

Reading Joyce in and out of the Archive
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Joyce's works have been blessed—some might say: burdened—with a vast body of critical writing. While that body of writing is not all academic—it began with a good number of critical appreciations by Joyce's friends, supporters and acolytes in literary journals and book length studies that appeared alongside book reviews and critical notices in the popular press—it is certainly worth reflecting on how academic writing has shaped and guided the reception of Joyce's *œuvre*. That this is not purely an academic question is contained in the fact that readers (whether they belong to that first generation of readers puzzled by Joyce's radically modernist style in the thirties and forties or to the vast class of Joyce enthusiasts and graduate students who struggle with the allusive detail or narrative and intertextual complexity of the later writings) so often approach Joyce through the critics.¹ Sifting through the various responses to academic Joyce criticism, a striking paradox emerges: on the one hand, an utterly hostile dismissal of Joyce criticism, amounting to a veritable industry with all its connotations of being overbearing and overproduced, comes from readers who find it hard to cope with the abstruse, self-indulgent discourse of academic criticism; on the other hand, the continuing use of "classics" of Joyce criticism, such as Ellmann's biography, Gifford's and McHugh's annotations, Kenner, Hayman and Hart, Glasheen, Atherton, Campbell and Robinson, Tyndall and so on, follows from many readers' feelings of inadequacy to confront Joyce's complicated works on their own terms. (When Morris Ernst, the attorney in the 1933 *United States v. Ulysses* trial, was questioned by Judge Woolsey whether he had read the novel, Ernst denied, explaining that he could not make sense of it: "This was before glossaries and instructional aids had been published" [Ernst 71].) Is the fact that they are "classics" perhaps a redeeming quality? In the light of the history of Joyce studies and of Joyce's reception, it is worth considering just what kind of reception these critical works themselves were given and how they have impacted readings and perceptions of Joyce in general.

My aim, however, is not to review great classics of Joyce scholarship, nor is it my purpose to write the history of the Joyce industry in its various emanations or the genesis of various foundations or critical projects. Others beside myself are far better positioned to do so.² Instead, I want to historicize certain moments in Joyce studies by investigating how particular exponents of that critical industry, in particular those that involve archival research

¹ While this is perhaps a commonplace observation about the role of secondary criticism, the extent to which Joyce's academic critics have influenced reception has not been fully documented. The role of literary criticism, for instance, emerges as having been quite significant in the history of Joyce's European reception, see Lernout and Van Mierlo, eds., *The Reception James Joyce in Europe*.

² In the past five to ten years, the Joyce industry has turned particularly self-reflexive with the appearance of a large number of studies on the reception of Joyce's writing and the disciplinary history of Joyce studies and the International James Joyce Foundation. I am thinking here, among others, of Charles Rossman, "The Critical Reception of the Gabler *Ulysses*" (1989 and 1990); Geert Lernout, *The French Joyce* (1990); Jeffrey Segal, *Joyce in America* (1993); Joseph Kelly, *Our Joyce: From Outcast to Icon* (1998); Fritz Senn, "The Joyce Industrial Revolution According to one European Amateur" (1998); Michael Groden, "Perplex in the Pen—and in the Pixels: Reflections on *The James Joyce Archive*, Hans Walter Gabler's *Ulysses*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses* in Hypermedia" (1999); a special issue of *Joyce Studies Annual* 2001; and Geert Lernout and Wim Van Mierlo, eds., *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe* (2004).

in one form or other, have influenced or (also) have been silenced by the Joyce community. My aim in this essay is also very much to advocate a revalidation of those archival investigations.

What exactly constitutes an archive and how it is put together is an interesting set of historical questions in its own right, and although they bear on the kind of issues I want to review, these questions do not concern me here in detail. For my purposes, I loosely and broadly define archival studies as any kind of research that uses documentary materials other than Joyce's works, whether they are actual archives in libraries, facsimile reproduction of manuscripts (as in the *James Joyce Archive*), or any other material source that is part of the general exegesis of or contributes to a contextual understanding of Joyce's writing. The term "context" itself is traditionally taken to signify any space anterior to the text; I use it here to mean any of the historical circumstances or conditions that determine or are determined by the text in its material form. Likewise, it is important to note, too, that the term exegesis is generally understood to be a form of ahistorical interpretation that is equated in most guidebooks with explication and close reading, but throughout this essay I give it back its original sense of historical gloss.³ The underpinning motivation of my essay is thus to ask what Joyceans do with the past that is Joyce's writing. Joyce, I contend, is not our contemporary; he is a writer from the past whose works need to be understood within the history from which they materialized. In the past ten years various aspects of a "material" Joyce have indeed seen the light of day, such as the reception, readership, composition, and publication history of his writing as well as his use of popular culture and his relationships—literary and political—to the Irish question. At a moment in Joyce's academic reception when academic interest has turned to historicized approaches to his work, it would appear common sense to consider Joyce a writer of the past. But if we look at the state of Joyce criticism today or over the past forty years such simple rationalization is either too plainly obvious or does not come natural at all.

