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Tracing the Material: Spaces and Objects in British and Irish Modernist Novels

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by

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ABSTRACT

Tracing the Material considers how James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf's *The Years*, and Samuel Beckett's *Murphy* represent material spaces and objects as a way of engaging with the fraught histories of England and Ireland. I argue that these three writers use spaces and objects to think through and critique nineteenth and early twentieth-century conflicts and transitions, particularly in the areas of empire, nationalism, gender, and family. Writing in the 1920s and 1930s, in the decline of British ascendency, the rise of the Irish Free State, and between the World Wars, these writers seek to interpret their history through the material world as a way of articulating their political, cultural, and social dissatisfactions, and to imagine the future. Drawing in part from Walter Benjamin's materialist historiography and Jacques Derrida's texts on spectrality and mourning, I investigate how the material world becomes the means through which nations and individuals express their guilt and desires, mourn losses, cut their losses, articulate the present, and anticipate the future. A study of the material world in these novels thus yields insights into how literary texts respond to history, both overtly and implicitly, foregrounding the importance of physical spaces and things in the larger narratives of national and personal history. My dissertation offers a new understanding of the way twentieth-century literature navigates its history through materiality, destabilizes subject-object distinctions, and exposes the often-unexpected power of the non-human world.

INTRODUCTION

In this project, I investigate how James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Samuel Beckett engage with the fraught histories of England and Ireland, histories which are inscribed into the physical environment—specifically the built spaces and the material things—of these two countries. These writers interpret British and Irish physical environments as a way of understanding and responding to nineteenth and twentieth-century conflicts and transitions, particularly in the areas of empire, nationalism, gender, family, and class structures. They reveal a reluctance to discard the past and an uneasy desire to hold on to it. Focusing on Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), Woolf's *The Years* (1937), and Beckett's *Murphy* (1938), I consider how these novels negotiate the materiality of their public historical worlds and imagine material spaces where the private histories of their characters reflect concerns in the nations at large. Materiality becomes the means through which countries and individuals express their guilt and desires; mourn losses, cut their losses; articulate the present and anticipate the future. I study how the novels' materiality thus yields insights into how modern literary texts affectively and ideologically reckon with history, both overtly and implicitly. Events infuse spaces and objects with particular weighty meanings; in these texts we see narratives of imperial dominance inscribed across the material environment—narratives challenged by nationalist movements. On the home front, the role of women, of men, and of the family is expressed, mandated, and resisted in everyday rooms and items, and changing ideas of class, of home, are registered in the physical world.

Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett are active readers and interpreters of the unwritten material environment around them and, as I will demonstrate, they render it insistently in their narratives,

re-connecting it to the conflicted histories of their nations. Their contemporary, Walter Benjamin, claims that the true historian "read[s] what was never written" ("Paralipomena" 405). Benjamin's own investigations into the past, his archaeologies, locate historical shifts less in large-scale events than in changes to concrete artifacts, the unwritten and often-overlooked material traces of modern society. While Benjamin was most concerned with the transitions to modernity in nineteenth-century Paris, Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett focus on the shift from the nineteenth century to the twentieth in the two primary loci of Dublin and London. The three texts I consider cover a period of fifty years, from 1880-the late 1930s. In time and place, these novels both overlap and diverge: Joyce's *Ulysses*, set in turn-of-the-century Ireland, lies on the fault line of two centuries and two nations, England and Ireland, struggling for ascendancy; Woolf's *The Years*, covering a time frame of five decades, traces English history from the Victorian age to the verge of the Second World War, from imperial power to the brink of its dissolution; Beckett's *Murphy,* moving between England and Ireland in the 1930s, considers the imbricated history of these countries while also wrestling with the desire to deny history and politics entirely.

From multiple vantage points, these novels contend with the recent troubled histories of these two nations, exposing a weighted past, a rapidly-changing present, and a disconcerting future. For Ireland in these texts, the past and present are dominated by Britain's imperial involvement and its own attempts to re-forge its identity as it looks toward an independent future; for England, a Victorian legacy (that influences everything from empire to family dynamics) lingers in the present, and the future, if not torn apart by war, offers alternately a space for change or a re-framed continuation of the past. Although these writers may seem to suffer, like their cultures, from what Nietzsche terms "historical sickness," an excessive concern for the past that stifles life in the present, they critique such a relationship to history and seek to

operate in the balance between an excess of remembering and an excess of forgetting.[1] And as Nietzsche viewed our relationship to history as an ethical situation, these writers find an ethical imperative in examining historical materiality, for it is in revisiting and re-appraising the past that one can create a rupture from it and begin to live in a new way. Writing in the 1920s and 30s, when Ireland was re-forming as a nation, England was reducing its empire, and the two World Wars lay at either end, Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett express the urgency of re-evaluating persisting nineteenth-century structures and ideologies and identifying more constructive directions. As they struggle to interpret and represent the complex syntax of their history, they form something akin to the memory discourses Andreas Huyssen discusses in *Present Pasts*, which "articulate our political, social, and cultural dissatisfactions with the present state of the world," enabling us to "imagine the future" (6). For though Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett often look backward, evoking an earlier time or considering the histories of their physical environment, histories that cohere around accounts of loss and negativity, they are studying their present day, seeking to make sense of it, and offering moments of looking forward, considering alternatives for responding to time, history, and the physical world that do not fall into repressive binaries or dogma. All three writers exhibit a willingness to accept contradiction and gaps as the first step in negotiating the past and the present, and at times in their texts they weigh ideas for how both literature and British and Irish culture can navigate a burdensome history and a troubling, uncertain present, holding on to multiple possibilities simultaneously while not claiming a final answer.

These authors explore these large historical considerations not from above, but from ground-level, in the spaces and things of everyday life: in the family sitting room, in the

[1] Nietzsche's discussion of historical sickness can be found in *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*.

photographs, the ink wipes, the rocking chairs. The "unwritten testimonies" (Ricoeur 170) of the material world are grouped, in these novels, into narratives that comment on their historical and cultural context. The physical things in *Ulysses*, *The Years*, and *Murphy* operate much like Derrida's specter in *Specters of Marx*, disjointing time and space, summoning the past (and the future) into the present to haunt it and speak into it. The material worlds depicted in these novels are wide-ranging and heterogeneous. The authors portray real historical spaces, such as 7 Eccles Street in Dublin, the National Library of Ireland, or Kensington Gardens in London—and real historical objects, such as a Buddha sculpture in the National Museum or the statue of Cuchulain in the General Post Office, remarking on them explicitly but also silently, through the way they are curated and placed in the text. Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett also demonstrate how these exterior historical sites project themselves into the interior, into private lives. Therefore their texts explore not only how individuals might interact, at a particular moment in time, with public spaces and narratives, but how individuals bring these narratives home, making them personal and inscribing them on their own domestic spaces and objects. Through the experiences of their characters, these writers interiorize the exterior, making the public more familiar and intimate, and exteriorize the interior, opening up and providing a cross-section of the private. They thus organize a common space and common narrative between public and private spaces and readings, indicating how the divisions between public and private ultimately dismantle themselves as the outside historical material world shapes how individuals understand their own lives and interact with their own physical environment.

In the following chapters, I seek to emphasize the connections Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett make between material traces and history. In so doing, I draw from long-established practices in history and anthropology that examine material things in order to gain insight into the culture

that produced them, a practice exemplified by Benjamin though by no means limited to him. Foucault places the emergence of material culture studies in the eighteenth century with the birth of the human sciences (308-309), and the great museums of the nineteenth century cultivated this interest in the study of human production (Buchli 2)—although of course human civilizations have always lived under the thrall of relics.[2] The twentieth century has seen the greatest flowering of material culture analysis; Douglas Mao refers to it as "the age of the object" (6). For just as production of things has increased in the twentieth century, so has attention to things and acknowledgement that things can represent larger ideas than themselves; as T.S. Eliot comments in *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture*, "Even the humblest material artefact, which is the product and symbol of a particular civilization, is an emissary of the culture out of which it comes" (92).

Likewise, the material conditions of spaces themselves, once largely overlooked in philosophy and history, have become an object of inquiry in multiple fields since phenomenologists and geographers turned attention in the late twentieth century to place and how it produces and is produced by human subjects, many building off the work of Heidegger and his notion that being is dependent on placement in the world. Some writers on place, such as Gaston Bachelard, Pierre Nora, and Andreas Huyssen, have drawn particular attention to the ways that memory and history get encoded into space, whether private, domestic spaces or public sites. Discussing place as a "historically contingent process," geographer Allan Pred argues that place is what "takes place ceaselessly, what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and the utilization of a specific setting" (279). Both material culture studies and spatial studies are, largely, concerned with how the physical environment articulates with society

[2] Victor Buchli's introduction to *The Material Culture Reader* provides an overview of material culture studies *per se,* while also noting the propensity for studying and collecting artifacts that has characterized numerous cultures.

or the individual. By considering both places and things in this study, I hope to emphasize commonalities between these fields as well as create a fuller picture of the material environment in these novels. Moreover, by focusing on the material world in literary texts in particular, I am also attending to how authors frame materiality in order to comment on their culture, both past and present, and to critically reflect on their history. Literature, in part generated by historical and material narratives, also generates these narratives and mediates between them.

While the starting point for these chapters is particular material traces and particular histories—looking *through* specific objects to see what they disclose about the history of specific subjects—the texts themselves seem to create and demand a wider angle, one that takes into account objects themselves and the notion and representation of history in general—looking *at* objects, thinking about history. In his work on thing theory, Bill Brown draws attention to how "inanimate objects constitute human subjects, how they move them, how they threaten them, how they facilitate or threaten their relation to other subjects" (7), citing Latour's assertion that "'things do not exist without being full of people,' that considering humans necessarily involves the consideration of things" (12).[3] These novels open up commentary on the universal role of the object as they question the ontological distinction between objects and subjects and demonstrate how both form one another.[4] They move beyond considering particular objects to thinking about

[3] The increasingly material turn in theory since the 1990s has been well-documented. "New Materialism" seeks to give special attention to matter, neglected in Cartesian thought, demonstrating how even the mind is material. "Object-Oriented Ontology" rejects the privileging of human existence over nonhuman objects and puts the object at the center of its investigation. While my project does not fully align with either of these strands of theory, it is influenced by their interest in the nonhuman, in re-thinking dualism, and in emphasizing relations.

[4] What I consider a breadth of commentary in these writers (as they deal with what objects reveal and what they are in themselves), Mao, speaking of the Modern attitudes toward the object, calls a tension: "And indeed one encounters the tension between interpretation and resistance to interpretation at a pitch of extremity in Benjamin himself, that writer torn so excruciatingly, at times, between the urge to show how his beloved material fragments distill the essence of the world that made them and the wish to abjure

the role of the object in general and the relation between nonhumans and humans. My selected authors also, in dwelling on their own histories, comment on issues of history, from its preservation and reinforcement to its representation. In both areas, they fan outward from their immediate concerns to broader reflections on the ethical and political implications of matter and history: how, for example, the treatment of the object can relate to the treatment of the other, or how historical narratives are produced by those in power. History, for these authors, is repositioned as a site of questioning rather than of knowledge, homogenized and easily assimilated. Stephen Dedalus' well-known assertion in *Ulysses*, "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (2.377) or the Englishman Haines' "It seems history is to blame" (1.649) express an increasing willingness to re-evaluate the past and recognize its complexities, but also to acknowledge the way it resists interpretation.

Literary writing has always included descriptions of real places and representations of objects, whether it is to construct a setting and contribute a sense of realism or to turn the real and the everyday into symbols or allegorical devices. Coinciding with the period of the novels I am discussing, Bakhtin's "chronotope" refreshed the centrality of the material of time and space to literary narratives. Growing interest in literary material culture and space have greatly expanded our understanding of the role of the physical world in British poetry and prose writings, particularly of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[5] The shift in how twentieth-century British literature reckons with materiality, however, has been less documented in

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any reconstruction in which those fragments might finally be eclipsed—which is to say, any reconstruction at all" (7).

[5] See, for example, Cynthia Wall's exploration of objects in eighteenth-century prose, *The Prose of Things*; or the large number of thought-provoking studies of Victorian material culture, such as Asa Briggs' *Victorian Things,* John Plotz's *Portable Property*, Thomas Richards' *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, Elaine Freedgood's *The Ideas in Things*, or Barbara Black's *On Exhibit.* Notably these studies are overwhelmingly focused on things rather than spaces.

contemporary scholarship, although Mao's *Solid Objects* and Andrew Thacker's *Moving Through Modernity* set the stage for new evaluations of spaces and objects in modernist texts in particular.[6] Modernist writers have been primarily associated with the writing of subjectivity, and scholarship has accordingly tended to disregard the material components of their work. The writers in this dissertation have particularly been noted for their groundbreaking renderings of the inner human experience in their novels.[7] But just as they provide transformative interpretations of the human subject, they re-imagine the non-human object as well, registering the physical environment in a way that has little precedent in earlier literature. In their novels the material world is both background and foreground, simultaneously a realistic setting for the internal and external experiences of the characters, and a conceptual site that encodes conflicts and passages within history, politics, individuality, and matter itself. Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett reveal the layers of meaning and narrative residing in materiality, and in their characters' responses to their material environment, navigate matters of individual identity, nation development, and social restructurings, negotiating the ideological and practical transitions from the nineteenth century into modernity.

These three novels by Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett provide a set of narratives on England, Ireland, and their material worlds in the twentieth century. They form case studies,[8] that,

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[6] Some studies that have emerged out of this general trend include Andrea Zemgulys's *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage*, Victoria Rosner's *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life*, Leo Mellor's *Reading the Ruins*, and Thacker and Peter Brooker's edited collection, *Geographies of Modernism.* Book-length studies of things in particular are rarer; Michael North's *The Final Sculpture* or Ruth Hoberman's and Catherine Paul's writings on museums, *Museum Trouble* and *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism* provide notable examples.

[7] See Michael Levenson's examination of the development of consciousness in Modernism in *A Genealogy of Modernism,* David Trotter's "The Modernist Novel," and Blanchot's *The Book to Come.*

[8] Barthes in *Camera Lucida*: "Nothing to do with a corpus: only some bodies" (8).

something like Wittgenstein's "family resemblance," are connected by a series of overlapping similarities rather than just one common feature.[9] Navigating interrelated topics of empire, nationalism, gender, family, and home, they provide multiple perspectives that contribute to a fuller understanding of how English and Irish writing responded to these quickly-changing aspects of public and private life in the first half of the twentieth century. Likewise, my own study aims to provide a fuller picture of how the material world is portrayed in twentieth-century literature. I focus on the novel in particular because the novel as a genre offers these writers a medium for sustained examination of spaces and things, and, as Bakhtin considers, acts as a literary site where various types of realism are best developed.[10] My analyses of these novels do not purport to provide a comprehensive examination of every space and every thing: I isolate certain spaces and certain things that seem to form patterns. Some things are passed over, and my study acknowledges the inevitability of such gaps, even as the narratives I consider are themselves marked by lacunae.

The first two chapters of this study focus on Joyce's *Ulysses* and the notion of the archive. Chapter One discusses archived material in public spaces in the novel: the National Library and National Museum of Dublin, and the monuments to public figures placed around the city. Considering the historical background along with how Joyce presents these culturally and politically-charged spaces and objects, this chapter probes the material record of Irish history from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, investigating how this record, written on the public collections in the city and written into the novel, is not unified but vexed, preserving two ideas and two contentious histories: Irish culture and nationalism, and the British empire. The public

[9] See Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* 35-36.

[10] Certain realist and materially-driven poetry and drama could, however, be studied in a similar way. Seamus Heaney's poetry and Caryl Churchill's plays, for example, would lend themselves to this type of reading.

archives in the city work against themselves, producing multiple conflicting versions of history and forgetting other histories. By presenting the archives this way, Joyce captures the complexities of Ireland's political environment at the turn of the century and resists falling into a binary of imperial sympathizing or nationalist resistance. In so doing, he demonstrates the unreliability and contingencies of historical records and the ambiguities and irreducibility of histories. But as he critiques the archive, he also falls under its spell, and this fever of the archive is written into the very form of *Ulysses*.

Chapter Two follows Leopold Bloom from the public spaces of Dublin and back into his home, where he puts into practice the methods of archiving instituted on the national scale. Forming his own library on shelves, his own museum in drawers, and his own memorials in his pockets, Bloom becomes a micro-portrait of the English and Irish public archivists, driven by the same fears of loss and desires for a stable identity. His archive of personal effects is as fragmented and defined by the negative as the national collections. By exploring Bloom's archives, Joyce considers the universality of the archival impulse, which infects both nations and individuals, and he breaks down divisions between public and private, demonstrating how these spheres constitute and intrude upon one another. In this chapter, I expand on the first chapter's consideration of whose archive is being formed to interrogate what makes an archive and to question if the traits of a private archive supplement or negate the institutional archive.

Chapter Three moves from the edge of empire to the center, from one day in 1904 to a fifty-year span beginning in 1880. And it transitions from the archive, the nineteenth-century embodiment of completeness and control, to the prosthesis, an object and symbol that assumed particular resonance after the First World War, and that stands in both for loss and attempts to be whole. Woolf's *The Years*, which styles itself as a modern condition-of-England novel,

concentrates on a single family. The Pargiters represent the British middle-class family of the late Victorian age, and carry all of this period's attendant national and social burdens. These burdens, which include everything from war and empire to restrictive gender and class relations, coalesce and are symbolized in the family home. In the dark, crowded, constraining space of the family home, Woolf critiques the Victorian age and figures it as a diseased limb that must be severed. *The Years* traces this slow dismembering and then follows the subsequent reliance on prosthetics, the nineteenth-century domestic objects left behind after the relinquishment of the home. As Woolf explores these objects—substitutes for a lost way of life—she considers how they too are crippling and ultimately ponders a present and a future defined neither by lack of the past nor an unhealthy dependence on it. The narrative form of *The Years*, which attempts to balance the novel of vision and the novel of fact, reflects the troubled couplings within the text itself, as it also seeks to create a new literary form.

Chapter Four swerves between England and Ireland, body and mind, remembering and negating. Like the telephone lines increasingly criss-crossing the globe in the 1930s, Beckett's early novel *Murphy* transfers calls between two seemingly distant ends: the material, temporal world and the inner world of universalized abstractions. The protagonist Murphy and some of his fellow Irish transplants long to retreat into their minds and leave behind the alienating outer world. Living abroad in England, they are marginalized by the dominant narratives of the colonizing power. And yet even home in Ireland for them is a conflicted territory, as they are at odds with the repressive governance of the Irish Free State. They seek to resist or deny both the imperial London spaces where they live and the nationalist Dublin spaces they left behind, and they use certain common objects around them to transcend the physical world. But no matter how much they attempt to negate their external environment, they are always confronted with the

inescapable facts of matter and history, which are like calls placed in the past that must be answered in the present. The Cartesian dilemma of his characters marks Beckett's own writing, which I argue remains caught between two currents, to represent and to negate.

Conceptually, I have structured these chapters around particular emblems: the archive, the prosthesis, and the telephone. These approaches or organizing attempts are united in several ways. They are all physical and conceptual at the same time: an archive is a real space, but it is also an idea, an attitude, a practice; a prosthesis is a real object serving a physical function, but it also takes on metaphorical dimensions in relation to loss and substitution; the telephone is a thing that resides in space and connects multiple spaces and multiple people, but its operations are strangely disembodied and its physicality seems to dissolve in its representation of communication and presence. By arranging the chapters around these emblems, I am seeking to replicate how spaces and things are functioning in the texts themselves: physical things serving both physical and non-physical purposes. I am thus interested in their abstract value as much as their overt purpose, and endeavor to emphasize these two aspects. All three of these objects/ideas were crucial in their historical time periods, both for what they were and what they stood for. All have been considered, sometimes extensively, in philosophy, as they have become meaningful tools and metaphors for contemplating epistemology, phenomenology, ontology. And indeed, each section in this dissertation is underpinned by a central theoretical work: Chapters One and Two, by Derrida's *Archive Fever*; Chapter Three, by David Wills' *Prosthesis*; and Chapter Four, by Avital Ronell's *The Telephone Book.* Finally, the archive, the prosthesis, and the telephone all function from the position of aporia; they at the same time succeed and fail: the archive preserves and loses, the prosthesis supports and disables, the telephone connects and disconnects. As these concepts embody and incorporate contradiction, they imitate the contradictions that characterize

materiality, history, and writing. In order to produce the readings that follow, I rely on a poststructural approach, largely influenced by Derrida, and a philosophically-inflected materialist historiography, modeled by Benjamin. Broadly, I aim to offer both cultural and historical criticism and literary analysis, for though my argument is concerned with the historical narratives written into materiality, I maintain focus on the texts themselves, seeking ultimately to collapse context and text.

This dissertation centers on writings from the first half of the twentieth century—writings responding to their historical moment as they get propelled, like Benjamin's Angel of History, into the future. This historical moment—between the Wars, in the decline of British ascendancy and the rise of the Irish Free State—was a time of uncertainty and change and fear, but also a time of promise for these writers, as structures so crucial to nineteenth-century Britain—its empire, class system, gender roles, its image of the family and home—were becoming dismantled or reorganized. Tracing the developments that led up to this period, these authors map key coordinates onto the material environment. The spaces and objects in their novels capture moments when national or personal history is being produced, contemplated, or re-envisioned.

The preoccupations we see in Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett with their history does not end with them, but if anything, only hypertrophies over the course of the century with other writers, who face an ever-mounting pile of material and emotional debris that necessitates contemplation and that defies contemplation. W.G. Sebald particularly expresses this position, writing *The Rings of Saturn* in the final years of the twentieth century about the material remnants of a dying England and a dying world, nearly suffocating under the weight of its material history—inexorable accumulations of creation and destruction that cannot be ignored. And yet in these

accumulations, for the authors in this study, there is more than a reminder of loss, but an unexpected affirmation of life, a survival of the past that suggests life in the future.

CHAPTER ONE: ARCHIVING THE EXTERIOR IN *ULYSSES*

Perdition

A biography of James Joyce might be written that tells his life through objects. Something like Walter Benjamin's biogeographical map[11] that marks the places of personal significance, this biography might visually depict, not the places, but the things that composed Joyce's life. But such a record, attempted in one form by Joyce archives around the world, which collect and display various artifacts and ephemera from his life, would have to take into account not just the possession but the dispossession, the circulating away of things. Richard Ellmann's description of Joyce's childhood emphasizes the family's frequent removal, under the improvident leadership of John Joyce, from house to house, and accompanying these removals, the painful relinquishing of more and more of the family belongings to Mrs. M'Guinness, the pawnshop operator.[12] Stanislaus Joyce recalled, according to Ellmann, that "at first two floats were needed" (to carry their belongings to new quarters) "but eventually one was enough" (*JJ* 71). The family portraits were once pawned (and bought back); much of the furniture was eventually pawned or sold; the piano, a precious instrument in a musical family, sold. May Joyce later pawned some household necessity to send money to the starving Joyce in Paris (126), and

[11] Described in "A Berlin Chronicle" in *Reflections* (5)

[12] She appears in *Ulysses*, encountered by the Reverend John Conmee, who marvels, "A fine carriage she had. Like Mary, queen of Scots, something. And to think that she was a pawnbroker!" (*U* 10. 65-66); in the same episode, Maggy Dedalus takes some of Stephen's books to Mrs. M'Guinness to pawn. Joseph Brady writes that "the movement of goods to and from the pawnbroker was part of the essential rhythm of life" for the underclass of Dublin (302).

Joyce himself, in the straitened circumstances that he perpetually found himself in during his adult life, was forced into pawning some of his own things, such as his silver watch (485). Even with the objects he kept, he was constantly aware of the tenuousness of possession, underscored by the way that he stamped his books with *J.J.*, claiming them through writing (prompting his son Giorgio to protest, "Don't do that. I'm going to have your books when you die, and your initials will be on them" [qtd. in Ellmann *JJ* 479]).

But while physical things were always slipping away from him, sold or lost in the limbo or perdition of the pawnshop, his head was full of "pebbles and rubbish and broken matches and bits of glass picked up 'most everywhere,'" as he remarked to Harriet Shaw Weaver, repeating to her some gossip about him in Paris: "(somebody here said of me: 'They call him a poet. He appears to be interested chiefly in mattresses.') And, in fact, I was" (*Letters* 165-67). In the same letter, Joyce estimates that he has spent 20,000 hours writing *Ulysses*, his mind apparently preoccupied by both mattresses and epics: and indeed this slippage between the mundane and the transcendent, the material and symbolic, has been noted by critics from the beginning.[13] In formulating an aesthetic that, Edmund Wilson contends, merges elements of both Naturalism and Symbolism (191-236), Joyce draws attention to the abundant material universes of his texts. Ellmann comments, echoing J.M. Cohen on Rabelais, that Joyce "come[s] to things through words, instead of to words from things" (2); or as Wyndham Lewis complained of *Ulysses* early on, it contains a "suffocating, noetic expanse of objects, all of them lifeless, the sewage of a Past twenty years old" (91).[14] *Ulysses* is many things, but it is, prominently, a novel of things.

[13] Evan Horowitz discusses some of these early reviews in his essay, "*Ulysses*: Mired in the Universal."

[14] Many present-day critics have focused in some form on this "suffocating" material expanse in Joyce's fiction, considering such broader topics as commodity culture, waste, hoarding, and the banality of objects, or more particularly examining the historical context of a "real" thing, such as the barmbracks

Published in 1922 (the year Ireland was declared a free state) but set in 1904, the twilight of the British empire, Joyce's text seeks to preserve not just the political/cultural Dublin of the past, but the physical Dublin of 1904, documenting with exhaustive detail and great concern for accuracy the spaces and things of the city[15] so that there would be a textual record of its materiality should it ever disappear, as Joyce famously declared.[16] *Ulysses* is not only concerned with the public physical environments of Dublin, but also the private, the bourgeois interior and its accoutrements, Joyce's material treatment of the city navigating between exteriors and interiors, and in all spaces seeking to maintain his commitment to "keep close to fact" (98), as he claimed in a conversation with Arthur Power. On a different occasion, when the artist Patrick Tuohy was painting his portrait, Joyce remarked, "Never mind my soul. Just be sure you have my tie right" (Ellmann, *JJ* 577).

This commitment to factual precision in "tangible phenomena" (*U* 14.1227) led Joyce, in the writing of *Ulysses,* to rely not only on his own memory, but the firsthand knowledge of relatives like his Aunt Josephine Murray, whom he frequently consulted regarding even the most minor points,[17] and whom he asked to send him newspapers, magazines, and books having to do

(and clay) in "Clay." For examples of some of these critiques, see Bénéjam, Fluet, Leonard, Majumdar, Moran, and Owens.

[15] As Don Gifford, in *Ulysses Annotated*, points out, Joyce was fascinated with what he called "Dublin street furniture" (xv) and he crowded his novel with it: *Ulysses* abounds with factual references to streets, bridges, buildings, pubs, and shops; Bloom, for instance, lives at 7 Eccles Street, a real address, wears a hat from Plasto's, a real hatter, buys soap from Sweny's, a real chemist, and spends his day walking down streets, across bridges, past churches, and into stores that were, with few exceptions, real places in 1904.

[16] In a conversation with his friend Frank Budgen, Joyce remarked: "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book" (Budgen 69). Budgen also records how Joyce composed the "Wandering Rocks" episode with a map of Dublin laid out before him, like a "surveyor with a theolodite and measuring chain" (124-25).

[17] For example, before writing the part of "Ithaca" when Bloom drops himself down from the area railings, Joyce asked Josephine, "Is it possible for an ordinary person to climb over the area railings of no 7 Eccles Street, either from the path or the steps, lower himself from the lowest part of the railings till his

with Ireland; after Josephine died, according to Ellmann, Joyce "several times sent friends to interview his father so as to rescue from oblivion some small fact about family history or Dublin gossip" (*JJ* 244, 591). But Joyce did not rely solely on the knowledge and memories of individuals: he extensively consulted numerous issues of *Thom's Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*—the authoritative, statistical record of Dublin—indeed, he used *Thom's* so much that C.P. Curran, in his obituary for Joyce in *The Irish Times,* asserted that Joyce was "the last forty volumes of *Thom's Directory* thinking aloud" (qtd. in Gunn 15). Collecting and encyclopedically cataloguing the myriad aspects of the material world in Dublin at this particular time and for these particular people, Joyce seems to manifest an obsessive concern with losing memory of a particular materiality, of sacrificing it, as it were, to the pawnshop. If Leopold Bloom is something of an artist, then we might say Joyce—and The Arranger—is something of an archivist.[18]

Joyce's archiving concerns and his narrative archive, *Ulysses*, serve as an emblem for the treatment of certain physical objects within the text itself. I will consider a number of these objects and the spaces in which they are located, exploring how the things and spaces are caught in the fever of the archive, and yet are not: how they form, for those who possess them, both archives and anti-archives. For at the same time that Joyce attempts to create an archive in his own work, he calls into question the possibility that an archive can exist. The word *archive* is a particularly slippery term that has been invested with a bewildering variety of meanings and uses

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feet are within 2 feet or 3 of the ground and drop unhurt. I saw it done myself by a man of rather athletic build. I require this information in detail in order to determine the wording of a paragraph" (*Letters* 175).

[18] Hugh Kenner, drawing from David Hayman, suggests that in addition to the narrator of *Ulysses* is "the Arranger," a colorful figure who manipulates the text and makes expressions and observations that the narrator is incapable of. The Arranger is commonly accepted as an additional narrative figure in Joyce's text.

in the twentieth century;[19] the term originates from the Greek *arkheion*, the place where public records were kept, which comes from *arkhē,* meaning "government" and *arkhō*, literally, "beginning" (*A Greek-English Lexicon*). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (which itself attempts to make a comprehensive archive of the English language) defines it as a "place in which public records or other historical documents are kept" or "a historical record or document so preserved." But in addition to the physical substrate, the archive is also an imagined site. For this argument I will employ a working understanding of archive as a convergence of space, object, practice, and theory, drawing largely from Derrida's discussion in *Archive Fever* of the archive as a public, prosthetic extension of memory, a site of origins or commencement, where history is preserved but also produced, and where the archive cannot remain outside of its contents and other bodies of knowledge, but is informed by them. Derrida's psychoanalytic reading premises the archive on the conflicting forces of the pleasure principle (which strives to preserve) and the death drive (which destroys and forgets): every construction of a historical record involves a negotiation of these two drives.[20]

I will focus on two groups of archived spaces and things in *Ulysses*. In Chapter One, I will consider a group of public things, the books, art, and monuments collected and housed in the National Library and National Museum and positioned across Dublin in statuary, and in Chapter Two I will look at a group of private things, the diverse items concealed in Leopold Bloom's home and on his person. Material culture in Joyce's novel is heterogeneous in type and purpose;

[19] The word has expanded with the archival impulse itself; according to Pierre Nora, the archive is "the imperative of our epoch" : "not only to keep everything, to preserve every indicator of memory—even when we are not sure which memory is being indicated—but also to produce archives" (14).

[20] Foucault's formulation of the archive in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) is one of the most important explanations of the theoretical archive along with Derrida's Freudian version. Foucault's archive is not the historical traces left by a culture or the institution that preserves these traces—it is rather the system of discursivity, the "law of what can be said," establishing or transforming statements (128-31).

the public and private things I will explore are disparate in kind but united in the archival role they are given, a role in preserving memory, in producing a history (whether on the national level or the personal). These archives, however, are resistant and defined by aporia, driven to disorder and forget as much as order and remember. The public collections form a material record of Irish history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but this record is vexed, preserving multiple memories and divergent histories and at all times pointing to an idea of Ireland and an idea of Empire never fully realized: an image of Ireland as a unique culture deeply connected to its past and united in its present-day resistance to Britain; and an image of the British Empire as a homogeneous entity of total knowledge and unwavering control. Bloom's collections likewise construct an external chronicle of his life, but this ephemeral archive is partially concealed, incomplete, and in the process of disintegration, ceaselessly indicating not what has been saved, but what is not there: the dead, the lost, the unattainable. The objects in these archives draw their force not from their physical presence, but from absence; and the histories thus recorded are built on a trace.

Samuel Beckett once remarked of Joyce's method that "He was always adding to it; you only have to look at his proofs to see that. I realized that my own way was in impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than in adding" (qtd. in Knowlson 352). Joyce's writing is commonly seen as an art of accumulation, of addition, and the plenitude of the material world in *Ulysses*, not unlike the object plenitude in a nineteenth-century Realist or Naturalist novel, seems to affirm this view. But the material abundance of *Ulysses* testifies more often to what is not there than to what is, suggesting Joyce's material aesthetic is not so far removed from Beckett's art of negation and impoverishment. Things in *Ulysses* are additional in enumeration, but reductive in essence. There are, of course, objects in *Ulysses* not deriving their

meaning from what is absent (and indeed having little meaning at all beyond function): Bloom's breakfast-tray, for example, appears to be just a tray. However, I am focusing on groups of things that appear to mean something beyond mundane function or commodity value or even metaphor: things which individually and collectively are being deployed to preserve a history, to create an archive, and yet in forgetting, in diverging, in lacking, are producing an anti-archive, a material narrative of absence.

Ellmann notes that Joyce's story "The Dead" was "an answer to his university friends who mocked his remark that death is the most beautiful form of life by saying that absence is the highest form of presence" (*JJ* 262).[21] Joyce enacted this belief in his relationship with Dublin, a place he remained absent from most of his adult life, but which he said he "never left." The public and private things I examine in *Ulysses,* in attempting an archive, are attempting to incorporate the absent into the living, seeking to keep what is gone alive. But in the process they are also signaling the approaching death of the living and present—nations, individuals, things—beginning the work of death, the undertaking of mourning, not just others, but themselves.

In the Heart of the Material Metropolis

As Bloom wends his way around Dublin on June 16, 1904, he encounters and interacts with numerous objects that form the material make-up of the city. These public things fall largely into a few major categories, although most items straddle multiple categories, defying simple classification. Some things, like the newspaper printing machine at the *Freeman's Journal*, are involved in production. Certain items, found in places of business, are primarily commercial

[21] In "Circe," Lynch's cap makes nearly the same remark, declaring to Stephen, "Extremes meet. Death is the highest form of life" (*U* 15.2098)—a revision of Bloom's earlier observation at Paddy Dignam's funeral: "In the midst of death we are in life. Both ends meet" (*U* 6.759).

objects for consumption, such as the "herbs, ointments, disinfectants" (*U* 5.476) in the chemist Sweny's shop, where Bloom orders Molly's lotion and picks up the lemon soap that fragrances the rest of his day, or the food items that Bloom alternately eats or feeds to others, summarized elegantly in the budget compiled in "Ithaca." And following the trajectory of the commodity from production to consumption to waste, other objects form the detritus of Dublin: the cut sheets advertising Agendath Netaim that the butcher Dlugacz wraps the meat in, the throwaway announcing the coming of Elijah (and Dr. John Alexander Dowie) that, thrown away into the river and resurfacing throughout the book, mimics Bloom's circulations through the city. But the categories proliferate like the objects themselves. There are objects for communication: the telephone in the *Freeman* office, the stationery Bloom uses to write Martha; for entertainment: the piano in the Ormond bar, the books in the hawker's cart; for advertisement: the poster of Marie Kendall, charming soubrette, or the sandwich boards worn for Wisdom Hely's; for decoration: the lamp in Bella Cohen's; for violence: the biscuit tin the Citizen throws at Bloom. Money in the novel is not just the means of purchasing or selling commodities—it is a thing in itself, rattling merrily in Boylan's pocket, slowly accumulating in the one-legged sailor's cap, transferring grudgingly from Simon Dedalus's pocket to Dilly Dedalus's hand or from Stephen to Bloom and Bloom to Stephen.

Alongside this disparate expanse of things on exhibit in the city environment is another set of public things on display in more intentional ways. In *Ulysses,* Joyce refers to three different public collections of objects, the National Library, the National Museum, and Dublin's public sculpture, all of which played, in history, many of the roles listed above (in some iteration): they communicated, they entertained, they advertised, they were involved in production, they were made for consumption. But one of their primary functions, whether stated

or implied, was to form an archive, a public and physical historical record that preserved certain elements of the past as Ireland moved into a new century, enclosing many past times, events, and spaces into one space. Foucault writes that the library and the museum are heterotopias "proper to the western culture of the nineteenth century" because they seek "to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes . . . constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages" (26). These institutions in many ways act as microcosms of the history of Ireland in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Ireland at the turn of the century was, as Stephen Howe comments, "a sphere of ambiguity, tension, transition, hybridity, between 'national' and 'imperial' spheres" (68), a country simultaneously viewed by Britain as a partner in empire and a colony, according to Yvonne Whelan, and a place where Irish nationals sought to assert a strong sense of Irish identity (7). Therefore, as we examine the function of these palimpsestic collections in history and in the novel, perhaps a guiding question should be, if these objects form an archive, then *whose* archive?

The Crystal Palace of the Creator

The Great Exhibition of 1851—showcased in the wonder-inspiring Crystal Palace in London, and enshrining, for the awe of six million visitors, the manufactures and industries of the British Empire (and the rest of the world)—seems on first glance remote from the Irish public establishments discussed in *Ulysses.* But the Crystal Palace had trickle down effects in Ireland and Dublin that eventually led to the creation of such institutions as the National Library and Museum. As Joseph Brady records in *Dublin through Space and Time*, the Great Exhibition inspired an Irish version, the Irish Industrial Exhibition, held in 1853 in a magnificent structure

of steel and glass on the grounds of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS).[22] Although the structure itself was eventually demolished, the exhibition furthered the momentum toward establishing a series of national institutions clustered around the RDS, starting with the National Gallery and Natural History Museum and culminating with the National Library and National Museum (224-29), the latter two of which play a prominent role in *Ulysses*, the "crystal palace of [its] creator," Joyce (*U* 14.403).

The Library and Museum were thus both conceived around the same time, almost a gesture to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when libraries, as Paula Findlen points out, "formed an essential part of collections; rarely did a museum not have a library connected to it" so that "the library was indeed a museum" (34). The National Library and National Museum together formed part of an extensive late nineteenth-century project to fashion Irish cultural institutions, modeled largely on those in England. This group of National establishments, Whelan argues, reinforced Dublin's location within the broader empire, and served, along with public statuary and street names, as collective assertions of "a shared British identity" (111). They can be seen as belonging to what Thomas Richards has called the "imperial archive," the knowledge-producing institutions of the nineteenth century that sought to control Britain's colonies through information rather than force. Therefore these institutions simultaneously endeavored to raise the cultural status and visibility of Ireland and identify Ireland as a British subject. The British government did not act alone in promoting these projects; as Marie Bourke details in *The Story of Irish Museums*, the RDS strongly emphasized "developing a cultural

[22] The RDS is a learned body formed in 1731 with broad aims for the education of the Irish people and the improvement of the country. The Society was strongly identified with the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the Protestant Ascendancy, but as Marie Bourke asserts, it attracted people from all walks of life. In 1877, the state intervened in the formerly private institution, taking control of its educational, medical, and economic roles (Bourke 32-35).

infrastructure for Ireland," and part of developing this infrastructure meant accumulating collections of many kinds that could later help form national collections (177).

These national collections (which I will explore in more detail in the following sections), were divided, like the history of the institutions themselves, between Irish and British interests, and though many Irish materials were preserved, they were preserved under the auspices of the British government. In 1836, a Parliament committee advised the RDS to expand its acquisitions and begin to function as a national library (Brady 229); the RDS's collection, which was biased toward science and technology, received a major boost in 1863 when Dr. Jasper Robert Joly contributed his library of 23,000 volumes, which was particularly rich in Irish material. His donation came with the stipulation that "If a public library should be established in Dublin under the authority of parliament . . . analogous to the library of the British Museum in London," then his gift might be transferred to that public collection (Long, "The National Library" 267). In 1877, the Dublin Science and Art Museum Act officially instituted the National Library and National Museum, the RDS supplying the core collection of the library, and the Royal Irish Academy[23] transferring its collection to the museum (Brady 232).

Once the central collections were secured, the Office of Public Works held an architectural competition for the design of the structures. After two years and two competitions, the designs of the father-son architectural team Thomas Newenham Deane and Thomas Manley Deane were selected, and the National Library and Museum, opening to the public in 1890, were built as a pair, flanking Leinster House on Kildare Street.[24] According to the architect of the

[23] The RIA, founded in 1785, was an antiquarian institution concerned with Irish archaeological studies. In 1840, the RIA began to form a national collection of Irish artifacts that quickly became the most important Celtic collection in the world (Bourke 156-63).

[24] Originally the ducal palace of the Dukes of Leinster; in 1922 it became the seat of Parliament for the Irish Free State.

Altes Museum in Berlin, one of the models for the Kildare Street buildings, the structure of a museum should "First delight, then instruct" (qtd. in Crimp 301). The design and craftsmanship of the National Library and Museum may perhaps delight their visitors, but the buildings, structurally embodying yet also concealing the cultural split of the institutions themselves, more significantly provide an inadvertent instruction in the hidden disunities within empire and nation.

The Library and Museum, as purportedly national institutions, were praised in the Irish press at the time for their fittingly Irish provenance, "designed by an Irish architect and built of Irish materials by Irish hands" (Bourke 195),[25] but their origins, design, and craftsmanship in reality possessed a far more divided legacy. In the first architectural competition for the design of the buildings, no Irish architects made it into the top five slots, prompting accusations that the selection committee was biased in favor of English architects. As the editor of the *Irish Builder* declared, "we candidly say however we have not much faith in the good intentions of the South Kensington officials respecting Ireland or matters Irish" (qtd. in Crooke 117). The committee was accordingly obliged to hold a second competition, and the winning design, submitted by the Irish firm of T.N. Deane and Son, was considered a triumph by those who wanted the buildings to be a truly Irish production. But T.N. Deane, though Irish in nationality, was greatly influenced by the writings on John Ruskin on architecture, and is perhaps best known for the Ruskinian-Gothic museums that he and his first partner Benjamin Woodward designed in England: the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford.[26] Further, the Library and Museum buildings manifest little that is identifiably Irish in their design: they are

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[25] Notably, it was Samuel Beckett's grandfather and great uncle, William Beckett and James Beckett, who constructed the National Library and Museum with their company J. and W. Beckett Builders (Knowlson 27).

[26] For an in-depth exploration of Deane's influences and style, see Blau and O'Dwyer.

neo-classical buildings combining design elements of classical Continental architecture (such as a central rotunda and colonnade) with a layout patterned on the South Kensington Museum in London (Bourke 194-96).[27] The central domed space of both buildings, Eve Blau notes, is a hallmark not only of classical architecture, but of the nineteenth-century museum (34), famously exemplified by the British Museum—and thus the dome allies the Library and Museum even more closely with their British models. The "Irishness" of the structures appears primarily in the materials used in the buildings: Dalkey Granite, Mount Charles sandstone, and columns made of Irish marble (Crooke 119, 121). But even the materials were not wholly Irish. As Crooke reports, English oak was used on the interior doors (119), and the outer doors as well as chimneypieces were carved in Italy (O'Dwyer 393).

The Library and Museum, like Deane and his earlier partner Woodward's structures such as the Trinity College Museum and Oxford Museum, overall manifest an eclectic approach, in this case by embedding Irish craftsmanship within various European and British traditions. The varied designs and materials of the Library and Museum are not discordant, however, but manage to blend into a balanced whole. These buildings, by offering a harmonious rendering of diverse elements, capture and yet belie the conflicts within and between the British Empire and Irish nation over Ireland's cultural institutions. Even if the buildings could be considered, as the Irish press indicated, essentially Irish structures, they still cannot materially escape their imperial legacy: their foundation stone was laid by the Prince of Wales—a politically significant gesture that, as Crooke notes, was "a chance to celebrate the success of the British Empire and strengthen its place in Ireland" (121). A few years later a statue of Queen Victoria was erected on

[27] Bloom himself is most struck by the classical appearance of the buildings, remarking when examining the "cream curves" of the National Museum's "handsome building," which echo the curves of the Greco-Roman goddesses inside: "Sir Thomas Deane was the Greek architecture" (*U* 8.1180-81) (Stephen has a different interpretation of the Library, calling its pillared hall "Moorish" [*U* 9.1168]).

the lawn between the two buildings (only to be removed in 1948) and a statue of Prince Albert was placed on the edge of Leinster Lawn, where it remains, from the margins a constant reminder of the Library and Museum's conflicted past. These two public institutions, then, share a tortuous history with both British and Irish origins, organized and managed by collectors and officials who were motivated both by the desire to preserve Irish culture and to create in Ireland collections similar to those in England: a heterogeneous history embodied in the physical structures that amalgamate materials and designs from Ireland and abroad.

Coffined Thoughts in Mummycases

Noel Kissane records that the primary intention for the National Library at its inception, articulated by the Librarian, William Archer, and the Council of Trustees, was to act as a national book archive for every text of "Irish origin or interest published through the ages" as well as a compendium of texts from other countries and on other subjects (5). In 1902 the Librarian Thomas Lyster described the National Library as the "tiny British Museum of Ireland" (qtd. in Long, *A Twinge* 3), expressing on the one hand the archival aspirations of the Library, but on the other, its inescapable ties to Britain. The conflict expressed in the phrase "British Museum of Ireland" would haunt the Library in its beginning years, as we glimpse in *Ulysses.*

The Library appears primarily in one episode of *Ulysses*, "Scylla and Charybdis." Haines announces his intention, in "Telemachus," of visiting the Library, and he, Buck, and Stephen separately converge on the "coffined thoughts" (*U* 9.352) on Kildare Street in the afternoon. Bloom, with more practical motivations, realizes his archival need: "That *Kilkenny People* in the national library now I must" (*U* 8.1043-44), and he too seeks out the Library,[28] forming in the

[28] His normal library of choice is the Capel Street Library, a regular lending library to which he owes the overdue *Stark-Munro Letters* by A. Conan Doyle. Later we learn that the secretary Miss Dunne has also

process the first spatial node in the narrative between him and Stephen—their earliest meeting in the text thus occurs in a public collection while their next meeting will conclude amidst Bloom's private collection. "Scylla and Charybdis" finds itself set amidst a collection of books, and the conversations that dominate the episode take on the nature of their mise en scène.[29] But the Library is more than just a background: it is an ideological place. In this episode, Joyce stages a conflict between the physical books in the Library and the books in the conversation: the texts he singles out from the Library's relatively diverse holdings serve to emphasize the Library as an Irish archive, while the texts that populate the exchanges of Stephen and his cohort mark the cultural and aesthetic motivations working in opposition to the archive. Studying Joyce's text alongside the early history of the Library accentuates the irresolvably frictive nature of this collection, an archive for Ireland that also works in service for Britain in everything from its conception and development to actual practices in its day-to-day operation.