That Joyce studies suffer from "a sort of historical amnesia" (Segall 49) follows from a habit to take his literary reputation for granted. One way to properly assess his pastness is by looking at the history of the production and reception of his writing, at the critical and scholarly efforts that went into constructing the image (or images) of Joyce that we now know. But here lies the problem that I want to address. On the one hand, Joyce *criticism* has

³ In twentieth-century criticism, there seems to be a confusion between method (close reading) and goal (glossing the text), between a broad and a narrow sense of explication, that causes us to overlook the historical nature of exegesis. Undoubtedly, glosses and annotations come about through close reading of the text, but their historicity manifests itself on various levels: as a form of "timely reading," exegetical notes record the ideas, observations, and knowledge of contemporary annotators or of annotators who try to bridge the gap in time between the author and themselves; as marginalia (in the Biblical tradition) or as annotations (in the literary tradition), exegetical notes become part of the life and the reception of the book across the generations. Exegesis, in other words, is concerned with origins, the meanings a text held for its author and its original audience, prompting us to recognize the "temporal distance" between ourselves and the text at hand, whereas literary interpretation is concerned with the meanings a text holds for the current audience and with the work of art as a timeless object (Noakes 11-12). In *Timely Reading: Between Exegesis and Interpretation*, Susan Noakes argues that any separation of exegesis and interpretation results in a reductive reading experience (241-42)

been largely responsible for promoting a timeless vision of Joyce; Joyce *scholarship*, on the other hand, by the very nature of what it does, considers historical questions. But since it very often treats the man rather than the writing, scholarship does not always find good favor with literary critics. In order to recognize Joyce's pastness, therefore, we must recognize the critical value of scholarship and bridge the gap between critic and scholar.

Criticism and scholarship have been and continue to be regarded as antithetical terms in literary studies, where one deals with the "higher" and "nobler" endeavor of interpretation and evaluation (the "intrinsic" values of literature), and the other with the "lower" and preparatory task of objective research and facts (the "extrinsic" parts of literature). This qualitative separation between criticism and scholarship dates back to the 1890s, but (ironically) it was instigated by the philologists in the English departments, who resisted the dilettantism of a number of "generalist" critics (Graff 94-96) and, stressing their own prominence, argued that journalistic generalizations about literature were interesting but unfounded. Both parties, however, were vying for the Arnoldian legacy of cultural relevance, a battle the scholars were apt to lose because they had a harder time proving that their highly specialized, "technocratic" analyses had any direct effect on the broader culture (Graff 4). By the 1920s and '30s, at the beginning of the New Criticism, the "generalists" had managed to consolidate their position in the university. At the same time, as research scholars themselves became frustrated over the increasing fragmentation of English into ever-narrower subdisciplines, they conceded there was a time and place for criticism as long as the necessary groundwork had first been laid (Graff 137, 143). The New Critics would forcibly propagate this view: preparatory scholarship was undoubtedly "indispensible," Wellek wrote, but "it results frequently in trivialities and useless pedantries which justly evoke the ridicule of the layman and the anger of the scholar at wasted energy" (qtd. in Graff 138). Both sides paid lip service to bridging the gap, but the separation, if not an actual fact, was perpetuated through the decades in a separatist rhetoric that, depending on one's perspective, pitted objectivity and certitude (letting the facts speak for themselves) against mere subjectivity, or the rich esthetic experience of literary appreciation (letting the text speak for itself) against the sub-literary dissection of scholarly analysis.