Joyce offers little information about the National Library's actual holdings; therefore the texts he does refer to adopt particular significance. He mentions specifically only two items that belong to the Library's collection: the back issues of the *Kilkenny People* Bloom seeks to locate [30] and Mr. Best's translation of "Jubainville's book" (*U* 9.93), the French work, *Le Cycle*

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borrowed a book from the Capel Street Library, *The Woman in White:* "Too much mystery business in it . . . Change it and get another by Mary Cecil Haye" (*U* 10.371-72).

[29] Ellmann reports that as a young man Joyce spent much of his time at the National Library, and that he met Oliver Gogarty (the model for Buck Mulligan) while both were waiting at the counter for a book, their first conversation concerning Yeats (*JJ* 121). Joyce transposes his own experiences of social stimulation and intellectual ferment at the Library onto the Library in the text, demonstrated not only in Stephen's regular meetings at the Library but also with Bloom, who proposes the National Library as one of the settings for his (fantasized) series of regular intellectual dialogues with Stephen (*U* 17.960-72).

[30] According to Kissane, it was the National Library's policy from the beginning to acquire all current Irish newspapers, provincial and national. By 1900, the Library was receiving forty newspapers and journals and also received many donations of back files (69). Mr. Lyster confirms this information in his conversation with Bloom: " 'All the leading provincial …. *Northern Whig*, *Cork Examiner*, *Enniscorthy Guardian*. Last year. 1903 ….Will you please … Evans, conduct this gentleman … If you just follow the

Mythologique Irlandais translated by Best as *The Irish Mythological Cycle and Celtic Mythology* in 1903. Other texts are alluded to; when Best relates how he showed Haines Jubainville's work, he observes that Haines is "quite enthusiastic, don't you know, about Hyde's *Lovesongs of Connacht*" (*U* 9.94), perhaps implying that the two men looked at Douglas Hyde's book, a translation of Irish poems. In addition, the librarian Mr. Lyster leaves Stephen's group to assist Father Dineen, an "Irish-speaking writer, translator, editor, and philologist" (Gifford 9.967). More than likely, Father Dineen needed help finding some particular Irish texts.

All of the texts Joyce references as a part of the National Library's collection, then, relate explicitly to Ireland in their origin and interest, and their authors (excepting the various unknown writers for the *Kilkenny People*) were passionately concerned with the preservation of Irish culture. Marie Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville was professor of Celtic Literature at the Collège de France in the late nineteenth century, and according to his entry in the 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica, he "was among the first in France to enter upon the study of the most ancient monuments of Irish literature with a solid philological preparation and without empty prejudices." Richard Best, his translator (and former student), was a founder of the School for Irish Learning, a bibliographer for other Celtic scholars, and a committee member of the Feis Ceoil, the annual Irish Music Festival (Long, *A Twinge* 31-32)—in addition to directing the National Library for many years. Douglas Hyde, translator of the *Love Songs*, helped establish

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atten …. Or, please allow me …. This way … Please, sir ….' Voluble, dutiful, he led the way to all the provincial papers" (*U* 9.598-602). Long speculates that Bloom would not have been able to locate the 1903 issues of the *Kilkenny People,* since it does not appear on the list of Irish newspapers in the Library's Report of 1902/03 or 1904/05 and the earliest hardcopy held by the Library is not until January 1922 (42).

the Gaelic League (an organization dedicated to preserving the Irish language and traditional Irish culture), and later became the first President of Ireland.[31]

Prepared by these cultural nationalists, these books represent a distinctive and Irish past preserved in the present, whether as historical texts in their original state (perhaps what Father Dineen is seeking) or historical texts translated for contemporary use. Each thus affords a key into Irish cultural identity. In her study of the development of the National Museum in Ireland, Elizabeth Crooke emphasizes the pivotal role of cultural institutions in furthering the growth of nationalism, and drawing from George Boyce, states that the links between culture and politics constitute a nation's "design for living, handed down from generation to generation . . . expressing the characteristics by which people assert their identity" (22). The particular focus of the Library's collection on Irish texts was critical in forming an understanding of the nation in Ireland, both by increasing knowledge of the country's past and of its distinct culture. While the Library in its early years, according to Kissane, was not yet a "comprehensive Irish book archive or . . . an encyclopedic reference collection" (11) for Irish documents, it was extensive, owing largely to the Joly donation. Accordingly, the National Library at the turn of the century, housing an ever-increasing collection of Irish documents that preserved knowledge of the Irish language and culture and that could be used (and were) to recapitulate aspects of that culture in the present, constructed an image of itself as a unified and inviolate archive for Ireland. This type of archive is both institutive and conservative, in the words of Derrida in *Archive Fever*: it preserves history and also produces it, forming through its collection the beginnings of a coherent narrative about Ireland—a story of a unique culture nearly lost because of imperial appropriation but saved by the efforts of archivists with nationalist sympathies. Joyce exposes us

[31] See Janet and Gareth Dunleavy for more information on Hyde's life and accomplishments.

to this narrative in "Scylla and Charybdis" through the setting of the Library and the foregrounded Irish texts.

However, the conversations of Stephen's group in *Ulysses* and, outside *Ulysses*, the history of the collection, the collectors, and the visitors to the collection, all disrupt this nationalist-leaning narrative. Though surrounded by the most extensive collection of Irish texts in the world, Stephen and his fellow Dublin literati give precedence in their conversation not to Irish writers but to a host of British, continental, and classical writers—most notably, of course, to Shakespeare: as Eglinton observes, "Our young Irish bards have yet to create a figure which the world will set beside Saxon Shakespeare's Hamlet" (*U* 9.43-44). A few asides on the Irish Literary Revival do crop up; Russell, for example, is gathering together "a sheaf of our younger poets' verses" (*U* 9.290-91) (excluding those of Stephen), and the men speculate about who will write "Our national epic" (*U* 9.309). But the writers in the Literary Revival were predominantly Anglo-Irish, and the man nominated for the honor of writing the national epic is George Moore, who as L.H. Platt points out was a man "whose sense of his own Irishness was an uncertain affair and whose reputation was built on writing English novels for an English audience" (742). The literary preoccupations of the men Stephen speaks with in the Library correspond well with their backgrounds: all belonged (in the text and in history) to the Ascendancy. AE and Richard Best were Anglo-Irish; Thomas William Lyster, in spite of his denomination as the "quaker librarian" was a Protestant Episcopalian (Long, *A Twinge* 16); and John Eglinton (pseudonym of William Kirkpatrick Magee), the Trinity-educated son of a Protestant clergyman and a forceful critic of the Irish Literary Revival, relocated to England in protest after the foundation of the Irish Free State (Long 26; Gifford 9.18). Stephen of course is not a part of their particular cultural background, and though he is often critical of the English Bard who occupies the conversation,

he does not spare the Revivalist writers from his hostility: he is accused, for example, of urinating on Synge's halldoor as a "contribution to literature" (*U* 9.569-72) and Buck laughs at him for writing a critical review of Lady Gregory's "drivel" (*U* 9.1158-60). In Joyce's portrayal of the National Library, the literary conversation is pitted against the archival scene, for though the men in Stephen's group may speak of revival, a return to the archives of Ireland's cultural history, they are ultimately motivated by a desire to preserve themselves: their own tastes and their own power. Platt asserts that "Anglo-Ireland's colonization of a mythic past was a means by which a declining class attempted to preserve for itself a cultural and intellectual position" (739). And though Stephen calls into question the motivations of the Anglo-Irish Revivalists as he also demystifies the Anglo literary god Shakespeare, he himself is more interested in forming a new national consciousness in his writing than in turning to the archives. As he famously states at the end of *Portrait,* "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (V.2788-90). He will always be entangled in the history of his country and wandering in the labyrinth of another's language, "so familiar and so foreign" (*Portrait* V.556), but desires still to voice something altogether new, neither borrowed nor revived.

The early history of the Library further complicates the notion of the Library as an Irish archive. As described earlier, the National Library and Museum arose through the joint efforts of the Irish (in the RDS) and the British Parliament; both groups desired to establish cultural institutions in Ireland for the improvement of the Irish citizens. The RDS, while attracting a variety of members, was primarily an Anglo-Irish body. The Library was built on the RDS grounds and filled with the RDS collection (and the Joly donation, with its stipulation for the approval of Parliament), and many of the trustees, according to Gerard Long, were members of

the Royal Irish Society (RIS) (4). The National Library, therefore, was predominately controlled by—not surprisingly—those in power in Ireland, who at this time were the British Parliament and the Irish aristocracy. As with the original Greek *arkheion* Derrida discusses, the official documents were kept by the superior magistrates, "the *archons,* those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law" (2). Moreover, in the early years of the Library, Kissane notes,

> the government of the day seems to have envisaged a more limited role for the National Library, as a large provincial public library, with only some of the features of contemporary national libraries. In effect, the British Museum was to continue as the national library for the United Kingdom and Ireland; for example, the British Museum was entitled to free copies of British and Irish publications under the terms of copyright law, but the legislation did not provide reciprocal rights for the National Library of Ireland. (5-6)

Although the Library in time became more of a true national library and comprehensive archive, in its beginning years (when *Ulysses* takes place) it was limited in both its collection and its purpose. One of the most frequent complaints in the early years of the Library was the lack of adequate funding to expand its departments and collections because of insufficient support from the British Parliament; this review of the Trustees' Report, appearing in the *United Irishman* on March 5, 1904, expresses the common frustration:

> The library building is uncompleted, no proper provision has been made for a newspaper department, nor a map department, nor a patents' department, nor a fireproof room for MSS. There is no proper room for the unpacking of large consignments of books, nor satisfactory light for the reading-room . . . There is no

> proper catalogue, since there is no money to provide it, there is no money to buy necessary books, there is no money to pay proper salaries. The Empire can't afford it. (qtd. in Long, *A Twinge* 15-16)

Yet because many of the items in its collection were of Irish origin, then the conquerors, the British and Anglo-Irish, unexpectedly became the preservers of Ireland's past, further confusing the narrative of the objects in the Library and vexing the notion of an Irish archive. Considerations of which articles made it into the archive, which did not, and why, acquire much more weight when the ones collecting and curating are, predominantly, the imperialists. The motivations behind the British establishing an Irish archive are not easily disentangled, but in *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson offers one explanation. Discussing how colonial regimes in Southeast Asia began "attaching themselves to antiquity as much as conquest," Anderson argues that these regimes invested in archaeology and museums so that the state could "appear as the guardian of a generalized, but also local, Tradition" (181). Controlling the colony's past and heritage through its "museumizing imagination" enables the state to create a "totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state's real or contemplated control . . . to be able to say of anything that it was this, not that; it belonged here, not there" (184). By preserving Irish texts, the imperialists could establish control over a time in Ireland's past when the country was autonomous, thereby colonizing the past along with the present and at all points seeking to command Irish memory and identity. In *Ulysses,* the Englishman Haines provides a clear illustration of the imperial academic interest in Irish culture. Like the British who helped found the National Library, Haines seeks to study and preserve Irish culture and the Irish language, going so far as to make his own microcosmic archive of folkloric sayings and Irish literature bought at the bookseller Gill's (when Haines

appears in Gothic guise in "Oxen of the Sun," he has "a portfolio full of Celtic literature in one hand, in the other a phial marked *Poison*" [*U* 14.1013-14]). He goes to the Library because it is an important resource in his ethnographic research. Vincent Cheng, who views Haines as an anthropologist among the natives, notes his "Museum Mentality," searching for an Orientalized experience that he can collect and turn into a marketable commodity (153). However, as Kathleen St. Peters Lancia argues, the Celtic Revivalists (including such people as Douglas Hyde), even as they sought to redeem Irish culture, were also participating in primitivistic, essentializing discourses that ultimately became complicit with colonialist narratives (81). Consequently, the Library's institutional narrative of itself as an Irish archive is not as straightforward as it might appear on first glance, but is cleft by a complex of often-opposed motivations.

The visitors to the National Library disrupt this narrative even more; although its founders intended the Library as a resource for the citizens of Dublin, an introduction from a "respectable resident" (qtd. in Brady 232) was needed to secure reading privileges, an ambiguous requirement that could possibly restrict the collection, with its records of the Irish past, from some of the very people whose culture arose from that past, while leaving it open to outsiders. In *Ulysses,* Haines, for example, is able to easily enter the library and access Irish texts. Students and people engaged in research comprised the predominant group of readers at the Library—not casual readers—although in 1906 the library attendant Seán Condún wrote an article complaining about how "bores, cranks, and lunatics . . . undesirables" were attracted to the Library because of its physical warmth and comfort (Long, *A Twinge* 51, 45). The Library, then, became a disciplinary space of sorts that used the restriction (or vilification) of undesirable persons to reinforce its claim to order and power, a claim foregrounded by its ready acceptance

of English imperialists like Haines. In *The Birth of the Museum,* Tony Bennett considers how museums act in this Foucauldian way, regulating the behavior of visitors and shaping their knowledge of the nation and the world. The discipline of the Library extends beyond mandating the quiet, controlled deportment of those within its walls: it pronounces the appropriate behavior for Irish citizens (intellectual productivity and moral decency) and reserves the ability to exclude them when necessary, maintaining the archive as a place for those in power in Irish society.

The myth of Scylla and Charybdis dramatizes the trial framed by the archive of the National Library. Just as Ulysses was forced to navigate between two threats, both of which demanded a sacrifice, the collection in the Library forces its visitor to steer between opposing interpretations of the archive—as an Irish archive or as an imperial archive—never leading to a clear resolution, always exacting loss, "Between the Saxon smile and yankee yawp. The devil and the deep sea" (*U* 9.139-40). The archive's confusion over who is preserving what is only intensified by the collections in the National Museum, the Library's sister institution.

Omnium Gatherum

In *On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums*, Barbara Black refers to Thomas Laurie, author of the 1885 text *Suggestions for Establishing Cheap Popular and Educational Museums of Scientific and Art Collections*. According to Black, Laurie proposes that "a museum belonged in every town of five hundred or more inhabitants, in every district of London, and throughout the colonial empire" (34). Museum-building, for the Victorians, went hand-in-hand with empire-building. A museum enabled the British, in part, to engage in the missionizing goal of improving and shaping its subjects, near and far, through educational contact with certain physical

artifacts.[32] But education was not the only role of the museum: the museum also served, for the Empire, as a way of manifesting imperial power, of guarding, as Black contends, the borders of empire (11). When a museum displays the spoils of the world, it simultaneously exhibits its own power. Moreover, according to Maya Jasanoff in *Edge of Empire,* collecting and displaying objects was a means for the British empire to engage in self-fashioning, ordering and controlling not just the external world, but itself (7, 321). The involvement of the British government in the development and administration of the National Museum was a political statement about its role in Ireland as a whole, and as such was criticized by some nationalist figures, who recognized the implications of surrendering the "Irish past to English administration" (Crooke 123).

But it is not only an empire that might use a collection to articulate itself. The National Museum in Ireland became a theatre for the desires of Ireland as well as the British Empire, a site for both to negotiate power and national identity. In *Twilight Memories*, Andreas Huyssen writes that in the museum, "there is always a surplus of meaning that exceeds set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counter-hegemonic memory" (15). In Ireland's National Museum, as in the National Library, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic memories and desires chafe against one another, uncovering the many uneasy and disruptive exchanges in the heart of the colony and at the heart of the archive. Although Joyce does not set an entire episode in the Museum as he does with the Library, he provides a representative look into its collection, a

[32] According to the Victorian periodical *Blackwood's Magazine*, exhibitions, galleries, and museums were intended to be "part and parcel of popular education in the young and the adult: they stimulate that principle of inquisitiveness natural to man, and with the right sort of food: they instill knowledge, drop by drop, through the eye into the mind, and create a healthy appetite, growing with what it feeds on: they make the libraries of those who have no money to expend on books, and are the travels of those that have no time to bestow on travel: they are schools in which the best and only true politeness may be taught" (qtd. in Altick 442).

glimpse that, coupled with an understanding of the holdings and display practices of the Museum at the turn of the century, emphasizes the irresolvably fractured nature of this archive.

As Bourke explains, the director and curators of the Museum of Science and Art, a transitional museum before the 1877 Act, began developing a vision for a national museum of Ireland that conformed to their goal to "document and conserve the natural, scientific and cultural history of Ireland" (191). In its collections, the National Museum sought to preserve elements from Ireland's past, although Crooke records that the collection of Irish antiquities did not play a significant role in the early days of the museum, with fewer yearly additions, fewer accompanying catalogues, and fewer lectures than the other collections in the Museum (125). Nevertheless, casts of Irish high crosses, called symbols of a "reclaimed and reinvigorated Irish identity" by the *Illustrated London News* when they were exhibited at the Irish Industrial Exhibition in 1853 (qtd. in Bourke 109-110) studded the central court of the Museum, providing a magnificent entrance. The Irish antiquities, which featured items from thousands of years B.C. to the Renaissance, proved to be a popular attraction due to their quality and beauty, and the crosses, whose form dates to the late seventh century, along with the antiquities, drew attention to Ireland's ancient heritage and helped express "a growing sense of national identity" (Bourke 199-200). The long and contentious acquisition of the Broighter Hoard, a collection of gold ornaments uncovered in Londonderry in 1896 and sold to the British Museum, made a symbolic triumph for the National Museum and for Ireland and added to the growing understanding of Ireland's special and desirable craftsmanship (Crooke 129-34). The Natural Science section of the Museum gathered together such things as mineral specimens from Ireland and a plaster relief model of the geological structure of Ireland (Bourke 198), making the land itself a fitting subject of study and appreciation.

The Museum's holdings were not wholly Irish, of course. In addition to exhibiting art, antiquities, and natural history specimens from Ireland, the Museum featured loans from the South Kensington and antiquities and art copies acquired from across Europe (Bourke 197). The ground floor galleries were filled Indian and Persian art, Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, and Roman antiquities, and many other miscellaneous artifacts from around the world, many assembled to be suggestive to Irish industry (Crooke 125). In the central court of the museum, a collection of field guns captured by the British army from the Sikhs in India were displayed (Wallace 19), along with numerous other international acquisitions, many of which are enumerated in this extract from an 1894 report:

> A cast of an ancient cross at Kilkieran co. Kilkenny (from moulds presented by the Royal Irish Academy); . . . Cast of a Buddhist Column (British Museum); Recumbent figure 'Admiral Chabot' (Louvre); Tomb of the children of Charles VIII (Tours); A font attributed to Jacopo della Quercia (Siena); Judith and Holofernes, by Donatello (Florence); Doorway from the Corso Magenta, (Milan); Niche from Pulpit (Siena); Column, octagonal from the Abbey of Souvigny, France; Doorway from St Maclou, Rouen; Portion of Doorway in Bordeaux Cathedral. (Crooke 125)

Pertinent to *Ulysses,* the entrance hall of the National Museum was also thronged with statuary. As with the National Library, the National Museum held an extensive and varied collection, but Joyce limits his references essentially to two objects: a Buddha statue and a plaster cast of the goddess Venus. When Bloom attends the service at All Hallows, he reflects on the conversion of the Chinese, recalling, "Buddha their god lying on his side in the museum" (*U* 5.328); later, Molly, who complains about how Bloom "tired [her] out with statues" (*U* 18.93),

observes how when Bloom is sleeping he resembles "that Indian god he took me to show one wet Sunday in the museum in Kildare street all yellow in a pinafore lying on his side on his hand with his ten toes sticking out" (*U* 18.1201-03). The statue so incorrectly and deflatingly referred to (Bloom thinks it is Chinese and a god; Molly thinks it is a god and wearing a pinafore) is "Reclining Buddha," a marble and gold figure gifted to the National Museum in 1891 by Col. Sir Charles Fitzgerald (O'Toole 184). Fitzgerald was an Irishman who commanded Indian army regiments in the British campaign in Burma in the late 1880s, and the statue, one of his souvenirs from the successful operation, has been called by John Smurthwaite a "trophy of Britain's newest colony exhibited to the people of her oldest" (3). The statue on the one hand fed a rhetoric of Oriental indolence (Bloom, who earlier in the episode fantasizes about the *dolce far niente* of the Eastern lands, remarks that the statue is "taking it easy with hand under his cheek" [*U* 5.328-29]) and, because of its history as a war trophy, operated as a piece of imperial propaganda, promoting the British as active, capable conquerors. As the looted Indian objects Jasanoff discusses "gave the idea of Indian empire a material reality for hundreds of individual Britons" (185), the Buddha statue made the far-off reaches of empire and their distant colonial brethren a reality for the Irish, serving to unify them all under Victoria's banner. But the object, working on multiple levels, also highlighted the religious and cultural rift between Ireland and the rest of the colonies, contributing to an implicit identification with Britain (this identification is further supported by the fact that the trophy was looted and re-appropriated by an Irishman working for the British). The Other, interiorized in the Irish Museum, simultaneously reinforced Ireland's status as Other and encourages Ireland to reject what is Other and view itself as part of Britain.

Joyce, however, through Molly and Bloom's reactions to the Buddha, undercuts the way the Empire deploys its objects. Molly and Bloom do not appear to appreciate the item's imperial import—indeed they do not even know that the item comes from a British colony. Though they may try to translate the object into something they know (Molly by dressing it in a pinafore and comparing its posture with Bloom's; Bloom by contrasting it with an image of Christ on the cross), they do not identify with its cultural background or feel united with it under the global reach of the British Empire. And while they view the Buddha as a foreign curio, an Orientalized Other, they do not reject the Other as such—Bloom dreams of what a "lovely spot [the far East] must be" (*U* 5.29-30)—and do not in turn associate themselves with Britain or Britain's exports. When, for example, Bloom first thinks of the Buddha during the service at All Hallows, he does not then affirm the Church's goals for "Sav[ing] China's millions" (*U* 5.326), but rather jokes about how St Patrick illustrated the Trinity to the Irish by using the shamrock, and how could the same be taught to the Chinese—through chopsticks? Thus through a single object, Joyce exposes the weaknesses of the Imperial archive's museum missions, demonstrating how ordinary men and women entering the museum can unconsciously and in a few words nullify the Empire's use of its objects.

The goddesses on display in the Museum play a slightly different role in the Museum's history and in *Ulysses,* where they emerge and re-emerge throughout the text, plaster-cast Greek divinities providing aesthetic and scientific aid to the modern-day Ulysses. They even make an appearance in *A Portrait of the Artist* when Lynch confesses to writing his name on the backside of Venus in the Museum (5.1114-16), the cloacal obsession apparently inherited from the Romans and the British (*U* 7.491-93). The goddesses, models of well-known Greco-Roman statues, were a part of the collection of the RDS, which had begun acquiring casts as far back as

the 1750s (Cullen 40). Collecting and displaying classical casts was common throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and while the provenance of the RDS casts is vague, the better-known history of a similar set of statues in Cork offers intriguing possibilities. The history of the Cork goddesses is steeped in imperial appropriation. Originally given to the Prince Regent by Pope Pius VII in recognition of Britain's aid in restoring artifacts stolen from Rome by Napoleon, the statues were donated by the Prince Regent to the Apollo Theatre in Cork in the winter of 1818-1819. The statues were greeted with considerable fervor, as melodramatically recorded in the *Dublin University Magazine*:

> Whatever of dullness had hitherto subsisted . . . vanished at the memorable approach of these casts . . . The jarring discord in taste, politics, and religion [was] suspended. All ranks and parties united themselves in one common resolution to do justice to the arts, and the magnificent donation of their prince. (qtd. in Cullen 38).

Even if the RDS goddesses were not the result of a gift from an old empire to a new (and from the new empire to one of her colonies), they nevertheless represent an attempt to establish continuity between Britain's perceived origins in the Roman empire and her present empire, according an elevated, classical common history to all parts of Britannia. The plaster casts' placement in the entrance hall of the museum alongside central Irish symbols like the high crosses accords the ancient mythology of a foreign country the same visual primacy as ancient Irish history. Although the Museum was instituted to help conserve Ireland's history–it is, after all, a *national* museum, even though Ireland was not a legal nation in 1904[33]—it also conserves

[33] It should be noted that the Museum, at the time of *Ulysses*, was a national museum in purpose rather than name: the museum was called the "Dublin Museum of Science and Art" until 1908, when it was renamed the "National Museum of Science and Art" (and in 1921, the name was finally changed to the

a classical history distinctly unrelated to Ireland. The goal of Parliament and the RDS to provide a space for the preservation and display of significant Irish artifacts is thus undercut by the appropriation of that space for other cultural histories the British consider equally (or more) important. The situation recalls one of the early pronouncements by Parliament about the need for a national museum in Ireland: in their declaration, the government articulated the desirability of providing "approved models and objects" (qtd. in Bourke 192) for the people of Ireland to study, thereby seeking to perpetuate classical history and art not only through the endless physical copies distributed throughout the Museum, but also in the minds and productions of the Irish, who would view and study the casts and then, presumably, create similar art, remaking their culture along classical rather than Gaelic lines. In addition, since Ireland's Museum, in its broader purposes, layout, and design, represents a copy of British institutions, particularly the South Kensington Museum, the National Museum itself is a study of "approved models."

Our first introduction to this classical mode of instruction (as well as our introduction to the Museum itself) in *Ulysses* constitutes a parody of both the Museum's educative purposes and its manner of achieving them. In "Lestrygonians," Bloom ducks into the Museum (which, along with the Library, he later calls a "holy place" [*U* 17.2048]) not to muse over the sacred artifacts, but to avoid Boylan and also to satisfy his curiosity about whether the classical statues have anuses: "Never looked. I'll look today. Keeper won't see. Bend down let something fall see if she" (*U* 8.930-31). The Keeper may not have observed him, but Buck Mulligan certainly does, remarking to his friends in the Library, "I found him over in the museum where I went to hail the foamborn Aphrodite . . . His pale Galilean eyes were upon her mesial groove" (*U* 9.609-10, 615). Bloom's museal experience might be characterized, in the words of Ruth Hoberman, as "a

"National Museum of Ireland"). I have used its final name for clarity and to emphasize the continuity between the institution as originally conceived and as eventually achieved.

triumph of bodily desire over a homogenizing institution" (132-33), an inversion of the museum's attempts to structure the way visitors experience objects. But he also demonstrates the success of the Museum's approach to instruction.[34] Bourke records how the director of the National Museum at the turn of the century, G.T. Plunkett, following the example of the South Kensington Museum, worked to develop an educational program for the institution, including museum guides and personal tours, in order to instruct the public on how to learn from the collections and prevent "'the aimless inspection of the interesting articles in the Museum'" (qtd. in 200). Bloom's posterior inspection of the goddess is not exactly aimless and certainly not his first tête à tête with the plaster casts. Considering himself "a bit of an artist in his spare time" (*U* 16.1448-49), Bloom seems to have made a practice of visiting the statues and studying the female form, and has formulated (and justified) his ideas of female beauty based in part on these sessions in the Museum. He moreover uses the Museum to instruct others, taking Molly there, so that when she reflects on the beauty of a woman's breasts, she illustrates it by thinking of the breasts of the goddesses: "theyre supposed to represent beauty placed up there like those statues in the museum one of them pretending to hide it with her hand" (*U* 18.540-41). In Bloom's vision of the New Bloomusalem, the keeper of the Kildare street museum appears pulling a lorry of plaster casts, which feature such important new goddesses as "Venus Metempsychosis" and new muses representing "Private Hygiene," "Seaside Concert Entertainments," "Painless Obstetrics," etc. (*U* 15.1703-10). Thus Bloom includes in his new empire, in the foundations of

[34] Of course, Bloom draws his information from a wide variety of sources, some seemingly less elevated; another exhibition influencing his knowledge of the human body is the World's Fair Waxwork Exhibition in Henry Street. As he recalls in "Eumaeus": "In those waxworks in Henry street I myself saw some Aztecs, as they are called, sitting bowlegged, they couldn't straighten their legs if you paid them because the muscles here, you see . . . or whatever you like to call them behind the right knee, were utterly powerless from sitting that way so long cramped up" (*U* 16.850-56). Gifford speculates that Bloom means *ascetics* rather than "Aztecs," the yogi ascetic or fakir having weakened muscles from prolonged worship in a single position (16.851-56).

what might be termed the New *Bloomuseum*, objects that are foreign to Ireland's national collection, recapitulating the imperial museal practices he has been exposed to in the National Museum.[35]

From the plaster casts that Joyce mentions seems to emerge another story of imperial control, an archive that minimizes Irish culture while seeming to memorialize it. However, this narrative from objects is once again not as simple as it may appear, for the classical models that the British placed in implicit competition with Irish art for the museum viewer's attention could also be found in Britain's own national museums, most notably the South Kensington. Fintan Cullen observes that in the nineteenth century, many art institutions across Europe and America displayed plaster casts (36), copies not having the same stigma then as they do today. Besides supplying useful models to artists, the casts were also seen as providing "a 'real' connection with the classical world" (Beard qtd. in Cullen 41). Curators often placed these classical models in the entrances of institutions to comfort the art viewer with the familiar (Cullen 36). The plaster casts of *Ulysses*, in representing the nineteenth-century preoccupation with the classical world, provide an indirect remembrance of the way that the passions and concerns of Britain influenced its colonies. Although Bloom may have figuratively been attempting to escape from Ireland's past and start anew in the New Bloomusalem, his respect for high culture as interpreted by the British ultimately wins out over his Irishness and Jewishness with his collection of goddesses and Muses. In the end, he is only reflecting the same classical interests as the British, his New Jerusalem a Pantheon, his new museum, like the plaster casts, a creative copy.

The National Museum, then, in configuring a depository for both national and international antiquities, forms a diverging, dual archive that bespeaks commitment to both Irish

[35] The New Bloomusalem also comically mimics the Great Exhibition: Bloom's city is constructed as a "colossal edifice with crystal roof, built in the shape of a huge pork kidney, containing forty thousand rooms" (*U* 15.1548-49).

heritage and British preoccupations and museology. Derrida posits in *Archive Fever* that to consign to an archive means not only to deposit but to *con-sign*, to gather together signs into a single corpus, a unified system in which there is not any "absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or *secret* which could separate [*secernere*] or partition" (3). Similarly, Richards claims in *The Imperial Archive* that the knowledge gathered in institutions like the museum was intended, no matter how disparate, to foster a sense of coherence, of unity, presupposing "not only an invisible interconnectedness among forms of knowledge but also a cultural cohesiveness among communities of knowers" (111). The heterogeneity of knowers and the multiple corpuses that occupy the Museum disturb its function as an archive, menacing both Ireland's attempts at nationhood and the imperial power structure. When she discusses collections in *On Longing*, Susan Stewart argues that within the collection, the individual narratives of the objects are superseded by the narrative of the whole collection, a new context being created that anticipates the future rather than recalling the past (151-53). The context of the National Museum's collection, however, can never move completely beyond the context of its individual items, forcing the Museum to ceaselessly reference the past and the present of Ireland, when strongly opposing forces can never perfectly coexist.

Joyce does not explicitly reference this split of the Museum's archive, only mentioning objects of empire in his text: a Burmese war trophy and a clutch of goddesses reminiscent of the Roman empire and admired by the British. But the absence of Irish objects in Joyce's representation of the National Museum comments eloquently on the competing material narratives in Ireland's public collections, emphasizing how narratives promoting Empire have a tendency to subsume all others. In his essay on the museum, Georges Bataille writes that the origin of the modern museum is linked to the guillotine, since the Louvre was not opened to the

public as a museum until the French royalty were slaughtered. Joyce's selection of museal objects in *Ulysses* seems to suggest that a true national museum in Ireland, an Irish archive for Irish objects, cannot come into being until the British are deposed and Ireland wakes up from the nightmare of imperial history.

Museum Without Walls

When Stephen Dedalus expounds his theory of Shakespeare in the National Library, one of his listeners, John Eglinton, recalls that Herr Bleibtreu believes "the secret is hidden in the Stratford monument" (*U* 9.1074-75)—Shakespeare's gravestone. Eglinton's aside indirectly comments on two of the most important capacities of the public monument (and the archive): its power in creating narratives of the past and its tendency to reveal frictions between what is forgotten (or hidden) and what is remembered. Dublin's archive was not confined to libraries and museums, but extends, I argue, to the public statuary situated across the urban body, bringing Ireland and the Empire's holdings into unavoidable contact with Dublin's inhabitants. The practice of marking important victories or celebrating important men with monuments can be traced back thousands of years: the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans all used obelisks, columns, and arches to depict significant moments in their history. But as James Hall notes, the nineteenth century experienced an exponential increase in the number of freestanding public monuments, most of these consecrated to "great men," thereby seeking to inspire "virtuous and patriotic thoughts and deeds in citizens and colonial subjects" (224). Dublin was not immune to this "statuemania," as Hall calls it; Judith Hill records the erection of twenty-three statues in Dublin between 1853-1880 alone—in addition to the sixteen already in existence, further augmented by a few more in the 1880s and early 1890s and then greatly increased again after the centenary of

the 1798 uprising (86, 118).[36] This stone archive records the memories and desires of both the British and the Irish nationalists in a manner similar to but more directly conveyed than the collections in the National Library and Museum. As objects commissioned expressly for the purpose of commemorating national ideals, public monuments explicitly link material substrates with political power and cultural self-determination, driving forces behind the formation of archives.

In *Ulysses,* we encounter a wide swath of these monuments. Whereas Joyce mentions (albeit significantly) few of the objects in the National Library and National Museum, he makes many specific references to public statuary, not only in *Ulysses*, but also in *Dubliners* and *Portrait*. This makes practical sense; while Bloom and the other main characters spend little time in the Library and Museum, they continually walk around the city and thus endlessly meet the city's monuments. But these monuments do more than ornamentally contribute to the realistic material landscape of the city—they carry with them weighted references to the political history of Ireland. In her study of statuary in Joyce's oeuvre, Anne Fogarty asserts that "the statues of Dublin . . . seem to be both casually observed, inert objects and also redolent and evocative symbols that act as coordinates for buried but vital cultural and historical memories" (69).[37] She argues that Joyce "constantly seeks to rescue statues from their inherent obsolescence and from their static quality" (79). The monuments in *Ulysses* do indeed house memories of Ireland that Joyce revitalizes, and he revitalizes these memories in part by foregrounding the memorials in his text and allowing the complex narratives of the statues to speak. Huyssen, recalling Robert

[36] It is interesting to note that Thomas Newenham Deane, co-designer of the Library and Museum, was appointed the post of Superintendent of National Monuments in March 1875 (O'Dwyer 391), making Deane a key figure in the preservation and presentation of public collections in Dublin.

[37] See also Michael Murphy for a discussion of the monuments that appear in "The Dead" and the way that they function "something like unobtrusive symbols or musical motifs" (110).

Musil's reflection that "there is nothing as invisible as a monument," claims in *Present Pasts* that "the more monuments there are, the more the past becomes invisible, and the easier it is to forget" (32). Joyce counteracts this tendency toward invisibility by giving the statues of Dublin new prominence in his pages. This visibility of the monuments gives us a parallactic view[38] of Ireland: statues raised to heroes of the British empire and to Irish nationalist leaders provide two different angles from which to view Ireland at the turn of the century. But these imbricated perspectives, while on the one hand offering a more complex vision of Ireland, also contradict one another. The British monumental archive and the Irish monumental archive form two separate and competing memory discourses in the visual landscape of Dublin, both vying for authority over not only the past but also the future. Both archives strive to transform their statues into *lieux de mémoires*,[39] but these sites are characterized by amnesia. Joyce's text depicts this archival struggle waged in Dublin's cityscape, foregrounding and supplementing the monuments and their histories in a way that emphasizes the ultimately anti-archival dynamic at play in the heart of the metropolis and in the margins of empire.

Many of the statues mentioned in *Ulysses* appear like Odyssean shades in "Hades," where they indicate the progress of the carriage toward the Glasnevin Cemetery (officially known as Prospect Cemetery), a place with its own memorials: "saddened angels, crosses, broken pillars, family vaults, stone hopes praying with upcast eyes, old Ireland's hearts and hands" (*U* 6.928-

[38] Parallax is defined by the *OED* as the "difference or change in the apparent position or direction of an object as seen from two different points." In "Lestrygonians," Bloom thinks of an astronomy book by Sir Robert Ball and considers a concept discussed in the book, remarking, "Parallax. I never exactly understood" (*U* 8.110-11). The concept of parallax continues to occupy him the rest of the day.

[39] The concept of *lieux de mémoires*, or sites of memory, is developed by Pierre Nora in the massive seven-volume work which is translated to English as *Realms of Memory* and condensed to three volumes. According to Nora, who supervised a team of writers on this work, a site of memory is an entity in which collective cultural memory has crystallized itself over time, turning that place or object or concept into a significant symbol of cultural heritage.

30). But more than serving as geographic markers, the statues calibrate the shifting tides of Ireland's history in the nineteenth century, paralleling the physical advance of the carriage with a backward move through history. As the men ride to the underworld, they pass the memorials to William Smith O'Brien, Daniel O'Connell, Sir John Gray, Fr. Theobald Mathew, and the foundation stone for Parnell's monument; the last statue they encounter is Nelson's Pillar, where someone is selling plums: "Eight plums a penny! Eight for a penny!" (*U* 6.294)—just as plums are sold at the foot of the Pillar in Stephen's Parable. This group of statues yields an exemplary glimpse into the trends in Irish statuary and the relationship of these trends to Irish history.

According to Whelan, in the eighteenth through the early nineteenth century, Ireland's monumental legacy was dominated by memorials to British monarchs and military heroes, but in the mid-nineteenth century, began to be shaped by figures from Irish culture and politics (33-34). Nelson's Pillar provides a prime example of the early phase of monumentalizing in Ireland. Admiral Lord Nelson, the greatest British naval hero of his day, died at Trafalgar in 1805 after effecting a key victory over Napoleon. News of his death reached Dublin eighteen days later, according to Hill, and within ten days a corporation of Irish Protestants, motivated by Union aspirations, were discussing how Nelson might be commemorated in Ireland. Money was raised from the Protestant establishment and the navy, and by 1808 the foundation stone was laid on the Sackville (now O'Connell) street site, rather than on the suggested site of Howth Head, where the statue could overlook the sea (60-62). The placement of the monument was as much a political placement as physical; as Richard Serra famously stated when arguing for the site specificity of his sculpture, "To remove the work is to destroy the work" (qtd. in Crimp 153). The selection of the Sackville location, a busy thoroughfare in the heart of the city, emphasizes the Protestant committee's desire to centralize and imbed this symbol of British military

sovereignty in order that it might act as a constant visual reminder of Ireland's place within the empire and to promote solidarity. As one of the headlines in "Aeolus" announces, "HORATIO IS CYNOSURE THIS FAIR JUNE DAY" (*U* 7.1063); because of the statue's position, Horatio (and Britain) is always cynosure. Indeed, because of the speed with which the statue was commissioned and erected, Dublin was symbolically celebrating Nelson's victory before London itself, which did not raise Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square until 1843. As the Pillar was later made the hub of tramlines, its role as a stable center in the midst of the city's movement and change was even more emphasized.[40] In *Ulysses*, "Aeolus" histrionically announces the placement of this statue, beginning with the headline, "IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS" followed by a description of where this "heart" is: "Before Nelson's Pillar…" (*U* 7.1-3). Joyce uncovers the inherent tensions embodied in the Pillar and its location: the center of Ireland is a monument to a British hero.

The English architect William Wilkins designed the column, which was built to tower over the cityscape at 134 feet in height, and the column was topped by a thirteen-foot statue of Nelson. The Pillar commanded an impressive panoramic view of Dublin and its surroundings, and could be mounted by 168 steps to the viewing platform (Whelan 46). In addition to the Pillar providing a vertiginous physical prospect of the city, Andrew Thacker comments that Joyce's deployment of the Pillar at the opening and closing of the chapter forms "an impression of the city and perhaps the chapter as being under surveillance" (199). The monument's height and situation lent it a dramatic prominence in the city,[41] parodied by Joyce in "Circe," when several

[40] We see the Pillar's role as a transportation hub in the story "Clay" in *Dubliners*, when Maria times her trip to Joe's house according to trams that pass through the Pillar: "From Ballsbridge to the Pillar, twenty minutes; from the Pillar to Drumcondra, twenty minutes; and twenty minutes to buy the things" (100).

[41] In 1876, decades after Nelson's Pillar was erected, a poem appeared in the *Irish Builder* pleading, "Not in the centre of our city, Where the lines of traffic meet-- / In the very path of commerce, Blocking up a

attractive women commit suicide by casting themselves from the top of Nelson's Pillar (*U* 15.1748), and shortly thereafter, when Bloom proves his messianic calling by climbing the monument and hanging himself from the top ledge by his eyelids (*U* 15.1842-43). Stephen's story of the two Dublin vestals at the end of "Aeolus" is also premised on the column's symbolic stature and location: the women, only able to view Ireland as the subordinate landscape under the dominating gaze of the imperial conqueror (whom Stephen witheringly denominates the "onehandled adulterer" [*U* 7.1018]) are soon "too tired to look up or down or to speak" (*U* 7.1023-24), spitting the dregs of their plums on a country that they, like Moses with the Promised Land, will never possess. Stephen's parable succinctly expresses the bitterness and the scorn many of the Irish felt toward the imperial monuments and what they represented in the Irish landscape, and the responses of his audience—to laugh, and in the case of J.J. O'Molloy, to cast a "weary sidelong glance toward the statue and [hold] his peace" (*U* 7.1064-65)—captures the humor and resignation that they adopted to live in a city dominated by a British archive. Stephen closes his story abruptly, prompting Myles Crawford to ask, "Finished?" (*U* 7.1031). The question is never answered, and the narrative, like Ireland's history, is left ambiguous, neither definitively open nor closed.

Nelson's Pillar, though likely the most famous monument in Dublin, was not alone in the British Empire's network of stone stretching across the cityscape. It joined earlier statues devoted primarily to British monarchs, including one to King William III (William of Orange), known as "King Billy" in *Ulysses* and *Dubliners*. William, who was responsible for helping the Protestants regain control of Dublin, amassed an almost cult following among the Protestants in Ireland, Hill notes. His equestrian statue, unveiled on the tenth anniversary of the Battle of the

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noble street, -- / As a figure in a picture Disproportionately tall, / Seems to make its right surroundings Quite ridiculously small" (qtd. in Whelan 47).

Boyne in 1701, was inspired by the statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitoline Hill in Rome: William, atop the horse, was dressed in Roman armor and crowned with a laurel wreath (Hill 42). The statue, invoking the Roman empire so unequivocally, clearly identified William and Britain as the leaders of a new empire, the brokers of a pax Britannica, and Ireland as a loyal subject. Placed in College Green, the monument stood on the central axis of the city, a powerful focal point.

King Billy's statue appears in *Ulysses* during the Viceregal cavalcade, when all the eyes of Dublin are united in looking at the symbolic wearer of the crown as he proceeds like a conqueror, like William of Orange, through the city: "Where the foreleg of King Billy's horse pawed the air Mrs Breen plucked her hastening husband back from under the hoofs of the outriders" (*U* 10.1231-33). Just as King Billy's horse raises its hoof in a gesture of dominance, the horses in the cavalcade plow aggressively through the city with little regard for the citizens. The end of the scene draws a parallel between His Excellency's arrival and Queen Victoria's visit to the Irish capital in 1849, the three monarchal references providing a simple but telling history of British involvement in Ireland for the previous two hundred years. King Billy also makes an appearance in "The Dead," when Gabriel tells the story of his grandfather's horse Johnny, who drove a starch mill by moving round and round in circles. When Johnny was taken to a military review in the park, he came in sight of King Billy's statue, "and whether he fell in love with the horse King Billy sits on or whether he thought he was back again in the mill, anyhow he began to walk round the statue" (208). Johnny's repetitive circling of the statue, whether through a confused love or confused duty, provides a mirror (or a cracked lookingglass) of Ireland faithfully serving its British imperial master.

Apart from the references in "The Dead" to the Wellington Monument, a heavy-looking obelisk that, like Nelson's Pillar, commemorated a military hero (albeit an Irish one) in the Napoleonic campaigns, and like Nelson's Pillar, was also raised in Dublin before a similar structure could be erected in London (Hill 66), most of the other allusions to public statues in Joyce's writings concern Irish political and cultural figures. The British monarchal and military statues were never, even when they were first raised, completely popular additions to the landscape, but often provoked much political and aesthetic criticism (as conveyed in Stephen's parable and the newspaper men's reception of it), and were frequently the scene of demonstrations. By the middle of the nineteenth century, citizens began to demand monuments to Irish figures. As *The Nation* lamented in 1843,

> We now have statues to William the Dutchman, to the four Georges—all either German by birth or German by feeling—to Nelson, a great admiral but an Englishman, while not a single statue of any of the many celebrated Irishmen whom their country should honour adorns a street or square of our beautiful metropolis. (qtd. in Whelan 53)

Many of the first Irish statues erected were devoted to non-controversial cultural figures, such as Thomas Moore and Oliver Goldsmith, indicated by Joyce, as are many of the statues in *Ulysses*, in irreverent synecdoche: "Tommy Moore's roguish finger" (*U* 8.414)[42] and "Goldsmith's knobby poll" (*U* 10.339).[43] But statues dedicated to overtly nationalist figures began to spring up

[42] Tommy Moore also appears in *Portrait,* where Stephen unflatteringly describes his monument as the "droll statue of the national poet of Ireland": "sloth of the body and of the soul crept over it like unseen vermin, over the shuffling feet and up the folds of the cloak and around the servile head, it seemed humbly conscious of its indignity. It was a Firbolg in the borrowed cloak of a Milesian" (162).

[43] Joyce's frequently ironic and dismissive attitude toward public monuments in general has been documented by scholars such as Fogarty and Sakr—and in light of this attitude, Joyce doubtless would have been amused by the number of statues around the world commemorating him.

in Dublin in the latter decades of the century. Nearly all the main nationalist monuments find their way into Joyce's writings. As noted earlier, on the way to Glasnevin, the men in "Hades" pass memorials to William Smith O'Brien (*U* 6.226-28), a leader of the 1848 rebellion; Sir John Gray (*U* 6.258), a moderate nationalist; Daniel O'Connell (*U* 6.249), Ireland's major political leader of the first half of the nineteenth century; Father Theobald Mathew, a friar who led a temperance crusade that complemented O'Connell's political crusade (*U* 6.319-20); and the foundation stone for Charles Stewart Parnell (*U* 6.320), the controversial nationalist leader of the second half of the century. Later, in "Wandering Rocks," the "stern stone hand" (*U* 10.352) of Henry Grattan, who worked for Catholic Emancipation, bids the trams on College Green to halt. While Joyce uses the imperial monuments as a nexus for Britain's control of history and Ireland's paralysis, the Irish monuments become a reminder of Ireland's attempts to overcome that paralysis and form a new archive.

Memorials to Daniel O'Connell, under whom Irish nationalism gained impetus, were the first monuments to an Irish political figure in Dublin, and as such possessed particular symbolism within the landscape. The "hugecloaked Liberator's form" (*U* 6.249), raised on Sackville Street in 1882 (the street itself was named after O'Connell in 1924), visually challenges Nelson's Pillar further up the street, and in the stateliness and drama of its carved form, commands attention and announces the hopes of Irish nationalism with forcefulness. The monument, which Christine Casey considers the "highpoint of Victorian public sculpture in Dublin" (61), was designed by John Henry Foley, an Irish-born sculptor who had carved the bronze statue of Prince Albert in the Albert Memorial in London. In the O'Connell monument, a larger-than-life figure of O'Connell, presented as a statesman with a roll of papers, stands atop a

drum featuring reliefs of Erin (pointing up to O'Connell) and the Irish people. Four winged allegorical figures sit at the base. Although the design of the monument was not particularly ground-breaking, as Casey points out, and its symbolism is rather heavy-handed, the allegorical figures relate the struggles and triumphs of Ireland to the timeless desires of mankind, justifying and celebrating Ireland's desires for nationhood. Moreover, the frieze depicts an appealing vision of a diverse but unified nation. The monument thus accomplishes more than remembering the achievements of O'Connell: it looks toward the future with the hope embodied in this first major nationalist leader.

In Joyce's texts, O'Connell's statue makes only two brief appearances—once in "Hades" and then as the snow-covered man Gabriel salutes in "The Dead": "Good-night, Dan" (214) (Gabriel had earlier greeted the Wellington monument, which Fogarty claims shows his divided loyalties [77]). But the monument to O'Connell becomes fused with the monument-tomb to O'Connell that the men pass in Glasnevin Cemetery, both shrines a part of the larger memorial landscape devoted to the Liberator (five different statues were commissioned in multiple cities across Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth century). On the way to Paddy Dignam's grave, Simon Dedalus observes the O'Connell circle, the round tower built over O'Connell's crypt. Mr. Power reflects in response, "He's at rest in the middle of his people, old Dan O'. But his heart is buried in Rome" (*U* 6.643). Power does not speak only figuratively; the O'Connell circle was indeed in the middle of the cemetery, and O'Connell's heart was placed in a church in Rome after he died on a pilgrimage in 1847. Ellmann notes that for Joyce, Rome and Dublin were cities united by the way that the dead, that ruins visible and invisible, encroached constantly upon the living environment, and indeed, Joyce compared Rome to a cemetery (*JJ* 253, 233). The O'Connell monuments, divided like O'Connell's own body, one in the heart of

the city, another within the necropolis, together allow the absent leader and his unachieved vision of Ireland to inscribe a spectral presence across the minds of the Irish people.[44] But O'Connell's people were broken themselves, according to Mr. Power; after remarking on how Dan O's heart was buried in Rome, he exclaims, "How many broken hearts are buried here, Simon!" (*U* 6.644), suggesting an underworld made up of generations who had loved and desired much for Ireland, only to have their hearts broken by it, who had striven for independence and unity but who had only known division. Through his portrayal of the memorials to O'Connell, Joyce not only offers a view of the Irish public archive, but lays bare the disappointment and grief so often evoked by monuments that had begun in hope.

The monuments in Dublin seem to trace a dispersed archive across the urban landscape, superimposing Ireland's past across its present like a stereoscope. But the monumental archive, as Joyce portrays it and as demonstrated in history, is not monolithic or hegemonic, but conflicted, displaying memories of both British and Irish accomplishments, and incomplete, marked by fissures caused by the nature of monuments themselves, which seek to negotiate between the past and the future, between giving an account of history and providing a promise for times to come. Monuments such as Nelson's Pillar or King Billy's statue, in their design and placement, provide a narrative of British dominance that disregards Irish culture and Irish resistance. These imperial statues seek to reenact British and Anglo-Irish successes for future generations, encouraging the collective memory of the country to revolve around recollections of British sovereignty, much as the horse Johnny circles King Billy's statue. But to remember the past the way these statues demand requires a calculated forgetting of British failures and Irish rebellions. Moreover, viewed at the turn of the century, when *Ulysses* takes place, the

[44] O'Connell himself was adept in employing ghosts of the past for rhetorical purposes, holding political meetings at archaeological sites (Crooke 22).

monuments appear to reference not just the past but a future hope of continuing control. Mr. Deasy declares to Stephen that "Old England is dying" (*U* 2.350-51); in this fin de siècle, in what we might term the twilight of empire, the archive of statues not only selectively preserve a material reminder of England's past success in Ireland (and elsewhere), but attempt to repetitively produce this success in the new century, when its hold on Ireland (and the rest of the empire) is the most threatened.

The narrative of Irish success composed by the nationalist memorials is also riddled with lacunae. Rita Sakr, discussing Bloom's thoughts in "Hades" of the nationalist Robert Emmet (at the time not yet commemorated by a statue in Dublin), contends that the scene "becomes an implicit indictment of both the erasures and excesses in the national and nationalist practices of commemoration" (128). But in addition to leaving out memorials to certain figures, the Irish monumental archive also masks the actual political state of Ireland at the turn of the century. According to Hill, the erecting of nationalist monuments, although a "significant nationalist effort," occurred at a time when other political efforts were failing (86). These monuments, then, reflect hopes for the future rather than achievements of the past/present. Hill references R.V. Comerford, who identifies the post-famine decades as a time when Ireland "was drawn more tightly into the British economic and cultural sphere" (86). Thus there is a disconnect in the record of the past provided by the nationalist public statuary, for the narrative of the monuments ultimately disregards the failures of many hopes and the threats from the outside, and instead gestures to the future, to what is not there, rather than to what is: "and the slab where Wolfe Tone's statue was not" (*U* 10.378).[45] This absent statue, not completed for many years, or the other unfinished monument in *Ulysses*, "Foundation stone for Parnell. Breakdown. Heart" (*U*

[45] In *Portrait,* Stephen passes the slab set to the memory of Wolfe Tone, which causes him to reflect that "The Ireland of Tone and of Parnell seemed to have receded in space" (166).

6.320), in seeking to form part of an archive but not, provide an unintended sacralization of the void, an avowal, if not of the impossibility of memory, perhaps at least of the recurring desirability of forgetfulness. Statues to nationalist heroes before Ireland's independence were reminders not only of attempts toward a desired history, but also of the breakdown of these attempts—of absence or lack as much as presence. Incomplete or unattempted memorials gesture to the *ars oblivionis* often necessary to cultivate alongside memory in the colonial city. The destruction of Nelson's Pillar in 1966 by the IRA (English 72) claimed part of the former imperial archive for what Paul Ricoeur calls a "treasury of forgetting" (417) in the heart of the city.[46] Indeed, Dublin in *Ulysses* and in history is a palimpsest of many discontinuous narratives, a palimpsest that like the Berlin Huyssen examines, "implies voids, illegibilities" (84) in its very center. As Adrien Forty notes, quoting Ernest Renan, "the essence of a nation is that all the individuals share a great many things in common and also that they have forgotten some things" (7). The monumental archives in Dublin, like all archives, produce a history not only by remembering but by selective forgetting.

Incorporation

When visiting the chemist where he orders Molly's skin cream, Bloom thinks variously of drugs and overdoses and unexpected remedies, and finally concludes to himself, "Poisons the only cures" (*U* 5.483); an hour or so later, when he walks in the cemetery, he is reminded of Romeo (who also knew something of cures masquerading as poisons) and his love among the tombstones: "In the midst of death we are in life" (*U* 6.759). The monuments in Dublin—along with the other public collections in the Library and Museum—in incorporating the dead, the past,

[46] The Spire of Dublin, a tall, stainless steel, pin-like monument, was erected in the Pillar's place in 2002, filling the void with an abstraction rather than a political figure.

and the foreign, outside, "other" elements inside the city, center of the British colony, acted as a type of *pharmakos*[47] to the inhabitants of Ireland*,* and in so doing, functioned (and perhaps continue to function) as both a poison and a cure: by standing as a public reminder of the ambiguous, divided, antagonistic relationships of empire, the archives were a sort of evil, a poison within Ireland's midst, but they were simultaneously a good insofar as these reminders may have helped temper imperial and nationalistic histories that tend to adopt monolithic stances toward the material things they accrue. Their double role extends further: by representing death, loss, and absence, the archives signal inevitable future losses to the empire and the nation, indicating the relationship between the archive drive and the death drive—an unsettling, toxic notion, but perhaps ultimately salutary, enabling mourning for not only the forfeitures of the past but for the destructions and amnesias of the future. This double function as historical poison and remedy echoes the aporias at play in the public collections from their beginnings. The archives in Dublin and in *Ulysses*' Dublin are always commenting upon Ireland's history, even if their commentary is cleft, heterogeneous, and not always immediately apparent or present. Derrida notes that the textual chain of signification which through association makes absent words like *pharmakos* present operates outside of the immediate boundaries of the text: "it is in the back room, in the shadows of the pharmacy . . . that these textual 'operations' occur" (132). Yet this absent commentary is always present as what Derrida calls a "trace": therefore with the public

[47] In his essay, "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination,* Derrida explores the concept of the *pharmakos*, a Greek word referring to a scapegoat (and by extension, something that both poisons and heals) to develop his ideas that the inside/outside dichotomy cannot exist. The *pharmakos* was an outsider, a social outcast, maintained within the city so that when times of calamity came, he could be punished and killed for the purification of the city, representing the "otherness of the evil that comes to affect or infect the inside by unpredictably breaking into it." Just as the *pharmakos* existed both inside and outside the city and society, so the absent word *pharmakos* is present inside the text though it is absent, on the outside of it. There is consequently no possibility for the text to be closed just as the city cannot be closed, and therefore words/concepts can hold multiple meanings/functions simultaneously since the *pharmakos* both poisons and cures.

archives, there is no possibility for closure and hence no possibility that the histories embodied and buried in the archives will ever be totally forgotten or repressed.

CHAPTER TWO: ARCHIVING THE INTERIOR IN *ULYSSES*

Infinite Riches in a Little Room

In an early section of *Memory, History, Forgetting,* Paul Ricoeur examines the philosophical traditions behind two conventionally opposed types of memory, collective and individual. Ricoeur, seeking to escape either/or alternatives, suggests that public/collective memory is joined to personal memory in a distinct but interconnected constitution. In *Ulysses,* public and private memory and history are linked at the level of archived materiality, for just as the British empire and Irish nation amassed physical things to establish a public history, individuals also sought to consign certain objects to their own personal archive to make a private history or material autobiography. In her study of Victorian museums, Black quotes from Thomas Greenwood's 1888 guide, "Useful Rules to Keep in Mind on Visiting a Museum," in which he urges the museum-goer to become a museum-maker: "Make a private collection of *something*" (71). Black observes that in the "efflorescence of museum culture" (5) marking the Victorian age, the "museum enterprise come[s] home" (71).[48] All of the main characters in *Ulysses* collect or accumulate in some way (Jehovah is even described as a "collector of prepuces" [*U* 1.394, 9.609]), but Leopold Bloom, the protagonist of the novel, is the collector *par excellence*, and the one of whose archive we are offered such a thorough inspection. The narrative of Bloom's objects, although often just as discontinuous as the public narratives,

[48] The museum has gone through a number of transitions from public to private and from private to public in its history, and it has often been a combination of the two. In her history of the Renaissance incarnation of the museum, Findlen observes that early collections were not only placed in the home, but in the most "personal" space in the home, near the bedchamber (37). In this respect it was both public and private, for it brought the world (in terms of both objects and visitors) into the home (36-43).

"borders on the chaos of [personal] memories" (Benjamin, "Unpacking" 60) rather than national ones. But just as the public and private archives physically intersect when Bloom, carrying part of his collection, enters the National Library and National Museum or confronts the public statuary, the archives conceptually meet in their fractured attempts to form a coherent narrative of a history. Bloom thus becomes a small fictionalized portrait of the English and Irish archivists, driven by many of the same fears and forming on an individual level a similar relationship to materiality and identity. Bloom's personal effects are not all real in the same way that Nelson's Pillar is real (although some of them are) but they are true to their time and place and therefore offer a fair portrait of how and what an individual at the turn of the century might have archived—while also giving us insight into Bloom the fictional character himself. The blurring of inside/outside distinctions that occurred in the public collections is furthered in this slippage between public and private and real and fictional, questioning, like the archives themselves, commonly accepted delimitations.

As with public materiality, not all of the objects in the private realm are serving an archival purpose. Bloom encounters many objects in the material landscape of Dublin that are not, within history or within the narrative, playing a fundamentally archival role; likewise, many of the objects he lives with in his private life are dominated by other, non-archival purposes.[49] However, out of the bricolage of Bloom's personal things housed in 7 Eccles Street and carried on his person emerges a set of disparate objects whose primary purpose is to form a private archive for Bloom—private not just because it belongs to one individual, but because Bloom is creating his archive for himself, not others, and devoted to himself. When Dr. Madden assists in

[49] These primarily non-archival items include use-driven objects such as the tea-kettle or breakfast tray Bloom uses in "Calypso" (*U* 4.7); useful and decorative home furnishings, such as the "paraffin oil lamp with oblique shade" (*U* 17.1173-74) that Molly shines from the bedroom; or the family art: the "Bath of the Nymph" painting and the statue of Narcissus ("art for art's sake" [*U* 15.3186]).

the medical inspection of Bloom's body in "Circe," he suggests that in the interest of coming generations, Bloom's supposedly malformed genitals "should be preserved in spirits of wine in the national teratological museum" (*U* 15.1790-91). In this hallucinatory rendering, Bloom literally becomes the exotic object within the museum; in the clear light of day, Bloom is perhaps not an object within his personal archive but is undoubtedly the subject, the one whose history and identity is formed from the objects. As Jean Baudrillard declares in *The System of Objects*: "For what you really collect is always yourself" (97). This personal archive is made up of preserved things that have been removed from active use and whose sole purpose seems to be one of memory (thereby distinguishing themselves from the many other objects in the house that may be associated with memories but that are not exclusively devoted to the preservation of a history). These things hold a particular meaning for Bloom, gathering the parts of his life together and playing an often affective role in recalling people and things that are lost or slipping away: thus his attachment is not only to the objects themselves, but to the absences they signify, the gnomon. Indeed, Bloom's entire archive is premised not on the physical things that have been saved, but on the vanishing things and the lost things that could never have been saved. His archive—half-hidden, seemingly haphazard, provisional, spatially-fluctuating, incomplete, defined by the negative—refracts, like the public collections, the very notion of the archive. But unlike the public collections, whose split character leads us to the ultimate question of whose archive, whose history is being produced within Dublin, Bloom's collection interrogates the qualities of the archive itself, questioning what makes an archive, and whether the characteristics of a private archive supplement or negate the traditional understanding of the institutional archive.

Dublin's public collections mentioned in *Ulysses* can be largely grouped into three spaces: the National Library, the National Museum, and the streets and parks that provide the setting for the monuments. Bloom's collection coalesces around certain locations that mimic these exterior archives: his bookshelves are his library, his table drawers are his museum, and his pockets are the spatially-dispersed sites for memorials. As the first two of these sites are positioned within the larger space of the home on Eccles Street, then Bloom's residence, the encircling and delimiting scene for the confined archival spaces, is thus a sort of meta-archive. The spatial configuration of the interior of the home and the objects within it furthermore help frame our understanding of Bloom. Benjamin writes that the nineteenth century (of which Bloom is a product) was "addicted to dwelling," conceiving the residence "as a receptacle for the person," and bearing the impression of its occupant like a shell or a plush case (*AP* 220). Bloom's domicile, figured as both Calypso's imprisoning island and Ithaca, the long-desired home, structures his experience and is structured by him (and its other occupants); therefore a physical overview—or what is called in Ignatian spirituality the "composition of place"[50]—of Bloom's residence helps us understand his archiving not only in a spatial but in a psychological context, the house and all its objects—archived or otherwise—forming for Bloom what Gaston Bachelard calls the "topography of our intimate being" (xxxvi).

Physiognomy of the Interior

7 Eccles Street no longer exists outside of the narrative of *Ulysses*, having been demolished to allow for the construction of buildings for the Mater Hospital, as Casey records (284). Thus the attempt to recover or reconstitute the lost materiality of 7 Eccles is in itself a

[50] The concept of the *compositio loci* is mentioned in "Scylla and Charybdis": "Composition of place. Ignatius Loyola, make haste to help me!" (*U* 9.163) and used in *Portrait* when the minister creates a picture of hell during the spiritual retreat. See *Portrait* 3.894.

work of archiving and a work of mourning for a historical space that has been sadly lost. The Blooms' home belonged to a row of three-story houses along the north side of Eccles Street, a respectable middle-class neighborhood in 1904 (Clarke 38) and at one point the home of Joyce's friend J.F. Byrne, the model for Cranly (it was therefore a space with which Joyce was personally familiar) (Gunn and Hart 16). The dwelling, along with the row houses that adjoined it, featured a Georgian façade, lending the structures a sedate and orderly appearance and uniting them with the many other eighteenth and nineteenth-century buildings in Dublin that share this popular architectural style. The Georgian style, so called because of its development during the reign of the Georges in England but perpetuated in many Irish buildings well into the reign of Victoria, is a reminder of the long-dead past living on in material remains, a theme repeated like a fugue in Bloom's collections.

The front door of 7 Eccles opens onto a hallway on the left of which lie the living room and main bedroom. These two rooms, along with the kitchen (in the semi-basement of the house) are the primary interior spaces the reader experiences in Bloom's home, although the text makes references to Milly's bedroom on the second floor (*U* 18.1489), the upstairs water closet off a landing (*U* 4.463-64), and the unfurnished bedrooms that the Blooms are trying to let (*U* 10.250, 10.542). Each of the main spaces in Bloom's home uncovers valuable insights into his relationship to archiving, although his archive itself resides only in the front room of the house. Joyce, however, presents this room last, using the other rooms of the home as a sort of narrative vestibule to the main collection, the ground zero of the archive.

We meet Bloom for the first time in *Ulysses* when he is in his home, and the first room we encounter in his home is the kitchen, where we arrive *in medias res* as Bloom is preparing breakfast, the "new womanly man" performing typically female duties in a typically female

space. But the kitchen in *Ulysses* is not a gendered location[51]—it is a practical and personal compartment filled with the functional appurtenances and accumulations of daily life for the whole family. If the floors of the house might be re-drawn, in a Bachelardian vein, as the archaeological layers of the psyche, the kitchen—tucked away below street level, hidden, closed-in—is the place requiring the deepest excavation. Bloom's preference for this buried space that ensconces traces of all the absent family members (as well as Molly's suitor, Boylan), signals, practically, his desire to have a private space, hidden from the world and hidden from the rest of the home, and psychologically, his interest in the interred aspects of his own past and its present-day marks. Both of these particular aspects, the practical and the psychological, will influence Bloom's development of his unique archive.

Although the kitchen is used by the entire family, from the beginning of "Calypso" it is figured as a retreat for Bloom, where he can privately putter about free from surveillance (though from the bedroom Molly tries to supervise his activities in the kitchen). While Molly dominates the bedroom, Bloom is able to enjoy some privacy in the kitchen. His later entertaining of Stephen in the kitchen rather than the front room of the house accentuates both his familial attitude toward Stephen and his personal attitude toward this room. The kitchen, however, though a retreat for Bloom, is still not fully his own space. In "Ithaca," when Joyce catalogues the contents of the room, he reveals many vestiges of absent people. Molly in particular is inscribed on objects throughout the kitchen, from her laundry hanging beside the chimney "on exhibition for all" (*U* 18.1096) to the contents of the three-shelved drawer, which contains the violet comfits Molly eats to have good breath for Boylan (*U* 17.301; 18.1140-41), to the black olives and Spanish onions, culinary reminders of Molly's Mediterranean heritage. A pot of

[51] Nor for that matter is it a place of class divisions: the Blooms no longer have a servant to run the kitchen and become the "leviathan in the lower depths" that Woolf talks about in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (320).

Plumtree's potted meat, empty, calls to mind the recurring advertisement throughout the book: "What is home without Plumtree's Potted Meat? Incomplete. With it an abode of bliss" (*U* 5.144-47). When Bloom later climbs into bed with Molly, he encounters flakes of potted meat in the bedlinen, remnants of Molly's afternoon with Boylan—and reminders of her bliss with Boylan and incompleteness with her husband. The interloper Boylan is further represented in the form of two scarlet betting tickets, which lie discarded on the apron of the dresser, thrown away after Boylan's horse lost to Throwaway (*U* 17.320; 18.424). Milly, absent from home, is present in object-form as well: Bloom drinks his tea from a moustache cup of imitation crown derby, given to him by Milly on his twenty-seventh birthday (*U* 4.283-84; *U* 17.361-62; 17.921-22).

On the one hand, these various remnants of other people emphasize Bloom's lack of a true personal compartment within the home. Every room is shared with someone else. His archive will attempt to negotiate a private space in the midst of these shared spaces. But further, although none of the items in the kitchen can properly be considered part of Bloom's archive (since they are all primarily use-driven objects), they demonstrate how objects can bear meaningful traces of someone absent—the crucial premise of Bloom's collection. Bloom's preference for the kitchen, built into the ground and removed from the rest of the activities of the house and the outside world, mediates his desire to enter into the buried layers of his personal history; as Benjamin writes, "he who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging . . . remembrance must . . . assay its spade in ever-new places, and in the old ones delve to ever-deeper layers" ("A Berlin Chronicle" 26).

The hallway itself, as a threshold and passageway, is a transitional space rather than a dwelling place within the home, but it nevertheless plays a significant role in Bloom's relationship to space and archiving. In *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life,* Victoria

Rosner considers the spatial divisions in the Victorian home and how the threshold provides an intermediary in the "otherwise black-and-white world of separated spheres" (62). The hallway within the Blooms' home demonstrates the permeability of the division between public and private, physically connecting the outside of the house (both the street in the front and the garden in the back) with the interior, and introducing the outside world into the inside in the form of letters pushed under or through the hall door, and visitors, who would enter the home through the hall. The hall embodies in itself an ambiguous zone: it is formal space on the one hand, conducting visitors into the living room in the front, and a casual and even private space on the other hand, potentially exposing outsiders to the intimacies of the Blooms' bedroom, which does not accord to a common nineteenth-century divide of public downstairs/private upstairs. When Bloom leads Stephen down the hall on their way to the kitchen, Stephen notices the lighted crevice of the bedroom doorway on his left (*U* 17.121), and earlier in the day, as Bloom leaves the house to buy a kidney, he hears from the hallway Molly's "warm heavy sigh, softer, as she turned over and the loose brass quoits of the bedstead jingled" (*U* 4.58-59), illustrating how intimately familiar a place the hallway can become and how close the activities of the bedroom lie to the activities of the household. This liminal space, which is also where Bloom hangs his hat—the hat that holds his PO card for his secret correspondence with Martha—thus blurs the boundaries between public and private, just as Bloom, when leaving the house without his key, pulls the halldoor just enough closed to "Look[...] shut" (*U* 4.76). The hallway represents Bloom's inside-outside status both inside and outside his home: within his home, Bloom is a lover of Molly and a cuckold, belonging and rejected; outside the home, he is a part of Irish society and exiled from it, an Irish bourgeois colonial and a Jew. Bloom's collection, as we shall see, will reflect this upset logic of interior/exterior, questioning the traditionally public role of the

archive while struggling to negotiate the demands of a private archive, and in its contents, will complicate other boundaries, particularly the dichotomy of absent/present.

Bloom and Molly's bedroom, which looks out on the rear of the property, the "wilderness of inhabitation" (*U* 17.1022), is the next space the reader encounters in the house, and the most intimate: when they were courting, one of Bloom's requests, after asking Molly for a bit cut from her drawers, was to know "the shape of [her] bedroom" (*U* 18.287). The bedroom is filled, indeed nearly taken over by highly personal things, but these things predominantly belong to Molly, so that the bedroom becomes a sanctum for Molly's desires and memories, not Bloom's. This secondariness in the physical environment of his bedroom signifies Bloom's secondariness with Molly, which ultimately helps model his relationship to physical things and memory.

The room contains a miscellany of furniture as well as a considerable number of personal items for Molly, but the most significant item in the bedroom, the bed itself, most effectively articulates Bloom's marginality in the space.[52] When Bloom stops outside the door to ask Molly if she wants anything for breakfast and he hears the jingling of the brass bed, he thinks, "All the way from Gibraltar" (*U* 4.60), a reflection that could as easily be applied to Molly as to the bed, thereby closely linking her with the most central item of furniture in the bedroom. The loose quoits of the bed speak volubly throughout the novel, maintaining Bloom's reflection on the

[52] These furnishings include chairs (which double as bedside tables) (*U* 4.301; 17.2109), an orange-keyed chamberpot (*U* 4.330), a washstand (*U* 17.2106), a broken commode (*U* 17.2102; 18.1136), a wardrobe (*U* 4.73), a lamp (*U* 17.1173-74; 17.2300), a dressingtable (*U* 13.926), and a trunk of Brian Tweedy's (*U* 17.2097-98). The trunk, like the bed, unmistakably belongs to Molly and is a part of her past, but many of the other items, if not used exclusively by Molly (as, for example, the dressing table) are generally associated with her in the novel. In "Calypso," her soiled linen overlays one of the chairs (*U* 4.65) and her book sprawls against the chamberpot (*U* 4.329-30), and in "Ithaca," even more underclothing is disposed on top of the trunk (*U* 17.2092-98). Molly is the one shining the lamp, availing herself of the chamberpot, and opening the wardrobe (which she calls a press [*U* 18.1207]). Even the painting hanging over the bed, *The Bath of the Nymph*—Bloom's primary contribution to the furnishings—is an idealized representation of Molly: "Not unlike her with her hair down: slimmer" (*U* 4.371).

newspaper printer: "Almost human the way it sllt to call attention. Doing its level best to speak. That door too sllt creaking, asking to be shut. Everything speaks in its own way. Sllt" (*U* 7.175-77).[53] Through all of its jingling speech, the bed signals Molly's activities on it, activities which most notably exclude Bloom until his cautious entering of it at the end of the night—and even then the bed and Molly have to be approached with the same degree of circumspection: as "Ithaca" details, Bloom climbs into bed "with solicitude, the snakespiral springs of the mattress being old, the brass quoits and pendant viper radii loose and tremulous under stress and strain: prudently, as entering a lair or ambush of lust or adders" (*U* 17.2116-18). When he gets in the bed, he notices not only the flakes of potted meat, but "the imprint of a human form, male, not his" (*U* 17.2124), prompting him to reflect that the one who enters the bed imagines himself to be the first, "whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity" (*U* 17.2130-31). The bed, unlike Shakespeare's, may not be "Secondbest," but Bloom himself appears to be. His position in the bed—lying inverted and facing Molly—illustrates his dislocated orientation to the boudoir and to his marriage as a whole.

The master bedroom, conventionally pictured as the most private, most insulated, location in the home, and the reverential scene of consummation, conception, birth, and rest, is a space in which Bloom no longer materially invests himself because that space, for him, is no longer private or insulated, but has been emotionally violated, not just by the entrance of Boylan but more profoundly by the exit of Rudy, about which Molly says "we were never the same since" (*U* 18.1450). The room is a place of loss for Bloom, of his wife and of his son, and though because of these losses he feels displaced from the bedroom, they at the same time are what drive him to make a place for himself and assert some kind of ownership and control through

[53] In the hallucinatory cacophony of "Circe," the quoits, as well as numerous other objects, from wreaths to a cap to a doorhandle, literally speak.

archiving. In her study of the homes of writers, *The Sense of an Interior*, Diana Fuss reads Freud's collecting of antiquities as a response to the death of his father, so that patients arriving at Freud's office "entered the exteriorized theater of Freud's own emotional history, where every object newly found memorialized a love-object lost" (79). Bloom's losses in his bedroom, adding to other losses in other bedrooms (such as the death of his parents) coalesce in his desire to form spaces in the home where he can hold on to things and in some way possess the ones he has been deprived of—giving new meaning to his pronouncement in "Hades" that "The Irishman's house is his coffin" (*U* 6.821-22).

The front room of 7 Eccles is the last room Joyce presents to the reader. As the most formal room of the home, and the site of Bloom's stationary archive, the room might be expected to embody a sense of stability, but the space, which looks out on the activity and movement of the street, is introduced to the reader when its contents are in a state of flux. This fluid, unpredictable quality comes to characterize the room as a whole, signifying the shifting relationships within Bloom's home. After Stephen leaves, Bloom enters the front room to add his letter from Martha to the others in the drawer. His learned movement for negotiating the space of the room is disrupted, however: the furniture has been completely rearranged while he was gone, announced to him physically—and painfully—by his obstructed entrance to the room, when he strikes his head against the projecting walnut sideboard. Space, for Stephen, may be "what you damn well have to see" (*U* 9.86); for Bloom, it is also what you damn well have to feel. His spatial maneuvering through the room, which must have already been a complex ballet because of the room's general crowdedness, is complicated by the new arrangement.[54] Bachelard

[54] The room thus (comically) becomes a place of snares, like the apartments in a detective novel Benjamin discusses: "The furniture style of the second half of the nineteenth century has received its only adequate description, and analysis, in a certain type of detective novel at the dynamic center of which stands the horror of apartments. The arrangement of the furniture is at the same time the site plan of deadly traps,

discusses how houses inscribe themselves on us physically, so that particular movements and gestures within the house become engraved on us: "we are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house . . . the word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget, with an unforgettable house" (15). Although Bloom has had the time to learn this room, he must now re-learn it, re-inscribing new movements over the old, for the space has been considerably altered, the furniture moved like so many chess pieces: in addition to the translocated walnut sideboard, the sofa has been transferred to the opposite side of the room, the majolica-topped table placed where the sofa was, the chairs re-oriented, the piano re-positioned (*U* 17.1281-1303). In short, every moveable item of furniture in the room has been rearranged except for the bookshelves and the strainveined timber table—the two places in the house where Bloom keeps his archive (although several of his books have been inverted).

Joyce does not provide an explanation for the alterations in the room. Regardless of the means, the dislocation of the furniture echoes the changes happening in the home through both Molly's affair and Milly's removal. As Edgar Allan Poe phrases it in his description of the ideal arrangement and decoration of a room, "there is philosophy even in furniture" (243), and the philosophy of the front room furniture speaks to the unrest of Bloom's life. The geometry of the home always aligns with Bloom's inner state; his archive can thus be read as a reaction to both physical rearrangements and removals (Molly counts that Eccles Street is their fifth home in sixteen years of marriage [*U* 18.1216-17]) and emotional upheavals: it is an attempt to make something fixed within the home, to hold on to physical things and to a way of knowing when everything else gets altered.

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and the suite of rooms prescribes the fleeing victim's path . . . The bourgeois interior of the 1860s to the 1890s, with its gigantic sideboards distended with carvings . . . fittingly houses only the corpse" ("One-Way Street" 64-65).

In his introduction to Poe's "Philosophy of Furniture," Baudelaire writes (recorded by Benjamin), "Who among us, in his idle hours, has not taken a delicious pleasure in constructing for himself a model apartment, a dream house, a house of dreams?" (*AP* 227). After Bloom has returned to his Ithaca, 7 Eccles, at the end of the day, and Stephen has left, he entertains himself by picturing his dream home, an exceedingly well-provisioned bungalow with extensive grounds just outside of the metropolis. Bloom's current home, the site of his psychic and embodied experiences, is far removed from the house of his dreams, and it is unlikely that he will ever live in such an establishment. But though he may not live in one, he still constructs one: his archive, shaped by his experiences as well as his desires, becomes a version of the dream house. And perhaps in the end, he does dwell in it; as Benjamin declares of collections in "Unpacking My Library": "Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them" (67).

The Total Library

Bloom's archive, consisting of items on his two bookshelves, in his two drawers, and in his innumerable pockets, is, of course, spatially dispersed. Bloom does not have a room of his own like the masculine studies Rosner considers, a "perfected space of privacy, a privacy that enables a heightened degree of autonomy within the symbiotic structure of the household" (93). He is even missing the key to his home, a figurative loss of sovereignty over his dwelling as well as a literal loss of immediate access. He annexes, therefore, small corners for his things on his body and in the heart of the family rooms. The most exposed and exhibitory of these spaces is his bookshelves, originally wedged behind the sofa and beside the piano, but after Molly's rearrangement, more easy to access, with nothing immediately in front. Findlen, examining the origins of the museum, writes that as "a repository of past activities, created in the mirror of the

present, the museum was above all a dialectical structure which served as a meeting point in which the historical claims of the present were invoked in memory of the past" (24). Bloom's library, a repository of memories that we first encounter reflected through a literal mirror, the gilt-bordered pierglass, displays a set of objects in which the past interfaces with the present and Bloom's various identities confront one another. While we receive only suggestive glimpses of the titles in the National Library, "Ithaca," in the catechistic desire to account for all questions, lists Bloom's entire library catalogue, including information about the physical appearance of the books and the placement of any bookmarks (*U* 17.1361-1407).

The boundaries of the archive are not all-encompassing in Bloom's library, however (nor will they be in the other spaces), for though certain items on the bookshelves are serving an archival purpose, helping Bloom construct a personal history, not every book is part of the archive.[55] A set of books in this collection, however, appears to have been acquired by Bloom because they evoke certain memories and ideas of himself and thus help him form a sense of his identity, in much the same way as the ancient Irish texts in the National Library were used to stake out Ireland's identity at the turn of the twentieth century. Three aspects of his identity Bloom's books express and seek to retain include his Judaism, his Irishness, and his Mediterranean self.

[55] The non-archived books are wide-ranging, reflecting everything from Bloom's desire for education and improvement (such as Eugen Sandow's *Physical Strength and How to Obtain It* or Sir Robert Ball's *The Story of the Heavens*) to his interests in travel and history (*Three Trips to Madagascar*, *Voyages in China,* or *The Secret History of the Court of Charles II*). *Thom's Dublin Post Office Directory,* the first book in the list, is undoubtedly practical, a reference work of street names, tradesmen lists, and census counts. The office for the printing of the Directory was two doors down from the *Freeman* office, and Bloom mentions the smell of its glue in "Aeolus" (*U* 7.224). The Directory's appearance on Bloom's shelf marks something of a metanarrative moment, since Joyce made extensive use of it in the writing of *Ulysses*—indeed, *Thom's* and *Ulysses* can be seen as two parallel guides to Dublin, one, the official, objective account of the city, the other, a fictionalized, transmuted remembrance.

Three of the works on the shelves recall Bloom's Judaism, a religion he no longer practices but which is much in his heart. None of the titles as given can be traced to a specific author or specific book, according to Gifford (588-89), but the titles still provide a significant insight into their subject matter and their connection to Bloom: the *Philosophy of the Talmud*, an aide-memoire of the beliefs and rituals of his family's past; *Thoughts from Spinoza*, which may not concern Judaism but which definitely reminds Bloom of it—during his argument with the Citizen in "Cyclops," Bloom protests, "Mendelssohn was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza" (*U* 12.1804)—and *The Hidden Life of Christ*, which like the work by Spinoza also gives Bloom confidence in his Jewish heritage: in the same debate with the Citizen, Bloom also exclaims, "Christ was a jew like me" (*U* 12.1808-09). These texts provide an external record for the muddle of memories and experiences of Judaism that Bloom possesses. Earlier, when Bloom and Stephen compare the Hebrew and Irish languages, Bloom chants the opening lines of a Zionist anthem, but stops after the first couplet "in consequence of defective mnemotechnic" (*U* 17.766): Bloom's internal memories may become incomplete or defective (though he claims, "My memory's not so bad" [*U* 13.1142]), but his archive furnishes a concrete and seemingly reliable reminder of his heritage, which itself is so often wedded to texts—when Rudy appears at the end of "Circe," he comes in the guise of a young Jewish scholar, reading a holy book from right to left, and recalling as he does his grandfather and namesake Rudolph, whom Bloom remembers reading the *Haggadah* "backwards" (*U* 7.207).

Along with preserving his Jewish self, Bloom also seeks to produce an Irish self through the books he has acquired. Three works dealing with Ireland particularly stand out: Denis Florence MacCarthy's *Poetical Works*, William O'Brien's novel, *When We Were Boys,* and the guide, *The Beauties of Killarney.* No standard book catalogues list a *Poetical Works* for

McCarthy, just as with the three Jewish titles, the title likely being a generalization rather than the actual name of the book. MacCarthy, though not considered a nationalist writer and translator in the manner of Douglas Hyde, wrote patriotic poetry and edited a book of Irish ballads (Kennedy). While MacCarthy is not a polemical figure, his presence and position on Bloom's shelves after *Thom's* and before Shakespeare's *Works* announces not only spatial priority but cultural precedence: the Irish poet comes before the English Bard. O'Brien, a journalist and M.P. who was imprisoned with Parnell because of his militant actions during the land war, wrote *When We Were Boys* during his time in jail. According to James H. Murphy, the novel, a romance and Fenian adventure story, expresses the discontent of the emergent Catholic intelligentsia in the late nineteenth century. Bloom's copy of the book, which he has presumably read a portion of (its bookmark is at p. 217), suggests that he perhaps identifies himself as part of the Catholic intelligentsia, critical of many of the realities of Ireland while desiring to improve it. *The Beauties of Killarney,* another hard-to-identify book, is likely an illustrated guide or picture book rhapsodizing on the lakes and mountains in the County Kerry. Stephen encounters a similar text in the bookcart on Bedford Row: *Pocket Guide to Killarney* (*U* 10.839), indicating that such books were quite common. Perhaps Bloom has thought about visiting it on his westward journey to County Clare on the anniversary of his father's death, although just as likely he bought it to enjoy as an armchair traveler, much as he reads texts like *Voyages in China.* The book demonstrates Bloom's general interest in the region; he debates going to see *The Lily of Killarney*, an opera set in Killarney, in the evening, but misses it because of his tête a tête with Gerty on the beach (*U* 6.186; 13.1213), and when he later enumerates the places he thinks about relocating within Ireland, the lakes of Killarney closes the list (*U* 17.1978). Regardless of Bloom's precise reason for having the book, it helps confirm his love for the natural or physical

aspects of his country and his desire to know the land better; notably, the "lovely lakes of Killarney" (*U* 12.1451) are purportedly embroidered on the Citizen's handkerchief, providing an indirect affirmation of Bloom's Irishness. Because Bloom is a Jew, he at times has to defend his Irish nationality, the two identifications mutually excluding one another for the likes of the Citizen; the Irish books, which prompt thoughts of Irish culture, Irish politics, and Irish land, therefore help Bloom think about his place in the Hibernian nation, and work to construct, through a few objects, an external identity that allows him to be both/and—Jewish and Irish—rather than either/or.

Two more books on the shelves form a network between Bloom, Molly, and the East, so that these texts broker a third identity for Bloom, a Mediterranean identity. On the surface these works are quite different: Col. Sir Henry Montague Hozier's two volume *History of the Russo-Turkish War*, and *In the Track of the Sun*, a travelogue by Frederick Diodati Thompson about his trip around the world, but which concentrates on Thompson's travels in the Orient and Near East. The two texts, however, spark many of the same associations in Bloom's mind. Hozier's history receives slightly more immediate attention than the other books in the catalogue because, sighting its bulk, Bloom thinks about the personally relevant data it contains—"the name of a decisive battle (forgotten), frequently remembered by a decisive officer, major Brian Cooper Tweedy (remembered)" (*U* 17.1419-20). Tweedy is, of course, Molly's Irish father, and his action at the decisive battle, Plevna,[56] is frequently recalled by Bloom (when he can remember it). The book itself had apparently belonged to Tweedy, since it comes from the Garrison Library

[56] *Purported* action, possibly. Fritz Senn has written that one of the unsolved problems of *Ulysses* is whether Molly's father was actually a major in the British Army. Ruth Von Phul attempts to answer this question, contending that he was a drum major garrisoned at Gibraltar, and that he never could have fought at Plevna because no British troops fought in the Russo-Turkish War. However, according to Thomas Kenny, some British soldiers and officers were involved on the Turkish forces, lending some plausibility to Tweedy's claims.

at Gibraltar. The defining military event in the life of Molly's father lies along a track of associations in Bloom's mind that leads him to think of Molly, of her upbringing in Gibraltar, and of the Mediterranean in general, where he fantasizes about settling, in a Zionist vein. *In the Track of the Sun* helps feed into these associations, shaping Bloom's conception of the East, which becomes vaguely conflated with the Mediterranean in his mind (in "Lotus Eaters" he transitions from thinking about the laziness of the Far East to remembering a picture of a person floating on his back in the Dead Sea)—a place that is simultaneously the birthplace of Molly and the birthplace of the Jewish people.[57] In his walk to buy meat in "Calypso," these thoughts follow in an almost unbroken chain: he hears the bed, which makes him think of Gibraltar, then Molly, then Tweedy, then Plevna, then the Orient (and Tweedy and Molly again), then *In the Track of the Sun*, then (slightly later) orange groves north of Jaffa, then citrons from the Mediterranean, and finally the Dead Sea. Similarly, in "Circe," in a very quick sequence of events, a sunburst appears in the northwest (which echoes not only the headpiece on the *Freeman*, but the titlepage of *In the Track of the Sun* [*U* 15.1469; 4.100-102]), Bloom is crowned King and wears the Koh-i-Noor diamond (aligning him with both the British monarchy and the Eastern empire), Bloom charges across the heights of Plevna, and reads in Hebrew while the standard of Zion is hoisted (*U* 15.1469-1625).

[57] Molly is strongly associated with the Mediterranean and the Orient for Bloom.There are many possible examples. It is very clear, for instance, that Bloom finds Molly sexually desirable largely because of her exotic looks and southern passion: "it was just the wellknown case of hot passion, pure and simple. . . and just bore out the very thing he was saying, as she also was Spanish or half so, types that wouldn't do things by halves, passionate abandon of the south, casting every shred of decency to the winds" (*U* 16.1406-10). In "Circe," Bloom imagines Molly appearing before him refigured as a Turkish woman, dressed in "Turkish costume" and leading a camel (*U* 15.297-302). Bloom also has a partiality for food of the Mediterranean, likely influenced by Molly; in Davy Byrne's pub, he orders a gorgonzola sandwich and Italian olives, which prompts him to think lovingly of olive oil and Spanish onions. Molly's body is constantly associated in Bloom's mind with plump melons—and it is to the immense melonfields north of Jaffa that he contemplates moving.

Both Hozier's history and Thompson's travelogue, then, trigger either directly or indirectly Bloom's thoughts of his personal relationship to the Mediterranean (which of course also connects to his relationship to Judaism). Though he might have intervals of amnesia about the name of Tweedy's battle or say of *In the Track of the Sun,* "Probably not a bit like it really. Kind of stuff you read" (*U* 4.99), these two texts help Bloom conceive of a Mediterranean identity. This identity is one that Bloom is drawn to because of his familial connections to the region and also perhaps because its foreignness and strangeness reminds him of his own strangeness in Ireland, "so foreign from the others" (*U* 13.1210).[58] When Bloom imagines in "Ithaca" the places he wishes he could re-settle, seven of the eleven locations he names are in the Mediterranean, and in "Hades," in thinking about burial, he reflects, "Lay me in my native earth. Bit of clay from the holy land" (*U* 6.819), a dual acknowledgment of his desire to move to Palestine or, barring that, to have a bit of Palestine with him. Yet before he goes to bed he torches the flier for the model farm in Jaffa in order to light an incense burner, and as he reasons through his desires to leave Dublin and travel, these desires are rendered "undesirable" as he contemplates what is present, here in front of him: human warmth with Molly in bed. In the end, Joyce tells us, Bloom "rests. He has travelled" (*U* 17.2320), though he has never left Dublin, and it seems that his travels will always remain purely imaginary. These two books therefore provide a perpetual "mnemotechnic" (*U* 17.1422) for Bloom, reminding him of his distant heritage and far-flung desires, so that in reading them, he is "reading the book of himself" (*U* 9.115) and in preserving them, is maintaining an essential part of himself.

Bloom is not Benjamin's book collector in "Unpacking My Library": he is not collecting books purely for themselves, for the thrill of acquisition and to liberate the books from all

[58] Bloom's identification with the Mediterranean of course also reminds us of his epic counterpart's journeys and dwellings in the Mediterranean.

usefulness. Bloom gathers some books for practicality and pleasure; he amasses others for a half-conscious drive to conserve and create an image of himself. While these latter texts contribute to a tentative archive for Bloom, providing him a narrative of who he is, this narrative is ultimately only necessary because Bloom is at times perceived by others (or by himself) as not these things—not Jewish, not Irish, not Mediterranean. The books, then, while they gesture to presence, are perhaps more significantly indicating a perceived absence. Since Judaism is passed down matrilineally, and Bloom's mother was not a Jew, then Bloom is not a Jew in terms of Jewish law—a technicality that he is well aware of, though it may be unknown (or irrelevant) to others; his Irishness is explicitly called into question in "Cyclops" but implicitly undermined throughout the text by characters who insist on defining him solely as a Jew or "foreign," though he was born in Ireland; his Mediterranean connections and aspirations are unknown or unremarked on: he is just the son of a "perverted Jew from a place in Hungary" (*U* 12.1635) and his Spanish wife just "a good armful" (*U* 6.698). Using his books to stand-in for these types of "lack" in his various identities, Bloom reveals an underlying fear of loss, a fear that he may forfeit a complex sense of himself to accord with the simplifying versions others apply to him. The books simultaneously help him have a sense of control over his identity and indicate his lack of control. André Topia, in his article on the spaces of memory in "Ithaca," writes that Joyce's conception of memory lies somewhere between Cicero and Proust, between the classical spatial model for storing and retrieving information, and the modern one, which is "involuntary, fluctuating, haunted by loss rather than accumulation" (396). Bloom's archive of books provides a system whereby he can store and retrieve images of himself, but these images and this archive are forever haunted by dispersal.

Necropolis

Hannah Arendt asserts that "the four walls of one's private property offer the only reliable hiding place from the common public world, not only from everything that goes on in it but also from its very publicity, from being seen and being heard" (212). Bloom's abode, entered (and rearranged?) by Boylan, is not a private retreat for Bloom—indeed he is retreating *from* rather than *to* the house all day, and even without Boylan—the "common public world"—Bloom lacks privacy within the home. So his private archive is always public in some sense. His library is hid in plain sight, like the purloined letter, but because of Bloom's concern about the "insecurity of hiding any secret document behind, beneath or between the pages of a book" (*U* 17.1413-14), his other collection within the home resides in the semi-private spaces of two unlocked drawers in the strainveined table in the center of the front room. These drawers provide Bloom a sense of privacy without actual secrecy: Molly, like Bloom with Gerty, quite literally has "[seen] all the secrets of [his] bottom drawer" (*U* 15.384). Hidden and displayed, Bloom's drawers constitute his national museum, although the chaos of items with their attendant tumult of memories more closely resembles the curiosity cabinets or *wunderkammer* that preceded the modern-day museum. Joyce lists every object in the drawers, recalling the almost infinite cataloguing of the heroes and heroines engraved on the seastones hanging from the Citizen's girdle. Bloom's past, constructed "from a set of presently existing pieces" (Stewart 145) lives in these drawers, open time capsules with an extended temporal reach; like the casket Bachelard discusses, the drawers contain "the things that are unforgettable, unforgettable for us, but also unforgettable for those to whom we are going to give our treasures. Here the past, the present and a future are condensed. Thus the casket is memory of what is immemorial" (84).