Seemingly, literary scholars and critics had set out for themselves the same task: elucidating and understanding the texts they were reading. But they disagreed on the means by which understanding was to be effected. The task was a contested one because in particular literary critics were not clear—or even, to say it bluntly, quite muddled—in their definition of the role of the critic, as it changed from one generation to the next. For the New Critics, criticism initially served to evaluate the writer's language and style, his modes of expression; it served to understand (as is the case with F. R. Leavis) the author's "vision of life." To assess the writer's achievements any type of contextualization was considered irrelevant: "The accumulation of scholarship . . . about and around the great things of literature" could not add anything to the value of the literary work (Leavis, *Common Pursuit* 35). Leavis even went so far as to reject entirely any form of explanation in which the critic makes meaning clear to the reader. Somewhere along the line in the history of criticism, *evaluation* becomes *explanation*; not just the esthetic value of the writer but also the meaning of his work becomes important as the object of investigation. However, the rejection of scholarship remained a constant factor: "explanation by origins," Eliot proclaimed, takes "explanation for understanding" (Eliot 107, 109). The nature of the scholar's work was said to differ in many respects from that of the critic: objective facts do not explain. The scholar does not respond

critically to the work but merely lays the (necessary) groundwork for the act of interpretation. The results of scholarly findings are deemed "essential" if they generate not just new knowledge, but further understanding and help the critic along with his interpretive work. This is strictly a utilitarian position, which makes scholarship secondary to literary criticism, something that can be called upon or dismissed at will depending on the argument one wants to put forth.

Even before there was an academic reception of Joyce, the lines between critical understanding and scholarly utility were already being drawn. Early critical responses to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, apart from newspaper reviews and other notices, were largely produced by Joyce's friends and allies. Apart from being hagiographic, these responses were fairly traditional in nature, intended as introductions to Joyce's writings. On the one hand, there are Eliot and Pound, who wrote their famous essays "Ulysses, Order and Myth" (1923) and "James Joyce et Pécuchet" (1922). Emphasizing two opposing trends of the novel, they invented a critical terminology that acted as a point of reference for much of the later Joyce criticism. On the other hand, there are Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's "Ulysses"* (1930), the first full-length book on the novel, and *Our Exagmination roand his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (1929), a collection of essays by members of the *transition* group. These two volumes were the first attempt at a more thorough analysis of Joyce's writing, although only Gilbert's achievement was more successful. (With the exception of Beckett's contribution—containing the famous statement that "Work in Progress" "is not *about* something; *it is that something itself*" [14]—almost none of the essays in the book are particularly remembered today.) Despite differences in approach, Eliot, Pound, Gilbert and the contributors to the *Exagmination* served an obvious need for clarification; reviewers had repeatedly objected that Joyce was simply too difficult and in response readers felt a certain trepidation to tackle Joyce on their own. The differences in approach, however, are significant even at this early moment in the reception. Pound and Eliot offered a frame of reference within which *Ulysses* could be read; Gilbert and *Our Exagmination* did the same but they delved into a more detailed exegesis as well. If all these commentators were concerned in one way or another with the "mechanics of meaning" of Joyce's writing, Gilbert most urgently tried to satisfy the demand for a "key" to Joyce's novel. His detailed analysis, the first treatment of the Homeric parallel, is even said to have been a kind of genetic study *avant la lettre*.⁴

Responding to the need for elucidation, these early readings of Joyce also functioned to defend Joyce's modernism and to defend it against allegations of immorality; underwriting Joyce as serious literature, they helped his books on the way to become "modern classics." Joseph Kelly has shown how Joyce's newly forged reputation persuaded an American court to lift the ban on *Ulysses*, but, outside the small circle of intellectuals and modernist aficionados to which Pound, Eliot and others addressed themselves, Joyce was not yet taken seriously. His entry into the academy, despite the early support of Harvard professor Harry Levin, was cumbersome. As the transition from philology to criticism in English departments was still completing itself in the thirties, the resistance to contemporary literature—especially to literature that was extremely difficult to understand and tarnished by its sexually explicit content—was even greater. But the early critics, even the contributors to

⁴ Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon have suggested that for his treatment of Homer, Gilbert might have had access to Joyce's own notes on Victor Bérard (Joyce, *Last Notebook*, xxx-xxxii).