The contents of the drawers, particularly the first compartment (*U* 17.1774-1823), present themselves at first glance like the incomprehensible accumulations of a hoarder. And indeed a number of the items appear to have been saved for no good reason, having perhaps at one point been deemed important by Bloom and then later forgotten, demonstrating the inevitable slow accretions of time: a bazaar ticket, a stamp from Queen Victoria's reign, a Yuletide card from a Mr. and Mrs. Comerford. Additionally, as with many of the other objects in Bloom's home, many of the things in his drawers are functional in nature, only gathered in these compartments because there is nowhere else for them to go: sealing wax, pennibs, a magnifying glass, a recipe for the renovation of old tan boots, a chart of Bloom's measurements before and after performing Sandow's exercises, a prospectus for the Wonderworker ("world's greatest remedy for rectal complaints"). Bloom's drawers are a catch-all as well as an archive, and a lot of junk (albeit personally-revealing junk) jostles up against the items that he has very intentionally kept. These carefully preserved items—the archived content of the two compartments—all relate directly or indirectly to family members and specifically those whom Bloom has, on some level, lost. The objects together form a corpus and the drawers a tomb for these loved ones and by extension, for Bloom himself.

The first object listed in the first drawer is an old handwriting copybook that once belonged to Milly but that now serves to evoke Bloom's memories of his daughter's lost childhood, and more broadly, of the daughter and only child he is metaphorically losing. The copybook, inscribed with Milly's drawings of Bloom, or *Papli*, "a large globular head with 5 hairs erect, 2 eyes in profile, the trunk full front with 3 large buttons, 1 triangular foot" (*U* 17.1777-78) (a drawing remarkably similar to Joyce's famous sketch of Bloom) is accompanied in the drawer by another of Milly's infantile artifacts, a letter: "Papli, How are you? I am very

well. Milly" (*U* 17.1792-94). A third object, the "pink ribbon which had festooned an Easter egg in the year 1899" (*U* 17.1803-04), lacks an explicit connection to Milly but has more than likely been saved because Bloom associates it with her: the ribbon may conjure memories of a particular Easter festivity with Milly or on its own remind him of how he used to tie her hair in a ribbon, one of his recollections in "Ithaca" (*U* 17.896). The press cutting on the subject of corporal chastisement in girls' schools (*U* 17.1801-02), on a less directly personal level, indicates how his daughter and issues related to her exercise Bloom's mind. The drawer notably lacks any current traces of Milly, and her most recent letter from Mullingar does not get united with her childhood epistle—and indeed, most of Bloom's memories of Milly throughout the text relate to her as a young girl. Bloom, it seems, has nostalgically retained things that re-create Milly as a child because in a muted way he is grieving for her growing up and leaving home; as he reflects on her maturing from childhood to adolescence and then moving away in "Ithaca," the question is asked, "Did that first division, portending a second division, afflict him?" and the answer is, "Less than he had imagined, more than he had hoped" (*U* 17.885). Although, according to Molly, it was Bloom's idea to send Milly to work at the photographic studio (*U* 18.1004-05), his desire for her presence presses on him throughout the day, whether he is picturing the sunlight streaming down Berkeley road to be Milly running to meet him (*U* 4.240-42) or planning a walking tour to visit her (*U* 6.445).

What affects Bloom more than the physical loss of Milly from the household, however, is the more definitive sundering foreshadowed by her new relationship with the young student Bannon: a relationship which suggests the eventual loss of Milly's innocence, the transfer of her affections to a man other than her father, and her final removal from the home. When Bloom first reads about Bannon in Milly's letter, he immediately worries, "she knows how to mind herself.

But if not? No, nothing has happened. Of course it might" (*U* 4.428-29), and then remembers Molly at Milly's age, which gives him more pause. This inevitable loss of Milly to another man troubles Bloom off-and-on for the rest of the day; he reflects in "Sirens": "I too. Last of my race. Milly young student" (*U* 11.1066), as Milly will presumably be carrying on the race of the young student, not continuing Bloom's name, as a son would have done. When Milly appears in "Circe," she must break free from the arms of the Mullingar student to cry out to Papli (*U* 15.3165-71). Although Milly is not yet completely lost to Bloom, his affectionate retaining of her childhood's small relics constitute his means of continuing to possess her, his child, as she moves out of his reach, and possessing her in her most innocent and dependent state. But these objects also inescapably remind him of that loss; as Stephen thinks when parting from Buck at the library, "that lies in space which I in time must come to, ineluctably" (*U* 9.1200-01). The objects in the space of his drawer confront Bloom with the reductions, the forfeitures, that he is facing and must face in time.

A second set of archived things, in both the first and second drawers, evoke Bloom's memories of his deceased father, forming a complex of affective material that structures and drives his mourning. When Bloom watches the gravediggers cover Paddy's grave, he thinks, "Begin to be forgotten. Out of sight, out of mind" (*U* 6.872). Much of Bloom's archiving of his parents' artifacts is driven by a desire to forestall oblivion—of them as well as of himself, last of his race. But there is also a desire to keep sad objects around him so that he can continue to feel the melancholy they bring him, and thus honor his parents in emotion as well as in memory—mourning by always maintaining an open wound.[59] Only one thing in the drawers pertains to Bloom's mother, Ellen Bloom—the cameo brooch (*U* 17.1794-95), which she wears when she

[59] In maintaining sadness there is also perhaps a degree of pleasure; Black, discussing Queen Victoria's prolonged mourning of Albert and her obsessive collecting of his personal effects, suggests that collecting and recollecting can be a form of necrophilia (45).

appears in "Circe" (*U* 15.285). Bloom carries a far more sentimental possession of Ellen's, the shriveled potato, on his person (I will consider this item later). By comparison, the drawers are replete with things belonging or related to Rudolph Bloom. The second drawer in particular uncovers a hoard of deeply personal items: a press cutting concerning Rudolph's change of surname from Virag to Bloom; a daguerreotype of Rudolph and his father Leopold Virag; a Haggadah book with a pair of spectacles inserted in the pages; a photocard of the Queen's Hotel in Ennis of which Rudolph was the proprietor; an envelope addressed to Bloom, presumably containing Rudolph's suicide note (*U* 17.1866-81).

This drawer acts as a symbolic coffin for Rudolph, who because of his suicide was refused a Christian burial (*U* 6.346) and could not be entombed with his wife, or later, his grandson (*U* 6.862-63). But it is also an elegy for Rudolph, with its objects narrating the geographical movements and cultural shifts of his life and marking his relationship to his religion, to his work, and to his family. For Bloom, the objects confront him with the loss of his father while also facing him with the inevitability of his own death and future absence, as "coming events cast their shadows before" (*U* 8.526). The daguerreotype, though indistinct, lends a physicality and verifiable reality to his memories of his father; earlier, when walking through the cemetery in "Hades," Bloom reflects on how we remember people who have died—their eyes, walk, voice. He has the idea to play gramophones of people's voices after they are gone to "Remind you of the voice like the photograph reminds you of the face. Otherwise you couldn't remember the face after fifteen years, say" (*U* 6.966-68). Bloom evidences this faith in the photograph elsewhere, remembering places through photography (he saves a photocard of the Queen's Hotel that Rudolph operated) and people (he recalls how Molly used to look by carrying a photo of her in his wallet); he also sends Milly off to work at a photographic studio and

contemplates snapshot photography as one of his intellectual pursuits at the dream house (*U* 17.1589). Photography, to Bloom, may be an entertainment (his sleeping pose apparently mimics the pose he made for one of his schoolboy friend Percy Apjohn's snapshot photographs [*U* 17.2316-17]), but it is also a memorial. Similar to Roland Barthes's Winter Garden photograph of his mother, the daguerreotype of Rudolph "attest[s] that what [he] sees has indeed existed" (Barthes 82), but like all photographs it possesses a duality: it affirms the life of his father, and in the same stroke it confirms his death and figuratively abolishes him again. The photograph thus also represents a *memento mori* for Bloom, reminding him of his own death ("each photograph always contains this imperious sign of my future death" [Barthes 97]),[60] because just as his father died and is now reduced to a few objects, Bloom knows that one day he will die and all that will remain of him will be a few items in drawers. The thought of the possessions that he will leave behind, "the endowment policy, the bank passbook, the certificate of the possession of scrip" (*U* 17.1931-32), provides Bloom's only consolation.

One of the other effects left behind by Rudolph particularly lies on Bloom's mind as he approaches the eighteenth anniversary of Rudolph's death on the 27th of June: the suicide note, represented by the envelope bearing the words, "*To My Dear Son Leopold*" (*U* 17.1881). In an atypical rendering for the factually-thorough "Ithaca," we are only allowed to know "fractions of phrases" of the note, eloquently recalled by Bloom after glimpsing the envelope:

> Tomorrow will be a week that I received . . . it is no use Leopold to be . . . with your dear mother . . . that is not more to stand . . . to her . . . all for me is out . . .

[60] Consider also Susan Sontag: "Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art . . . All photographs are *memento mori* . . . Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt" (15).

> be kind to Athos, Leopold . . . my dear son . . . always . . . of me . . . *das Herz* . . . *Gott* . . . *dein* . . . . (*U* 17.1883-86)

These snatches from Rudolph's last letter evoke in Bloom the melancholy scene of his father's last days: "An old man, widower, unkempt of hair, in bed, with head covered, sighing: an infirm dog, Athos: aconite, resorted to by increasing doses of grains and scruples as a palliative of recrudescent neuralgia: the face in death of a septuagenarian, suicide by poison" (*U* 17.1889-92)—a scene that echoes another memory, revisited by Bloom on the way to Paddy's funeral: "That afternoon of the inquest. The redlabelled bottle on the table. The room in the hotel with hunting pictures . . . Thought he was asleep first. Then saw like yellow streaks on his face. Had slipped down to the foot of the bed. Verdict: overdose. Death by misadventure. The letter. For my son Leopold" (*U* 6.359-64).[61] These tableaux morts continue to haunt Bloom, and the letter, saved for nearly two decades, perpetuates this haunting. Stephen remarks in "Oxen of the Sun": "You have spoken of the past and its phantoms . . . Why think of them? If I call them into life across the waters of Lethe will not the poor ghosts troop to my call?" (*U* 14.1112-14); Bloom, however, does not want to forget his ghosts on the other side of Lethe—even the horrific ghost of a father with a yellow-streaked face, as if in repressing Rudolph's death in shame he might drive another stake through a heart broken already. Instead, like the Jewish practice of placing stones on a grave, Bloom has preserved this letter and other small effects as a token of continued, unconditional remembrance, a collective memorial that he hopes, unlike his memories of the letter, will know no elisions.

[61] These scenes are not unlike those Stephen has of his mother's deathbed in "Telemachus," and the yellow-streaked face of Rudolph that appears in "Circe" (*U* 15.250-51) recalls the odor of wetted ashes that characterizes the apparition of May Dedalus both in "Circe" (*U* 15.4182) and earlier (*U* 1.105, 1.272), forming another area of commonality between the figurative father and son.

Bloom's archive as a whole, however, in spite of its appearance of completeness, bears a significant lacuna. Amidst the copia of personal effects dedicated to lost loved ones, not a single article remains of Bloom's deceased son. Rudy, who had died over ten years before, in 1894, only lived eleven days (*U* 17.2280-82)—a short span, but not so short that he might not have left some material trace. The only thing associated with him is the notice of a graveplot purchased (*U* 17.1866), which Bloom indicates in "Hades": "Mine over there towards Finglas, the plot I bought. Mamma, poor mamma, and little Rudy" (*U* 6.862-63). Perhaps all small effects connected with Rudy have been buried with him, although Bloom's memories of the event are poignantly spare: "A dwarf's face, mauve and wrinkled . . . .Dwarf's body, weak as putty, in a whitelined deal box" (*U* 6.326-27). Since drawers at this time were often used as cradles, Bloom's drawer, empty of anything connected to Rudy, draws double attention to his absence. When Bloom thinks of material things in association with Rudy, they are the things that might have been, not that were—as when he pictures him wearing an Eton suit (*U* 6.76)—or they are symbolically-charged imaginary items that compose Bloom's vision of how he sees his son: in "Circe," Rudy appears wearing an Eton suit, but with "diamond and ruby buttons," glass shoes, a little bronze helmet, a book in one hand and a slim ivory cane with a violet bowknot in the other, and a white lambkin peeking out of his waistcoat pocket (*U* 15.4955-67). While Rudy has left no actual objects, his father has constructed an imaginary archive to accompany the projections he made for the son who never lived to fulfill them. Though nothing in the drawers pertains directly to Rudy, his presence is written across nearly everything in the Blooms' life, so that Rudy is being remembered in spite of himself, in spite of the fact that he left no visible trace, that he is a caesura in the archive. In his "Letter to Francine Loreau" upon the death of Max Loreau, Derrida reflects on the mourning that remains at work "behind the fleeting, inapparent moments, those

without archive and without words" (*Work* 95). As long as the wound of grief remains open in Bloom, then he will continue to remember and mourn Rudy, the lost one for whom the archive is silent.[62]

The archive in Bloom's drawers is defined by the negative: the objects composing it do not matter for what they mean in themselves, in the here and now, but for what they represent, which is, in this case (and always), something absent. Bloom's library is driven by a fear of losing his identity; the items in his drawers, by the actuality of losing his family, which means the disappearance of both a heritage (from his father) and a legacy (through his daughter and son)—just as the items in the National Museum reflect Irish fears of losing a heritage and British fears of losing a legacy. All of these losses are connected, almost repetitive, so that Bloom's archive encourages a slippage between losses and an overdetermination of the language and processes of mourning, as Bloom realizes himself as he listens to "M'appari" in the Ormond: "Thou lost one. All songs on that theme . . . Death . . . Human life . . . Gone. They sing. Forgotten. I too" (*U* 11.802-07). Through collecting the things in his library and drawers, Bloom is mourning not only the already lost, but himself, and yet the archive seems to give him means of continued life. Comparing the collecting of objects to the ball in Freud's account of *Fort-Da*, in which the child causes the ball to disappear and reappear to control his anxiety over the absence of his mother, Baudrillard states:

> the object is *the thing with which we construct our mourning*: the object represents our own death, but that death is transcended (symbolically) by virtue of the fact that we *possess* the object; the fact that by introjecting it into a work of

[62] As Benjamin notes, "'No one,' Pascal once said, 'dies so poor that he does not leave something behind.' Surely it is the same with memories too—although these do not always find an heir" ("The Storyteller" 98).

> mourning—by integrating it into a series in which its absence and its reemergence elsewhere 'work' at replaying themselves continually, recurrently—we succeed in dispelling the anxiety associated with absence and with the reality of death. Objects allow us to apply the work of mourning to ourselves right now, in everyday life, and this is turn allows us to live—to live regressively, no doubt, but at least to live. A person who collects is dead, but he literally survives himself through his collection, which (even while he lives) duplicates him infinitely, beyond death . . . if the function of dreams is to ensure the continuity of sleep, that of objects, thanks to very much the same sort of compromise, is to ensure the continuity of life. (104-105)

Bloom controls his anxiety over the absence of his loved ones and thoughts of his own future absence through the *fort-da* of archiving. If, as Ricoeur notes of Freud, the past once experienced is indestructible (445), then objects seemingly enable Bloom to return to and control that past and secure it for the future. This control is only symbolic—Bloom saves things precisely because he cannot save the people, and in the case of Rudy, he has no things to save, so that the memory of Rudy, maintained as long as he (Bloom) lives, will ineludibly die with him. His archive, then, works for and against itself: it achieves a certain degree of preservation and continuance built around absence, but this preservation is never more than representative, and it is inevitably incomplete, amnestic, limited by the very materiality that makes it possible in the first place.

The Language of Pockets

"So many things in an overcoat!" Benjamin observes (quoting another), "when circumstances and men make it speak" (*AP* 223). Bloom's archive extends to one more location,

but this one does not lie within his home. The last objects I will consider are parceled out across Bloom's body in the numerous pockets of his suit (although he keeps one item, his PO card for Henry Flower, in the band of his hat), just as the public collections are not confined to buildings but spread over the urban body in statuary. And just as the public monuments have the tendency to become invisible because they are always in front of people's eyes, the things in Bloom's pockets make more contact with the external world and have a greater chance of being seen, but, in the end, they remain far more hidden than the objects in the house, are "Quite safe" (*U* 4.71) and therefore more completely private. Karen Lawrence asserts that the pockets in Bloom's suit act as "way stations between private and societal domains" (170), and indeed many of the items in the pockets are in the process of being conveyed from the outside world to the private domain (or being disposed of entirely): money, the oft-mentioned soap, the *Freeman's Journal*, the flyer for Agendath Netaim, *Sweets of Sin*, the kidney, the bread and chocolate. These objects are all more or less functional items that Bloom only holds in his pockets for a few hours or perhaps the whole day, but not longer (money being the only exception). Bloom keeps a few exclusively private things in his pockets, and these things are *not* circulating to the public sphere, but remaining always private, whether by staying in his pockets or being transferred back to his home. One of these things is the letter from Martha, which Bloom acquires in the morning, carries the entire day, and deposits in one of his drawers at night. She also sends him a flower, which he stows away in his heartpocket, where it remains, as far as we know (its last mention is in "Circe," when Bloom shows it to the Watch [*U* 15.738]). Bloom carries a few more long-term items in his pockets, however—things that he has saved for some time and that exist apart from any practical purpose: the potato belonging to Ellen Bloom, the French Letter, and the photograph of Molly. Carried next to his body at all times, these archival items are intimately

connected to Bloom's corporeal existence, expressing his fears of bodily loss or endangerment and ultimately emphasizing the particular limitations of a physical archive.

The potato is the first item that we know is stored in Bloom's pockets. Heading out to buy a kidney in "Calypso," he feels in his pockets for the latchkey, which is "Not there," but, "Potato I have" (*U* 4.72, 73). The potato surfaces again when Bloom, flustered by the sight of Boylan, searches his pockets for the soap: "I am looking for that. Yes, that. Try all pockets. Hanker. *Freeman*. Where did I? Ah, yes. Trousers. Potato. Purse. Where?" (*U* 8.1188-89). It achieves its greatest prominence and movement in "Circe," when Bloom, knowing he needs to "Beware of pickpockets," again checks for it, "pats with parceled hands watchfob, pocketbookpocket, pursepoke, sweets of sin, potatosoap," (*U* 15.245, 242-43), later is forced to relinquish it to the prostitute Zoe, "She puts the potato greedily into a pocket then links his arm, cuddling him with supple warmth" (*U* 15.1316-17), and then receives it back again when she "hauls up a reef of her slip, revealing her bare thigh, and unrolls the potato from the top of her stocking" (*U* 15.3524-25).

Only very short clues indicate why he keeps the potato. When he first arrives in Nighttown, he feels his trouser pocket for the potato, remarking, "Poor mamma's panacea" (*U* 15.201-02). Later he explains to Zoe that the potato is a "talisman. Heirloom" (*U* 15.1313), and when he tries to get it back from her, further clarifies: "It is nothing, but still, a relic of poor mamma . . . There is a memory attached to it. I should like to have it" (*U* 15.3513, 3520). When Ellen Bloom briefly appears in "Circe," she searches the pouch of her petticoat for her smelling salts, and amidst other superstitious items, a shriveled potato falls out (*U* 15.289). Thus, on the one hand, the potato is an heirloom, passed down from his mother and reminding him of her, and he honors her by carrying the potato with him always, as she did, rather than relegating it to a

drawer. But the potato is concerned with preserving the living Bloom as much as retaining the memory of his mother. When the Daughters of Erin say a Mass for Bloom, they beseech the intercession of several of Bloom's objects, but their climactic line is directed toward the potato and its powers over the physical realm: "Potato Preservative against Plague and Pestilence, pray for us" (*U* 15.1952). Ellmann points out that the potato is the most literal expression of Moly, the talismanic herb that protects Odysseus from Circe's magic (*Ulysses* 145). While Bloom wears the potato to remember his mother, he also seems to feel superstitious about it, if not consciously believing it will protect him from harm or at least the rheumatism ("Spud again the rheumatiz?" [*U* 14.1480-81], subconsciously deriving a sense of security from its presence, as if its continued existence in his pocket is an assurance of his continued life and well-being. But the history of the potato in Ireland as a key crop for the economy and a staple food and also, after the potato blight, a symbol of decay, balances the life-giving properties of the tuber against the unrelenting contaminants of the physical world. Ellen and Bloom are both Irish, and would both be well aware of the tenuousness of this balance. Their choice of the potato as a talisman is a conscious and hopeful decision, a wager that life will outweigh death. The potato, then, manifests Bloom's desire for life amidst deterioration, to be able to say, as he does when he attends Paddy's funeral, "Back to the world again. Enough of this place" (*U* 6.995-96). The archive here is not being deployed to symbolically continue Bloom's life after he is gone, to let him live on in objects; rather, the potato is being used to keep him alive, his physical self, in the here and now.

The second part of Bloom's pocketed collection rests in his pocketbook, the holy of holies of his archive, doubly-pocketed, doubly-secreted. We know of only two things in Bloom's pocketbook, a French Letter (condom) and a photograph of Molly, but both, like the potato, are concerned with Bloom's future existence as well as the past, Janus-faced artifacts that provide an

unexpected glimpse of what Derrida notes as the ultimate orientation of the archive, toward the future: a "spectral messianicity is at work in the concept of the archive and ties it, like religion, like history, like science itself, to a very singular experience of the promise" (*AF* 36). The condom is first mentioned in "Nausicaa," when, after masturbating, Bloom recalls, "French letter still in my pocketbook. Cause of half the trouble. But might happen sometime, I don't think" (*U* 13.877-78). Although this is not Bloom's only condom, it is the only one he keeps on his person and thus the only one he has readily available for sexual adventures. Molly refers to this specific condom when she reminds herself to check "if he has that French letter still in his pocketbook I suppose he thinks I dont know deceitful men all their 20 pockets arent enough for their lies" (*U* 18.1235-37). Since the condom remains unused, an un-opened, unread letter, it does not harbor the memory of an affair for Bloom, but like the rubber preservatives in his drawer, reminds him of his sexually-frustrated relationship with Molly. But the condom, similar to the potato, is primarily a physical preservative for Bloom, although less in its actual function as a prophylactic as for what it signifies. Bloom has likely possessed this condom for quite some time without using it, and it seems doubtful that he will avail himself of it in the future. Instead he insists on retaining this French letter—in spite of the fact that Molly has discovered it—because it hints at sexual adventure, signifying absent pleasure, without ever having to be used (much as another type of letter in his life, his correspondence with Martha, provides distant and safe titillation without leading to anything more). Preparation for action preserves him from action. By way of contrast, Molly and Blazes not only have sex, but they have sex without a condom, moving beyond letters, beyond the secure. Bloom instead remains within the safety of pure signification, preserving the French Letter because it preserves him from sexual relationships that may further damage his one with Molly. Milly's young lover Alec Bannon provides another name for

prophylactics when he mentions a *marchand de capotes,* or cloak merchant—a "cloak," according to Gifford, supplying another slang term for condom (14.776). The term works well applied to Bloom, for he functions as a sort of cloak merchant in the text, obtaining cloak after cloak, preservative after preservative, never using but always circulating, protecting himself against threatening physical entanglements by clothing himself with objects.

As the condom indicates, Molly is never far from Bloom's mind, but only one of the objects in all of his archive actually directly relates to her. Bloom keeps several photographs, the previously mentioned daguerreotype of Rudolph, two "fading photographs of queen Alexandra of England and of Maud Branscombe, actress and professional beauty" (*U* 17.1778-80), and pornographic photos, but the picture of Molly is the only one held with him at all times, like the glove he carried during their courtship to "think of [her]" (*U* 18.288). The photo only appears in "Eumaeus," where it acts, according to Peter Sims, as a palliative after the Sailor's progressively more terrifying display of objects from his "chamber of horrors, otherwise pocket" (*U* 16.588). For Sims, the photo "comes closer to symbolizing the pleasures of home more than anything else, and of course it does lead directly to the two men setting out for this destination" (253). The "pleasures of home" might more specifically be phrased as the pleasures of Molly; although the photo does not "do justice" (*U* 16.1445) to her opulent curves, it reminds Bloom of Molly in her prime[63] and also of course of her still ample frame. The photo is soiled and creased, implying that Bloom has handled it much and perhaps shown it to others before Stephen, so that it is both something to be folded away in an intimate space and an object of display, Bloom himself falling into the "Show! Hide! Show!" (*U* 15.3815) dynamic dramatized in "Circe" when he watches

[63] Molly does not fully agree, complaining later, "showing him my photo its not good of me I ought to have got it taken in drapery that never looks out of fashion still I look young in it I wonder he didnt make him a present of it altogether" (*U* 18.1302-05).

Boylan and Molly through a keyhole—his pleasure in holding and looking at the photo is only increased by sharing it with others. Thus while the condom guards Bloom from extra-marital physical contact, the photo renews his desire for Molly. If, as Barthes comments, a photograph proves that "this object has existed and that it has been there where I see it" (115), Bloom is using his photo of Molly as a constant reminder to himself of the physical presence of the woman he fell in love with, certainly a masochistic act since every reminder of his relationship with her, when he knows that she is committing adultery, evokes pain as well as pleasure. But keeping the photo is also comforting, a reassurance that Molly is still his wife and that they will remain together, so that Bloom's possession of the picture amounts to what E.M. Forster calls in *Howards End* "paying rent to the ideal" (33).[64]

Black suggests that Victorian collectors sought to "erect pasts and ensure futures to fill some ontological void even as the copia of collection threatened to fall back into the miscellany of debris" (99). When Bloom comments to Zoe that he "should like to have" the potato, Stephen interjects, "To have or not to have that is the question" (*U* 15.3522). Possession trumps ontology; for Bloom, possession *is* ontology. Without having things, he has no history and no future, and thus no self. And his pocketed archive is premised on the bond between things and body, so that his life and well-being are also dependent upon his archive, his physical as well as his metaphysical self. But the potato is shriveled, the French letter is old (both Bloom and Molly

[64] The role of Molly's photo in Bloom's life is mirrored in another object Bloom always keeps: the coin placed in his pocket at the internment of Mrs. Sinico (*U* 17.1452-54). The photo and coin do not preserve Bloom from physical ills (in the manner of the potato and condom), but rather, they promote a more robust life. The coin, reminding him of a woman who died, like his father, of the "love that kills" (*U* 6.997), stirs Bloom to pursue loves that bring him life. Thinking of his father and Mrs. Sinico at Paddy's funeral, Bloom reflects, "There is another world after death named hell. I do not like that other world she wrote. No more do I. Plenty to see and hear and feel yet. Feel live warm beings near you. Let them sleep in their maggoty beds. They are not going to get me this innings. Warm beds: warm fullblooded life" (*U* 6.1002-1005). The coin and the photo alike make Bloom realize his desire for a warm bed rather than a maggoty one.

remark that it is *still* in his pocketbook), and the photo is faded. Theodor Adorno, discussing Valéry and Proust's opposed thoughts on the value of the museum in "Valéry Proust Museum," observes the phonetic and symbolic relationship between museum and mausoleum, declaring, "Museums are like the family sepulchres of works of art" (175).[65] Throughout the essay he emphasizes both Valéry and Proust's belief in the mortality of artifacts, commenting of Proust that "what seems eternal . . . contains within itself the impulse of its own destruction" (178) and noting that according to Proust it is the disintegration of things that gives them their true beauty and their second life through the "saturnine gaze of memory" (182). Benjamin, acknowledging less beauty in disintegration than Proust, speaks in "One-Way Street" of the "degeneration of things, with which, emulating human decay, they punish humanity" (75). As Thomas Browne apostrophizes in *Urn Burial,* "Time which antiquates Antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things" (79).

Bloom keeps archived things in his pockets to stave off his bodily losses, but the objects bear on themselves the signs of their own disintegration, and in so doing testify to the eventual loss of objects and the decay of Bloom's archive as a whole.[66] The archive is threatened by its

[65] This remark echoes Marinetti's denouncement in his 1909 "Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism": "Museums, cemeteries!"

[66] Other objects outside of Bloom's archive bear marks of physical disintegration, emphasizing the tendency of material things to weaken and die, the same as bodies. Consider, for example, the broken commode, the creaky wardrobe, or all the teasingly-symbolic stopped timepieces, from Bloom's wristwatch (*U* 13.983-84), to Molly's watch (*U* 18.344-46) and the wedding clock (*U* 17.1335-36). And then there are the things not lost through disintegration but through dispossession, vanishing out of one context to come alive again in another: Bloom acquired his waterproof from the lost property office, where he also proposes to look for a pair of field glasses: "Might chance on a pair in the railway lost property office. Astonishing the things people leave behind them in trains and cloakrooms" (*U* 8.556-57). He also loses things himself, such as the florin that he marks with notches and then uses as payment in order to see if it will circulate "on the waters of civic finance" and return to him (*U* 17.980-84)—his own version of the play he notices in children: "Children always want to throw things in the sea. Trust? Bread cast on the waters" (*U* 13.1251-52). Even the dog Stephen encounters along the sea is "Looking for something lost in a past life" (*U* 3.333).

very structure. Derrida argues that the structure of the archive determines the structure of the content, and archivable meaning "is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives" (*AF* 18). For Bloom, the composition of an archive that is capable of decomposition not only means that the physical structure of his collection will not last; the multivalent meaning of his history, his autobiography, which are enclosed in his archive, is threatened by the same amnesia which will soon overtake Rudy's memory, unsustained as it is by a physical substrate. Derrida's point goes further: the very content incorporated into Bloom's archive was predetermined by the nature of his particular archive, a set of small physical sites, partially open to and partially hidden from the public eye. And thus the "meaning" of all of this content, these locations—the meaning behind Bloom's history—is necessarily circumscribed and must, by its very nature, forget and alter vast tracts of Bloom's life, composing certain narratives at the expense of others. Bloom and his archive are caught in a *folie à deux*, a delusion that completeness is possible, when such a state could never be achieved: there is no "last word" on the archive, nor would it be desirable.

Coda to *Ulysses*: Petite Mort

> Do you see that the man who has just skipped out of the way of the tram? Consider, if he had been run over, how significant every act of his would at once become. I don't mean for the police inspector. I mean for anybody who knew him. And his thoughts, for anybody that knew them. It is my idea of the significance of trivial things that I want to give the two or three unfortunate wretches who may eventually read me. –James Joyce to Stanislaus Joyce (qtd. in Ellmann, *JJ* 169)

In "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," Mieke Bal, asserting that "verbal texts are not the only objects capable of conveying a narrative" (98), considers how things can "be, or tell stories" (99) and specifically investigates collecting as a narrative, with a meaningful sequence of events; for Bal, "collecting is a story" (103). The public and private collectors in *Ulysses,* prompted by the fears and actualities of loss, narrate their histories through objects in an attempt to forge an identity and a world. But just as collecting itself, according to John Elsner, is a "cult of fragments" (155), the narratives constructed by the collections are fragmented, conflicting, and incomplete. Joyce's portrayal of Dublin's public spaces and objects captures the complexities of the political environment of Ireland in 1904, when the country's future was as undecided as its heterogeneous archives—a vexed identity and vexed materiality writ small in the life and archive of a single man, Leopold Bloom. Joyce begins his interrogation of history and the archive with the National Library, the National Museum, and the public statuary, but he finishes his deconstruction at the micro level, the level of the individual.

By drawing together multiple public archives that share a complicated history with Irish and British collectors and intermingled (and not always clear-cut) nationalist and imperialist agendas, Joyce demonstrates the circulations and contradictions of power and resists a binaristic stance on Ireland, choosing neither "covert imperial complicity" nor "postcolonial nationalist resistance," in the words of Jon Hegglund, but a perspective that "cannot be resolved into either one" (166).[67] Joyce emphasizes the ambiguities in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Irish history, but then he shows how ambiguities and unreliability become a part of every history, including that of a single person. Though Bloom's collection has only one archivist and thus

[67] Similarly, Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes offer a way out of these binaries by suggesting that Joyce is "semicolonial," his writings evincing a "complex and ambivalent set of attitudes, not reducible to simple anticolonialism but very far from expressing approval of the colonial organizations and methods under which Ireland had suffered" (3).

achieves a single-mindedness not possible to the public archives, the collection itself fails to fully conserve Bloom's life, leaving gaps, accentuating the futility of trying to preserve the lost, and threatening to ultimately crumble into oblivion. Through these public and private histories, Joyce offers an implicit critique of any understanding of a culture or a person that is reliant upon the concept and structure of the archive. Every archive in *Ulysses*, whether public or private, is an anti-archive, always working against its own agenda of completeness, continuity, consonance, and presence, because history is not so reducible, and memory, as Michel de Certeau declares, "is a sort of anti-museum: it is not localizable" (108). The aporias Joyce opens in the archive allow no easy pronouncements and no resolution, but rather than paralyzing they animate the narratives of nations and individuals, inhibiting monolithic interpretations and mobilizing new reckonings. The way through Scylla and Charybdis is to "Cease to strive" (*U* 9.1221).

And yet Joyce himself succumbed to the fever of the archive. Purporting to create an archive of Dublin in his own work, he collected the city as he, his friends, and *Thom's Directory* knew it, and transmuted the material city into words, locking it within what Benjamin calls the "magic encyclopedia" of narrative (*AP* 207). On the one hand this narrative archiving enabled Joyce to hold on to a city that he had lost through time and through exile, to have it near him like the map and photographs of Dublin he requested while in Rome, or the addresses he wanted to write at the top of each page in *Chamber Music* "so that when I open the book I can revisit the places where I wrote the different songs" (qtd. in Ellmann, *JJ* 241). But Joyce was not just engaged in the project of preserving Dublin, saving it to help him and others remember it. He wanted it remembered as he chose for it to be remembered. As he once wrote to Nora, complaining that there was a time before he knew her, "I will ask you, my darling, to be patient with me. I am absurdly jealous of the past" (qtd. in Ellmann, *JJ* 292). Since Joyce could not

control the past any more than he could hold on to the material things that were always drifting in and out of his life, he constructed a narrative, attempting to control memory and space itself through language, blending verifiable facts with suppositions, fabrications, and omissions in his own version of the city's history. And because the narrative of *Ulysses* is closed, unlike the history of Ireland, then Joyce could keep his archive bounded, lending it the pressing significance of the finite, as he pointed out in his anecdote to Stanislaus of the man who skipped out of the way of the tram. By closing off his archive of Dublin, Joyce gave it an end, a figurative death. In "The Storyteller," Benjamin proposes that the meaning of life is only revealed in death, in remembered life, and that the reader of a novel looks for the meaning in the death of a character or the "death"—the end—of the narrative: "What draws the reader to the novel is the hope of warming his shivering life with a death he reads about" (101). Or, to adapt what he says in "Unpacking My Library": "Only in extinction is the collect[ion] comprehended" (67). For Joyce, the "death" of the archive does not impart an all-encompassing meaning to all that came before so much as stress the "significance of trivial things" that constitute nations, cities, public lives, private lives, and archives.

I would suggest that Joyce, as with the other archivists whose collections populate *Ulysses,* was driven, albeit subconsciously, by a knowledge of death, the desire to hold on to the material world stemming from a fear of losing himself. Benjamin states it unequivocally: "with individuals as with societies, the need to accumulate is one of the signs of approaching death" (*AP* 207-08). Huyssen, in *Twilight Memories,* declares that the museum (much like the archive) enables moderns to "articulate a relation to the past that is always also a relation to the transitory and to death, our own included" (16). *Ulysses,* then, might be read as a long exercise in death, a passage into the underworld that commences before and persists long after the "Hades"

episode—a text that negotiates a plurality of deaths, or premonitions of death, from that of the author to those of nations, empires, and individuals. But if the collections in Joyce's novel exhibit the archival desire to preserve in the face of death, they also manifest the opposite drive, to extinguish, to nullify. As Derrida claims, "that which permits and conditions archivization . . . exposes to destruction, and in truth menaces with destruction, introducing, *a priori*, forgetfulness and the archiviolithic into the heart of the monument." The death drive, which works in tandem with the erotic desire to conserve, has as its "silent vocation" to "burn the archive and incite amnesia" (*AF* 12). As if to insist on this darker vocation, a history of literal burning parallels the figurative immolations in *Ulysses*: the Crystal Palace, the forerunner of the Library and Museum, was destroyed by fire in 1936 ("Crystal Palace"), and the Custom House and Public Records Office in Dublin, both major repositories of Irish national records, some dating back to the thirteenth century, were burned by the IRA in 1921 and 1922, respectively (Sheehan 53-54; "History"). Joyce's jest to Frank Budgen about using *Ulysses* to reconstruct Dublin if it were destroyed assumes a sober tone in light of some of the events of the twentieth century. But according to Derrida, referring back to Freud, there is no future without this specter of oedipal violence, damaging and wiping away the institution of the archive. Without the death drive, "without this evil, which is also *archive fever*, the desire and the disorder of the archive, there would be neither assignation nor consignation" (*AF* 80-81). The anti-archive *is* the archive, producing through what it takes away, like the Irish nationalist Robert Emmet's last words, recorded in fragments at the end of "Sirens": "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth then and not till then, let my epitaph be written" (*U* 11.1284-91): his words against an epitaph are his epitaph.

Remembering, then, becomes the impossible: no lasting memory without the archive, no inviolate remembering with it. Archiving, trying to do its work, which is the work of death—holding on to the lost, incorporating the absent, speaking in the face of the void—and failing, always breaking off, like Bloom's disrupted cogito on the beach in "Nausicaa": "I . . . AM. A," abandoned by him because "All fades" (*U* 13.1258, 1264, 1267), thus assumes the form of mourning, itself another necessity and another impossibility. But "mourn we *must*" (Derrida, "The Taste of Tears" 110), and it seems that archiving we *must.* At the end of *Minima Moralia*, Adorno writes that the "only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption," but concludes, "beside the demand thus placed on thought, the question of the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters" (247). The impossibility of a redemptive archiving, one that forms a perfect history, a lasting memory, does not preclude the importance of attempting an archive, or of contemplating life as if it were possible to hold on to it.

CHAPTER THREE: *DISJECTA MEMBRA*: SEVERED HISTORY AND PROSTHETIC MATERIALITY IN *THE YEARS*

Body Language

Writing in her diary a few years after the end of the First World War, Virginia Woolf remarks that she has been intending to compose a "historical disquisition on the return of peace" though "the history books will make it much more definite than it is" (*Diary* II, 92). She records what she sees as two "just perceptibl[e]" signs of peace: cheap goods and few soldiers—thus juxtaposing objects and bodies, specifically plentiful objects, absent bodies, in her description of a reconstructing England. But then she complicates her discussion. Speaking of the "very few wounded soldiers abroad in blue," she observes,

> though stiff legs, single legs, sticks shod with rubber, & empty sleeves are common enough. Also at Waterloo I sometimes see dreadful looking spiders propelling themselves along the platform—men all body—legs trimmed off close to the body. (*Diary* II, 93)[68]

The bodies of these former soldiers bear visible signs of the past, of loss, and of attempts to reconstruct themselves: "sticks shod with rubber." Objects and bodies are juxtaposed again, but now more intimately: the object, as a prosthesis, is replacing the missing limb; the plentiful

[68] Amputees with prosthetics recur elsewhere in Woolf's early diaries: "Saw . . . a man without a hand, a hook instead" (*Diary* I, 41); "Passed German prisoners, cutting wheat with hooks" (*Diary* I, 41); "Already I've half forgotten the soldier with the nickel knee plate & the metal arch to his foot" (*Diary* I, 177). I am indebted to Oliver Taylor in "D.H. Lawrence's and Virginia Woolf's Hands" for drawing my attention to these references.

object is conjoined to the absent body—a sign perhaps of the return of peace, but also of the eternal return of rupture.[69] Woolf's own readings and writings about the war adopt this same recursiveness: years later, as she prepared to draft the "1917" section of *The Years*, she noted, "To freshen my memory of the war, I read some old diaries. How close the tears come, again & again. . . . The sense of all that floating away for ever down the stream, unknown for ever: queer sense of the past swallowing so much of oneself" (*Diary* IV, 193). The past simultaneously drifts away, consigned to oblivion, and is present, swallowing the living, the *Here and Now*, as Woolf originally titled *The Years* (Lee 629). The past has the weight of a phantom limb, and at times, the uncanny force of a prosthesis.

Writing after one war in a landscape of corporeal lack and artificial surrogate, and composing proleptically in the shadow of an impending war and its physical devastations, Woolf projects images of fractured people and nations and spectral places and objects onto *The Years*, her ambitious text of 1937 that attempts to trace English history and culture from 1880 to the 1930s. The hybrid of human and non-human, embodied in the figure of an amputee with a

[69] As Rhoda remarks on the First World War in *The Waves*, "like the relics of an army, our representatives, going every night . . . to battle, and coming back every night with their wounds, their ravaged faces" (170). Although Woolf would have encountered veterans from a variety of wars—the Crimean, the Indian Mutiny, the Boer—most of her contact with amputees—and with prosthetics—would have come from WWI. The Great War, with its industrialized weaponry that tore bodies apart and blasted off limbs, left an unprecedented amount of bodily damage, and in addition to the 272,000 men who seriously injured their limbs in battle, an estimated 41,000 British soldiers had limbs surgically amputated, according to Joanna Bourke (33). As these military amputees returned home and joined the wider constituency of disabled people in Britain, limblessness became normalized (Bourke 60). But the demand for prosthetics after the war was higher than it had ever been; Mary Guyatt records that the British government guaranteed a free artificial limb to all amputee ex-servicemen (312), and in consequence, WWI led to significant developments in the design and production of artificial limbs (310-11). This re-membering of the body had ideological as well as practical dimensions: while amputees heroically bore on their bodies the sign of their valor and sacrifice, their missing limbs were, according to Guyatt, "one of the most visible reminders of war," and it was only by concealing the loss could the country "begin to move forward seemingly cleansed and guilt-free" (14). See Fineman for a chronicle of prosthetics in Germany following WWI.

prosthetic limb, serves as a template for understanding Woolf's representation of the human subject's relationship to its material environment as both subject and object confront losses of the past and reckon with future annihilation. When she conceived of the text in 1931, Woolf envisioned *The Years* as a condition-of-England novel, one that would convey "the whole of the present society—nothing less: facts, as well as the vision. And to combine them both. I mean, *The Waves* going on simultaneously with *Night and Day*" (*Diary* IV, 151-52). For Woolf, the novel of facts, exemplified by *Night and Day*, emphasizes the material aspects of its created world, so that readers feel "wedged among solid objects in a solid universe" (94), as she discusses in "Phases of Fiction." The novel of vision, on the other hand, stresses the internal consciousness of the characters (as demonstrated in *The Waves*). *The Years,* then, would itself be a hybrid—between the material and the spiritual—but this hybrid would always be an uneasy one: when proposing it she asked in her diary, "Is this possible?" (152) and later would write, "I have a sense that one cannot control this terrible fluctuation between the two worlds" (*Diary* IV, 350).[70]

Critics have long interpreted Woolf as a writer of subjectivity, of the vision, not the facts. Erich Auerbach's reading of Woolf in *Mimesis* is exemplary of this school of thought; for Auerbach, in Woolf, "the writer as narrator of objective facts has almost completely vanished; almost everything stated appears by way of reflection in the consciousness of the dramatis personae" (534). Her concern is with "inner processes" more than "exterior occurrence" (529). But some recent scholars, notably Bill Brown and Douglas Mao, have challenged this view: they argue that the object rather than the subject lies at the heart of Woolf's fiction. In Mao's words,

[70] Woolf's original intention went even further: she initially attempted to intersperse the fictional chapters with essays, but she could not reconcile the demands of these two forms. As a result, her material/spiritual vision was essayed in the form and content of the novel alone. See Leaska's and Radin's studies of the evolution of *The Years*.

Woolf's writing is centrally animated by an "admiration for an object world beyond the manipulations of consciousness" (11). Brown considers the ethics inherent in Woolf "activat[ing] for the fragment a life of its own" (12)—a life independent of human subjectivity.[71] Timothy Mackin, however, in his study of *To the Lighthouse,* contends that Woolf does not want to see writing as a choice between inner and outer life, positing that "If her writing repeatedly enacts the difficulty of trying to reconcile subject and object, mind and world, this doesn't mean she views them as irreconcilable. It means that their reconciliation is what she's trying to achieve" (115).

Following Mackin, I propose that *The Years* represents Woolf's most sustained attempt at grafting together at the narrative level vision and fact, subject and object, and that these narrative trials reflect the troubled couplings of humans and their physical environment within the text itself. I will consider a few representative material things in Woolf's novel, exploring how they are functioning as prostheses for the human subjects who live amidst them. These things are not prosthetics in the usual bodily sense; there are no wooden legs in *The Years,* no hooks for hands, though the text is filled with broken bodies, from Abel Pargiter's missing fingers to Sara's deformed shoulder, the flower-seller with no nose and the toeless gardener.[72] Rather, as North declares near the end of the novel, "we are all deformed" (361)—crippled in a manner more vast and more profound than physical damage. The brokenness exposed in *The Years* is wide-ranging

[71] In *The Phantom Table*, Ann Banfield studies Woolf's relationship to philosophical and aesthetic theories of her time, and particularly examines how Woolf's view of reality was influenced by Bertrand Russell. According to Banfield, Woolf, like Russell, was suspicious of the "I" and wanted to strive for a "subject-less subjectivity." Similarly, Michael Levenson, in *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality*, considers how *To the Lighthouse* "envisions the natural world set free of interpreters" (207). See also Emily Dalgarno, who argues that Woolf's subject arises out of experience with the visible and the non-visible.