Our Exagmination, were influential in describing Joyce in terms of esthetic autonomy and formal coherence.⁵

The resistance to Joyce gradually waned after the courts had cleared Joyce's novel in 1934 in the U.S. and in 1936 in Britain, but his acceptance in this larger interpretive community only grew gradually, until by the late fifties Joyce criticism had attained all the characteristic beginnings of a mounting industry.⁶ In 1948, Samuel C. Chew summarized the situation in *A Literary History of England*. He reported that Joyce himself had proclaimed (in a statement with which we are all now quite familiar) that "to understand him the reader must devote his life to the study of his books," but Chew predicted a "readjustment of values" that would "spare future lovers of literature this self-immolation" of painstakingly finding out what it all means; he did not clearly define the means by which this readjustment would take effect, although he added that the critics were meanwhile quite busy to supply "short cuts" (1560). The exegetical wheels that produced a rising number of glosses and annotations were slowly turning, and readers (as Morris Ernst had also testified) shared the belief they were reaching nearer to the master who had created these wonderfully complex works of art.

The 1950s saw not only the birth of specialized (but short-lived) journals devoted to Joyce's writing, *Joyce Notes* and *The James Joyce Review*, but also the acquisition of vast archives of primary materials and memorabilia to American universities. All the while, close reading (in the new critical manner), myth criticism and exegesis existed alongside each other, but a paradigmatic discourse began to emerge that is associated with a handful of critics who had a lasting influence on Joyce studies. Harry Levin (1941) wrote about Joyce in the 'context of modern European literature, pointing out that the critical models established by Eliot and Pound were not alternatives but the "two keys" to Joyce's work (65-66). Hugh Kenner (1956) stressed Joyce's irony and portrayed him as a moralist who exposed in each sentence the paralysis of his native city. Richard Ellmann (1959) in his monumental biography evoked Joyce's humanity and his genius. In the book reviews, in the meantime, the dichotomy between the value of criticism and the utility of scholarship began to emerge. The *TLS* reviewer of *James Joyce's "Ulysses"* praised Gilbert for authoritatively clarifying the "technical obscurities" of the novel but took him to task for his overall assessment that Joyce is static and anti-sentimental. He submits in the end that Gilbert's purpose was not "critical" and commends him as an "admirable expositor," obviously putting much trust in Gilbert's exegetical powers. But although he realizes that Gilbert's explanations were not conjectural, knowing that James Joyce himself had had a hand in them, he expresses discomfort that the

⁵ For the contributors to *Our Exagmination* to emphasize or even to discover formal coherence in "Work in Progress" was not self-evident: Joyce's "meandertale" of the night had appeared serially in *transition* but some of the chapters were not yet in sequence. Nevertheless, they found in these pieces a kind of cerebral unity that held them together. Beckett, for instance, wondered, "How can we qualify this general esthetic vigilance without which we cannot hope to snare the sense which is for ever rising to the surface of the form and becoming the form itself" (14); Marcel Brian wrote, "In this apparent chaos we are conscious of a creative purpose, constructive and architectural, which has razed every conventional dimension, concept and vocabulary, and selected from their scattered material the elements of a new structure" (29).

⁶ The influence of critics like Edmund Wilson, who did not belong to Joyce's coterie or who did not have a university reaching post, on the acceptance of Joyce's later writings should not be underestimated, see Segall, 91-103. However, in this brief reception of exegetical and archival scholarship they fall outside the bounds of my overview.

"tabulated formula" of correspondences do not immediately show from the text itself ("Guide to *Ulysses*").⁷ Thirty years later writer and critic Anthony Cronin observed that "commentary is the staple of academic writing about literature since scholars are supposed to deal in facts," but proceeded to remark with regret that "it is impossible not to feel that Joyce is suffering from a great deal too much commentary; though he is patently still in dire need of good criticism" ("Echoes"). Arguments like these were repeated with great regularity.