[72] See (among other examples) pp. 12-13; 115; 133; 223; 334.

and systemic, a disability of the national and social body rather than the physical body: the novel outlines the depredations of war, empire, heteronormative male domination, and the class system on both the English nation and the English family. Though she reserves her more direct political content and polemical tone for *Three Guineas,* the essay that grew out of the novel, *The Years* remains Woolf's most unflinchingly ideological work of fiction, examining the splintered nature of English society and proposing, through "millions of ideas but no preaching" (*Diary* IV, 152), potentially better alternatives.[73]

In this chapter, I am focusing on an area of debility depicted in Woolf's novel: dependence on the past, specifically the recent nineteenth-century past. This type of debility, however, cannot be categorized separately from all the other practices and institutions Woolf denounces (patriarchy, empire, war, etc), but in many ways acts as an overarching term for these problematic structures, since they were each crucial to the operations of England in the nineteenth century. Discussing "the past," then, *in toto*, becomes Woolf's way of critiquing not just one system, but the entire anatomy of the Victorian age. She viewed the continued reliance on the past—a touchstone in the midst of the rapid transition and violent loss of the twentieth century—as ultimately more wounding than enabling. Although for a time this prosthetic relationship had offered both individuals and the British nation an anchoring to their memory and identity, a sense of wholeness and continuity as the old order slipped away, over the decades it further debilitated the English people. Woolf explores the etiology of this conjunctive pairing between humans and the past, using the coupling as a way to understand the present and to suggest what needs to be decentered or cast off before a better future can be attempted.

[73] For some particularly insightful studies dealing with *The Years* as a political and social commentary, see Zwerdling, Marcus, Phillips, Weihman, and Dalgarno ("A British War and Peace").

The span of time (approximately five decades) encompassed in *The Years* was a period of enormous and irrevocable change in Britain: during these years, the nation suffered through a world war and beheld the decline of its global preeminence and the slow erosion of its empire; experienced the shifting of its class system and the gradual redefining of the roles for women; and witnessed the implementation of major innovations in technology and transportation (the telephone, radio, car, and airplane, among others). While some of these seismic changes were hailed as signs of progress for many in Britain, other developments elicited, at best, deep ambivalence, and at worst—as with WWI—an unshakable sense of loss and dread. Writing of the pessimism on the rise toward the end of England's "imperial century," Ronald Hyam records the words of two men whose remarks fittingly bookend the era outlined in Woolf's novel.[74] The Liberal politician Meredith Townsend comments in 1888: "For whether for good or evil, a great change is passing over Englishmen. They have become uncertain of themselves, afraid of their old opinions, doubtful of the true teaching of their consciences" (qtd. in Hyam 190). And the Reverend F.A. Simpson, speaking in 1932, elegizes:

> those who would have been the light and lamp of our own generation, which now halts and stumbles, robbed of its natural leaders, towards its night . . . the chief thing to remember about our leaders in the next dozen years ahead of us is this: that most of them were not meant to be our leaders at all. They are only the last and worst of our war substitutes. Our true leaders, as well as in literature and the arts as in public life . . . our true leaders were taken from our head now nearly twenty years ago: when a generation was not decimated but decapitated; not

[74] Stephen Arata's *Fictions of Loss* also considers how a prevalent sense of decline—national, biological, and aesthetic—marks writings of the *fin de siècle*.

> mauled at mere haphazard, but shorn precisely of its grace and glory . . . Our born leaders are dead. (337)

Reflecting on years that began in uncertainty and fear and ended in decapitation, mauling, and the last and worst of substitutes, Woolf portrays a society weakened and dependent on representations of the past as embodied in certain physical artifacts. Using the prosthesis as a discursive framework, I will turn my discussion of *The Years* on the homes and objects belonging to the Pargiter family, a representative upper middle-class, late-Victorian family ("What could be more ordinary? . . . A large family, living in a large house" [160]) who typify Britain's vexed relationship with its history. I will focus particularly on one central space and three objects in the novel. The space, the family home of Abel and Rose Pargiter, most comprehensively incarnates Woolf's troubled conception of the Victorian age and hence signifies the diseased limb that must be amputated as the family moves into the twentieth century. As this family home (and the home of Digby and Eugénie Pargiter) is lost, moved away from and sold, various remaining objects become figurative supports for the Pargiter family, helping them remember what is gone, negotiate a sense of emptiness in the present, and approach the uncertainty of the future. The characters do not relate to the past univocally, however, as either a site of stability or a site of upheaval. Their relationship to history is divided and changeable, neither one of unquestioned nostalgia nor traumatic repetition. Woolf thus interrogates the conflicted essence of this prosthetic bond and ponders something beyond dependency or lack.

Woolf's biographer Hermione Lee writes that *The Years* "is a kind of crippled text, which disables itself while writing about a disabled society" (665). Woolf struggled to compose *The Years* and often considered it, as many readers have since, a failure. Her ambitions for the novel,

balanced against her attempt to imitate Turgenev's "long struggle of elimination" ("The Novels of Turgenev")—writing and re-writing to "clear the truth of the unessential" (*Diary* IV, 172)—prolonged the composition of the novel to five years, with a first draft of 900 pages that had to be painfully and repeatedly compacted while Woolf wrestled with a conviction that "'the impossible eternal book' . . . was no good at all" and that with the inevitability of war, "her work might be futile" (Lee 654). As she neared the end of her rewriting, "[her] book decay[ing] upon [her] like the body of the albatross" (*Letters* V, 447), she experienced a physical and emotional breakdown that hindered her from working for months; her diary contains the notation, "never been so near the precipice to my own feeling since 1913" (*Diary* V, 24). So Woolf emerged from writing *The Years* in a state of desolation, her life mirroring her text in an intricate layering of debilitation and collapse. A few years earlier, in *The Waves*, Woolf had written, "We must oppose the waste and deformity of the world, its crowds eddying round and round disgorged and trampling. . . . Everything must be done to rebuke the horror of deformity" (131). *The Years* may arguably break down under the strain of its subject matter, becoming a work, in David Wills' words, "that must fail even as it succeeds . . . a writing the imprecision of whose articulations will necessarily approach the impossible" (14). But in the novel's weakness it exposes other weaknesses, the individual and cultural failings that compose the waste and deformity of the world. And it still offers opportunities for change, possible responses for the "And now?" The material things in Woolf's novel are the unlikely emblems both for this devastation and this renewed afterlife.

Caesura

Borrowed from the Greek, the word *prosthesis* first appeared in English in 1553, according to the *OED.* The word was initially used only in its grammatical sense, as the addition

of a syllable or letter to the beginning of a word. By 1706, however, the word was also being employed as a medical term to mean "that which fills up what is wanting, as is to be seen in fistulous and hollow Ulcers, filled up with Flesh by that Art: Also the making of artificial Legs and Arms, when the natural ones are lost." As Marquard Smith and Joanne Morra point out in their introduction to *The Prosthetic Impulse,* these two definitions of prosthetic, rhetorical and material, addition and replacement, have persisted to this day (2, 11). The prosthesis has always been metaphorical as much as it is literal.[75] Sarah Jain describes it as "the joining of materials, naturalizations, excorporations, and semiotic transfer that also go far beyond the medical definition of 'replacement of a missing part'" (32). My study of the prosthesis in Woolf will draw particularly from David Wills' *Prosthesis*, and his appropriately indefinite definition of the prosthesis as "being about nothing if not placement, displacement, replacement, standing, dislodging, substituting, setting, amputating, supplementing . . . whatever arises out of that relation, and of that relation itself, of the sense and functioning of articulations between matters of two putatively distinct orders" (9-10).

Whether metaphorical or literal, the prosthesis always complicates the body it is joined to, problematizing notions of wholeness and lack, naturalness and artificiality, and creating new combinations, hybrids that at times have an unforeseen power, but that are also inadequate and

[75] The figural usage of prosthesis has flourished in the literature from a variety of disciplines as what Jain calls a "theoretical tool." Donna Haraway's 1985 essay "The Cyborg Manifesto" prompted such a strong outpouring of enthusiasm for the prosthetic in all its dimensions that Smith and Morra caution that "'the prosthetic' has similarly begun to assume an epic status that is out of proportion with its abilities to fulfill our ambitions for it" (2). They advocate for a critical interrogation of the trope that does not reactively dismiss its metaphorical possibilities and that concerns itself with investigating "the historical and conceptual edges between 'the human' and the posthuman" (3). Jain likewise notes that the prosthesis can be a useful metaphor insofar as it highlights its retroactive wounding and dis-abling. See, among many notable examples, Hayles; Lury; Scarry; Virilio; Wigley; and the essays in Smith and Morra. Derrida attends to the question of language and prosthesis in *Monolinguism*.

painful. Freud, who himself wore a prosthetic palate after surgery for throat cancer,[76] attends to these different aspects of the prosthesis in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (which, notably, was published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press in 1930). He writes:

> With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning. . . . Man has, as it were, become a prosthetic god. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent: but those organs have not grown on him and they still give him much trouble at times. Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginable great advances . . . and will increase man's likeness to God still more. But . . . we will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character. (42)

Although Freud regards the prosthetic ultimately as an advancement, a positive extension, he acknowledges the friction underlying this assimilation of otherness. As I consider metaphorical prosthetics in *The Years,* I will draw particular attention to the frustrations surrounding them, the desire for seamlessness and the perpetual confrontation with disjunction, throbbing interstices. But in spite of their disturbed articulation, an exercise in failure, Woolf indicates how the subject and object share a common teleology, a common eschatology, using similar language to talk about things as to talk about people. As the novel observes, referring both to people and to their material environment, "the years changed things; destroyed things; heaped things up" (256-57): the fate of one is the fate of the other, the object and the subject are equalized, both dependent on one another and both vulnerable to alienation and the depredations of time. Objects as well as

[76] Wills provides a description of Freud's prosthetic, called "the monster" for its difficulty of use and for the unbearable pain it caused (*Prosthesis* 92). Freud was well acquainted with the troubles underlying the benefits of prosthetics.

subjects become transient and spectral.[77] Although the juncture of prosthesis and body holds no messianic potential, its dramatic repositioning or rupturing offer the possibility, for Woolf, of redeeming the present (and future), of "shearing off all one's faculties, one by one, but leaving something alive in the centre" (*The Years* 145). This redemption applies to both human and non-human. Woolf's examination of the prosthetic relationship between humans and things in *The Years* takes a critical stance not only on the nineteenth century and its troubled junctures, but on the novel's present day, seeking to do more than understand the past but to express a realizable vision for the future.

A Haunted House

When Rose Pargiter visits her cousins Maggie and Sara in the "1910" section of *The Years*, she mentions to them that she had once lived near Hyams Place, prompting Sara to remark, "'We thought you lived in Abercorn Terrace'" (157). Rose is brusque: "'Can't one live in more places than one?'" (157). But in spite of her vexation at being associated with just one place, and that place her childhood home, Rose joins in with Maggie and Sara's reminiscences about the house, thinking, "Her past seemed to be rising above her present. And for some reason she wanted to talk about her past; to tell them something about herself that she had never told anybody—something hidden" (158). They discuss Abercorn Terrace and its old inhabitants as if, Rose reflects, they were real, "but not real in the way in which she felt herself to be real" (158). Rose feels divided, like she is two different people at the same time, "living at two different

[77] Although Woolf would not go so far as Latour to entirely dismantle the subject/object dialectic, she does question ontological distinctions between the two and demonstrates patterns of transference and translation. For Latour's analysis of modernity's "purification" of subject/object boundaries, see *We Have Never Been Modern.*

times at the same moment" (158-59). In the end, she never tells them the hidden thing about her past, wondering what is the use, and "what is one's past?" (159).

This scene captures the central tensions animating (and enervating) the Pargiter family's relationship with the family home: a place that they are all identified with, even after moving out; a place that connects them (and yet not quite) to each other and to earlier versions of themselves; and a place that signifies the past, with both its reassuring memories and its hidden traumatic episodes.[78] Rose, like most of her family, has moved out of Abercorn Terrace, has attempted to shed the house as a parasitic organism, but it continues to weigh on her and define her, even as something no longer quite real, a phantom limb. The family home in *The Years* is bound through multiple associations to all that Woolf found most crippling in the Victorian age, but particularly its attitudes toward gender and class. And because, according to Sharon Marcus, the Victorian house was built to act as "a bulwark against the losses effected by the passage of time and as an embodiment of a persistent, unchanging version of the past that could be transmitted to future generations" (92), then these crippling associations threatened to live on well into the new century. Tracking the life of the house in nearly every section of the novel, a parallel to the life of the family and the life of the nation, Woolf first renders Abercorn Terrace as a type of diseased appendage, deadening the vitality of the family; as the years pass, she

[78] One of the titles Woolf considered for *The Years*, "Other People's Houses," (*Diary* IV, 335) is both illuminating and deceiving. For while she introduces us to many different houses in the course of the novel, from country estates to cheap provisional flats, the text circulates around Abercorn Terrace. Digby and Eugénie Pargiter's house in Browne Street, however, plays a significant role in shaping Maggie and Sara. Although the house in Browne Street, untidy and breezy with open windows, is different from Abercorn Terrace in its material atmosphere, it is still a place rooted in the conflicts, the repressions, and the superfluities of the nineteenth century. And Digby and Eugénie's house follows the same orbit as Abercorn Terrace: it too remains the family home into the twentieth century, when the patriarch (preceded by the matriarch) dies. Then it, like Abercorn, is sold, leaving the next generation to find new, and often transitory, places of residence.

indicates how it begins to be gradually and painfully ablated, leaving the Pargiters with a sense of release but also a painful, disconcerting absence.

Mitchell Leaska speaks of the "1880" section of *The Years* (when Abercorn Terrace is introduced and given its fullest delineation) as "thinly veiled autobiography parading in the vestment of fiction" (177). It is well documented that the Pargiter family home is based on 22 Hyde Park Gate, where Woolf lived the first twenty-two years of her life.[79] In her essays for the Memoir Club, "22 Hyde Park Gate" and "Old Bloomsbury" and her later memoir, "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf describes the material and phenomenological aspects of the house, noting that Bloomsbury "could never have meant what it did had not 22 Hyde Park Gate preceded it" ("Old Bloomsbury" 182). Although she had moved out of the house many years before, it thus continued to be a formative presence in her life—an experience that she writes into *The Years.*

Karen Chase and Michael Levenson argue that "The ambitions of the midcentury family, its longing for privacy and its fear of exposure, were not only enacted through image, idea, and emotion; they were performed in rooms, among objects, near streets . . . Victorian domesticity was as much a spatial as an affective obsession" (143). The Victorian domestic ambitions of the Stephen family were everywhere evident in the organization and decoration of 22 Hyde Park Gate, which Woolf called a "complete model of Victorian society" ("A Sketch" 147). Situated in Kensington,[80] the rowhouse sat on a quiet street and was quiet within, all sounds muffled by the carpets and plush furniture. The house was also dark, in part because of the narrow street and in

[79] Abercorn Terrace, however, is not a real place, although Dorothy Brewster surmises that Woolf placed it in St John's Wood, with its locations of Abercorn Place, Abercorn Mews, and Abercorn Close (85). Jane Marcus takes a more figurative reading, speculating on the symbolic meanings of "abier" (denoting dead but unburied), and "corn" and "terrace" (signifying death and rebirth) (40).

[80] Their house was therefore not only ideally located for a family home in a quiet, respectable neighborhood, but was also immersed in the heart of nineteenth-century British monarchical and imperial structures and institutions: Kensington Palace, the South Kensington Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and the grandiose Albert Memorial, among others.

part because of Julia Stephen's taste, influenced by the "Watts-Venetian-little Holland House tradition" that "covered the furniture in red velvet and painted the woodwork black with thin gold lines upon it" ("Old Bloomsbury" 183). As Woolf writes in "22 Hyde Park Gate," "We were still much under the influence of Titian. Mounds of plush, Watts' portraits, busts shrined in crimson velvet, enriched the gloom of a room naturally dark and thickly shaded in summer by showers of Virginia Creeper" (164). This perpetually twilight atmosphere would have produced a feeling of retreat and insulation from the world but also of suffocation, and the oppressiveness of the décor was intensified by the crowdedness of the dwelling: ten family members plus servants living in small rooms whose ceilings, according to Victoria Rosner, were progressively lower on each succeeding story after the basement (72). And all these people further littered the rooms with their things. Woolf remembers,

> These three families had poured all their possessions into this one house. One never knew when one rummaged in the many dark cupboards and wardrobes whether one would disinter Herbert Duckworth's barrister's wig, my father's clergyman's collar, or a sheet scribbled over with drawings by Thackeray . . . Old letters filled dozens of black tin boxes. One opened them and got a terrific whiff of the past. There were chests of heavy family plate. There were hoards of china and glass. ("Old Bloomsbury" 182)

In "A Sketch of the Past" she provides an even more thorough chronicle of the heavy furnishings and abundant objects cluttering the home, listing everything from blue-china dumbwaiters to plush gloves for smoothing the silk of tophats (117). Attempts were made to organize the spaces: the family had their drawing room on the first floor, the seven maids had their sitting room in the

basement;[81] moreover, Woolf notes the presence of black folding doors ("How could family life have been carried on without them?" ["22 Hyde Park Gate" 164]), a particularly Victorian endeavor toward what Michael Levenson calls the "fantasy of spatial equilibrium and social articulation" (4). Woolf's house was dense with people and objects, and attempts at arrangement and distribution only amplified its atmosphere of confinement.

Woolf's slightly nostalgic, often uneasy reminiscences of 22 Hyde Park Gate find further expression in her depiction of the Pargiters' home in the first section of *The Years*.[82] Abercorn Terrace, the "large, architecturally insignificant, but no doubt convenient family mansion" (140) is pictured as a place of darkness, silence, and confinement, choking with massive furnishings and heirlooms, "carved chairs, oil paintings, the two daggers on the mantelpiece, and the handsome sideboard" (33), and littered with daily appurtenances. Woolf frequently notes the excess of stuff: "There were many plates and cups as if other people were coming"; "The room was full of furniture"; "what a number of chairs there were." The description of the maid Crosby cleaning up all the tea things and bringing in items to prepare the drawing room for the evening reads like a farce.[83] Many of these things are kept not because they are particularly useful in the

[81] When one of the maids complained that the basement was "like hell," she was banished "behind the red plush curtain which, hooped round a semi-circular wire, and anchored by a great gold knob, hid the door that led from the dining room to the pantry" ("A Sketch" 116-17).

[82] Leslie K. Hankins, who pairs Woolf with Walter Benjamin, points out the fascination for both with the bourgeois *intérieur*, noting how they combine nostalgia for the institutions they critiqued, but also a "repudiation of the past, providing that mix of attachment and loathing that gives the dialectical push to a new consciousness" (9).

[83] When Orlando travels through London in the nineteenth century, she is dismayed by the accumulation of stuff in St. James's Park: "a conglomeration at any rate of the most heterogeneous and ill-assorted objects, piled higgledy-piggledy in a vast mound where the statue of Queen Victoria now stands! Draped about a vast cross of fretted and floriated gold were widow's weeds and bridal veils; hooked on to other excrescences were crystal palaces, bassinettes, military helmets, memorial wreaths, trousers, whiskers, wedding cakes, anon, Christmas trees, telescopes, extinct monsters, globes, maps, elephants and mathematical instruments—the whole supported like a gigantic coat of arms on the right side by a female figure clothed in flowing white; on the left, by a portly gentleman wearing a frock-coat and sponge-bag

present, but simply because they belonged to the past. When the first scene in the house begins, Milly and Delia are making tea with an old brass kettle, but are frustrated at the kettle's slowness in boiling. Milly tries fraying the wick underneath the kettle to increase the size of the flame, but to no avail, and they wait, Delia wondering, "How can I put a stop to this fiddling and trifling" (10). The object, the kettle, no longer works effectively, but has been kept, seemingly, for some kind of memory—the same sort of memory that prompts Colonel Pargiter to sip every day from a teacup that belonged to his father, even though he detests tea (12). Available surfaces are covered with pictures, but even these pictures beckon towards the past: a drawing of Mrs. Pargiter's grandfather, a photograph of her uncle in uniform, a miniature of her father, and, of course, a painting of Mrs. Pargiter herself (which I will discuss later).[84] None of this surfeit of things provides a sense of rich abundance or even comfort, and the physical restrictions of the rooms and the velvet-swathed windows and furniture do not produce a feeling of snugness and warmth. Instead, the crowdedness is overpowering, the constrictions insufferable.[85]

Inside this claustrophobic, shadowy home, the Pargiters live frustrated lives, bound to old ways of doing things and unable to find meaning or full expression. "Somewhere there's beauty," Delia thinks, "somewhere there's freedom" (11) but it is not inside Abercorn Terrace or indeed anywhere in their immediate environs. Abel Pargiter lives out his days in the club, surrounded by fellow soldiers and civil servants discussing the old days in the colonies. Though

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trousers." For Orlando, the overwhelming number of things on this monument is "indecent" and "hideous," the more so because it all looks like "it were destined to endure for ever" (170).

[84] Compare to the Hilberys' room of heirlooms in *Night and Day* (15-16).

[85] Similarly, after Kitty Malone visits the Robsons' home, she is struck by how her own dining room "with its hanging creepers and its vast cracked canvases was so dark," noting how "the old gentleman who had ruled the college over a hundred years ago seemed to vanish in the daytime, but he came back when the lamps were lit" (72-73). In contrast, the Robsons' home is small, crowded with "hideous" objects, but full of sunlight and noise from the outside.

his eyes look as if "the glare of the East were still in them," he no longer finds interest in what the other men have to say: "He was out of it all . . . he had no longer any finger in that pie" (5). His mistress no longer gives him satisfaction, and yet he continues to visit her, feeling each time a sense of shame, of embarrassment, as he walks to her rooms and waits to be let in. He realizes "for him there was nothing to do" (5). His dying wife prevents him from moving out of London and into the country, and even if she were to die, "But then there was the house; then there were the children" (5).

These burdensome children living in this burdensome house are even more disappointed and restless than their father; Woolf presents them as models of frustrated activity: "Morris had a book in his hand but he was not reading; Milly had some stuff in her hand but she was not sewing; Delia was lying back in her chair, doing nothing whatever" (41). The daughters, unable to receive an education, and living with an ill mother, are forced to replicate their mother's role in the house, caring for the younger children, supervising the tea table, writing letters, and managing accounts. They have little to look forward to except a domestic inheritance—the oldest daughter Eleanor muses as she writes a letter on her mother's writing table, "It'll be my table now" (33). The sons, though able, unlike their sisters, to receive an education and pursue a profession, are emotionally stunted. Martin argues incessantly with his much younger sister Rose; Edward, away at Oxford, cannot translate the love he reads about in Greek drama to a real relationship with his cousin Kitty. The most unsettling evidence of the young Pargiters' internalized restriction surfaces when Rose, sexually violated while running to a shop one evening, is too scared and ashamed to tell anyone what she saw, leaving Eleanor to wonder, "What had she seen? Something horrible, something hidden. But what? There it was, hidden behind her strained eyes" (40). Years later, in response to Martin remarking to her, "What awful

lives children live!" Rose adds, "And they can't tell anybody" (151). Although her sexual trauma technically occurred outside the home, in the street, the stifled atmosphere and relationships within the home inhibited her disclosure. This untranslatable suffering and frustration lies at the heart of the children's experience of the home.

The central embodiment of this frustrated family is the figure of Mrs. Pargiter, perpetually dying, "look[ing] as if she might go on existing in this borderland between life and death for ever." Her daughter Delia (and doubtless the rest of the family) longs for her to die, but still Mrs. Pargiter lies there, "soft, decayed, but everlasting . . . an obstacle, a prevention, an impediment to all life" (21). Mrs. Pargiter's half-life offers a summation of life at Abercorn Terrace, where the characters are longing but seemingly unable to slough off the old, are caught between the past and inchoate desires for something different. As Eleanor reflects, "She seemed to be alone in the midst of nothingness; yet must descend, must carry her burden" (41). The house where they all live, in its confining jumble of old things, reflects and concretizes their sense of being weighed down and enclosed "in the midst of nothingness."

But just as Mrs. Pargiter eventually dies, the house is also eventually shut up and then sold: the longed-for severing of this embodiment of the nineteenth century. However, the amputation of the house, the burdensome manifestation of the past, is excruciatingly slow. The slowness of this process is felt and represented most fully through Eleanor's experience. As her brothers and sisters move out of the house in the decades after their mother's death, Eleanor remains, caring for her father and watching her life slowly drain away. The constrictions of the Victorian home continue to press on her and negate her for much of her life. She lives with her father "like brother and sister" (87) and feels unable to marry or pursue a life of her own. The sameness of Eleanor's life over these years is reflected in the material things around her: in 1891,

she is using the same writing table she had inherited in 1880; in 1908, when Martin and Rose visit her at Abercorn, she is still fumbling with the same ineffective brass tea kettle (143), and later holds up the china tea cup with roses—still her father's teacup after all these years. Martin observes that the drawing room is "cluttered up with several hideous pieces of furniture that he would have got rid of had he been Eleanor . . . and forced to live there" (150). Even though she holds positions of responsibility outside the home, managing housing properties for the poor, she is psychologically limited because of her inability to move out of Abercorn. Going to a committee meeting, she thinks, "She did not exist; she was not anybody at all" (90). Although her siblings have seemingly escaped the encumbrances of the house by moving away, Eleanor continues to be crippled by the family home well into the twentieth century.

These restrictions on Eleanor's life do not lift until 1911, when her father dies and the family home can finally be relinquished. After so many years of being weighted down by the Victorian home and all it embodied, Eleanor convalesces from its severance remarkably quickly. Although she does not sell the house until 1913, she shuts up the house immediately upon her father's death, and moves away. After years of sameness, now "everything was different" (185). As she visits her brother Morris, she thinks to herself of all the possibilities her life offers now that she is not shackled by the house and its responsibilities: "Should she take another house? Should she travel? Should she go to India, at last? Sir William was getting into bed next door, his life was over; hers was beginning. No, I don't mean to take another house, not another house" (202). Her thoughts are hopeful, but also sobering, for she is now in her fifties and has lost over half of her life to the care of a father and a house. Over the next twenty years she travels constantly, seeking to live as fully as possible in her remaining years, but she still "resent[s] the passage of time and the accidents of life which had swept her away—from all that" (283). In the

last section of the novel she laments, “Pity one can’t live again” (399), fully apprehending the magnitude of what she lost.

But Woolf does not depict the sloughing off of the house and the past, for Eleanor or her siblings, as something that occurs as a clean break, wholly accomplished at once. Eleanor’s brothers and sisters leave the house many years before she does, but they carry it with them, a burden and a shaping force. Although they have been given more opportunities than their sisters, the Pargiter sons seem unable to break out of the nineteenth-century matrices formed for them, and are generally unfulfilled as a result. The sons all choose the standard careers open to educated upper middle-class men: Morris becomes a barrister, Edward a scholar at Oxford, and Martin follows his father into military service in India. When Eleanor visits Morris’s family in 1911, she notices him comparing his career with Edward’s (190), and wonders if he should have gone to the Bar, “But once it’s done there it is; he married; the children came; he had to go on, whether he wanted to or not. How irrevocable things are” (191). Ultimately, though, she “prefer[s] failures, like Morris” (387) to Edward, who rises to the top of his field, but lacks human sympathy or the ability to express the beauty he studies and feels. When he talks stiffly to North in “Present Day,” North compares him to an insect “whose body has been eaten out, leaving only the wings, the shell” (384), and wonders, “What’s wrong with him . . . Why can’t he flow? . . . Why’s it all locked up, refrigerated? Because he’s a priest, a mystery monger . . . this guardian of beautiful words” (388). Martin serves his time in India but comes back aimless and dissatisfied, “Bored stiff” (233), unable to form lasting ties with a woman, and wishing “I’d been an architect . . . But they sent me into the Army instead, which I loathed” (217). The Pargiter sons are never truly able to leave the Victorian home and the vocational and emotional roles that it created for them, and as they live out these roles they are largely unhappy and inhibited.

The daughters do not fare much better. For Delia, the nineteenth-century house remains a diseased limb that she can never quite dissever. Rebellious and politically-minded, with a passion for Parnell and Irish independence, she thinks she can leave behind her bourgeois English upbringing by marrying an Irishman—but her marriage returns her to the very life she is trying to abandon: "Thinking to marry a wild rebel, she had married the most King-respecting, Empire-admiring of country gentleman" (378). She lives a disappointed life, never happy with her conventional husband or with their lack of political activism: "For the thousandth time he had dashed her dream" (378). Milly is much more at ease living in nineteenth-century conventions, but these conventions negatively shape her; as a young woman, she "always bring[s] the conversation back to marriage" (30), and soon marries an English country gentleman and "br[eaks] off into innumerable babies" (356). When she appears in "Present Day," she has grown fat and smug, lending a dull air to everything around her, her conversation with her husband like the "half-articulate munchings of animals in a stall" (356). Watching her talk to Eleanor, North ponders solutions for dealing with "prolific, profuse, half-conscious" (356) people like Milly and Hugh, including blowing them up with dynamite or making them drink a medication that imparts common sense.

The vexations that began in Abercorn when they were children continue into adulthood as they feel the disjunction between their desires and their life and sense inarticulately the need for some reckoning.[86] At the party in "Present Day," they discuss how much they hated Abercorn, Delia exclaiming, "It was Hell!" and insisting that when she goes to Paddington Station, she tells the driver to "Drive the other way round" so she does not have to pass by her childhood home (396). The house remains a specter in their lives even as they try to find ways to

[86] Milly, it should be noted, seems to be an exception to these dissatisfactions: her desires do seem to match up with her life, and she is so completely immersed in Victorian conventions that she is not open to other ways of living.

exorcise its influence. In the end, Woolf suggests, it may only be their children, summarized in the characters of North and Peggy, who manage to not just "drive the other way round," but to fully relinquish the nineteenth-century home.

Only perhaps for Rose and Eleanor has the scission with the past been both initiated and executed, and through these women Woolf offers an alternative to Victorian conventions. Rose, a lesbian political activist, is profoundly and unmistakably shaped by the structure of the Victorian home, which failed in its role to protect her and then which effectively silenced her revelation. Rather than uphold this structure when she gets older, she "thr[ows] a brick" at it (194), diverging completely from her namesake, her mother Rose. Eleanor's rupture with the past is less violent but no less sure. But at no point is this severing anesthetized. After an impassioned and courageous life as an activist, Rose, at the end of the text, still loses her words and has to sit down when she remembers the soiled pink frock she wore at Abercorn the night of her sexual initiation and her mother's death (395). The pain of her experience at the house still haunts her fifty years later. Similarly, in 1913, when the house is finally sold, Eleanor is "glad to be quit of it all" (203) but fights back tears as she thinks about the maid Crosby's prospects, as she looks at the empty rooms, and as she remembers their life there: "It was a dreadful moment; unhappy; muddled; altogether wrong. Crosby was so miserable; she was so glad. Yet as she held the door open her tears formed and fell. They had all lived here; she had stood here to wave Morris to school; there was the little garden in which they used to plant crocuses" (204). Years later, in "Present Day," when she drives by Abercorn with Morris's daughter Peggy, Eleanor relates, "'That's where we used to live,'" but adds, incompletely, "Abercorn Terrace . . . the pillar-box" (315). This pillar box, which stood outside the house, was for Eleanor connected with one of her happiest memories of Abercorn—sending Morris off to school every morning and watching him

wave to her from the corner where the pillar box was situated (42). This memory is immediately complicated, however, for it recalls the disparities between Eleanor's life and opportunities and those of her brother.[87] The pillar box is also the site of trauma for Rose, for it is the place where a man exposed himself to her. Thus, in Eleanor's elliptical remark, Woolf suggests to the reader both the divided nature of the home but also the ultimate reason why the home must be cast off—for though it provided some moments of genuine happiness, these moments cannot cancel out the means by which it stifled and damaged its inhabitants.

Lee writes that Woolf's "lifelong argument with the past took its central images from the leaving, and the memory, of the Victorian house." For Woolf, it was only when the "objects of the Victorian house . . . have been cleared out, leaving nothing but marks on the wall, and the big extended families which had grown up there die and move out and split up, it ought to be possible for something quite new to begin" (46). As Martin reflects in *The Years*, "It was an abominable system . . . family life; Abercorn Terrace . . . there all those different people had lived, boxed up together, telling lies" (211), or, as Colonel Pargiter summarizes it, nineteenth-century family life meant "shutting things up in drawers" (97-98). Using an ordinary family whose life in the home is largely unremarkable, Woolf emphasizes how these "abominable" experiences were common, defining not just this family but the age in which they lived. Discussing her own family and childhood home, a "complete model of Victorian society," in *A Sketch of the Past*, she writes,

> Two different ages confronted each other in the drawing room at Hyde Park Gate. The Victorian age and the Edwardian age . . . But while we looked into the future, we were completely under the power of the past. Explorers and revolutionists . . .

[87] In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf discusses waving Adrian off to school every day at Hyde Park Gate; for her, it was not an untroubled habit but was a sad relic of her half-sister Stella: "a flutter of the dead hand which lay beneath the surface of family life" (147).

> we lived under the sway of a society that was about fifty years too old for us. It was this curious fact that made our struggle so bitter and so violent. (147)

Woolf does not simplify the process of casting off the house and the antiquated system it represents, but rather depicts it as an extended and problematic undertaking that is no less painful because it is necessary. But as the home is being severed, a "feeling of something extinguished" (140) persists—there is release, but there is also an absence. Regardless of how unsound the Victorian home, its truncation leaves a phantom presence and a phantom pain, and the Pargiters seek surrogates to stand in its place, material things to remind them of their old life as they transition into the twentieth century. The second thread of Woolf's argument with the past pertains to the objects that survive as the home is abandoned: the things that become prostheses, "the echo or haunting of a lost origin" (Wills, "Two Words," note 9).

The Mark on the Wall

In his lecture on "The Thing," Heidegger considers the nature of a ceramic jug, its "thingness," positing that the vessel is not defined by its sides and bottom, but by its void. It is the emptiness that does the holding, not the materials, and thus the *being* of the jug is constituted by the *nothing*. The objects that remain in *The Years* as the characters slowly dislocate the nineteenth-century home are, like Heidegger's jug, constituted less by their material presence than by the absence they give form to. Filling in for the lost home, these prosthetic objects (like all prosthetics) turn on the problem of "wholeness"; their presence suggests an incomplete corpus, a deficiency requiring a supplement. As Wills writes, prosthesis connotes "two contradictory but complementary operations: amputation and addition" (*Prosthesis* 133). In Woolf's novel, objects and humans do not together construct a whole, but only an uncanny

whole, an illusion of continuity. For a time, the Pargiters rely on this conjunctive relationship to help them navigate greater losses and transitions; as Rachel Bowlby asserts, the retained objects "stand as parts for the whole, for the family domestic environment from which they have been separated, and also for the time remembered as a long-forgotten and buried past of childhood, but now abruptly, and partially, returned" (119-20). However, through several members of the family, Woolf explores new ways of relating to the past and its material emblems, offering a vision for the future that liberates both humans and things from an ultimately unproductive hybridity.

The first prosthetic object that we encounter in the text is the oil portrait of Mrs. Rose Pargiter, one of many objects in an overcrowded drawing-room. Given the focal position over the fireplace, "a red-haired young woman in white muslin holding a basket of flowers on her lap smiled down" (10). Like the portrait of Kitty Lasswade discussed later in the novel, "Her hair had been very red in those days; she was toying with a basket of roses. Fiery but tender, she looked, emerging from a cloud of white muslin" (243), it is aesthetically conventional; Ruth Hoberman considers it kitsch, "clearly not meant to be great art" (80) (although the aesthete Martin does pronounce it "a nice picture" [150]). Beyond portraying Rose Pargiter as a young woman, the painting depicts the well-defined role of ideal Victorian womanhood: to be beautiful and pure with a promise of fertility (and the implied future of care-giving within the home). Diana Gillespie notes that the painting seems to be inspired by G.F. Watts' "Lilian" (209), another image of a red-haired woman dressed in white and holding a basket of flowers. Watts, a Symbolist who painted allegorical works that often captured essences of Victorian ideals, famously stated that he "paint[ed] ideas, not things" (qtd. in de la Sizeranne 86); the idea behind

Mrs. Pargiter's portrait appears to be pristine womanhood.[88] By featuring a Watts-esque painting in the drawing-room of Abercorn, Woolf embeds the Pargiters firmly within both Victorian aesthetics and ideologies.

The portrait, however, is not simply a didactic decoration for the drawing room. It quickly assumes a more personal and affective significance. We learn that the original of the young woman in the painting is on the verge of death, expiring upstairs while her portrait hangs downstairs. Mrs. Pargiter's hair is no longer red but white with "queer yellow patches in it" (20), her face no longer young but "pouched and heavy" (20), her smile not constant but "flicker[ing] and fad[ing]" (24), and her flowers not a cornucopia but a vase of lilies of the valley, brought by a relative to the sick room (21). The portrait becomes a supplemental presence not only for the youth and health of Mrs. Pargiter, but for the woman herself. On the night of her death, two of her daughters interact with the portrait as if it were their mother. Milly stands before the mantelpiece, staring at the portrait and crying; Delia speaks to the picture: "'So you're not going to die,' she said, looking at the girl balanced on the trunk of a tree; she seemed to simper down at her daughter with smiling malice. 'You're not going to die—never, never!' she cried, clenching her hands together beneath her mother's picture" (37). While in her living presence, they hold back tears and rage in restrained politeness, "mechanical cheerfulness" (22), their true feelings get shunted to her portrait. As Mrs. Pargiter dies, her children's relationship with her loses its vitality, leading them to seek ersatz versions, even in the "horrid daub" (249) of mediocre art.

Similar to how she deploys Lily Briscoe's painting of Mrs. Ramsay at the end of *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf uses the portrait of Rose Pargiter to express the particular power of the image

[88] Woolf's childhood home prominently featured paintings by Watts. Watts was a family friend of Leslie and Julie Stephen, and his portrait of Leslie Stephen hung in their drawing-room, while his portrait of Leslie's first wife Harriet Thackeray hung in the study. Woolf herself, however, seemed to have serious reservations about Watts' style. She called his posthumous exhibition of 1905 "weak and worthless" (qtd. in Lee 216).

to give shape to a lack. But in the same stroke she dismantles that power, stressing its inadequacy. Speaking of Louis Marin's work on portraiture, Derrida observes that "if painting has within itself a force that is absolutely divine (*vim divinam*), it is because it makes the absent present," and death, as "the most absent of absences" is what gives painting "its greatest force" ("By Force of Mourning" 154). The portrait of Mrs. Pargiter gains its primary meaning or force from making a woman who is absent through sickness and then death present in the drawing room, in the heart of family life. In a sense, for her children, the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter *is* Mrs. Pargiter. And it is not. The portrait makes her present in the family even when she is gone, thus gaining a new force in its representational power. However, it makes her present in an inadequate, dissymmetric way, as an image that gazes back but no more. Similarly, the vision of ideal womanhood that the image represents maintains some authority within the home, but it is a weakened influence, tethered to the past and bound to grow weaker over time. Although Colonel Pargiter and the children remain in Abercorn Terrace for many years after her passing, the death of Mrs. Pargiter is the first step in the break-up of the family and the Victorian home. In this early loss we see the family using an object, the portrait, as a prosthesis, in this case an emotional apparatus that is ill-fitting, unsatisfactory, and yet that in part fills the gap left by death and upheaval.

The portrait continues to function as a prosthetic decades later, well after the initial grief for Mrs. Pargiter has subsided. It re-emerges in the text in 1908, when Martin and Rose visit Eleanor. At first it seems that the painting, temporally distanced from its original, has lost its personal significance and its aura, that it has shifted from its role as a prosthetic replacement for Mrs. Pargiter and the unspoiled, well-ordered domestic life she represented. When Martin walks in the drawing room, he is pleased that "Nothing had been changed," and he looks at his

mother's picture, reflecting, "In the course of the past few years it had ceased to be his mother; it had become a work of art" (141). Martin's two thoughts are paradoxical, for though he claims the room and the picture have not altered, the picture has changed, in his estimation (and not just because it has grown dirty): it no longer represents his mother, but is just a representational artwork. His comment distances the painting from sentimental and personal portraiture, establishing it as a piece he can look on objectively. Eleanor's relationship to the painting appears to be similarly re-calibrated; when Martin draws her attention to it, she gazes on it anew, "She had not looked at it, so as to see it, for many years" (150). Like the portraits of the former Oxford masters lining the staircase at the Lodge where the Malones live, Mrs. Pargiter's portrait has seemingly receded, becoming just one of many objects populating the room.

But as Martin regards the portrait and remembers it having a blue flower that is now obscured by dirt, he turns, and on observing Rose, immediately recalls a childhood memory. His mother's portrait, by prompting him to summon one memory from his childhood—seeing the blue flower—opens up his mind to other buried memories. The portrait possesses a strong suggestive power, recalling Woolf's short story "The Mark on the Wall," in which the narrator sees a small black mark above the mantelpiece and is drawn by contemplating it along a nearly endless chain of associations. Mrs. Pargiter's portrait is rife with personal associations. It is not coincidental that after contemplating his mother's portrait that "wants cleaning" (150), Martin thinks of a memory pertaining to his sister Rose, named after her mother, also red-haired, and scolded as a child for her dirty pinafore (and who has just entered the room announcing that she needs a bath). Thus, although Martin thinks that the portrait has become just another work of art, it is functioning as a prop to his memory, specifically triggering reminiscences of his life around

the time of his mother's death. If it is has "ceased to be his mother," it is only because it is now representative of much more: his early life in Abercorn Terrace.

At this time, in 1908, Martin is going through a considerable transition in his life; he has just resigned from the army, under dubious circumstances, and returned to England. As he adjusts to his new life, he is at loose ends, visiting the houses of his youth, reconnecting with old friends (his childhood friend Erridge becomes his stockbroker), allowing Crosby to continue to mend his pajamas, admiring St. Paul's and thinking how he wanted to be an architect. Gazing at the portrait of his mother becomes a continuation of these other nostalgia-tinged practices of a middle-aged man who does not know what to do with the second half of his life. As he reconnects with the portrait and the memories it conjures, he gains a sense of continuity with the past. Something disturbs this comfort, however: the memory the picture provokes is a bad one—refusing to go with Rose to Lamley's (on the night she is violated, although Martin never knows it)—prompting Martin to exclaim, "What awful lives children live!" (151). As they discuss the portrait, they hear the sound of glass crashing; Martin thinks it comes from their neighbor Miss Pym (whose cats had also sparked a childhood argument between him and Rose [16]), but Eleanor replies, "Miss Pym? . . . She's been dead these twenty years!" (151). Though Martin seeks to find some sort of wholeness, of stillness, in the portrait of his mother and these images of the past, a compensation for his years of rootlessness and his empty prospects, he uncovers little more than fragmented unhappy impressions and reminders of change and death.

Eleanor also uses the portrait as a representation of the family's past. After the house is sold, the Pargiters divide up its furnishings, "Morris had taken this; Delia had taken that; everything had been shared out and separated" (205), leaving only marks on the walls "where the furniture had stood, where the pictures had hung" (204). Eleanor elects to keep the portrait of her

mother.[89] It had not been the only portrait in the house; among the things Crosby salvages from the home are various portraits of the family, "some in wedding-dress, some in wigs and gowns, and Mr. Martin in his uniform" (207). Eleanor never explicitly comments on why she retains this picture, and it does not appear again until the last section of the book, some twenty years later, when it is hanging over the writing table in her new flat. Eleanor, unlike Martin, lived in the house and among its furnishings too long to idealize them, and therefore it seems unlikely that she keeps the portrait (and the writing table) out of pure sentimentality. Rather, the portrait serves to remind her, concurrently, of the good and bad aspects of her domestic inheritance—of a mother that she loved, but also a mother whose place she had to fill for so many years. In *The Pargiters,* the early manuscript of *The Years*, Eleanor announces, looking at the picture, "I shouldnt live like this" (23). For Eleanor, the portrait, in standing for her mother, stands for care-giving, self-sacrificing Victorian womanhood, cloistered in the home—an "Angel in the House" (unless abroad on works of charity). Her mother remains forever locked into this literal and figurative image. And Eleanor herself was bound to this representation of ideal female life for decades, living out what is modeled in the portrait (though she herself is often unseen, unacknowledged). She however does not remain imprisoned within the image, but is later able to re-draw her own life. Thus although the portrait painfully reminds Eleanor of the sacrifices and restrictions in her mother's life, in her own life, and in lives of Victorian woman in general, it also stands for her own desires to change. Moreover, while the past the portrait represents for Eleanor is perhaps mostly painful, it is a known pain, and an inoculating pain against the

[89] This scene closely follows Woolf's own experience on leaving Hyde Park Gate following her father's death, reflected on in "Old Bloomsbury." After Woolf and her siblings sold the house, they sold much of the old furniture, but nevertheless kept various objects, which filled new spaces in Bloomsbury (184). Similarly, when Virginia and Leonard bought Monk's House, they sold most of its existing furnishings, which encapsulated, according to Lee, a "whole century of Sussex life"—yet they retained portraits of the house's previous owners (418).

uncertainties of the present. When she stays at Maggie and Renny's house during the air-raid, she stares at a painting of a village on the wall, feeling immune from personal danger: "Immune, she repeated, looking at the picture" (278). The portrait of her mother functions much the same as this picture of the village, an embodiment on the one hand of place and time removed from present destruction and imagined future horrors, and on the other hand a reminder of all the things she has lost and endured, thereby possessing her with a sense of fortitude, or immunity.

But over the years, this prosthetic portrait, beneficial at times, becomes an excrescence. When Eleanor visits Morris, she thinks as she goes to bed, "Things can't go on forever . . . Things pass, things change" (202), overcome, like Kitty at the opera "with a sudden sense of the passage of time and its tragedy" (175). Though she holds on to the portrait, it becomes apparent that she can no longer use it as a surrogate in any way for her old life, a stopgap against the forward flood of time. Toward the beginning of "Present Day," Morris's daughter Peggy visits Eleanor at her flat before they go to Delia's party. While Eleanor makes a telephone call, Peggy looks at the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter, observing afterwards to her aunt, "'You've had it cleaned'" (308). This recent cleaning denotes a shift in Eleanor's relationship with the picture—a move away from a dependency toward a new, more balanced arrangement. As she talks about the portrait with Peggy, we learn more about this reversal. While Peggy persistently tries to determine if the woman in the painting is an accurate depiction of her grandmother, Eleanor demurs, talking instead about the man she found to clean the picture. Peggy repeats her question, and Eleanor finally answers, "'Not as I remember her . . . When I was a child perhaps—no, I don't think even as a child'" (309), and then turns the conversation to the female aesthetic: "'What's so interesting,' she continued, 'is that what they thought ugly—red hair for instance—we think pretty; so that I often ask myself,' she paused, puffing at her cheroot, 'What is pretty?'"

(309). Considering how female beauty is assessed, Eleanor objectifies her own mother in the painting in order to reflect on changing notions of beauty, suggesting by extension how the roles of women in society are culturally fixed rather than arising from an unchanging essence. Her life now many years removed from the way of life embodied in her mother's portrait—a lifestyle idealizing female purity, domesticity, and care-giving—Eleanor can now take an analytical stance toward that life and that portrait. She no longer relates to the picture as to her mother and to the burdensome inheritance her mother left her: her concern with it now is as an object, something to be cleaned and something to ponder, aesthetically and socially. The painting, for Eleanor, has become closer to what Martin claimed it was for him so many years before: a work of art. Her reliance on the portrait as a conflicted representation of her personal past has ended, but she has found a way to attenuate the past and re-purpose the object, by transforming it to art. As she later muses, "Directly something got together, it broke. She had a feeling of desolation. And then you have to pick up the pieces, and make something new, something different" (372-73). In what seems almost a gesture toward Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Woolf considers the power of the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter while she was still alive: a power to conjure not only the woman herself, but the way of life that she promoted within the home. But as time (not reproducibility in this case) erodes the authority of the artwork, then its viewers are able to become critical commentators rather than participants in what the painting espouses. As the portrait loses its connection to her mother, Eleanor is able to appreciate the painting as an object *qua* object as well as distance herself from the ideas of womanhood that it seeks to impose.

As Eleanor is transmuting her relationship with the past by dissolving her prosthetic dependence on its material artifacts, the next generation, Peggy and North, seem to desire to

create these bonds for themselves, grafting on a past that they imagine to be better than the present. As North begins to make a speech at the party about "liv[ing] differently," about "a new world," (401), he is inspired by looking at Peggy's face, which "reminded him of his grandmother's face in the picture" (400).[90] Earlier in the evening, Peggy herself threatens to succumb to this prosthesis fever: she thinks about her resemblance to her grandmother in the picture, and though she physically "did not want to be like her" (308),[91] she repeatedly tries to get Eleanor to talk about the past: "She wished to get her back to her past. It was so interesting; so safe; so unreal—that past of the 'eighties; and to her, so beautiful in its unreality" (316). As they drive to the party, Peggy thinks about how Eleanor comes from a "wonderful generation" (314) and imagines herself collecting facts about her aunt "to add to her portrait of a Victorian spinster" (316)—a limiting and romanticized representation that corresponds to the literal portrait of Mrs. Pargiter, the Victorian wife and mother. Because she is dissatisfied with her present life, "feeling like a person whose blood has been sucked, leaving all the nerve-centres pale" (343), and the present world, "On every placard at every street corner was Death; or worse—tyranny; brutality; torture; the fall of civilization; the end of freedom" (368), Peggy takes refuge in a past-oriented cathexis. She imagines the previous century as a bourne no devastation could touch, and views the previous generation as mostly unwrenched by pain, unwounded by loss.

[90] Similarly, Rose is always compared to "Old Uncle Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse," whose picture appears in Mrs. Pargiter's bedroom (21). As a child, Rose imitates him—with traumatic consequences—when she goes to Mrs. Lamley's shop one night (26), but in adulthood matches both his militancy and his bearing, to the general respect of her family, who comment often on how Rose "was exactly like the picture of old Uncle Pargiter" (148, 395). For Rose, the likeness to her uncle ultimately proves to be liberating; Peggy, however, finds her similarity to her grandmother less inspiring.

[91] It is not only physically that Peggy does not want to resemble her grandmother: she has also chosen to live a very different life (she does not marry and have children, but instead pursues a career in medicine). But her unhappiness and pessimism lead her to simplify and idealize the world of her grandparents.

This dependency on the past seems doomed to an eternal repetition, but Woolf uses Eleanor to guard against an untempered understanding of history and to offer a new approach to the material remnants of the past, which is a new approach to the past itself. As Peggy attempts to lead Eleanor back to an exploration of her past, Eleanor persists in unsatisfactory answers, in mis-directions, in forgetfulness—products, Peggy assumes, of old age, discounting that Eleanor "do[es] not want to go back into [her] past" (318), that she wants, like Kitty, "not the past—not memories. The present; the future—that was what she wanted" (400). But gradually Peggy comes to dimly perceive the misguidedness of her own attempt to forge a tie with the past to compensate for a feeling of disquiet in the present. Thinking of her romanticized picture of Eleanor, she admits, "She's not like that—not like that at all, she said, making a little dash with her hand as if to rub out an outline that she had drawn wrongly" (317). She looks at the portrait of her grandmother to ask her opinion about Eleanor (or her opinion about Peggy's attitude toward Eleanor), but Mrs. Pargiter offers her no clarity: "she had assumed the immunity of a work of art; she seemed as she sat there, smiling at her roses, to be indifferent to our right and wrong" (310). In the end, Peggy begins to realize, like Eleanor, that in order to relate to the present in a way that is non-destructive, then the relation to the past must be transformed, just as the portrait was transformed from an object of dependency into an object of critique. This re-orientation toward the past ultimately enables a re-evaluation and perhaps transformation of the present, a re-evaluation that starts with the open-ended questions, "what is this moment; and what are we?" (317).

Solid Objects

As Eleanor sits at her mother's writing table while her mother dies upstairs, she observes the objects resting on the table: a silver candlestick, a miniature of her grandfather, tradesman's books, and a walrus. The walrus is a pen-wipe, a small figurine with a brush on its back for wiping off ink, and Martin gave it to his mother on her birthday. Pen wipes came into widespread use with the development of steel-nib pens in Birmingham in the early nineteenth century. Although a common activity for women and girls involved knitting elaborate decorative cloths to clean off the nibs, figurines with built-in cloths or brushes were also popular. The English silver company Sampson Mordan produced pen wipes modeled after boot scrapers that were topped with silver and gold animals.[92] Discussing the interior and the trace in *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin notes, "The étuis, dust covers, sheaths with which the bourgeois household of the preceding century encased its utensils were so many measures taken to capture and preserve traces" (226). The pen-wipe was one of these quintessentially nineteenth-century objects, capturing the trace of the ink, the repeated pressure of the steel nib—a smudged record of daily activities in the household, the letter-writing, the account-keeping. Bernard Steigler, building off Derrida's examination of the supplement, considers how writing acts as a prosthesis for the memory, enabling traces of the dead to be transmitted to the living (245). The pen wipe offers a reinterpretation of the supplement, for in gathering waste to itself—excess and leftover ink—the wipe lies in contrast to the productive act of writing (and its purposeful command of ink), becoming aligned instead with the by-products of inscription. And the walrus later becomes a waste product itself. And yet it is in all of this waste that traces of the dead and the absent live

[92] For more information as well as images of these knick-knacks, see "Antique Pens and Accessories" and "Pen Wiper for a Writing Table."

on.[93] In *The Years*, the walrus acts as a prosthesis of the Pargiter family and the complex organism of the Victorian home, both of which were breaking up and passing away in the new century. As an object, the walrus does not repeat the same trajectory as the portrait, however; rather, it follows two parallel lives over the years, one of burdened preservation, and in the other, of conscious relinquishment. It is in this second life, or afterlife, of the walrus that Woolf suggests the possibility of sacrificing, laying waste, the prosthesis and what it stands for in order to move forward.

In the first of the walrus's alternate lives, Crosby, the Pargiters' maid, preserves the pen wipe. In 1901, when the guns are firing for the state funeral of Queen Victoria, Crosby finds the walrus in the waste-paper basket and salvages it. Years later, when Abercorn Terrace is sold and Crosby moves to her own room in Richmond, she takes the walrus with her. Her new home soon is transformed into an uncanny version of the family home, "ha[ving] a look of Abercorn Terrace," filled with the many odds and ends Crosby has hoarded over the years: "Indian elephants, silver vases, the walrus . . . there they all were. She ranged them askew on the mantelpiece, and when she had hung the portraits of the family . . . it was quite like home" (207).[94] Arranged on the mantelpiece, the walrus is now entirely abstracted from any functional value, although we learn elsewhere it was "ink-corroded" (404) and had a "worn patch in its bristles" (147) and had therefore become useless as a pen-wipe. Its role as a fragment of the past

[93] Benjamin: "My thinking is related to theology as blotting pad is related to ink. It is saturated with it. Were one to go by the blotter, however, nothing of what is written would remain" (*AP* 471).
[94] Like Crosby's room, Mira's lodgings—Abel Pargiter's supplementary home—provide an estranged, downgraded reflection of Abercorn. Her rooms are filled with things, but rather than the large solid objects of the upper middle-class residence, Mira's things are "little objects" (6), "that litter of things" (8). She draws her yellow curtains at the end of the day, but they do not shut out the noise of a barrel organ playing on the street (9); at Abercorn, however, when the curtains of claret-colored plush are pulled at dusk, they silence the streets: "the world outside seemed thickly and entirely cut off" (19).

now dominates exclusively. As Susan Stewart writes of the miniature, "as an object consumed, the miniature finds its 'use value' transformed into the infinite time of reverie" (65).

The walrus, along with the other bric-a-brac collected by Crosby, allows her to form a prosthetic extension of the dispersed Pargiter family and their disposed home. For the Pargiters, the selling of the home was painful, but for Crosby, "it was the end of everything" (205). Mrs. Swithin declares in *Between the Acts*, "We live in others . . . We live in things" (49), and nowhere is this more evident than in Crosby's life. For forty years her life consisted of caring for the family and their material world, dusting and polishing "all the solid objects" (33) and knowing the house with the deepest of intimacies:

> She had known every cupboard, flagstone, chair and table in that large rambling house, not from five or six feet of distance as they had known it; but from her knees, as she scrubbed and polished; she had known every groove, stain, fork, knife, napkin and cupboard. They and their doings had made her entire world. (205)

After the family leaves and the house is cleared out, she "remember[s] everything" (205) and her own room is an attempt to recreate what she has lost in fact but not in memory. Studying the servant characters in Woolf's fiction, Monica Miller argues that it is through objects that Crosby comes to understand the Pargiters, and that "If objects are accretions of the soul, then Crosby's collection seems to reveal a soul scavenged from cast-off pieces of her employers' souls" (124). The sections of the novel focusing on Crosby after she has left Abercorn make it painfully evident that she has no life outside of the Pargiters; the highlight of her week is to visit Martin in his neighborhood where "she felt more herself" (208) and to maintain a connection to him through material goods by continuing to mend his socks and pajamas. Though he had not lived in

the same house as Crosby for many years, Martin is still able to remark to Sara in "1914" that he is "Crosby's God" (218). Through her arrangement of objects on the mantelpiece, Crosby is not simply memorializing her favorite Martin, as Joanna Lipking suggests (143), and not even her labor, as Hoberman argues (89), but is trying to fill through external objects a sense of internal emptiness after leaving a position and a home that had constituted her entire being.

Of all the items Crosby keeps, the walrus is the most appropriate and the most poignant, for it represents not just Abercorn Terrace and the Pargiter family, but it stands, in a complex relation, for Crosby herself and for the dissolving nineteenth-century class system. In rescuing the figurine from the wastebasket, perhaps Crosby sees in it something of herself—both are products of an older system; both, above all, functional objects, but ones for whom their possessors felt some degree of affection; both physically degraded over the years (when Crosby first came to the family, she was "so stiff and smart." In 1913, Eleanor notices that "her blue gnat's eyes protruded and her cheeks were sunk" [205], and in 1918, her body is further breaking down as she walks through the city); and both are finally cast off. In rescuing the object she is akin to Benjamin's ragpicker, going through refuse and collecting things that have been lost and scorned by the nineteenth-century capitalist system, identifying with and thus seeking to redeem the waste object. Through Crosby, Woolf indicates the inevitable collateral damage that comes from undoing Victorian class divisions, for as live-in servants are phased out in the twentieth century, there will be Crosbys who have "nowhere else . . . to go" (287). Crosby is mourning the loss of her old life and her old self, and by forming a prosthetic system in her new home with the walrus and other objects, something "quite like home" (207), she creates an illusion of continuity. But even she does not believe this illusion. When we last see her in "1918," she is hobbling through the streets, having "aged greatly during the past four years" (287). She knows

the people in the Richmond lodging house want her gone, and in spite of her attempts to make her room a miniature version of Abercorn Terrace, she laments that "It was no pleasure to her to live in the house anymore" (287). Like Mrs. Flanders holding up Jacob's shoes at the end of *Jacob's Room,* Crosby remembers absence through the presence of preserved objects.

Stewart contends that "The possession of the metonymic object is a kind of dispossession in that the presence of the object all the more radically speaks to its status as a mere substitution" (135). In possessing the walrus and other things, Crosby is ultimately more dispossessed than if her mantelpiece had been empty. Crosby's prosthetics fail, and if anything, the continued presence of these objects seems calculated to give more pain, as constant reminders of displacement and decline. Although Crosby is a sympathetic and even pitiful figure in *The Years*, and not faulted in the text for her dependency on these material relics, Woolf does use the family servant to accent the untenability of a sustained reliance on the past, even as she herself is a type of appendage shed by the family. The walrus, however, has a second history outside of Crosby's mantelpiece, and it is through this history that Woolf offers another alternative to prosthesis.

Eleanor, of course, owns the walrus before Crosby. She holds on to it for twenty-one years after her mother's death, using it for a time as a pen-wipe, but primarily keeping it because of its personal associations. When the walrus is mentioned in 1891, she is no longer using it for its functional purpose—it sits on the desk while Eleanor uses blotting paper for the actual task of wiping her pen.[95] The walrus, which Eleanor retains because "it was a part of other things—her mother for example…" (86), seems to stand for the family and the household in general, both of which were in the process of changing during these years, a reflection of re-orderings in English

[95] Pen wipes were often viewed as particularly personal desk items, and were frequently given as gifts; in a letter of 1855, Cardinal Newman writes to the daughter of a friend who had made him the gift of a pen wipe: "A pen wiper is always useful. It lies on the table, and one can't help looking at it. I have one in use, made for me by a dear aunt, now dead . . . When I take it up, I always think of her, and I assure you I shall think of you, when I see yours" (Ward 317).

society at large. The walrus' sentimental provenance—bought by Martin, who gave it to his mother, who posthumously left it to Eleanor—creates a network of associations that serve to remind Eleanor of her family's bonds. In its functional capacities, the walrus was involved in the daily running of the large household, a tool employed by both Mrs. Pargiter and Eleanor as they kept accounts and wrote letters. Thus, as the family breaks up, the household becomes reduced to two members, and the house itself loses its primacy as the center of family activities, Eleanor uses the walrus as a prosthetic item, which simultaneously represents both the positive aspects of family life, a fuller and more vital home, and the less fulfilling facets—the drudgeries of managing a household. Outside of Abercorn, the structure and concept of the Victorian family unit was increasingly losing its hold during this time as challenges to the large nuclear family with well-defined roles were leading to the more fragile or more loosely-defined family of the twentieth century. The transitions within the Pargiter family suggest these greater transitions within the English family. To Eleanor, the walrus is connected with the Victorian concept of the family, one which brought her some stability but also restriction and tedium. Like the walrus itself, her memories of the family are "tangled and matted" with "scenes of family life, grotesque, comic and tragic," as Woolf describes her own home in "Old Bloomsbury" (183).

But even during the years she retains it, Eleanor has misgivings about the proper relationship to these personal objects that link her to a life about which she feels so ambivalent. One day in 1891, sitting at her desk, she observes the walrus and reflects, "It's awfully queer, she thought . . . that *that* should have gone on all these years. That solid object might survive them all. If she threw it away it would still exist somewhere or other" (86). She has preserved the walrus because it is a reminder of a quickly-disappearing era, but its very permanence, or seeming permanence—its "solidity"—unnerves her: the prosthetic threatens to survive the body,

the non-living to outlive the living, the past to subsume the present and the future. And so in 1901, Crosby finds the walrus in the wastepaper basket. Though it is possible that the pen-wipe accidentally fell into the trash, it is more likely that Eleanor chose to finally dispose of the ink-corroded relic. The text leaves no doubt about the date—Crosby finds the walrus on the morning "the guns were firing for the old Queen's funeral" (207). The moment is symbolically loaded: the old system is passing away, a new era is beginning. Christina Alt observes of this scene, "the urge to collect and preserve is directly associated with the age of Victoria and it is suggested that this impulse ends abruptly with the Queen's death" (86). Just as Mrs. Pargiter's death in 1880 ushered in a period of dependence on material reminders, the Queen's death performs another scission, prompting Eleanor to slough off the prosthesis as she prepares to inhabit a new century. Like Woolf writing about moving in 1904 from Hyde Park Gate to Bloomsbury (where both the material environment and the family unit were re-made); "Everything was going to be new; everything was going to be different. Everything was on trial" ("Old Bloomsbury" 185).

Discarding the walrus, however, does not, at the moment, change anything. Eleanor continues living in the same way for years more, in the same house, with the same dynamic with her father, still "behind the times" (147). And although the prosthetic item, the walrus, is gone, it is still psychologically present, an absent presence, a palpable void. Seven years after throwing away the walrus, Eleanor still glances at the writing table and notices that "The walrus, with a worn patch in its bristles, no longer stood there" (147). Although she apparently shed the object in an attempt to move forward, she still feels its loss, in much the same way that her family feels the loss of the house after selling it. Her relationship with the past cannot be re-defined as long as she still looks toward spectral space of the object.

In a sense, the walrus never goes away. But Eleanor's feelings of dependency on it fade. When she wakes up from a doze at the party in "Present Day" (around thirty years after throwing away the walrus), she is "suffused with a feeling of happiness" and asks herself, "Was it because this had survived—this keen sensation (she was waking up) and the other thing, the solid object—she saw an ink-corroded walrus—had vanished?" (404). Her earlier fears about the solidity of the object, that this representation of the past would determine her life and then outlive her, have now been nullified. They have been nullified by her life, which moved beyond reliance on nineteenth-century ideas of family: after leaving Abercorn, she chose not to marry and settle in one home, but to travel, making her home in numerous places around the world, occasionally staying with family members, living independently while still maintaining relationships with her siblings and nieces and nephews. No longer limited by nineteenth-century understandings of what a home should look like, Eleanor creates her own versions of home and family life.

Eleanor's fears about the object are also nullified by focusing on what she calls "this keen sensation," powerful moments of feeling in the present rather than re-lived memories of happiness or pain. As she thinks about how life is "too short, too broken" (405), she is assured that it is not just the solid object, but also moments of intangible being that can endure. Eleanor, along with the other characters in *The Years*, is in conflict with the material world and with the past, is split between her desire to preserve and her desire to lose, to "fl[i]ng it away," like Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway.* And part of this conflict comes from the fact that what matters to her are not physical things, but are experiences and moments that are ephemeral. At one point Eleanor thinks she does not have a life, because a life ought "to be something you

could handle and produce . . . But [she has] only the present moment" (347-48).[96] Eleanor throws away the walrus initially because its continued life is an assault on the present. Her frustration with the transience and the impalpability human life is aggravated by the seeming immutability of physical objects.[97] If the present moment, full "with the past, the present, and the future . . . whole, bright, deep with understanding" must disappear ("It must drop. It must fall"), leading to "the endless night, the endless dark" (406), then why should the object—heirloom or not—be preserved?[98] Woolf's own lament on the survival of objects after the bombing of her house in London, "oh that Hitler had obliterated all our books tables carpets & pictures—oh that we were empty & bare & unpossessed" (*Letters* VI, 3670), adopts the same posture as her characters. She suggests in the play on words—"unpossessed" meaning both to be without possessions and to be freed from an overpowering, menacing influence—both the conflict with objects and a solution to this conflict. It is not, however, Eleanor's physical discarding of the walrus that ultimately leads to her release, although that acts as the outward manifestation. Rather, she has learned how to let go of the past and re-orient herself toward the present. With the portrait of her mother, Eleanor learned to re-purpose the object and transform her relationship to it and what it stood for;

[96] This concern is also taken up in *The Waves*; see, for example, Bernard's comments: "This, for the moment, seems to be my life. If it were possible, I would hand it you entire. I would break it off as one breaks off a bunch of grapes. I would say, 'Take it. This is my life.'" (176); "Let us again pretend that life is a solid substance, shaped like a globe, which we turn about in our fingers" (186).

[97] Compare to *Between the Acts*: "That's what makes a view so sad…And so beautiful. It'll be there…when we're not" (37). Considering the "Times Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse,* Mao expands on this thought: "'Times Passes' maps the conflict between a possibly superfluous humanity and the satisfactory, achieved object world onto a conflict between 'life,' understood as human, and the lovely but also uncannily frightening world of nonlife that would include everything else" (61).

[98] Similarly, we see Sara getting rid of the bust of her grandfather (297), and Maggie bringing out the decorative family plates during the air-raid, remarking, "it seemed silly—keeping them in a cabinet" in spite of the fact that "We break one every week" (269).

with the walrus, she experiments with the possibility of moving beyond the past entirely, of releasing it to make room for new moments of being.

Woolf's short story "Solid Objects" picks up where *The Years*—and the walrus—leave off. For while Woolf condemns Crosby's dependency on the metonymic force of the walrus, and advances through Eleanor another alternative, a disposal, she sympathizes with the plight of the object itself. In "Solid Objects," she offers a vision of an afterlife for the detritus of modern society. In the story, a man named John finds a piece of glass at the beach, becomes captivated by the fragment and other similar pieces of rubble, and slowly relinquishes his career and relationships as he devotes himself to collecting unique or otherwise alluring shards. Unlike Crosby's salvaged walrus, John's rescued waste is completely divorced from his history, and thus able to take on a new life in his care. With John, these leavings are appreciated not for their function or for their connection to the past, but for their consummate beauty. Woolf's story has been read negatively, as an exploration of "the danger of allowing the aesthetic vision completely to overcome the practical vision" (Broughton 54-55), but both Bill Brown and Douglas Mao focus on the way Woolf "consecrat[es] the valueless material object" (Brown 5) and demonstrates "the point of these objects is not what they do or say, but their sheer capacity to be appreciated" (Mao 27). "Solid Objects" thus provides a postscript to the narrative of the walrus pen-wipe in *The Years*, negotiating a life for the object after prosthetic and beyond waste, and finding a way to suture the fissure between subject and object.

Subject and Object and the Nature of Reality

When Mrs. Hilbery in *Night and Day* is showing the reluctant Ralph Denham around her heirloom-studded family home, she exclaims, "Dear things! . . . Dear chairs and tables! How like old friends they are—faithful, silent friends" (22). One of the furnishings Mrs. Hilbery refers to

is a chair sat in by Mary Queen of Scots—not just any piece of furniture, but one with a long history that has survived numerous changes of context, and one that exudes a distinctive aura. The crimson chair with gilt claws that occupies the pages of *The Years* has perhaps a less storied history than the chair in *Night and Day,* but is valued for many of the same reasons. The chair initially inhabits Digby and Eugénie Pargiter's home in Browne Street, which is sold in 1908, when both Digby and Eugénie die. Their daughters save two primary objects after the loss of the family home: the chair and a looking glass, both purchased in Italy around 1891. Although the looking glass soon disappears from the narrative, lost or shattered in the shuffle, the chair remains until the very end, for many years a connection to their origin, and an image of constancy in the midst of both family and national upheaval and uncertainty. However, as the Pargiters begin to see parallels between their lives and the life of the thing, and between present struggles and the past, they gesture toward new connections with the object and with history built on identification rather than reliance.

When Abel Pargiter visits Digby and Eugénie in 1891, he jealously notes how their house "was full of pretty things," thinking perhaps mainly of Eugénie, but looking at "the great crimson chair with gilt claws that stood in the hall" (120). Earlier he had noticed the looking glass covered in spots that had just been unpacked from their trip to Italy, remarking that it was "the sort of thing that people did pick up in Italy" (111). The chair is also from Italy, likely purchased on the same trip, extracted from its place "on the cracked floor of some Italian ante-room" (123-24) and deposited in the hallway of the house on Browne Street. The chair signifies the prosperity and leisure of the upper middle-class household, with its opportunities for holidays abroad and exotic souvenirs. And set amidst the clutter of the home, the chair lends a regal air to its surroundings; the characters note its ceremonial appearance (123) and its rich sensuousness:

"She could see the great Italian chair with the gilt claws that stood in the hall. Her mother had thrown her evening cloak over it, so that it fell in soft golden folds over the crimson cover" (136). At no point in the entire text is the chair actually used as a seat; it is a stately article meant to elevate its surroundings, similar to the formal chairs in the drawing room at the Lodge, where Kitty observes, "The pictures seemed to be looking down at the empty chairs, and the empty chairs seemed to be looking up at the pictures" (72). With such obviously prized possessions, it is perhaps no wonder that Digby argues with Eugénie about forgetting to install a new lock on the door after a burglary nearby (136).

But the chair, an image of abundance and solidity, sits in stark contrast to the impoverished and volatile emotional life of the home in Browne Street. Figuring in a series of scenes that pivot around conflict, dissatisfaction, and inadequacy, the object draws attention not to profusion but to a consuming lack at the center of the home. When Abel visits his brother and sister-in-law in 1891, he carries with him the news of Parnell's death, discussing Kitty O'Shea, Parnell's mistress, with Eugénie. Abel's adultery with Mira and Eugénie's implied adultery (and perhaps a past adulterous relationship between the two) underlies the conversation, suggesting marital unhappiness and friction. When Digby arrives, he is irritable with his wife, criticizing her purchase of the looking glass (Martin later says of him, "Very cultivated of course . . . But he was such a damned snob" [144]). Fraternal conflicts also emerge, as Abel compares himself with his brother in everything from physical appearance to possessions to accomplishments, comforting himself that although Digby "was a distinguished man in his way; the top of his tree; a knight and all the rest of it," he made less money than Abel (117-18). The chair, a silent witness to this discord, appears again in "1907," when Digby bickers with Eugénie about the

lock on the door and about being late to the party, and Eugénie promises to tell her daughters the "true story" of an admirer (135).

The patriarch, Digby, though not the sole cause, is at the center of much of this strife and fragmentation within the home. The chair, with its gilt claws, does not represent, as Leaska asserts, "the *guilty claws* of a crippling paternalistic world" (185) or as Lara Feigel argues, a symbol of oppression to the women in the home (174). But it does bear witness to patriarchal absence and in its way provide a constancy within the home that Digby does not. The chair is initially acquired when Digby is absent: he chose to go shooting in Scotland rather than travel to Italy with his wife and daughters. When the chair and the other Italian purchases are unpacked and arranged within the home in "1891," Digby is gone for much of the scene, arriving home later, having forgotten that it is his daughter's birthday and having missed the celebration. Eugénie explains to Abel that this absence is typical; after a full day at the office, Digby always "comes back with his bag full of papers" (118), working after dinner rather than spending time with his family. Although Maggie and Sara do not use the crimson chair as children, they note its reliable presence as they go about the house: "[They] could see the great Italian chair with the gilt claws that stood in the hall" (136). The chair is not quite a stand-in for Digby, but a reminder of what he is not, a figure of unmoving dependability.

When Maggie and Sara lose their parents and sell the house in Browne Street, they take the chair with them to prosthetically extend its stability and constancy to their new environment. In its new context, a noisy, "poverty-stricken" lodging house in Hyams Place (156), the chair is a strange, disorienting reminder of a more prosperous past, elevating its material environment as well as its emotional one. A foreign, throne-like chair whose purpose is to be admired rather than used, it conjures images of wealth, of far-off places, of a life more oriented around beauty than

function. An antique of sorts, it also seemingly connects with an imagined earlier time of peace and fixedness, when the world was not undergoing such seismic shifts.

Lacking sufficient means to comfortably support themselves, and no longer anchored to a family home, the women's lives are in upheaval. Maggie's marriage provides her a measure of financial protection that Sara lacks, but the Great War unsettles any notion of security, financial or otherwise. The transient lives of the two women continue for many years, and the chair becomes caught in their movements: in 1910, the chair is in Hyams Place; in 1917, in Maggie's house in Westminster; in Present Day, in Sara's lodgings on Milton Street. While the women, parentless, live an uncertain existence of poverty and relocation and then suffer through the turbulence of war, the chair bespeaks constancy and a connection to an origin.[99] As a souvenir, the chair always carries with it its original context in Italy, "generat[ing] a narrative which reaches only 'behind'" (Stewart 135), and thus conveying a rootedness that Maggie and Sara now lack. Its presence transports them back to their own lost place of origin in Browne Street, but further, it denotes an origin of origins, a place that generates rather than collapses. In this way it stands both for a home and for a father and mother, a presence rather than a lack. As a prosthetic, the object promises the ability to embed the women securely in the past, and not in the "grimy . . . sordid end" of their past (140) but in a past that "has never existed except as narrative" (Stewart 23). In this talismanic material intersection, they are able to feel themselves close to the mother they loved, an imagined loving father, and a home that was only abundance.

Other members of the Pargiter family, shaken by their own life upheavals and the uncertainties of a changing and war-haunted nation, get drawn in to the chair's narrative of wholeness. When Rose visits Hyams Place for the first time, she is dismayed by the dinginess

[99] They also collect other items that connect them to the past: in addition to Maggie's plates that she brings out during the air-raid, Sara's room in "Present Day" has silhouettes of Colonel and Mrs. Pargiter on the mantelpiece (296), and at one point a bust of her grandfather (297).

and scarcity of their rooms—in spite of the fact that she herself is used to simple accommodations. As she looks around their lodgings, "Everything was different from what she expected" (156). Then her eyes alight on the chair: "But there was a crimson-and-gilt chair; she recognized it with relief" (157). The chair helps her orient herself in her new and unexpectedly degraded surroundings, reassuring her with something familiar, something that has not changed or declined. After she comments on the chair, the women turn the conversation to the looking glass, and then Abercorn Terrace and the portrait of Mrs. Pargiter, finding a comfort and common ground in discussing their childhood homes and other material remainders of the past. Several years later, when Eleanor stays with Maggie and her husband Renny during the air-raid, she too recognizes the chair and draws solace from it: "even the chair with gilt claws, at which she was looking, seemed porous; it seemed to radiate out some warmth, some glamour, as she looked at it" (272). As sirens wail and guns fire outside, the chair seems a-temporal, an image of prosperity and security. Eleanor remarks that she remembers the chair and Eugénie (although "she always saw Eugénie not sitting but in movement" [272]), prompting her to reminisce with Maggie and Sara about a happy moment in the past, the object connecting the cousins to one another and to a sheltered place in their history as all around them people are killed.

But the safe narrative of the past that the chair provides, only ever partially true, begins to rupture under pressure, leaving the past and the object both estranged. When Maggie and Sara discuss the past with Rose, their memories project outward, toward Rose's family: "Go on telling us about the Pargiters" (160); they avoid discussing their own father but mention Abel making a gift of a blue necklace with gold spots. Rose is less able to be selective; she remembers Digby, so absorbed in a task at hand that he forgets everything around him, and she remembers her own home life, summarized not in a blue necklace from Lamley's, but a toy duck and herself

"running along the broad avenue in the lamplight" (160). In the end, the chain of memories that the chair evokes only reminds Rose that discussing the past offers no restoration: it is only a process of defining voids and silently repeating the traumas that cannot be spoken.[100]

During the air-raid, Eleanor's momentary connection with the chair also fades. As she gazes at the chair, her reminiscences with Maggie and Sara end, and the group is forced to move to the basement to protect themselves from the raid. Eleanor bestows a parting thought on the chair: "The colours began to fade. She had been looking at the red chair. It lost its radiance as she looked at it, as if a light had gone out" (273). The object no longer creates a space of illumination and connectedness; it devolves into a crepuscular fumbling obscurity like everything else around it, and its version of the past grows as dim as the present day. In this way, the chair also mimics what is happening in the human environment—in "1917," the characters are depicted moving in and out of light—from the darkness of the streets into the home ablaze with light; in the house darkened for the raid, but lit up in the basement with a "whitish, greenish" (276) light; looking up at the black skies punctuated with searchlights; and hurrying along the pavement, "emerg[ing] for a moment under a lamp, then vanish[ing] into darkness again" (284). Indeed the movement of the entire novel is between these flashes of incandescence, darkness, uncertain light and uncertain darkness, through so many shades between "Darkness reigned" (202) and "The sun had risen" (412). Woolf's characters are caught in this oscillation between clarity and opacity, both in their relation to the present and to the past. The chair is one of the many objects trapped in this flux. As Eleanor perceives that the chair does not hold its

[100] Likewise, North comes to associate the chair with the broken aspects of his own past. When he calls on Sara in "Present Day," he recognizes the chair as the same one present on the evening when he visited Sara before leaving for war. He does not associate the chair with Digby and Eugénie's home (which he likely never visited) or with an idealized past, but with Sara's broken-down lodgings, their contentious conversation about war, and then right afterwards, his goodbye to his mother: "he had never seen her again" (298).

radiance, but gains or loses it moment by moment, she acknowledges that the object is not transcendent; it cannot be viewed as something separate from the subject, a prosthetic aid to substitute for the absences in human existence, but as a thing whose life constitutes and is constituted by human subjectivity. Similarly, the generalized past the chair represents cannot be idealized, for any stability in the past is a fiction. *The Years* emphasizes how the troubles of each age change in type but are always present.

Maggie's later experience with the chair parallels Eleanor's. Stopping by Sara's lodgings in "Present Day," she idly gazes around the room, and glimpsing the chair, mentally collects it together with the other objects in the room: "Behind their heads rose the curve of the mahogany chair back. And behind the curve of the chair back was a crinkled glass with a red lip; then there was the straight line of the mantelpiece with little black-and-white squares on it; and then three rods ending in soft yellow plumes" (331). As she runs her eye from thing to thing, she begins weaving a pattern with the materials, but it is interrupted by her husband standing up to leave: "collecting, gathering, summing up into one whole, when, just as she was about to complete the pattern, Renny exclaimed…" (331). She is no longer using the chair to recall the past, but she is still attempting to fit the object into a narrative of wholeness, some material account that makes the world more comprehensible, wondering, as Eleanor does, "is there a pattern; a theme, recurring, like music; half-remembered, half foreseen? … a gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible?" (351). But this narrative is broken: "The pattern was painful" (153), as Rose once reflects.[101] Moments later, as she stands at the door, switching off the light, Maggie ventures a last attempt to group the chair and room into a satisfactory whole. The objects are resistant now, however, transmuted into amorphous, ephemeral forms: "The room now was almost dark, save

[101] Compare to Eleanor's sunflower terra cotta plaque installed at a tenant house: "She had meant it to signify flowers, fields in the heart of London; but now it was cracked" (95).

for a watery pattern fluctuating on the ceiling. In this phantom evanescent light only the outlines showed; ghostly apples, ghostly bananas, and the spectre of a chair" (332). Maggie finally sees the object as not only emptied of the past, but of all solidity and fixedness. Like the detritus of the party, which "In the mixture of lights . . . looked prosaic but unreal; cadaverous but brilliant" (410), the chair is no longer an image of rootedness, but of a life as phantom and tenuous as human life, which is described as "cadaverous and unreal" (284).

Through Eleanor and Maggie, Woolf considers the possibility of a realignment with the object that goes beyond reclaiming or discarding it, as with the portrait and walrus, but on also acknowledging its equivalences with the human subject. In this figuration, the object no longer holds a prosthetic position as a messenger of the past, but it also does not act as a privileged representation of beauty or permanence. Rather, it is the "thing itself before it has been made anything" (*To the Lighthouse* 193), liberated from functions and expectations but susceptible to the same depredations (and possibilities) as human subjects. This realignment redeems the object, releasing the thing from a subservient position that denies its ontology, but it also redeems the subject, opening the human up to less dominating (and crippling) ways of relating to their environment and to their history. In *The Telephone Book,* Avital Ronell poses the questions,

> Now, what if Others were encapsulated in Things, in a way that Being towards Things were not ontologically severable, in Heidegger's terms, from Being towards Others? What if the mode of Dasein of Others were to dwell in Things, and so forth? In the same light, then, what if the Thing were a *Dublette* of the Self, and not what is called the Other? Or more radically still, what if the Self were in some fundamental way becoming a Xerox copy, a duplicate, of the Thing in its assumed essence? (24)

Woolf does not express a fully-formed vision of the ideal subject-object relation, but she probes multiple possibilities, including a set of relations not far distant from Ronell's suggestions.[102] *The Years* moves beyond Bernard's desire in *The Waves* to "sit here forever with bare things, this coffee cup, this knife, this fork, things in themselves, myself being myself" (219): with the parting perception of "the spectre of a chair," Woolf translates the object into the subject, allowing Maggie, the one who looks on the chair, to see herself and all of human existence in the object. In turn, objects are elevated, able to be recognized as a "*dublette* of the self," in Ronell's words, and capable of an existence not normally accorded non-living things; Feigel notes the "potential for consciousness" that objects are granted in *The Years* (175). Woolf demonstrates that the essences of things and selves are not clearly divisible.[103] Furthermore, these object-subject realignments suggest new alignments between the present and the past. The portrait enables a relationship with the past built off distance and critique; the walrus interrogates the possibility of exorcising the past and focusing on the present. The chair offers a third alternative that recognizes commonalities between present circumstances and past events, resisting both an idealization of the past as a better time or a demonization of it as only detrimental. Instead, the attitudes the characters develop toward the chair suggest an ability to see continuity and equivalence between two historical moments. Eleanor's and Maggie's encounters are fleeting,

[102] In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno argues about the ethics underlying the alterity of things: accepting the otherness of things is a condition for accepting otherness in general (see 189-94). Latour, however, would argue against this distinction, claiming that the subject/object dialectic is an artificial one, and that the world is in fact full of "quasi-objects" and "quasi-subjects" (51).

[103] There are a number of incidences in the book in which human subjects are also pictured as objects. For example, when Eleanor sees Morris in the law courts, she compares him and the other barristers to paintings: "They all looked like pictures; all the barristers looked emphatic, cut out, like eighteenth-century portraits hung upon a wall" (103). Kitty Malone does the same with her father, thinking, "Dr. Malone, who, had a frame been set round him, might have hung over the fireplace too" (73). At the end of the text, the Pargiters stand looking out the window and seem to turn into objects: "The group in the window . . . wore a statuesque look for a moment, as if they were carved in stone. Their dresses fell in stiff sculptured folds" (410).

but they mark a rapprochement, a move away from dependence and towards identification, pointing "There!" as Eleanor does at the end, gesturing toward something outside and away, and then looking in toward her immediate surroundings, asking, "And now?"

Shut off the Wireless and Listen to the Past

> 'Another interval,' Dodge read out, looking at the programme.
> 'And after that, what?' asked Lucy.
> 'Present Time. Ourselves,' he read.
> 'Let's hope to God that's the end,' said Giles gruffly.
>
> —Woolf, *Between the Acts* (120)

In the last months of her life, Woolf witnessed the destruction of London through the air-raids of the Second World War, a repetition and intensification of the air war she had experienced over twenty years before. In the Autumn and Winter of 1940-1941, she and Leonard came up to London from their country house in Rodmell "every week or so to see more of Bloomsbury destroyed," as she described it in a letter to Hugh Walpole (*Letters* VI, 435). The Woolfs' two London homes, 52 Tavistock and 37 Mecklenburgh Square, were both demolished by bombs, personal losses that echoed the national losses. Woolf traveled throughout the city during this time and reflected on the ruins:

> Then I saw a cliff of wall, eaten out, at one corner; a great corner all smashed . . . So by tube to the Temple; & there wandered in the desolate ruins of my old squares: gashed; dismantled; the old red bricks all white powder, something like a builders yard. Grey dirt & broken windows; sightseers; all that completeness ravished and demolished. (*Diary* V, 353)

The language Woolf uses emphasizes the irrevocable violence done to the body of the city, an uncanny rendering of the damaged bodies she had seen after WWI: the corpus of buildings and

squares and streets that had represented a type of wholeness were now "eaten out," "smashed," "gashed," "dismantled," "ravished," and "demolished." Nearby, a bombed house is "Like a tooth knocked out—a clean cut" (*Diary* V, 316). The city had not been wiped away entirely, but remained, dismembered, spectral, a material syncope.[104]

The broken society depicted in *The Years*, embodied in the figure of the WWI amputee, finds an even fuller expression in these war-torn images of London. Woolf's sketches from both the First and the Second World Wars are parerga to *The Years*, framing it, extending it, contributing toward it, as if they are prostheses themselves. Derrida writes of the parergon: "[It] is against, beside, above and beyond the ergon, the work accomplished, the accomplishment of the work. But it is not incidental; it is connected to and cooperates in its operation from the outside" (20). Exerting pressure from outside the text, these letters and diary entries augment Woolf's figurative representation of fractured English society, but they also complicate this representation, tracing the outlines of disintegration but not of restoration. And if, as Wills proposes, a text *is* a prosthesis, that being a prosthesis "must be considered a necessary condition for the constitution of any text whatsoever" (*Prosthesis* 135), then *The Years* itself might be considered a prosthetic to English culture in the 1930s, exposing its weaknesses but also seeking to rehabilitate it. In this novel, so often regarded as a disabled text, Woolf not only pictures how people in England are living "like cripples in a cave" (281), "sheltering under a leaf, which will be destroyed" (368), but scrutinizes how they choose to reckon with loss, and seeks to imagine something beyond lack or prosthesis. *The Years* is Woolf's attempt to give shape to loss, but also to envision the contours of a new future, where it will be possible to "live . . . wholly" (281), to

[104] As Leo Mellor points out in *Reading the Ruins*, over fifty percent of buildings in greater London were damaged in the Blitz: "a cataclysm that altered the physical space of London more than any even since the Great Fire of 1666" (1-3).

form "new combinations" (280). She is not, as Renny accuses Eleanor, "Always talking of the other world," but like Eleanor, "mean[s] this world . . . happy in this world—happy with living people" (368).

But in order to suggest something new, she returns to the past, providing fifty years of anamnesis that begins in the nineteenth century and follows the reverberations of the Victorian age up to the decisive interwar period.[105] Like Benjamin, she makes the physical spaces and artifacts of the nineteenth century her object of study. As the translators write in their forward to *The Arcades Project,* Benjamin viewed the nineteenth century as "the collective dream which we, its heirs, were obliged to reenter, as patiently and minutely as possible, in order to follow out its ramifications and, finally, to awaken from it" (ix). Woolf reenters the Victorian age through the pivotal structure of the family home, realized most fully in Abercorn Terrace, highlighting through this home and the representative Pargiter family what she sees as the most crippling practices defining the English nation: the subjection of women, the emotional stunting of men, the repressed sexual traumas, the punishing treatment of servants, the idealization of the traditional family. But the arrival of the twentieth century and the shedding of the Victorian home do not lead to immediate and unmitigated liberation. Woolf investigates the substitutes used by members of the Pargiter family to fill in for the gaping loss of the home and the nineteenth-century way of life it represented (or seemed to represent—the past becomes a conflicted territory, memories of pain competing with memories of happiness, feelings of security always undercut by uncertainty). These prostheses, however, objects that had filled the

[105] Just as Woolf struggled writing the text itself, she also tortured over what to call it, and considered nine titles (*The Pargiters*; *Here and Now*; *Music*; *Dawn*; *Sons and Daughters*; *Daughters and Sons*; *Ordinary People*; *The Caravan; Other People's Houses*) before at last seizing on *The Years* ("that name is fixed; dropped like a billiard ball into a pocket" [*Diary* IV 342]) (Leaska 174). As a title, "The Years" emphasizes Woolf's investigation into recent English history and projection into the future; as Anna Snaith notes, "the protagonist is time itself" (xlii).

home, are ultimately as wounding and as inhibiting as the home itself, and the tensions underlying the possession of these objects contribute to some of the most significant personal crises of the novel. In *The Years,* Woolf contends that even if the object can never be totally divested of its prosthetic function, individuals can learn to relate to the object in more productive ways, curbing the negative effects of their history and perhaps transitioning into a new way of life. The Victorian object thus provides a means of understanding not only the nineteenth century, but the twentieth: its realities as well as its possibilities. Mao argues that *The Years* marks Woolf's "most formidable attempt to subdue the Victorian" as she turns against "English history's most astounding eruption of a human production that destroys" (80). But as Woolf seeks to subdue the past, her primary concern is the present—"Present Day"—and the immediate future, and finding a way to reposition relics of the past so that they support the vision of "extraordinary beauty, simplicity, and peace" with which she closes the text.

The Years does not find Woolf fully articulating a systematic position toward the object or toward history. And indeed she is reluctant to do so, would not be a "fat man gesticulating" (313) or an orator on Speakers' Corner preaching "joostice and liberty" (227). She submits multiple suggestions for redeeming the materials of the past, without claiming totality or closure: there is "no peroration" (409). With the portrait, she offers the possibility of repurposing the object, of keeping it embedded within daily life, but distancing oneself from the life it represents; with the walrus, she explores the ramifications and final advantages of disposal, of shedding burdensome reminders of an old life; and with the chair, she critiques the tendency to idealize earlier periods of history, and urges recognition of commonalities between subject and object, past and present. Each option allows the potential for renewing both the subject's relationship to the past and the object's ontology. Woolf forces the reader to maintain these multiple

possibilities simultaneously without presuming that they represent the final answer; her position is perhaps best expressed in the reaction to the song of the caretaker's children in "Present Day," a song for which Eleanor cannot "find one word for the whole" but settles on "Beautiful?" (408). This attempt to find an appropriate response, but ending with a note of interrogation, ultimately characterizes Woolf's entire struggle with the materiality of the past. Her words on the "inconclusive" Russian mind in "Modern Fiction" apply equally well to her own writing: "It is the sense that there is no answer, that if honestly examined life presents question after question which must be left to sound on and on after the story is over in hopeless interrogation" (*Collected Essays* 109). Although *The Years* ends with questions, "And now? . . . And now?" and offers only ideas, no answers, Woolf presents the possibility that in such an economy, in such an ellipsis, the phantom space of dismembering, there might be a better articulation, a restored sense of wholeness. In *Orlando*, another novel concerned with the telling of history and with transformation, Woolf writes about language, noting the most poetic speech is "precisely that which cannot be written down." So in the middle of Orlando's story there is a blank space on the page, a void that does not indicate loss but an inexpressible presence: "For which reasons we leave a great blank here, which must be taken to indicate that the space is filled to repletion" (186).