As literary criticism since World War II concentrated more and more exclusively on literary form (from esthetic effect and ambiguity in the forties and fifties to linguistic instability, discourse, and textual politics in the eighties and nineties) and the reader's response to it, any type of reading that questions the text historically became increasingly outdated. The popularization of close reading as a method and the canonization of modern literature had a negative effect on the study of literary history. On the one hand, students of literature were no longer trained to read historically, *i.e.* to sift through and compare isolated items of evidence and distil a comprehensive story; they were trained to think symbolically and to get as many potential meanings out of a text as possible. Historical readings, in contrast, tended to want to delimitate and circumscribe meaning. On the other hand, New Criticism popularized the idea that it did not need extraneous elements to interpret a literary text. The work could be read outside its historical context. Even if the initiators of New Criticism in Britain and the States were not always convinced of the literary integrity of Modernism (Segall 121-22, 124), postwar critics had overcome this resentment and investigated literature solely under "modern presuppositions" as if they were texts from the present (Graff 197-98); or, at least, they primarily studied works whose constitution did not show the signs of age, either because they were modern works or because they did not particularly require specialist, historical knowledge (such as the ability to read and understand Old or Middle English). Under this influence critics focused almost without exception on the question what a literary work meant to them and to their own contemporary culture; the historical meaning of the work, what it meant to its original audience or even to its author, was left out of the equation.

It became so absolutely normal to think about literature as something timeless that even today we often forget the gap in time that separates readers from the text they are reading, especially when that gap is relatively small as in the case of Joyce. To this effect, Richard Ellmann's opening words in the foreword to his biography of Joyce, that "we are still learning to be James Joyce's contemporaries, to understand our interpreter" (*JIII* 3), hovers like a ghost over Joyce studies. The statement is a powerful one. It evokes less the ever-widening gap of time that stands between Joyce and ourselves than it suggests the long and arduous climb towards understanding Joyce. In 1959, Ellmann's exhortation still made certain sense: the need to mediate between Joyce's (literary) world and his own was not yet so great. Even though the Second World War had disturbed the literary scene in London and Paris and cultural values had shifted under new economic circumstances, Modernism was not yet dead (Beckett had not yet reached the height of his career and Pound's *Cantos* were still in progress); moreover, the name for the period itself had barely entered critical

⁷ Patrick McCarthy later countered, too, that Gilbert's "method of analysis seemed to many readers too schematized, too pedantic, and too often concerned with technical experimentation to account for the richness of human experience in Joyce's novel" (*Portals* 16).

discourse.⁸ In 1982, when Ellmann II came out, that was no longer the situation: we were not Joyce's contemporaries anymore. And even then to the biographer the pastness of Joyce was not evident. Although significant parts of Joyce's world—from Bloom's house at 7 Eccles Street to songs and tidbits from popular culture—were permanently lost, Ellmann was still interested in mediating between the minds of his readers and Joyce's timeless genius.

But let's not anticipate events. In many respects, the publication of Ellmann's biography in 1959 marked a turning point in the reception of Joyce but also in the way his work was supposed to be read. A spectacular homage to Joyce's art, the biography accomplished several feats. Not only did it monumentalize Joyce, it also made his writing acceptable inside as well as outside the academy. In the wake of Ellmann, Joyce was finally a topic worthy of serious study (an event that coincided with the end of the in-fighting in English departments over whether or not modern literature deserved an equal place in the curriculum next to Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton (Graff 207-081). Ellmann confirmed Joyce as a "modern classic" by underscoring the timelessness and humanity of his literary achievements. Ellmann's construction of this purified Joyce had a spiraling effect on his reception and on the way Joyce criticism functions. In effect, the modern classic imagines authors as if they are "geniuses writing for no particular audience or at least for a vague posterity," a designation that dignifies but also debilitates the text, according to Joseph Kelly, because its timeliness (the novelist is a product and producer of his/her culture) is replaced with its timelessness and affects the way the author is read and studied (Kelly 81, 11 5). Likewise, to stress Joyce's humanity in literary criticism is to produce "comprehensive," "transcendental" and "non-historical" statements about literature that do not, in Jerome McGann's view, "serve to elucidate" (*Romantic Ideology* 28). The imperative to emulate Joyce's humanity in reading his works silently dominates Joyce criticism, regardless whether humanity signifies Joyce's stylistic expression of his morality and politics (embodied, among others, in Mr. Bloom's compassion) or the means by which his writing subverts political hegemonies. Although reading Joyce's humanity in his work need not result in the exclusion of history (Dominic Manganiello's *Joyce's Politics* is a fine example of this because it considers Joyce's political interests in the context of his writing and the contents of his personal library), the emphasis rests on reading Joyce with a set of critical parameters in mind that reflect contemporary political interests rather than the author's.