CHAPTER FOUR: DEAD LINES/LIVE WIRES: TELEPHONIC MATERIALITY IN *MURPHY*

Short Circuit

When Samuel Beckett settled permanently in Paris in the late 1930s, his apartment in the rue des Favorites did not have a telephone until the end of 1957 (Cronin 473). Once it was installed, Beckett followed the same protocol he used with the telephone at his country home in Ussy (installed in 1954): he gave his number only to a few friends, not listing it in the directory; and he answered his phone only between the hours of eleven and twelve in the morning, employing an on-off switch that enabled him to use the phone only for outgoing calls during the other twenty-three hours (Cronin 473; Knowlson 526). He did not try to avoid the phone line, however, sending a perpetual busy signal, so much as control its intrusions and strategically direct its outgoing currents, so that Beckett became his own switchboard operator, choreographing the "faint ping of receiver raised" and "sound of receiver put down violently" in his home (*Rough for Radio I* 270). These operations led to lost calls, failed connections: he missed the publisher Jerome Lindon's attempts to call him to tell him that he wanted to publish *Molloy* (Bair 407); he shirked the initial "catastrophic" call informing him he had won the Nobel Prize (his wife, Suzanne, took a message) (Knowlson 505). But Beckett also used the phone to establish a line to worlds he had lost—he called Suzanne to find out how premieres of his plays were received (performances he had missed or skipped) and to stay in touch with family members and friends in Ireland, the country he had left. Beckett's phone use thus managed a

shifting economy of loss and gain in his life, enabling him both to shut off the outer world and dial in to it.

Technologies of various kinds play a privileged role in Beckett's writings, as he explored the expressive and conceptual possibilities and limitations of technology in both textual content (such as Krapp's tapes or the unseen recording device in *That Time*) and in performances—as Linda Ben-Zvi points out, six of Beckett's dramatic works were written for radio, five for television, and one for film (470). Telephones in particular feature a few times in Beckett's canon: for example, in the call to the doctor in *Rough for Radio I* or in the negative space of *Endgame*—Hamm's question, "No phone calls?" But telephones, and their corresponding technology, telegraphs, are most fully operative in one of Beckett's first published works, the novel *Murphy*, written and set during a time—the 1930s—when phones were becoming increasingly common household items, and telegrams were at the peak of their popularity. In *Murphy*, telephones and telegraphs forge expressive and disruptive networks between two countries, England and Ireland, and across two cities, London and Dublin, forming the primary means of exchange between spatially-distributed characters. These attempted connections are at times faulty, contradictory, and nullified. But though the continuous wires running throughout the narrative may interfere or transmit only silence, they still form a matrix of communication.

The most important calls in the novel are not orchestrated through the literal medium of the telephone, however. Its imagery of wires and lines, connection and interference, compose the conceptual grid of the novel, in which the transference and conflict between the "Little World" of the mind and the "Big World" of the body constitute the protagonist Murphy's central problem of being. For Murphy, "there was the mental fact, and there was the physical fact" (108), and the text tracks his vacillation, in a critique of Descartes, between these two aspects of

existence—the inner world of rest, and the outer world of physical demands and practical contingencies.[106] Murphy realizes that these two sides of himself "had intercourse apparently" (109), and though he increasingly seeks to retreat further into his mind, he cannot stop the disruptions from the external world. The line goes haywire, but it cannot be severed. Murphy, his lover Celia, and others in the text use certain physical spaces and material objects to escape from the physical and temporal world and find asylum in the mind, seeking to constrain the material to achieve freedom in the immaterial. But the physical world repeatedly reasserts its physicality, upsetting the boundaries the characters attempt to enforce between mind and body. Thus material things in Beckett's novel of duality occupy a schizophrenic role somewhere between the outer world where they nominally belong, and the inner world, in whose service they are employed, so that they form a cable of communication—or telecommunication—between the mind and body, though that line is jammed, interrupted, and sometimes momentarily dropped. Just as Murphy finds he is not able to belong exclusively to either the inner or the outer world, physical spaces and objects can also never become exclusive denizens of either the Little World or the Big World.

[106] Cartesian philosophy maintains a dualistic distinction between the mind (which Descartes considers immaterial—a thinking thing) and the body (which he considers material—an extended thing). The Cartesian mind is indivisible and non-spatial, with modes of understanding and some sensation; the body takes up space and can be divided into parts, and operates in modes of size, shape, and motion. For Descartes, since it is man's thinking that proves his existence, then the existence of the mind cannot be doubted. The existence of the body and the physical world, however, since they are *sui generis* from the mind, is uncertain. These ideas are explored in his *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*. According to Ackerley and Gontarski, Beckett immersed himself in the writings of Descartes from 1928-30, and though he did not accept all (or any) Cartesian premises, the logical impasses of these premises held a lasting attraction for him (132). Cartesian dualism, while central to *Murphy*, is not of course the novel's only philosophical influence; Ackerley explores the numerous other philosophers informing *Murphy*, including the Pre-Socratics and Atomists to Spinoza, Leibniz, Geulincx, and Kant (see especially Chapter Six of *Demented Particulars*). The views of these philosophers shape Beckett's portrayal of Murphy's mind in particular. However, the structure of Cartesian dualism—and mistrust of this structure—underlies the entire novel.

In this chapter I seek to tap the lines of a few prominent places and items in the novel, tracing how these things act telephonically, maintaining a strained articulation between the physical and mental realms, and by extension, between the temporal and the universal: for in seeking to escape the material world, the characters are also seeking, unsuccessfully, to shed the weight of the historical. In *Murphy*, Beckett uses materiality to obliquely explore how his Irish characters consciously and unconsciously respond to and recapitulate the imbricated history of England and Ireland. Their interactions with their spatial environment in particular comment on English colonial involvement in Ireland, Irish nationalism, and the Irish Free State, although this commentary is generally undeveloped, elliptical, and ambivalent. The characters are unable to deny the effect of these historical and political developments in their lives, but they are also unable or unwilling to fully engage with them. Beckett indicates that no matter how silenced or resisted, the troubled burden of English and Irish history will continue, as Avital Ronell writes of the call of conscience, to "tear[...] into us with the authority of a suddenness, a resolute event which can neither be subjected to a will nor to a string of predictable determinations" (32). History in this novel is neither negated nor fully expressed, but is negotiated in the aporia between the ineffable and a drive to articulate or be heard. Through the historical references in the novel, often fleetingly passed over or present only in implication and indirection, Beckett iterates both the inescapable and indebting presence of history, but also the accordant desire to overlook or even forget.

The material world, moreover, provides insight into Beckett's doubly-bound narrative method, inaugurated in the simultaneously realistic/philosophical approach of *Murphy*, and elaborated in his later works, in which there is a constant, though often distant and faltering, commerce between historical, concrete components and universalized abstractions. Beckett, I

argue, is caught between these two currents, to situate his writing in the concerns of the Big World of time and space or the Little World of the mind and the abstract. The deployment of materiality in *Murphy* exposes a destabilized Cartesian model that spectrally undergirds Beckett's later writings. The only possible positioning for the modern individual seems to be a third space, lying in the overlapping frequencies of the body and mind, the crossed wires of the historical and the universal.

Beckett scholars have long been preoccupied with dichotomies—divided, for example, over whether to characterize Beckett as Irish or European; as a writer of the universal or the particular; as apolitical and primarily concerned with larger issues of the human condition, or political, engaging with historical issues of his time. Binaries such as these, some of which are explored in Vivian Mercier's 1977 study, *Beckett/Beckett*, guide—at times reductively—many readings of Beckett's texts. The dominant account of Beckett's writing, for instance, focuses exclusively on Beckett as a writer of abstraction, who increasingly resists specificities of place and time; an artist, as David Lloyd expresses it, whose art is "resolutely antagonistic to representation" (37).[107] These readings, however, tend to glance off not only the historically and materially-rooted early texts (like *Murphy*), relegating them to "apprentice pieces,"[108] but they also downplay the significant vestiges of geographical, historical, and artistic references and allusions that haunt the landscape of the more rarefied post-1946 texts.[109] In reaction to these

[107] For further example see Maurice Blanchot's *The Book to Come*, in which he considers how the trilogy of novels moves beyond representation, so that in *The Unnamable* the protagonist has "fallen outside of life" and "lives under the threat of the impersonal, the approach of a neutral speech that speaks of itself alone" (213).

[108] See Ackerley 10.

[109] To give a couple of many possible examples, one might note the Dublin locales named and alluded to throughout Beckett's oeuvre, such as Foxrock in *All that Fall* or Dún Laoghaire in *Krapp's Last Tape* (or the Gaelic word for town, "Bally" used in *Molloy*); the references, direct and allusive, to paintings and

pervasive readings, some historically-oriented approaches have emerged, interested in how Beckett's work exposes its cultural origins and influences. These critics, however, do not fail any better, because as Peter Boxall points out, they do not demonstrate how the cultural has a bearing on Beckett's universality, and in their fear of trespassing on the revered ground of Beckett's abstraction, "shroud[…] in anxious caveats . . . that such [biographical or transpotterish] details are of signal unimportance in the wide and empty expanses of the Beckettian poetic terrain" (161).[110]

In the static of this critical environment, some recent studies have emerged that have attempted to acknowledge the presence in Beckett's work of historical *and* universal, to read, as Coílín Parsons, "dislocation . . . as itself located" (88), often using the language of spectrality to articulate the presence of the Irish and the political in Beckett's texts.[111] Boxall's "Samuel Beckett: Towards a Political Reading" advocates for this more balanced approach, contending that "Beckett's work is not driven solely by an abstract compulsion or categorical imperative, but by a difficult and ambivalent relationship with a material political geography, whose specific cultural meanings both constrain and partly produce the constantly self-effacing spaces of his

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painters, such as Caravaggio, in so many of Beckett's works, as James Knowlson has thoroughly detailed; and historical references, such as to the Boer War in *Mercier et Camier* (Kennedy discusses this example in "Humanity in Ruins" 188).

[110] An example of this critical impasse is demonstrated in Eoin O'Brien's *The Beckett Country*, a study of the influence of Ireland as a place on Beckett's writings. This work was faulted by C.J. Ackerley and S.E. Gontarski because it does not also show how Ireland is absent or disappears from Beckett's writings, how it is "more simulated than geographically discrete, simultaneously anywhere and nowhere" ("Introduction" xiv, xv)—though of course such was not the purpose of the work. O'Brien himself, anticipating these charges, writes in his introduction that he is anxious that his book, in presenting outer realities, does not "blight . . . the 'soul-landscape'" (xix).

[111] In *Beckett, Modernism, and the Material Imagination*, Steven Connor writes that for Beckett, "Sein . . . is always Da-Sein" and notes that this way of being is thematized in the figure of the ghost, "who is both there . . . and 'not there.' But it should be remembered that the ghost has a curious relation to finitude, which means it is never entirely unearthly or out of this world" (182).

writing" (162).[112] Following these critics and observing Beckett's own warning in "Dante . . . Bruno" that "The danger is in the neatness of identifications" (495), I seek to read the Big World/Little World conflicts in *Murphy* as expressive of Beckett's later tenuous positioning between the historical and ahistorical, the material and immaterial. Rather than viewing *Murphy*, in its seemingly greater focus on the "real" world, as particularly distinct from Beckett's later writings, I suggest that it offers a heuristic for reading these later works. Its telephonic materiality, which disrupts the boundaries between concrete and abstract, underscores patterns and tensions running through Beckett's oeuvre.[113]

In this network of intermediating lines drawing together seemingly distant ends, the telephone becomes an appropriate metaphor—enabling communication, but also complicating it.[114] Yet all of the literal and figurative wires crisscrossing the text, even when they falter, lead to fateful transmissions, from the phone in Murphy's apartment to the frenetic telegrams sent between his Irish coterie; from the gas wiring in the garret to the switchboards in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat. My argument will borrow from Avital Ronell's *The Telephone Book*, and her use of the telephone as a tool to think through philosophical problems, a "technical object whose

[112] Similarly, Seán Kennedy urges in his introduction to *Beckett and Ireland* that we need to move away from "an either/or debate (and the possessive language that seems to go with it)" and "deconstruct the various binaries in Beckett studies . . . so that the many fruitful tensions and correspondences between them can be more easily discerned" (8).

[113] Objects have been little discussed in scholarship on *Murphy* (as they are underexplored in Beckett scholarship in general). For several recent approaches to objects in Beckett's works, ranging from poststructural readings to thing theory, see Bryden and Redfern; Chevallier; Nugent-Folan; Price; Robinson; and Volpicelli.

[114] Like Descartes' vexed concept of the conarium, the pineal space of contact between the body and mind, the phone line provides an unseen third space where transference occurs. And perhaps such alternate methods of connecting the Big World with the Little World are necessary, considering that, according to Murphy's mentor Neary, "I should say [Murphy's] conarium has shrunk to nothing" (6).

technicity appears to dissolve at the moment of essential connection" (3).[115] Although the philosophical and historical problems I examine in *Murphy* and Beckett differ from those Ronell investigates, her larger consideration of the phone as a conceptual device that "destabilizes the self and other, subject and thing . . . abolishes the ordinariness of site . . . is itself unsure of its identity as object, thing, piece of equipment, perlocutionary intensity or artwork" (9) offers a productive application to the destabilized, in-between material world of *Murphy.* Moreover, her comparison of Heidegger's call of conscience to a telephone call structures my own reading of historical references in the novel as a call to the characters (and the reader)—a call that discourses in silence, that breaks down the limits of outside and inside, and that immediately obligates.

The composition of *Murphy,* a novel largely about being caught between two states, corresponds with its own narrative concerns: it was drafted, according to Knowlson, in two countries, England and Ireland, as Beckett traveled back and forth between his childhood home in Dublin and his residence in London. During this time, Beckett found himself in a condition of both mental and physical breakdown and underwent two years of psychoanalysis to trace his troubles in the present to his past traumas. As he was shuttling between all these worlds, he was also regularly spending time at the London lodgings of a woman, Hester Dowdon, who was a medium (Knowlson 166-83). Beckett lived in the relentless transmissions between absence and presence. The pull between two worlds established in the writing and positioning of *Murphy* is

[115] Although I am drawing my understanding of the phone from Ronell, other thinkers have attended to the philosophical possibilities and historical ramifications of the telephone. Freud writes about the telephone and its relation to psychoanalysis, commenting that the doctor must act to the patient as a telephone receiver to the transmitting microphone, converting the patient's communications into a reconstructed unconscious (115-16). In *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan emphasizes how the phone acts as an extension of the body (265). Stephen Kern considers how the telephone has helped to alter individuals' sense of time and space (69). In *A Lover's Discourse*, Barthes discusses how the telephone stresses the silences and departures of the other: "We fall silent in unison: crowding of two voids. I'm going to leave you, the voice on the telephone says with each second" (114-15).

never fully resolved in Beckett's writings, for his later works, no matter how apparently emptied and abstracted, contain odd ghosts of histories, of places, of things, straining toward the nothing but recalled back by the plenum of a life situated in space and time. As the narrator reflects in *Molloy*: "But in spite of my soul's leap out to him, at the end of its elastic, I saw him only darkly, because of the dark and then because of the terrain . . . but most of all I think because of other things calling me and towards which too one after the other my soul was straining, wildly" (7). But in these busy lines, through these insistent frequencies between the material and the immaterial, *Murphy* not only suggests a way of understanding Beckett's writing, but questions how to answer the always-disruptive call of history that indebts us as soon as we respond.

Something There

The writer John Banville observes of Beckett, "we can see how firmly his writings are rooted in the solid, the commonplace. . . . In his work the thing shines. All is immanence" (qtd. in Knowlson 21). Although physical things in Beckett's texts might be reduced in quantity, they are amplified in purpose and meaning. The characters in *Murphy* repeatedly use material objects to establish a one-way transmission that channels their energies away from the extended world and the demands of time to the seemingly more pure and timeless state of the mind.[116] Murphy's "best friends had always been among things" (191), but he, and other characters in the text, use things to move toward thinglessness. Their attempt to negate the physical world echoes Beckett's own relationship toward his writing; as he articulates it in a letter to Aidan Higgins, "I used to

[116] The things themselves in *Murphy* are not definitively tied to a specific place and time. In this way, the objects in this early work anticipate the portrayal of many of the objects—the umbrellas, the walking sticks, the boots—in the later novels and plays. Ackerley and Gontarski point out that the world of things in Beckett's works have roots in "turn-of-the-century turf, amid the Anglo-Irish bourgeoisie" (x). There is, then, a trace of historical specificity in the objects, but not as exact or developed as the spaces in *Murphy,* as we will see.

think all this work was an effort, necessarily feeble, to express the nothing. It seems rather to have been a journey, irreversible, in gathering thinglessness, towards it" (qtd. in Morin 125). However, these currents toward the nothing always circulate back; the objects avow their embodiment, the flow of time interrupts. During Beckett's first months living in London in 1934, while he was undergoing psychoanalysis for panic attacks and depression, he wrote to his cousin Morris Sinclair that he walked for hours in the evening in order to tire himself physically, but was "enjoying it all the more since motion itself is a kind of anesthesia" (*Letters* 215), a sedative for his anxious mind. This relationship between the physical and the mental—external motion generating inward calm—defines many of the objects in *Murphy*, both their known purpose and their actual use. In using these objects, however, the characters focus on the inward calm so much that they tend to disregard the very physicality that enables them to pursue it. But though they prioritize the mind over the body, seeking to remain "dead to the voices of the street, dead and damned" (229), the body—and the entire outer world—inevitably reasserts itself. The objects, like telephone lines stretching between two worlds, are positioned in what Ronell calls "this gap that tenuously joins what it separates" (3). Simultaneously embodied and disembodied, objects in *Murphy* demonstrate the destabilizing intermediacy of the thing world, thereby calling into question definitions of body and mind, object and thing, substance and essence. In their state of ontological in-betweenness, these objects also set the stage for the spaces in *Murphy* and their relation to the national and political undecidability of the characters.

Murphy's rocking chair is the first major object introduced in the text, and its portrayal and deployment inaugurates a pattern followed by several other prominent items in the novel.[117]

[117] The rocking chair makes appearances in other Beckett texts, notably *Rockaby* and *Film.* According to Knowlson, the memory of his grandmother sitting in a rocking chair at the window, as well as several paintings, inspired the image of the woman in *Rockaby*, who is entranced by the rocking in a manner not dissimilar to Murphy and Celia (583). In the notes for *Film*, precise instructions are provided for the

The first page provides the only physical description of the chair, that it is built of "undressed teak, guaranteed not to crack, warp, shrink, corrode, or creak at night" (1). The chair's distinctive physical characteristics appear to matter little, other than to create a pun (the teak is undressed and so is Murphy) and to foreshadow the end of Murphy (and the end of the chair), when the durability of the chair will prove meaningless against fire, and its silence will be matched by Murphy himself: "Soon his body was quiet" (253). One aspect of the chair's physical presence does matter, however: it is not just any chair, but a rocking chair. A rocking chair, of course, does more than hold a body; its essence is motion, but motion of a circumscribed, recursive kind. When Murphy rocks, he controls his own movements similarly, strapping himself to the chair with seven scarves so that "only the most local movements were possible" (2). Thus the body and the chair are permitted only constrained movements, minimal transgression into their surrounding space: Murphy allows his material world to express itself, but only in a limited way. This type of subdued physicality is crucial to the functions Murphy has developed for the chair, to quiet his body and to "set him free in his mind" (2). It is only when he works the chair up to "its maximum rock" that "the world died down, the big world where *Quid pro quo* was cried . . . in favour of the little . . . where he could love himself" (6-7). The chair is a vehicle that transports Murphy out of the physical, so that the chair, the bonds, the body, and the outside world are left behind. Although perhaps other devices might work, the nature of the rocking chair appears to be particularly well-adapted for Murphy's purposes; while "most things under the moon got slower and slower and then stopped, a rock got faster and faster and then stopped" (9)—the chair allows both movement and stillness, physical and non-physical, to coexist. When

timing and manner of rocking in order to "emotionalize [the] inspection" of the photographs, given in numbered steps: "gentle steady rock for 1 to 4, rock stilled (foot to ground) after two seconds of 5, rock resumed between 5 and 6, rock stilled after two seconds of 6, rock resumed after 6 and for 7 as for 1-4" (334).

Murphy first moves to the garret, he does not have the chair, and so he tries to "come out in his mind" by lying on his bed (175). He falls asleep instead. The controlled rhythm of the rocking chair is both an awakened and a denied physicality, one that gives pleasure to Murphy's body, but that also enables the body to be lulled and finally transcended.

It is not only Murphy, the "seedy solipsist," who uses the chair in this way. When Murphy leaves to look for work, Celia, normally the more earthly-minded of the pair, begins to feel the draw of the chair, understanding its appeal "as soon as [Murphy] gave up trying to explain" (67). As Ruby Cohn points out, Celia has also become enveloped in the aura of the "old boy" upstairs, an alter ego of Murphy (77). The old boy's pacing in his room mimics the action of the rocking chair, motion within a limited space. Soon Celia is spending much of the day in the rocking chair facing the window, "steeping herself in these faint eddies till they made an amnion about her own disquiet" (66-67). It is not clear which comes first, the rocking chair or the discontent, but Celia realizes, as Murphy has, the futility of the outer world and its getting and spending, and wants to do nothing but escape into a constraint of body and emptiness of mind, which the chair enables: "She could not sit for long in the chair without the impulse stirring . . . to be naked and bound . . . always the moment came when no effort of thought could prevail against the sensation of being imbedded in a jelly of light, or calm the trembling of her body to be made fast" (67). The sexual nature of the rocking experience, for both Celia and Murphy, cannot be denied—their naked bodies are pleasured by the motions of the chair and by bondage, both real and imagined. But the bodily pleasure offered by the chair is used as a vehicle to bodily escape. Celia uses the rocking chair to unburden herself of her body, a particularly charged site, given her work as a prostitute, and her temporal existence, which is weighted with both a traumatic past and a vastly uncertain future:

> She closed her eyes and was in her mind with Murphy, Mr. Kelly, clients, her parents, others, herself a girl, a child, an infant. In the cell of her mind, teasing the oakum of her history. Then it was finished, the days and places and things and people were untwisted and scattered, she was lying down, she had no history. (148-49)

Her rocking is compared to Penelope's unweaving, a daily attempt to lose, to move backward in time and negate history, to remove herself to a place of absolute being. Like Murphy, she finds the chair to be the best instrument for achieving this state—better than walking the streets or wandering in the Market (67), and part of the predictable movements of the footsteps overhead and the waning light across the ceiling (134). For a brief time in these afternoons, the rocking chair, itself a physical thing, quiets the physical world for Celia. As Molloy will later state, "to restore silence is the role of objects" (9).

Murphy later acknowledges, however, that the rocking chair could only "sway the issue in the desired direction, but not clinch it" (179). The chair is divided between its materiality and the predominantly non-material purposes to which it has been employed, and its embodiment announces itself at the moments when Murphy and Celia most desire to leave behind their own bodies. In the first scene of the book, Murphy's rocking is disturbed first by the ringing phone and then by a heart attack, both interruptions from the physical world that the chair is powerless to silence. In the latter instance, the rocking chair quickly becomes a liability, turning over on top of Murphy and trapping him so that once again "only the most local movements were possible" (28)—although now the constraint is not from choice. The very physical qualities that make the chair ideal for transporting Murphy to his mind also make it an encumbrance. And since Murphy's means of escape from the world is a physical object, bound by the rules of space and

time, then his moments of escape are similarly circumscribed; when he is wandering around the town, rejected from jobs and feeling dejected, he longs for his chair: "if only he were immediately wafted to his rocking-chair and allowed to rock for five minutes" (78). His internal passive voice and diction further emphasize how Murphy finds himself at the mercy of the chair and other physical circumstances. When he first moves to the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, the M.M.M., he cannot come alive in his mind without the chair, though he tries other means. So he must go back and retrieve it. Murphy has become so dependent on the chair that he must always carry it with him, a ubiquitous burden, "It was his own, it never left him" (1). He presumably brought the chair with him from Cork to London, he transfers it again when he and Celia move to Brewery Road, and it is the only thing he fetches when he relocates to the garret (earlier he comments to Celia that she would know he had left her for good if he took the chair [142]). His reliance on the chair is so great that at times when he is "craving for the chair" (190), it can seem unclear which he values more, his mind or his chair. Celia likewise becomes dependent on the chair during her short time with it, so that the chair and just two bags are all she takes with her when she moves to the upstairs apartment. After Murphy reclaims the chair, she is left adrift, the loss of the object seeming to affect her as much as the loss of Murphy himself.

Even when the chair is physically present and doing its Little World work (for sometimes there are "fruitless hours" of rocking [236]), it is only ever a stopgap, helping Murphy and Celia rise above their lives for just a few moments before they must wake again to "face the music, music, MUSIC" (252). Though Murphy himself is "vague about time" (69-70), his life is driven by the calendar as he seeks to live according to his horoscope and its account of his lucky days and years. His precise schedule at the M.M.M. reinforces his imposed submission to time. When he rocks, he removes himself from the pressures of the clock, but eventually he must re-enter

earthly reality. When Celia is rocking, she is able to lose track of time and enter a "paradisial innocence of days and places and things and people" (149), where she gives up trying to grasp the "irrevocable days and the unattainable days" (67). But then the rocking always stops, and she is reminded once again of how time is receding; at one point when she awakes from the stupor of the chair, she realizes she has not left her room in a fortnight. When she goes on her walks in the park, she seems to be trying to lose herself in the moment as she does on the chair, but is unable, for around her, as the narrator notes, "It was as though Time suddenly lost patience or had an anxiety attack" (278). The chair only removes Murphy and Celia from the Big World temporarily, and even then "Time did not cease, that would be asking too much" (246).

In the end, the rocking chair demonstrates not its inadequacy as an instrument for Murphy and Celia, but its in-betweenness, never a pure thing, existing on its own, and never a pure object, existing only in relation to a subject. Although a material thing, it is used to help its occupants enter their minds and suspend their sense of time, and yet even in this abstracted role, its relation to the world of space and time continually interjects. The rocking chair lies on a schizophrenic juncture between the embodied and disembodied, the thing and the object. This positioning is shared by other material items in *Murphy*, which, like the frequently repeated phrases in the text, reiterate, emphasize, and provide new shades of meaning, creating contrapuntal arrangements around the theme established by the rocking chair.[118]

In a letter to his friend Tom McGreevy that begins with the *Murphy*-esque line, "the discrepancy between the mind and body are terrible," Beckett describes a scene of kite-flying witnessed in Kensington Gardens that influenced his depiction of this key object in the novel. He

[118] Cohn notes that the "primary stylistic weapon" of the novel is repetition, and cites Rubin Rabinovitz, who lists over five hundred examples of reiterated passages and over two hundred examples of "'recurring episodes, dual sets of objects, characters with similar traits, and various types of symmetrical configurations'" (80).

concludes by declaring, “My next old man, or old young man, not of the big world but of the little world, must be a kite-flyer. So absolutely disinterested, like a poem” (274). His next letter announces, “The kites at the Round Pond yesterday were plunging & writhing all over the sky. The book closes with an old man flying his kite” (278). For Celia’s grandfather Willoughby Kelly, kites play a role similar to that of the rocking chair for Murphy and Celia, and though the text begins with the rocking chair, it ends with the kite. After a life of “dingy, stingy repose” (11), the one activity Mr. Kelly devotes himself to is kite-flying, and even when he is not by the Round Pond, throwing his kite into the air, he is always there in his mind. While Mr. Kelly is not philosophically preoccupied with the Little World like Murphy, he implicitly pursues it, like Celia, seeking to disavow the restrictions of the body and physical world through kites.

Mr. Kelly’s body, unlike his mind, has become considerably weakened and limited with age. Though he does not “look a day over ninety” (115), his body is wasting away: “Yet a little while and his brain-body ratio would have sunk to that of a small bird” (11). He primarily gets around in a wheelchair (“He was as fond of his chair in his own way as Murphy had been of his” [277]), but at times does not have the strength to propel it forward. When first pictured in the novel, he is lying in bed with barely the energy to keep his head up, and his control over his body seems to be slipping: parts of his body “would wander away and get lost if he did not keep a sharp look-out, he felt them fidgeting to be off” (115). The appeal of kite-flying is in direct proportion to his physical limitations. The kite achieves a soaring movement not possible to Mr. Kelly, and when he looks up at the kite, pulling out of sight, he sees himself: “Already he was in position, straining his eyes for the speck that was he, digging in his heels against the immense pull skyward” (25). Identifying with the kite, “the speck that was he,” he imagines himself leaving behind his mortal coil.

But Mr. Kelly's attraction to the kite is more than an attraction to its physical possibilities and pleasures; the kite also enables him to reach beyond the physical world. Little information is given about his life, but it is evident that he feels disconnected from the society around him. As an Irishman living in London, he is displaced, and he has formed no major relationships in his adopted city; Celia is the only person in his life, and when she does not visit him, he thinks, "Now I have no one" (115). The only political figure he expresses admiration for is Queen Victoria, who had died over thirty years prior, and whose associated way of life had largely disappeared. The world of 1930s London has little appeal for Mr. Kelly, who longs to escape from the specificities of time and place. When the kite gets high enough in the sky, it disappears from view, and Mr. Kelly can "measure the distance from the unseen to the seen . . . to determine the point at which seen and unseen met" (280). He is "enraptured" by the kite's ability to travel out of sight and his ability to ascertain the conarial zone where the material meets the immaterial. Unlike Murphy and Celia, Mr. Kelly is not interested in becoming absorbed in the mind, but rather in finding another space of timelessness and immateriality. The space that he finds is nevertheless a personal one; Celia, for example, does not experience what Mr. Kelly experiences when she looks up—when she watches the kites flying, she either sees images of herself and Murphy, or just a "ludicrous fever of toys struggling skyward" (281). Or she looks to the sky itself, where she is reminded not of immateriality, but of Ireland.

The kite, however, is still a physical object, subject both to its own material limitations and the limitations of the physical world. A kite as an object gives the appearance of transcendence, but it is bound to the earth: its movement is not completely free—tethered to a body at one end, its pull upward is necessarily restricted; it is subject to the undulations of the wind; it is destined to always fall back down to earth, no matter how long it might ascend into

the unseen. Like the recursive motion of the rocking chair, the motion of the kite is ultimately limited and contingent, so that the physical is again kept in check. The physical qualities of Mr. Kelly's particular kite also govern its ability to fly effectively. Mr. Kelly debates with other kite-fliers the merits of silk versus nainsook kites, finding silk the far superior material and according nainsook his ultimate disparagement: "Nainsook my rump" (277). And since his kite is "worn and wan with much exposure" (114-15), then he must constantly be mending it in order for it to fly. The kite is dependent on a host of material factors in order to accomplish its immaterial work. And as Mr. Kelly seeks timelessness with the kite, history becomes interpolated, both through the space itself—Mr. Kelly flies his kite next to the statue of Queen Victoria—and even through the narrator's joking comparison of the kite's rising to historical progression: its fitfulness is the "historical process of the hardened optimists" (279), its wild rush upward is the "industrial revolution" (280).

The end of the text marks both the collapse and the achievement of material transcendence: Mr. Kelly watches with exaltation the kite disappear from view, but then he falls asleep, his weak body triumphing over mental rapture; and as he sleeps, the winch slips from his hands, the string snaps, and the kite "jerk[s] upward in a wild whirl, vanish[ing] joyfully in the dusk" (282) in the spirit of a poltergeist. The physical world—the body, the wind, and the kite itself—announces itself and seemingly carries the day. However, as the kite, no longer tethered, vanishes, it is entering the unseen, and thus becomes disembodied at the same moment that its embodiment seems most pronounced. Its identity as an object also becomes more indeterminate in this last scene, for it enters the unseen no longer by the control of the kite-flyer, but by itself and other physical forces. As the human subjects are fading in the last lines of the book, Mr. Kelly going limp, Celia weary and toiling up the hill, the non-human world of wind and kite

manifests particular life and energy. Together, the wind and the kite orchestrate a union of seen and unseen outside of the power and observation of the human subject. In this last scene, an object becomes more than just the means for a subject to achieve transcendence: it becomes the agent, the operator, mobilizing its own transcendence. The kite will eventually fall. But before it falls, it fleetingly abolishes the distance between the physical and the non-physical, and questions the essence of its objecthood.

According to Knowlson, Beckett played chess with his friend Dr. Geoffrey Thompson when he visited Thompson during his shifts at the Bethlem Royal Hospital (199). It hardly needs to be noted Beckett's abiding interest in chess, which he played passionately throughout his life and which surfaces in various permutations in his writing, perhaps most prominently in *Endgame*.[119] Although the chess set appears in just two scenes of the novel, it is a central image to *Murphy*, particularly encapsulating the idea of attempted communications between two people and two ways of living in the world.[120] Mr. Endon, a patient in the M.M.M., is able, ironically, to employ chess to remain immured in his interior world. Murphy, however, though he seeks to use chess to enter the mind of Endon, ultimately fails. The chess set is the object that finally and undeniably underscores to Murphy his inescapable connections to the Big World.

The nature of chess implies that it could act as a medium of communication between two minds. Although the game is expressed in the movement of physical pieces on a physical board, its essence is mental strategy, which involves reading, anticipating, and responding to the moves

[119] Knowlson notes that the bookshelves of Beckett's home at Ussy held books on chess, and that the floors themselves, laid with red and white tiles in large squares, had the appearance of a chessboard (351).

[120] Beckett's desired cover for the published text of *Murphy* was a picture he had seen in a newspaper of two chimps playing chess. He sent a clipping of the photograph to his publisher, who never used it, causing Beckett to observe that he would spend the rest of his life "regretting the monkeys" (qtd. in Ackerley 3).

of the other player. The narrator never describes the chess set Murphy and Endon use, only referring to the colors of the pieces, black and white, de-emphasizing its physical traits in favor of detailed attention to the interactions between the players. In their last match, the narrator carefully lists all forty-three of their moves, with commentary. Endon, however, does not actually interact with Murphy during chess, but uses the game to ensconce himself more fully in his own Little World—and even turn his opponent into a part of the game. Chess is Endon's "one frivolity" (187), its appeal appearing to arise not only from its mental emphasis, but from its constrained movements, which attract Endon, who is at times so languorous that he falls into a "charming suspension of gesture" (186) and who wants to commit suicide by apnea, a still and passive form of suicide. As he plays chess with Murphy, he only thinks of Murphy as a part of chess: "while Mr. Endon for Murphy was no less than bliss, Murphy for Mr. Endon was no more than chess" (242). Murphy focuses on Endon as he plays, but Endon only pays attention to himself. Although Murphy thinks their relationship is of the purest possible kind because it is "exempt from the big world's precocious ejaculations of thought, word and deed" (184), in reality it lacks these elements because Endon does not acknowledge Murphy's humanity in any way. Rather than communicating with Murphy's moves on the chessboard, Endon ignores them, playing as if Murphy himself were not there and his pieces just things to be avoided. When their last match ends and Murphy tucks Endon into bed, he tries to make contact with Endon by staring into his eyes, but finally fathoms that he "is a speck in Mr. Endon's unseen" (250), echoing the language of Mr. Kelly's kite, another speck that disappears into the unseen. Endon is able to remain immersed in his mind not only through the mental game of chess, but by turning another human subject into an object, a part of the material world that for him is easily disregarded.

Murphy tries to use chess as a way of getting closer to Endon and gaining access to his self-immersed world, "as Narcissus to his fountain" (186). While he uses the rocking chair to enter his own mind, chess promises to connect him with the mind of one who lives exclusively in the Little World. Murphy believes that just as through the circumscribed movements of the rocking chair, the confined and calculated moves on the chessboard will lead him to greater mental absorption—and in this case, involvement in the mind of another. At first, Murphy believes that he is engaging with Endon during their matches, and draws from their passive form of playing the conviction that such "Fabian methods" indicated their kinship (186). Chess never allows Murphy to leave behind the physical world and connect with Endon, however. His failed attempts to assimilate into Endon's Little World through chess are reflected in the very style of playing that initially gave Murphy such hope of connection. They mostly play apart from one another—because Murphy is on duty in the M.M.M. and must leave to check on other patients, then he and Endon must make their moves both in the absence of the other. And their movements on the board do not reflect kinship so much as total non-engagement: they can play for hours with neither losing a piece or checking the other. In their last match, an elaborate exercise in non-communication, Murphy resigns after the forty-third move, laying his king on its side, a physical expression of his mental capitulation to Endon's impermeability.[121] He finally acknowledges, sorrowfully, Endon's "immunity from seeing anything but himself" (250). The chess set, while seeming to offer the prospect of a conduit between two minds, enabling them to connect with one another and leave behind the outside world, ultimately leaves them the same as they began: Endon alone with his voices and Murphy caught between body and mind.

[121] For a more thorough analysis of their manner of playing chess, see Bohman-Kalaja's chapter, "Stalemate: Failing Dialogues as *Murphy*'s Play" in *Reading Games.*

The narrator in Beckett's novel *Malone Dies*, who is agonizingly preparing for his death (and who does, eventually, die) at one point avers, "it's vague, life and death" (218). Murphy's own death, like his life, blurs these two states as it lies in the overlap or gap between the material and the non-material. Murphy burns in his garret, and in the mortuary he is incinerated again, turning him into ashes.[122] As his "body, mind and soul" are reverted to ash "of an eminently portable variety" (271), Murphy becomes a thing. In this re-positioning, which signifies both Murphy (the subject)'s transference out of the Big World and Murphy (the object)'s baptism into it, an "unspeakable juncture" (271) is formed of nothingness and presence. This state of complete and eternally unresolved in-betweenness provides the ultimate exemplar of things in *Murphy*.

As soon as he dies, Murphy's identity as a person slowly begins to be lost and his identity as an object begins. Before he is cremated, his body lies on an aluminum tray in the mortuary, where the doctors (faultily) determine his cause of death from his "irrefragable post-mortem appearance" (261) but find themselves unable to personally identify him because of this charred appearance. In a comic send-up of a scene in a detective novel, Celia and Murphy's Irish acquaintances come to the mortuary to identify Murphy, who is now referred to as "the remains." Miss Counihan is distressed that she can find no trace of the man she knew, "chagrined that she could not exclaim, before them all . . . 'This is Murphy, whose very dear friend I was'" (265). But Celia finds Murphy's birthmark, one of the last visible signs of him as an individual.

[122] Malone also considers ashes when speaking of himself, writing, "it was, though more unutterable, like the crumbling away of two little heaps of finest sand, or dust, or ashes, of unequal size, but diminishing together as it were in ratio, if that means anything, and leaving behind them, each in its own stead, the blessedness of absence" (216). Ashes, ashbins, and urns recur throughout Beckett's work: consider, for example, Nagg and Nell living in ashbins in *Endgame*; the three characters speaking from urns in *Play*; the song with the line "She comes in the ashes" in *Words and Music*; or the landscape and body of "ash grey" in *Lessness*. For Beckett, ashes convey the idea of something that is both extinguished and surviving, a paradox central to his work.

Once he is cremated, Murphy's identity as a person is totally lost. Neary says of the ashes, "Dump it anywhere" (272), dropping both the pronoun "he" from Murphy's remains as well as any attendant respect that might be accorded a person. Cooper, left with the ashes, notes they weigh around four pounds, focusing more on the physical qualities of the ash than what—or who—they signify.[123] The scene ends with Cooper first looking for a trash receptacle for the ashes, and then settling into a bar instead, where he throws the bag of ashes at a man in a fight. In the last mention of Murphy, he has become finally and unceremoniously incorporated into the material world: "By closing time the body, mind and soul of Murphy were freely distributed over the floor of the saloon; and before another dayspring greyened the earth had been swept away with the sand, the beer, the butts, the glass, the matches, the spits, the vomit" (275). Merged with excrement and the detritus from a pub and finally swept away as trash, Murphy's ashes find a resting place generally in keeping with the one specified in his will—the w.c. of the Abbey Theatre, "where their happiest hours have been spent" (269). His corporeal remains, "expurgated, accelerated, improved, and reduced" (12) to ashes and intermingled with the abject leavings of other bodies, other objects, are uncommemorated and quickly become anonymous. And yet as ash, Murphy has become one of the foundational elements of the earth and part of the poetic origins of the body alluded to in funereal benediction, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Or as the coroner notes, "How beautiful in a way . . . birthmark deathmark, I mean, rounding off the life somehow, don't you think, full circle" (267). Although he might become transferred or translated into something new, Murphy will never be destroyed but always a part of the physical makeup of the world.

[123] Four pounds is about the average weight of an adult's ashes. Beckett can be quite as precise as Joyce in his factual details.

What happens, however, to Murphy the person, the "I"? We only know that when he dies, his body is quiet and his mind is free. Perhaps in the end, his physical death enables his spirit to join the Little World for good; perhaps he becomes nothing, entering "the positive peace that comes when the somethings give way, or perhaps simply add up, to the Nothing, than which . . . naught is more real" (246). What happens to him lies beyond the limit of the narrative and lies within the paradox of being and nothingness. As Blanchot announces at the beginning of *The Writing of the Disaster*, "The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact. It does not touch anyone in particular; 'I' am not threatened by it, but spared, left aside. It is in this way that I am threatened; it is in this way that the disaster threatens in me that which is exterior to me—an other than I who passively become other" (1). Murphy's death operates within the aporia whereby he becomes nothing and a thing at the same time, both ruined and intact, his self preserved and destroyed. Like Mr. Endon's operation of the light switches and indicators in the corridors of the M.M.M., Murphy now exists in a state that is always both/and and neither/nor: "lit, indicated, extinguished; lit, extinguished, indicated; indicated, lit, extinguished" (247). The ontology of ashes offers a final instantiation of the condition of things in *Murphy*, always material and never as material as they seem.

What Where

Murphy is the most spatially located of all Beckett's writings, the novel not only set in precise (and real) places, but overwhelmed with details of place, drawn from Beckett's experiences living in Dublin and London. The reader is oriented immediately: the novel quickly moves from the general to the particular, establishing in the first sentence its earthly location—the nothing new on which the sun shines—and pinpointing in the second Murphy's specific

corner of the globe—a mew in West Brompton. From there Beckett gradually accretes more and more "demented particulars" (13), as Mr. Kelly would have it, plotting his characters' moves like chess pieces through London streets, by shops and hotels and train stops and across parks. The minutely-observed details of the city, accumulated by Beckett on his extensive walks while he lived in London in the mid-1930s, were aided by *Whitaker's Almanac* of 1935, which Beckett referenced while writing *Murphy*—in much the same way that Joyce drew from *Thom's Directory* for *Ulysses* (Ackerley and Gontarski 643). The switchboard of the novel also transfers us to Dublin (and briefly Cork), where the action revolves around Wynn's Hotel, Mooney's Pub, a Dalkey tram, and the General Post Office.[124]

Beckett gives, as Belacqua demands in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, "The facts—let us have facts, facts, plenty of facts" (32); however, as Cohn observes, all these urban signposts ultimately come across as "colorless" (76). For Malcolm Stuart, the seemingly hollow constitution of *Murphy*'s setting results from the novel being "located, rather than localized" (228). I would extend this argument by claiming that the nature of the place descriptions reflects the embattled relationship the main characters, who are Irish, have with the history and present political climate of both postcolonial Ireland and late imperial England. Displaced from Ireland to England, Murphy, Celia, and the constellation of Irish men and women who surround them, evidence what we might term historical exhaustion: they are driven by a desire to evacuate themselves of the constant reminders of the past encumbering the places they live. The "All out" that closes the text defines the spatial impetus behind these individuals' actions: to free, if possible, their spaces from everything but the essential, sweeping them clean of personal and historical associations, and in the sites where they have no power over the space, to disengage

[124] In the midst of all these real locations, Beckett occasionally undermines his realism by also including imaginary places, such as Tyburnia, the supposed district in London where Mr. Kelly lives.

from their surroundings, mentally emptying themselves, "improv[ing] [themselves] out of all knowledge" in an attempt to transcend history and politics. These attempts, however, are only ever short-lived; the troubled past and the demanding realities of the present always obtrude, persistent calls that cannot be ignored. The spaces in *Murphy* situate the characters and the reader in a materially and historically-layered world that can be resisted but never circumvented, put on hold but never cut off.

Murphy's horoscope reads, "There have been persons of this description known to have expressed a wish to be in two places at a time" (32); whether through desire or otherwise, Murphy and others in the text occupy two spaces at once—the internal space of their minds and the external space of their bodies. Since they are not able to shed their corporeal shadows, then Murphy and Celia in particular become increasingly interested in making their outer spaces conform to their mental state. In the chapter devoted to Murphy's mind, the reader is afforded a glimpse into how his mind "felt and pictured itself to be" (107), which the narrator describes in spatial terms as a Leibnizian monad, "a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe without" (107) and divided into three zones of light, half light, and dark.[125] It is in this third zone of darkness that Murphy prefers to spend most of his mental time, where "nothing but forms becoming and crumbling into the fragments of a new becoming, without love or hate or any intelligible principle of change" (112). In the darkness, Murphy can disengage from the affairs of the world and experience will-lessness, like "a missile without provenance or target" (112).

As he seeks to live more in his mind, Murphy adjusts his outer surroundings accordingly. The novel begins in his first London habitation, "a mew in West Brompton," designated as a "medium-sized cage of north-western aspect commanding an unbroken view of medium-sized

[125] Murphy himself also considers his mind "not as an instrument but as a place" (178).

cages of south-eastern aspect" (1). While Murphy's limited means would, practically speaking, prohibit him from living in a more spacious abode in a more open street, his current residence harmonizes well with his mental state. He is attempting to subdue the body to more completely occupy the mind, and his room aids in this attempt through its physical and visual constrictions of size and location. Inside, Murphy has cleared the room of most objects except for the ones that for him are the most vital, such as his bed and rocking chair. We learn later that "His books, his pictures, his postcards, his musical scores and instruments, all had been gradually disposed of in that order rather than the chair" (189). The room then, while not totally hollow, bears a vacant appearance, as Murphy's own mind is depicted, and suggests, further, his desire to rid himself of all sentimental and cultural baggage and become reduced to those external things that fulfill a necessary function (the bed) or that help him escape the physical (the rocking chair). The light of the room also registers Murphy's preference for the dark zone of his mind: the sun is curtained off during the day, and Celia, arriving one night after ten, is unsurprised to still see no light in the window, as she "knew how addicted he was to the dark" (26). When Murphy later relocates to the M.M.M., his spatial preferences remain the same. He chooses to stay in a garret rather than a room at the M.M.M., because he finds the garret to be like one he had occupied in Hanover, "but twice as good as the one in Hanover, because half as large" (162). The garret is simply furnished with just a bed, a chair, and a chest, and it possesses only two means of light, a small frosted skylight, "ideal for closing against the sun by day and opening by night to the stars," and a candle (162): a minimal room that foreshadows the dramatically-reduced spaces of Beckett's plays. While working at the hospital, he particularly admires the padded rooms of the patients, which "windowless, like a monad" represent for him the apogee of design: "Within the narrow

limits of domestic architecture he had never been able to imagine a more creditable representation of what he kept on calling, indefatigably, the little world" (181).

However, in spite of Murphy's attempts to make his living environments correspond with his mind, the material world can never be entirely cleared away: the sun splashes light on the ceiling, the telephone erupts into a ring, clocks and street cries echo throughout the mew, and the candle catches the room on fire. Even both of his spaces—the mew and the garret—cage-like and claustrophobic, seem to distantly suggest Murphy's position as an Irishman in England, confined by certain expectations and stereotypes and living on the edge of society. Although Murphy likes to picture his mind as hermetically sealed, neither his mind nor his intellectualized physical spaces can ever be abstracted from the insistent transmissions from the outside world.

The text does not give us the dimensions of Celia's mind as it does for Murphy, but rather of her body. However, though she is staged as a physical analogue to Murphy, as absorbed in the necessities of the Big World as he is in engrossed in the Little World, she becomes slowly drawn into the life of the mind when Murphy begins leaving daily to search for jobs. When he goes to live at the M.M.M., her assimilation into the Little World becomes more, though never entirely, complete. At the beginning, Celia's relationship with space tends toward the outwardly-oriented: after Murphy's mew is condemned, she is the one to find them a new room, one that is symbolically constricted in its location (it is on a road between a prison and a cattle market), yet is actually quite spacious and furnished with articles that are "very large indeed" (63). Practically-minded, Celia locates a room for them that offers living space for two people, rather than being small and confined, and that provides necessary furnishings, rather than reducing them to nearly-empty quarters, like they had had before. And the room itself resembles anything but a small, hollow monad, the vast floor covered by a distracting linoleum that Murphy thinks

resembles a Braque painting, the walls painted a vivid lemon that "whined like Vermeer's" (228), the ceiling so high it is lost in the shadows.[126] Celia is not concerned with finding or creating a minimalistic physical space that echoes a quieted mental space, but finding one that they can afford.

But Celia's interactions with her outer environment begin to shift when she is left at home alone with the rocking chair and begins to spend her days rocking and losing herself in her mind. Soon, like Murphy, she starts to think of her external space as a reflection of and aid to her mind. She does not alter their current apartment, but rather, when the "old boy" upstairs dies, seizes the opportunity to move into a room more fitting of the Little World. Although the walls and linoleum in this new room are the same as in the old, the room itself is half as big, the ceilings half as high, and the space filled with the silence of "quiet air" (148). The move upstairs also affords Celia the chance to move away from excessive furnishings and possessions: the only piece of furniture mentioned in the old boy's room is a tiny bed, and Celia takes with her only two bags and the rocking chair. When the landlady Miss Carridge asks Celia, "Is that all you've got?", Celia's response—"All"—(148) indicates the peace she has made with her lessening material world, even as it anticipates the negating "All out" of the conclusion.

However, just as Murphy cannot limit the intrusions of the outside world, Celia can never fully rarefy her physical environment. Neither, it seems, are able to "talk against space" (39) or able to silence the material transmissions erupting into their lives with the unexpected force and insistence of a telephone ring. The quiet integrity of her spaces is violated constantly: Miss Carridge interrupts Celia in her room daily, "Not even a nice hot cup of tea in her hand could

[126] This room is partially based on one of Beckett's own during his time in London, the linoleum of which made apparently a strong impression. As he describes his new place in a letter to Tom McGreevy, "Big big room with plenty of space to pace the masterpieces up & down & linoleum like Braque seen from a great distance" (*Letters* 220).

make her subject to the usual conditions of time and space in this matter" (68); the char comes in to clean the room, requiring Celia to vacate it; Murphy eventually returns to claim his bag and chair while Celia is absent; and the Irish cabal of Neary, Wylie, and Miss Counihan trespasses on Celia, occupying both rooms she had shared with Murphy and sleeping in both beds. Just as Celia's position in the world is largely powerless—she is an orphaned Irish prostitute, subject to leers and propositions every time she walks out the door—she is powerless to keep her spaces sacred to the Little World. Though she desires to remove herself and "be less beastly circumstantial" (13), she realizes that in her life and in her space she ultimately can "omit no material circumstance" (229).

The action of *Murphy* pivots not only around these private spaces but also around public places, where the characters have far less ability to physically redefine their environment. In these public areas in London, Murphy and Celia seek less to re-shape the physical space itself than to move outside and above it, attempting to live within their minds even when the external space demands their attention. These spaces, however, loaded with reminders of both personal history and the overlapping history of England and Ireland, write themselves on the characters and prompt them to respond and begin to define their relationship with these two nations. The spaces in London I will particularly consider are the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat and Kensington Gardens. Back in Dublin, two spaces make a brief appearance: the General Post Office, with its Statue of Cuchulain, and the Abbey Theatre. The responses these nationalist spaces evoke in Neary and Murphy highlight the conflicted and unresolved position of many Irish people toward Ireland and its political climate in the 1930s. All of these spaces, whether promoting narratives of British empire or the Irish Free State, indicate not only how the characters are shaped by their politically-inflected physical environments, but how they are

driven to respond, even when that response is ambivalent, caught in-between like the characters themselves.

The Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, based on the Bethlem Royal Hospital, or Bedlam, is one of the oldest institutions in London, and the oldest psychiatric facility in Europe, with a deeply fraught past related to the treatment of the mentally ill.[127] It is here that Murphy comes to a realization of his own inability to find asylum from history—his own or the history of the place where he finds himself. Murphy initially takes a job as a nurse in the hospital to satisfy Celia's demands that he find work, and is at first indifferent to any greater meaning the position could offer him. He remarks to Austin Ticklepenny, "It makes no difference to me . . . whether I go or stay"—but as the narrator interjects: "He was mistaken" (165). As Murphy tours the wards for the first time, he is struck by the self-absorption of the residents and is eager to assimilate with them, as people further advanced along the journey of introspection he himself is trying to make. By studying the patients, he hopes that he might learn to become one of them, since "between the life from which he had turned away and the life of which he had no experience, except as he hoped inchoately in himself, he could not fail to side with the latter" (176).[128] Even the

[127] According to *The History of Bethlem,* Bethlem began as a priory in 1247, focused on collecting and distributing alms, but over time its connection to the Order of Bethlehem weakened and it became an increasingly secularized institution. Exactly when it transitioned to a specialist hospital for the insane is not known, although evidence indicates that by 1400 it was housing a small number of insane persons, and by 1460 it was largely functioning as an institution for the insane. By the 1600s, "Bedlam" had so infiltrated the popular consciousness that the word was being used not just to describe the place, but a state of mindless chaos. Its various conditions and treatment practices (or lack thereof) have been widely criticized, although as Andrews, et al. note, many of the lurid stories passed down were never investigated (2). The hospital has occupied four different locations over the course of its history, moving into its most recent building at Monks Orchard in 1931, just before the events in *Murphy* take place.

[128] Beckett visited Bedlam while writing *Murphy* (his friend Geoffrey Thompson worked there as a physician). Though perhaps not finding kinship there like Murphy, his response is devoid of any particular estrangement: "I was down at Bedlam this day week & went round the wards for the first time, with scarcely any sense of horror, though I saw everything, from mild depression to profound dementia" (*Letters* 277).

sanatorium's placement conveys a sense of separation from the world, even more so than the parks, for while they provide respite in the midst of the city's bustle, the M.M.M. "lay a little way out of town" (156). During his stint at the M.M.M., Murphy makes every attempt to leave behind his personal life and the world at large: he cuts off ties with Celia, moves his few things to the garret, and so immerses himself with the melancholics, paranoids, hebephrenics, hypomanics, and schizoids that he seems to become one with them: "they felt in him what they had been and he in them what he would be" (183-84).

However, in spite of his determined attempts to enter fully into the world of the microcosmopolitans, calls from the Big World continue unremittingly. His personal past can never be totally evaded. Austin Ticklepenny, the "pot poet" and his old acquaintance from Dublin, not only gets Murphy the job, but lives in the room underneath him and is forever intruding on Murphy's solitude. Although the reader is given little information on Murphy's life in Ireland, we know that Ticklepenny is a particularly unwelcome reminder of that life to Murphy, perhaps suggesting that Murphy, like Beckett, had been involved in the Irish literary scene and was now eager to leave it behind.[129] Or perhaps on a broader scale, Ticklepenny makes Murphy think of Ireland itself, a place he chose to leave and a place that he voices no interest in. The garret that Murphy lodges in reminds him of another part of his past, the "first cyanosis of youth" that he spent in Hanover (161). His more recent past follows him as well: he dreams of Celia though he does not think of her during the day, and even when his dead body lies in the mortuary at the M.M.M., his past life in Cork obtrudes, as his former mentor, former colleague, and former lovers come to identify him and claim his ashes. Ronell notes of communications on

[129] Ticklepenny is based on the prolific Irish poet Austin Clarke, whose verse Beckett criticized in "Recent Irish Poetry." Knowlson is unable to identify any particular reasons for Beckett to insult Clarke so thoroughly through his picture of Ticklepenny—other than Clarke's views on versification (202). It is clear that for Beckett, Clarke represented the Dublin literary scene he was attempting to move beyond.

the telephone, "contact is never constant, nor is the break clean" (20). Though Murphy has left Ireland, he has never been able to shut off its signals.

But it is not only his private history that follows him; the troubled history of the M.M.M. both silently surrounds him and inscribes itself on his actions so that he unthinkingly replicates aspects of its past. Bixby argues that Murphy is implicated in the carceral procedures of the hospital, its schedule of surveillance and documentation so that "no utopian scheme can ever entirely escape the regimes of power-knowledge" (115). Murphy's responsibilities correspond with the description of the nursing staff and their working conditions at Monks Orchard, detailed in *The History of Bethlem*—particularly the fact that junior and untrained staff were frequently left in charge of the wards (632). But Murphy's involvement in the life of the hospital extends beyond its present practices. As he romanticizes the patients in the M.M.M., he unconsciously repeats one of the most unsettling aspects of Bedlam's history. From the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, Bedlam was open to casual visitors, who were allowed to tour the hospital and view the insane. Hospital administrators encouraged Bedlam's spot on the entertainment circuit because it brought in much-needed revenue. Such spectatorship promoted ideas of the mentally ill as both exotic creatures and object lessons who could be contemplated for moral improvement (Andrews, et al. 131-35; 178-94). Although Murphy's attitude toward his patients is one of admiration and kinship, he nevertheless exoticizes them as "the race of people he had long since despaired of finding" (169), even disregarding their expressions of "pain, rage, despair" because these outbursts do not fit into the "little world where Murphy presupposed them, one and all, to be having a glorious time" (179, 180). The inmates also function to him as a lesson in how best to live (the opposite lesson, of course, from that derived by Bedlam's eighteenth-century visitors): with a "self-immersed indifference to the contingencies of the

contingent world," which for him is the "only felicity and achieved so seldom" (168). Furthermore, underneath the scrim of the institution's history lies the outline of English imperial history. The othering of the mentally ill in Bedlam suggests, microcosmically, the othering of non-English peoples, including the Irish.[130] When Murphy idealizes the patients in the hospital—even though he is elevating them—he is operating from the same position as the English colonizers who exoticized native people they encountered. Living in the center of empire, Murphy figuratively adopts the same stance toward the peripheries as those in power. Even though Murphy is not consciously trying to reenact Bedlam's or England's history in his own attitudes, he is spectrally influenced by the past and by the place he now lives. If, as Joyce once noted, "places remember events," then the hospital and the nation retain the events of their past, and this past possesses their current inhabitants.

Murphy is never able to achieve true quiet and aloneness, but remains attuned to multiple frequencies from the outside world, both present and past. Though the M.M.M. seems to offer a place where he can transcend his private concerns and the demands of the physical world, both follow him and determine his actions, in waking and sleeping, in life and in death. Murphy finds himself always with an ear on two receivers, just as the hospital is situated on the boundary of two counties and just as its name "Mercyseat" denotes the Old Testament place where the divine met with his people. Although Murphy has tried to leave behind Ireland by moving to England, and has tried to leave behind England by moving into an asylum, they both shadow him, in the form of personal associations and through his own actions, which are shaped by these larger narratives. Inhabiting these two countries that share a conflicted past and finding a home in

[130] Beckett was well aware of how this othering of the Irish still persisted even in the 1930s (and even toward those whom, like himself, were upper-middle class Protestants); while living in London he was infuriated, according to Knowlson, by the "patronizing English habit of addressing him in the pubs and shops as 'Pat' or 'Paddy'" and his marginalized position led him to seek friendships primarily with other Irish expats (179).

neither, Murphy tries to live in a state that is ahistorical, where he can shed ideas of nationality and shrug off political involvement. But he cannot. As he spends time with the patients, who seemingly exemplify a life divorced from current cultural and political conflicts, he realizes how distanced he is from that existence; he is locked out of such a world, like Dives from Heaven: "In short, there was nothing but he, the unintelligible gulf and they. That was all. All. ALL" (240). In his last game of chess with Endon, Murphy surrenders, signifying both his inability to fully engage with a microcosmopolitan and his realization that he will never be able to attain a utopian existence. He dies, of course, shortly thereafter, but his attitude upon leaving Endon, "without reluctance and without relief" (250) suggests at least an acceptance of his position within history and within historically-charged places.

Because Murphy dies just after fully accepting his existence as a product of both mind and body, then we are never able to see how his life might have changed or how he might have responded to the pressures of personal and public historical forces shaping him. With Celia, however, we receive a slight glimpse of where this knowledge or this acceptance might lead. For Celia, it is not the hospital but rather Kensington Gardens where she faces and accedes to the realities of her life, which is entangled with the histories of Ireland and England.

The green space divided into Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens is given one of the most sustained portraits of a public space in *Murphy.* These parks have a long history in London, and though their appearance and purpose appear relatively benign, they layer, in one tract of land, multiple strata of ecclesiastical, royal, military, and imperial histories.[131] Moreover, over

[131] The enclosed tract of land in the heart of London that comprises Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens has existed for much of the modern history of London, belonging originally to the monks of Westminster Abbey before being claimed by Henry VIII. After Charles I opened the park to the general public in 1637, it quickly took on a prominent role in the life of the city as a place where all walks of life might mingle and pursue leisured activities. In 1851, the Great Exhibition was staged in Hyde Park, adding an imperial

time, the political peripheries bounding the parks' development became physically inscribed through extensive memorialization. At the time *Murphy* was written, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, and their immediate surroundings contained over a dozen statues and monuments, many of which were dedicated to royal and military figures.

When Murphy spends time in Hyde Park, he is more able than Celia to transcend his environment (though this transcendence is short-lived).[132] Celia's relationship with the Gardens begins with her trips to the Round Pond every Saturday afternoon to see her grandfather, Willoughby Kelly, fly kites. These afternoons cause her to associate the park with escape or release, in a way that contrasts with her other favorite haunt between the Battersea and Albert Bridges where she can see the barges pass under. If, as Ackerley notes in *Demented Particulars,* the barges, "coupled abreast," indicate Celia's need for Murphy (48), then the park with the kites would seemingly help her rise above such physical and emotional demands. Her first visit to Kensington Gardens detailed in the book occurs after Murphy has left her to work at the M.M.M. The same language is used to describe her trajectory, "Her course was clear: the Round Pond"

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layer to a site already sedimented with histories of the church, the monarchy, and the military (during the Civil Wars, regiments trained here). For a thorough historical background, see Walford.

[132] Parks appear to be singled out for Murphy's especial fondness because they provide him an image of his own life: a pursuit of a peaceful and focused center in the midst of worldly activity. Even the green spaces he does not like, such as Lincoln's Inn Fields ("the atmosphere there was foul, a miasma of laws" [79]), still possess the basic things he needs, "there was grass and there were plane trees" (79). Ultimately the unique qualities of the place matter little to him, since Murphy's goal is to lose the place and everything else material as he enters his mind: "Any old clod of the well-known English turf would do, on which he might lie down, cease to take notice and enter the landscapes where there were no chandlers and no exclusive residential cancers, but only himself" (79). Though he is interrupted by his surroundings, he is able to eventually disengage and find mental release: "Nothing can stop me now, was his last thought before he lapsed into consciousness . . . In effect, nothing did turn up to stop him and he slipped away, from the pensums and prizes, from Celia, chandlers, public highways, etc., from Celia, buses, public gardens, etc., to where there were no pensums and no prizes, but only Murphy himself, improved out of all knowledge" (105). His attitude toward museums, another type of place set apart from daily life, is similar: "as for the Harpy Tomb, by closing his eyes he could be in an archaic world very much less corrupt than anything on view in the B.M" (95).

(150) as to describe her path toward the barges on the night she meets Murphy: "Celia's course was clear: the water" (14). Her intentions, however, diverge, for in going to the Round Pond she is seeking to temporarily forget Murphy and their life. She entertains the idea of revisiting West Brompton, which would remind her of all the aspects of her recent past—her profession, meeting Murphy, living with Murphy—but "she set it aside" (150) to go to the Gardens.

Although she seeks a mental sanctuary on this trip, a few hours away from the weight of her life and the world around her, at no point is she able to detach from her outer environment. The Gardens constantly evoke her personal history. She is unable to disguise the gait of her profession, so she is accosted by a young man "amorously disposed" (151) in the shelter near the Pond; she passes by the accident house of the Royal Humane Society, an allusion to her desire to drown herself, as stated earlier in the text: "The temptation to enter [the water] was strong, but she set it aside. There would be time for that" (14).[133] Her inability to mentally break free becomes more pronounced when she observes the kites. As she contemplates two flying in tandem, she is reminded, as with the barges, of her desire for Murphy, and in seeing their struggled contortions before they rest peacefully on the ground, seems to receive renewed assurance that the present tumult of her life with Murphy is only temporary. She calls out goodnight to the boy flying the kites, in a gesture of hope. If Murphy "require[s] everything to remind [him] of something else" (63), Celia is unable to elude these reminders and finds in the Gardens a place no less disconnected from the Big World than any other place in her life. When Celia next visits Kensington Gardens, after Murphy's death, and while her "affective mechanisms seemed to be arrested" (255), she is no longer trying to escape the realities of her life. She comes, not alone this time, but with Mr. Kelly, not to lose herself in reverie, but to

[133] The accident house, one of a number established in London, was built on the bank of the Serpentine near the Cockpit to render first aid to drowning persons ("The History of the Society").

wheel his chair and throw up his kite. She no longer turns away potential clients, but "clinches" them, and looks to the tandem kites without expectation: "She watched the tandem coming shakily down from the turmoil, the child running forward to break its fall, his trouble when he failed, his absorbed kneeling over the damage. He did not sing as he departed, nor did she hail him" (281). Rather than pretending she can get away from herself in the park, Celia now accepts the way her outer environment seems to reflect or comment upon her inner life.

Celia's relationship with issues of nationality and history also become re-focused in Kensington Gardens. She has always lived in between two countries, without ever being fully a part of either. She moved from Ireland at the age of four, so the majority of her life has been spent in England. Celia neither identifies as English nor rejects England as her home. Her two visits to the Gardens that are detailed in *Murphy*, however, demonstrate her moving from non-engagement with the political and historical realities of her two countries to an early attempt to acknowledge and draw them together. On her first trip to the Gardens, Celia is surrounded by reminders of English royal and imperial history, which she does not apparently regard. She enters the royal Gardens by Victoria Gate, which honors the monarch who oversaw English expansion for much of the previous century, and who opposed Gladstone's proposals for home rule in Ireland. When Celia sits at the Round Pond, she places her back to Kensington Palace, former residence of the aforementioned queen and countless other British royals. And as Celia watches the kites, one comes down behind G.F. Watts' statue "Physical Energy," stylistically inspired by the Elgin Marbles, which were appropriated from Greece, and which commemorates Cecil Rhodes, an ardent British imperialist. The references are brief, and are as easily overlooked by the reader as they are by Celia. Andreas Huyssen recalls Robert Musil's declaration that there is nothing as invisible as a monument (32)—but though a monument may be unseen, it is still

active. These structures discourse, in the words of Ronell, "in the uncanny mode of *keeping silent*" (37). They announce themselves into Celia's vision and into the text, and though they appear silent and are mostly unacknowledged, they still create a narrative—a triumphalist narrative of power—and this narrative subtly recalls Celia to her own position. Celia's relation to these structures in Kensington Gardens underscores her stance as an Irish subject transplanted in London: she is living in a place where England has largely controlled the story about itself, and the memorialized history she is surrounded by is not her history. Nevertheless, Celia does not seem to actively engage with the political undertones written into the material environment all around her.

On her visit to the Gardens at the end of the text, Celia seems less willing to shut out questions of nationality, but struggles to find a version of national history that fits her experience. Whereas her Irish grandfather Mr. Kelly brings himself to rest beside the statue of Queen Victoria, "whom he greatly admired as a woman and as a queen" (277), having assimilated a British status quo perspective (on this monarch, at least, if not on other subjects), Celia does not feel comfortable with a fully English-oriented viewpoint. Thus she looks away from her immediate landscape and looks up to the sky, where she experiences "that unction of soft sunless light on her eyes that was all she remembered of Ireland" (280). This action repeats an earlier movement, when after arguing with Murphy about work, Celia walks to the window: "The sky, cool, bright, full of movement, anointed her eyes, reminded her of Ireland" (41).The emphasis on "unction" and "anointing" indicate that this vision of Ireland, arising from the physical world, is a blessing and a salve to Celia's mind during times of distress. And yet at the same time, when Celia is remembering the Irish sky, she is looking at the sky above her in England, so that the two places become implicated, even in such a personal memory. In gazing at

the sky, Celia is not trying to escape her current location, but to remember Ireland in the midst of her personal struggles and in the midst of England. Bixby refers to this pattern of thinking as her "diasporic imagination" (117). I argue that it is her beginning attempts to recognize and connect with two countries whose histories are imbricated on the national scale and imbricated in her own life. Her thoughts of the sky are not particularly political and they are not tied to a historical event, but they enable Celia to reflect distantly on these larger, more conflicted narratives.

Murphy's and Celia's interactions with their spatial environment confront them with the impossibility of removing themselves from the material world and its attendant weight of private and public associations. They are not alone in their frustrated desires. The scene of Neary and Wylie in the General Post Office dramatizes this inevitable and yet always somewhat uncertain confrontation with history. Neary, Murphy's former mentor, had tried to transcend the external world and his corporeal existence, living apart from society and seeking higher enlightenment in India at the Nerbudda and then at his grove in Cork. But when preoccupations with love disturb his transcendence, he leaves his academy in Cork and travels to "dear old indelible Dublin" (267). There his former pupil Wylie finds him dashing his head against the buttocks of Cuchulain in the G.P.O.[134] Standing in a place hallowed with political significance for Ireland and facing a statue of a figure revered by both Irish nationalists and Unionists, Neary feels compelled to respond, but his response is marked by confusion. At first he bares his head, "as though the holy ground meant something to him" (42), and then he attacks the statue, dashing his head against it in frustration: "That Red Branch bum was the camel's back" (46). He seems particularly

[134] The General Post Office, built in 1817, is an imposing building on Sackville (now O'Connell) Street most famously associated with the Easter Rising of 1916, where it was the Republican headquarters and the place from which Patrick Pearse read the proclamation declaring independence from Great Britain. Most of the building was destroyed by fire in the course of the rebellion, so that only the façade remains of the original structure. The statue of Cuchulain, sculpted by Oliver Sheppard, was erected by Prime Minister Éamon de Valera in 1935 to commemorate the men who died in the Rising.

provoked by the statue's buttocks, or its "deathless rump" (57), but the statue does not actually have buttocks (the figure is draped, slumped against a stone, and its rump is not visible). Neary is disoriented, on the one hand responding to the statue in front of him, and on the other, responding to his own inner state. As he is escorted out of the Post Office, he asks, "Where am I?" (45), demonstrating that he is not fully aware of his environment and thus not forming a carefully articulated response to it. Thus while he has just insulted and undermined a mythological figure and the Easter Rising martyrs that figure commemorates, he is not completely aware of what he has done, and does not seem to be reflecting deeply on Irish politics. He is drawn to confront his material world and its historical and political connotations, but this confrontation is mixed, undeveloped, and as much an engagement with what is not there as what is there.[135]

We see this ambivalence toward Ireland further developed in Murphy's will, where he mentions that he would like his ashes to be taken to the Abbey Theatre. The Abbey Theatre, like the G.P.O., was a place closely associated with Irish nationalism. Opened in 1904, it promoted Irish drama, helping strengthen the Irish Literary Revival. It later became subsidized by the Irish Free State. Yet when Murphy announces that he wants his ashes taken there, he specifies that they be particularly brought to the Theatre's "necessary house, where their happiest hours have been spent" and then flushed down during the performance of a piece (269). The details, though comical, emphasize Murphy's conflicted relationship with Ireland at this time. On the one hand, he does not wish that his ashes remain in England, his recently adopted home, but transported

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[135] Whereas Neary himself is confused in his attitude toward the statue, Beckett's own position is more evident. The scene is a humorous commentary on Irish nationalism and censorship. The police officer in the scene is a particularly satirical portrait of the censorious Irish Free State, exaggerated in its attempts to protect its vision of Ireland. It also seems that Beckett disliked how art—the statue—was being used in this case for an overt political agenda.

back to Ireland, and to a particularly significant Irish place. But his "happiest hours" in that Irish place have been in the toilet, and his contribution to a performance of Irish drama is the sound of a flush. Irish nationalism is undermined, and yet a connection to Ireland itself seems to persist for Murphy. Just as his ashes, as noted earlier, exist in a state of ontological undecidability, Murphy's relationship to Ireland, captured in his will, remains frictive and undetermined.

In these situations, in London and in Dublin, the characters are forced to accept that the "big blooming buzzing confusion" (4) of their history is not external to them, but determines their lives regardless of whether they seek to transcend it. It cannot be negated. In the M.M.M., Murphy finds himself not only unable to escape reminders of his life, but replicating the actions of former visitors to the hospital and symbolically positioning himself as a colonizer. Celia, surrounded by reminders of her personal life and of British history, is able to go a step further than Murphy, not only recognizing her placement in a material, historical world, but beginning to actively engage with it and seek to make sense of her overlapping histories and nationalities, as an Irish woman raised in England. And yet the episode of Neary in the G.P.O. highlights that confronting history does not mean there will be clarity or resolution; even Murphy's will closes his personal narrative in a position of conflict with Ireland. Beckett offers no prescription for a proper response to issues of history and politics, but only demonstrates that a response is unavoidable. In "Humanity in Ruins," Kennedy asserts that historical references in Beckett "haunt the narrative with a history that is, in an important sense, the history of Beckett's own time, but they recur as elements in flux that cannot be pinned down" (187). Just as the spaces are in flux in *Murphy,* limned in tantalizing glimpses, often stubbornly uncommunicative, the characters' own positions toward England and Ireland seem to lie in a purgatorial zone, shifting and uncertain.

Stirrings Still

In the first scene of the novel, Murphy receives a phone call. He does not receive it of his own volition, the phone having been neither installed by him nor the call solicited, but circumstances force him to answer it: he had neglected to take the phone off the hook; he cannot let it ring because of his landlady; and when he picks it up, he accidentally holds the receiver to his ear "instead of dashing [it] to the ground" (7). Even after answering, he tries to resist, laying the receiver in his lap and listening to the other voice "lament[ing] faintly against his flesh" (8). But finally he gives up and responds to his interlocutor (Celia). He responds elliptically and with resistance, but he responds. The scene is suggestive of Walter Benjamin's remarks in "Berlin Childhood Around 1900," when he discusses answering the telephone in his parents' house:

> I tore off the two receivers, which were heavy as dumbbells, thrust my head between them, and was inexorably delivered over to the voice that now sounded. There was nothing to allay the violence with which it pierced me. Powerless, I suffered, seeing that it obliterated my consciousness of time, my firm resolve, my sense of duty. And just as the medium obeys the voice that takes possession of him from beyond the grave, I submitted to the first proposal that came my way through the telephone. (351)

The telephone, for Murphy and for Benjamin, involves a violent interruption of their solitude, a summoning from the outer world that cannot be denied, that "takes possession" of them, demanding them to answer. *Murphy* is crossed with such a network of unavoidable calls, both literal, and as I am particularly considering, metaphorical. Derrida writes in "Ulysses Gramophone" that Leopold Bloom is "*at-the-telephone*: he is always there, he belongs to the telephone, he is at once riveted and destined there. His being is a being-at-the-telephone" (272-

73). We might say that Murphy and the other central characters in this novel are similarly at-the-telephone, attuned to frequencies from the outer world, transmissions that call them outside of themselves, that remind them of the body, of time, of history. Even when they try to put down the receiver, to "sever . . . connexion[s]" (24) and "listen[…] for a little to the dead line" (9), they remain hooked up to these voices, beckoned, provoked, challenged.

The spaces and things within *Murphy* operate, variously, like lines tenuously joining two worlds, like phones embodying both subject and object, like calls interrupting and demanding an answer. As Ronell uses the telephone to analyze Heidegger, I employ the telephone to consider Beckett's interrogation of Descartes. The main characters in *Murphy* continually reinforce mind/body distinctions as they seek to deny the physicality and temporality of their surroundings—whether their public and private spaces or their personal things—and live within their minds. Finding the outer world burdensome and themselves often alienated from it, they perceive their minds as the only remaining space of freedom and true being. But as they try to use their physical surroundings, paradoxically, to escape the physical world, Murphy and the other characters are confronted with the ineluctable materiality of their lives. The spaces and things within *Murphy*, even when their own history or meaning is drained or disregarded, when they are seen only as means to an end—material means to an immaterial end—still speak, engaging in an act of translation as they seek to render themselves articulable to the mind.

The material world in the novel thus functions telephonically, enabling transfers between the physical and mental realms and ultimately destabilizing these distinctions. Like a medium or a ghost, spaces and things in *Murphy* not only relay communications between worlds, but break down the boundaries themselves, revealing how the mind and body, subject and object, constitute one another rather than lie in opposition. The material and immaterial are doubles of

one another, the self calling the self; as Ronell writes, referring to the call of conscience, "Insofar as the call comes from beyond me and over me, it commands a power post of sorts, it lords over me, from beyond my station and puts me in its place—*my* place, for the call also calls from me. In this sense the 'me' is a receptionist who takes calls which are both outgoing and incoming" (33). The characters may resist these ventriloquistic communications, but eventually they, like Murphy with the ringing phone, must pick up the receiver.

A central aspect of this materiality is its relation to national history. The characters I have particularly considered in the novel, Irish men and a woman living in England, are shaped by the overlapping histories of England and Ireland, histories joined by empire. Living abroad, they are surrounded and marginalized by the dominant narratives of the colonizing power, narratives they are forced to either imbibe or renegotiate. And yet even "home" in Ireland for them is a conflicted territory, either a place where they have spent little time or a place where they no longer feel at home. The Irish Free State's own nationalistic narratives and repressive governance in the 1930s seem to echo British imperial rule. Politically and culturally, the characters in the novel fall in-between, belonging to two places, and also seeming to belong nowhere. *Murphy* exhibits their desire to abscond to a mental state freed from place and history, and traces their acceptance of the impossibility of escape. This acceptance is accompanied by varying degrees of engagement with their past and their nationality. Though they may never fully understand how they articulate with these two countries during this time, they learn that they can never move beyond history, that, somehow, it must be reckoned with.

Murphy also places an anticipatory call to its readers. For while the novel is typically viewed as distinctive from the Beckett canon in its concrete details and general realism, its collapsed boundaries between the material/historical and the abstract/universal predict the

narrative positioning of the later texts. Even though the material world is increasingly evacuated from Beckett's writings after 1946, it continues to animate his texts, even if from the margins or as a nearly-silenced voice. *Murphy* explores and in itself holds the tension between the Big World and the Little World that will occupy Beckett for the next fifty years. In this way, it provides a type of guide—yellow pages?—for understanding Beckett's attempts to subtract the material world and for understanding why these attempts are never fully accomplished. For if Beckett described his work as a journey in his letter to Aidan Higgins, quoted earlier, "a journey irreversible, in gathering thinglessness," a periphrastic progress toward the nothing, he had also written in a diary just after writing *Murphy* that "Journey anyway is the wrong figure. How can one travel to that from which one cannot move away . . . The necessary staying put is more like it" (qtd. in Knowlson 230). His creative progress after *Murphy* follows both these currents in a simultaneous attempt to move away from this materially-rooted early novel and a recognition that there is only "the necessary staying put," or as he expressed it elsewhere, "Dr. Johnson's dream of happiness, driving rapidly to & from nowhere" (*Letters* 490). Thus all his later work might be seen as a recursive movement, like the rocking chair or the advancing and retreating chess pieces, tethered like the kite to this early text, so that perhaps all the negating movement is both "a wandering to find home" (4) and a realization that, as with Celia, "There was nothing to go back to, yet she was glad when she arrived" (153).

Early in the novel, Celia feels that when she is with Murphy she is "spattered with words that went dead as soon as they sounded; each word obliterated, before it had time to make sense, by the word that came next; so that in the end she did not know what had been said" (40). Each word, each thing is the instrument of its own obliteration, and yet it is never totally obliterated. This idea, sounded in the Cartesian conflicts in *Murphy,* continues its faltering diminuendo in

Beckett's later writings; as he reflects in "Three Dialogues": "The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express" (139). Although the material and historical elements are increasingly stilled in Beckett's texts, they maintain a frequency through which they still stir, they still speak, even if at times it is through Blanchot's "forgetfulness and silence" (*Writing* 4), a soundless Miserere. Beckett notes in his journal, "How absurd, the struggle to learn to be silent in another language! . . . The struggle to be master of another silence!" (qtd. in Knowlson 218). In these exchanges between speech and silence dispatched across *Murphy* and the texts that follow it, Beckett telephonically communicates, negotiating how to respond to a material world haunted by troubled histories and uncertain politics. He does not provide a final solution; as Ronell asserts, "We cannot yet answer the question . . . except by answering its call—something that does not in itself constitute an answer, a finite, singular outcome or end product . . . Answering a call does not mean you have an answer" (83). But it is perhaps this in-between space itself that constitutes Beckett's perpetually provisional answer.

CONCLUSION: REMAINS

"You shall not think 'the past is finished' / Or 'the future is before us'"

–T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

The writers in this dissertation use the material world to travel through their history, to engage with it, as a way of responding to the present and conjuring the future. Paul Ricoeur describes the return to history as an attempt to bury, "an act of sepulcher. Not a place, a cemetery, a simple depository of bones, but an act of repeated entombment" (499); for Walter Benjamin, history and memory involve an act of excavation. These burials and excavations perhaps tell us something about the past, but more than that, they yield an image of the one revisiting the past, "in the same way a good archeological report not only informs us about the strata from which its findings originate, but also gives an account of the strata which first had to be broken through" (Benjamin, "Excavation and Memory" 576). As Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett devote themselves to the impassable passage-ways of history, they expose their own contradicting impulses as writers and reveal insights into the upheaval and uncertainty of their place and time, no *fin de siècle*, but similarly poised within ends and beginnings: the twilight of the British empire, the formation of a new Ireland, and *l'entre deux guerres*, as Eliot expresses it in *Four Quartets.* And just as Eliot records the attempts and failures of his own writing during this time, concluding that there is "neither gain nor loss" but "only the trying" (190), Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett seek new approaches to narrating fiction, narrating the past (and the present),

and narrating materiality, but any perspectives they gain only accentuate their own inadequacy, their losses.

The four chapters in this project are structured around particular emblems: the archive, the prosthesis, and the telephone, all three of which are real material sites as well as concepts. These emblems serve to both imitate the material world in the novels, which functions both practically and ideologically, and offer a way of approaching or understanding how these authors are depicting spaces and things. Within each text, these emblems are not all-encompassing—they do not account for every space and every thing and do not explain all the relationships characters develop with their physical environment. The archive, prosthesis, and telephone do, however, identify significant patterns within the novels. The archival impulse, for example, applies to many patterns of behavior exhibited in *Ulysses* toward the external world of Dublin. Archiving, of course, is not the only way that characters relate to objects or spaces, and not every object in the novel is subsumed into an archive (although we might argue that they are all a part of Joyce's archive). But the archive helps us understand a key relationship with materiality in the nineteenth century, and as a part of that, a key stance toward history. Likewise, the prosthesis articulates one way that Woolf and many of her contemporaries, seeking to shed the Victorian age and transition into the twentieth century, viewed the material and social remnants of that time. This concept, drawn from the actual historical development and rise in the use of prosthetics in the early twentieth century, does not apply to all objects in *The Years* or represent all attitudes toward the past, but it voices prominent concerns about the lingering structures of nineteenth-century British society. *Murphy*'s telephone lines provide a way of thinking about the means of connection, communication between human beings and their physical environment, which is also a relation to their history and nationality. Without claiming comprehensiveness, this metaphor offers a tool

for reading how Beckett undermines Cartesian duality and addresses the obligations or calls of history.

On a theoretical level, the concepts of the archive, prosthesis, and telephone are related, particularly in terms of how they comment on the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and how they operate from the position of aporia. It is in this latter relation that they have all three been considered by Derrida, and in *Archive Fever* he notes the prosthetic aspects of the archive (16-18, 80-81), just as Ronell, discussing Freud, considers how the telephone is like a prosthesis (88). Because of these areas of commonality, then to an extent, these emblems could be applied across the chapters of this dissertation: we can see archiving tendencies in *The Years*, prosthetic relationships to objects in *Murphy* and *Ulysses*, and aspects of telephonic materiality in *Ulysses* and *The Years*. The archive, prosthesis, and telephone each reveal the contradictions at work in materiality and in historical narratives.

All three of these novels are intensely concerned with various aspects of English and Irish history and politics from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century. Two of their most prominent areas of inquiry are empire and the Irish question. Joyce, setting his novel in Dublin when Ireland was still an English colony fighting for Home Rule, foregrounds issues of imperialism and nationalism without making easy pronouncements. In the public collections featured in *Ulysses*, he emphasizes the split nature of the archive, as it supports both nationalist and imperial agendas. Rather than espouse a political stance of either nationalist resistance or imperial complicity, he rather seeks to expose the contradictions and irreducibility of historical and political narratives, opening up more complex and nuanced readings. Beckett's novel, set thirty years later in the days of the Irish Free State, approaches Irish politics obliquely, from the position of Irish transplants in London. Like Joyce, he resists a definitive position on the state of

Ireland, demonstrating the negative effects of British imperial narratives but also commenting critically on nationalist monuments, such as the Abbey Theatre and the Statue of Cuchulain in the General Post Office. While both writers avoid binaristic attitudes toward Ireland and toward empire, they also indicate that, just as they cannot avoid the politically-shaped material landscapes of Dublin and London, they also cannot avoid engaging, on some level, with the intertwined histories of these countries. Woolf's perspective on empire and on Ireland in *The Years* is less central. The sole English-born writer in this project, she takes an anti-imperialist stance, and alludes to the Irish question, but she does not provide an extensive consideration of Irish colonialism, only registering it among the many aspects of nineteenth-century Britain that she critiques. The novel is set in the center of the Empire, so some its public spaces carry implicit references to Britain's colonial practices. Woolf's discussion of the Empire in general are few, confined mostly to her critical comments on Abel Pargiter (who lost two fingers fighting in the Indian Mutiny) and North Pargiter's ambivalent feelings about his time managing a farm in Africa. References to the political situation in Ireland are likewise limited: in the early scenes of the novel, Delia is enamored with Parnell; in 1891, Eleanor is dismayed when Parnell dies; at the end of the novel, we learn that Delia, though passionate about Irish politics, had married "the most King respecting" of Irish gentlemen, a counterpart to Willoughby Kelly in *Murphy*. Just as Martin thinks, glancing at a newspaper, "It was difficult to concentrate on the news from Ireland" (223), Woolf also is unable to give full attention to Ireland among the "millions of ideas" she proposes to consider in *The Years.*

Woolf however accords the subject of gender, especially as it relates to materiality, fuller contemplation. If Woolf is the only English writer in this dissertation, she is also the only woman, and in her novel, women are the most central characters and are made the inheritors of

the family objects. This inheritance is of course a questionable one, as the objects, particularly the portrait and the walrus, carry with them oppressive reminders of the ideal roles for women in the Victorian age. But if it is women who keep these objects over the years—Eleanor, Maggie and Sara, Crosby—they (excluding Crosby) are also the ones to discover more constructive ways of relating to the material thing and to the past it represents. In relating to the object in new ways, some of these women also find new ways of inhabiting their gender. If Woolf indicates that women tend to be the sentimental—and burdened and privileged—preservers of things, Joyce challenges that assumption. In *Ulysses*, it is primarily Bloom, not Molly, who collects and preserves, or at least into whose personal archive we are given the most extensive look. Bloom holds on to many objects for affective reasons, because of the people or the aspects of his past that he wants to remember, demonstrating that sentimental archiving is practiced by men as well as women. His intimate relationship with the spaces of his home also upends the nineteenth-century division of spheres, in which the man belongs more to the public sphere than to the private. In *Murphy,* the relationship between gender and materiality is further dismantled. Though Murphy and Celia are responding to different motivations, they both ultimately relate to spaces and objects in a similar way. Both seek to negate or transcend their spaces and to use objects to help them move beyond the physical world. One of these objects, the rocking chair, they share, and they both spend time not only in their shared apartment, but in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Neither gender is privileged, but both wrestle equally with the mind/body dilemmas of existence.

The three novels under consideration all question public and private distinctions. In *Ulysses*, I have considered two collections of objects: one set that resides in public spaces for the broader populace to view, and one set that occupies private spaces, intended for one man's

perusal. The distinctions, however, soon begin to blur. Bloom's impulse to collect draws from larger nineteenth-century narratives about the importance of museum-building, and just as he constructs an archive to structure a history and an identity for himself, Ireland and the British Empire construct national archives to produce a historical narrative and national identity. The forms of the public and private archives also mirror one another: the National Library and Bloom's library, the National Museum and Bloom's collection, and the spatially-distributed monuments and Bloom's pocketed mementos. In *Ulysses*, the archival impulse unites exterior and interior, demonstrating how the same motivations to preserve and curate animate both nations and individuals. *The Years* navigates both the public spaces of London and domestic interiors, just as it also tracks both national and social developments in Britain and changes in the life of one family. I have particularly considered how the domestic spaces in Woolf's novel reflect and influence these larger historical transitions, and how the Pargiters, in representing a late Victorian upper-middle class family, capture the transformations and anxieties shaping the entire nation. Public and private in *The Years* are not truly separate spheres but intrude upon one another and provide insight into each other. In Beckett's novel, Murphy and Celia engage similarly with their private spaces—their rooms in West Brompton and Brewery Road—as with the public spaces they frequent (or inhabit), such as Kensington Gardens and the M.M.M. They also find themselves facing reminders of their personal history not just in their private environments, but in the public realm.

Discussions of public/private distinctions are extended in the way these novels explore the ideas of home. In *Ulysses*, Joyce gives careful attention to the actual spaces of the family home at 7 Eccles, but suggests through these spaces Bloom's outsider status within his own home. Bloom's archive is an attempt to make a space for himself within the home, but even it is

intruded upon by others. Bloom's relationship with his home reflects his relationship with his country, Ireland, where he also feels like an exile and where he feels separated from what he imagines to be his true home in Zion. Joyce's novel examines Bloom's literal residence, but also his feeling of homelessness and his attempts to find a true home. *Murphy* also uses material spaces to consider the homelessness of its two main characters, Murphy and Celia, who have lived in both Ireland and England and who feel at home in neither. This disjunction with their nationality and country they inhabit expresses a broader disconnect. The home they try to make with one another never quite forms, and they are both left feeling alienated from one another and from the world around them. In trying to escape to their minds, a placeless place, they indicate the daily estrangement they feel. In *The Years*, Woolf shows how the Victorian family home is a site of constriction, and as the Pargiters are able to move away from it, they manage, in some cases, to achieve greater freedom in their lives and begin to re-make, among other things, ideas of home and family. The movements of the members of the family from one home to another, from even one country to another, explores both the positive and negative aspects of modern transience. As they think about the physical homes and families of their characters, these novelists are able to think about issues of race, of nationality, of social structures, re-framing the home and perhaps suggesting that the modern state is one of homelessness or transience.

In my introduction to this dissertation, I mentioned Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*, whose narrator journeys through the dying towns of England in the late twentieth century. At one point in the text, the narrator visits a life-size panorama of the Battle of Waterloo, and as he looks on this historical event, captured in objects—wax soldiers and horses, weapons and blood-stained sand—he reflects, "This then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We, the survivors, see everything from above,

see everything at once, and still we do not know how it was" (125). The narrator's aside points out the imperfect perspectives of history and its necessary gaps of knowledge, instantiated in the three texts I have examined, but it also references the concept of survival, an idea similarly underlying these texts and the idea with which I would like to conclude. *Ulysses*, *The Years*, and *Murphy*, for all the various ways they explore loss and negation, are also works about saving, about survival. To survive, as Derrida explores in his last interview before his death, means both to survive death "like a book that survives the death of its author, or a child the death of his or her parents" and to continue to live (*Learning to Live Finally* 26). Both sides of the definition structure these novels, which are filled with death, with life, and with the survivors of both. The archive is a response to *eros* and *thanatos*, and is driven by a desire to survive death and add life on to life. The prosthesis arises from loss but promises wholeness and addition. The telephone creates presence in absence. The texts are death-oriented, but they are also life-oriented; as Woolf notes, "I meant to write about death, only life came breaking in as usual" (*Diary* II, 167). Their narratives negotiate how to make it through loss, but also how to build on to life, to consider the past, but also to prepare for the future. And in a strange calculus, the complicated inheritance of the past, surviving in material spaces and things, gives hope, for though these traces of the past are mostly uninvited ghosts, unwelcome reminders of forfeitures and pain, they suggest that what is now, in the present, will live on. If history resounds into the present, then the present might be able to speak into the future, and compose it differently. For Benjamin, the concept of the afterlife was a concept of survival: he viewed a translated work as the afterlife of the original text, a living on, but with a difference. These survivals, these afterlives, of things, of nations, and of individuals, thus allow the present and future to be a translation of the past,

enabling new meanings to be wrested out of the historical rupture. As Derrida concludes his final interview:

> Everything I have said . . . about survival as a complication of the opposition death-life proceeds with me from an unconditional affirmation of life. Survival is life beyond life, life more than life, and the discourse I undertake is not death-oriented, just the opposite, it is the affirmation of someone living who prefers living, and therefore survival, to death; because survival is not simply what remains, it is the most intense life possible. (51)

In these three texts, something always remains after destruction or negation. In *Ulysses,* in spite of the archive fever that burns memories, that forgets and loses, there are things that survive and that will outlive the archivists themselves. In *The Years*, even after wars that dismember bodies and that blow apart cities, and even after the erosions of time, certain things live on in the empty spaces, ready to be reinvigorated. In *Murphy*, no amount of attrition can erase the places and objects clamoring for attention. Even when Murphy dies, he lives on as ashes. The material remains of these worlds have unexpected afterlives that enclose a double potency, a force that gathers and disperses, that renews and that burns up. The characters in these novels, even the ones who survive at the end of the text, will all die, but their spaces and things promise to live on, reminders of life in the past, but more, an inheritance to be re-envisioned.

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