Ellmann's biography, a work of criticism as well as a majestic piece of scholarly labor, was received triumphantly. It was revered as "an excellent example of the quality of a kind of American scholarship which is possible when long-range aircraft, tape recorders and Guggenheim grants can be diverted to worthy, official intellectual pursuits" (Hall 174). Yet the biography sparked criticism too—criticism now sometimes forgotten—about the role of literary criticism and the effectiveness of scholarship. *James Joyce* was generally considered a welcome correction to Gorman's very sketchy and incomplete first biography, and reviewers

⁸ "Although the writers and poets of the 1910s and '20s wrote about the "modern" literature they had helped to create, they did not use the term "Modernism" (a name that was frequently used instead was "Impressionism"). "Modernism" as applying to the art of the twentieth-century avant-garde first crops up in the writings of American critics in the 1930 but the term did not become part of academic critical vocabulary until the 1960s with Harry Levin's lecture on "What Was Modernism!" (Weisstein 422).

praised the range and depth of Ellmann's portrait of Joyce, even before it had actually appeared:

No biographer has yet satisfactorily dealt with the shaping forces of this formative stage. Perhaps Richard Ellmann's projected biography of Joyce, based on exhaustive researches in Ireland and elsewhere, will supply the background for further study. At the moment, however, Joyce's biography is very much a problem—in fact, *the* problem of Joyce scholarship. (Magalaner and Kain 43)

The impact of the biography was tremendous, too tremendous at times. There is a tacit belief that Ellmann has said *everything* there can be said about Joyce's life; whenever new biographical data emerge, they can barely prove their worth when critics are ready to dismiss them as "lightweight" archeological finds (Wood 10). Nonetheless, a handful of commentators publicly and privately objected to Ellmann's method, for instance that he had read too clearly the life through the fiction or favored the testimony of some of Joyce's entourage over that of others.⁹ Over the years, these shortcomings were alternatively disregarded and inflated; Ellmann himself all the while maintained that he simply stuck to the facts ("James Joyce"). Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind the climate in which the biography appeared: in 1959 Ellmann was still pretty much on the defensive, so it is not surprising that his portrayal of Joyce differed in execution from Gorman's (style, research, level of detail) but not in representation: he did not exactly hide Joyce's faults behind a veil of reverence but made allowances for the idiosyncracies of artistic genius. In spite of everything, there is still a touch of the hagiographic about Ellmann's portrait, making Joyce always right and the world always wrong (as Magalaner and Kain had observed about Gorman 42).

When it comes to the role of the biography in Joyce criticism, Hugh Kenner later regretted that Ellmann's anecdotes were too readily taken at face value because the biography had been stamped "definitive" from the beginning ("Impertinence of Being Definitive" 1384). Contrary to expectations, Ellmann had not entirely solved the problem of biography. Kenner pointed to what soon would become a sticky point in Joyce studies: Who holds authority over the text? The issue would arise most painfully in the late eighties with Hans Walter Gabler's "definitive" edition of *Ulysses*. But in the case of Ellmann it really pitted scholarship against criticism for the first time. The success of the biography raised a fundamental question in Joyce studies about what matters in interpretation: the man or the writing? Where the reviewers of Gorman complained that there was not enough of the man in the first biography, at least one of Ellmann's reviewers found that at times there was too much (Magalaner and Kain 41- 42; Noon 12). Ellmann's biography did not on its own effect the separation of the man from the writing (that owed its existence to the New Critical formulation of a number of critical fallacies), but it certainly brought out the problem acutely. Patrick McCarthy later said about the biography that "Ellmann opened up Joyce's

⁹ Joseph Kelly documents how Ellsworth Mason was concerned about Ellmann's mixing of "biography with criticism" (151-58). Mason tellingly predicted that Ellmann's outstanding abilities as critic and stylist would remain a manifest and enduring presence in Joyce studies: "The trouble with your performances is that they have a kind of self-contained beauty of their own, and even in deepest error you have an intelligence of expression that is rare in Joyce criticism. I hereby predict that your errors about Joyce will be the last to depart from this earth" (Mason, quoted in Kelly 152).

life as the key to the interpretation of his works" (Portals 19). Nobody would disagree, yet just how essential Joyce the man is for reading his works seemed to cause unease. Even though Ellmann and the critics of the fifties and sixties imagined themselves Joyce's contemporaries, the author Joyce was gradually becoming history.

Looking at the history of literary studies in general, we know that our discipline continually cycles through alternating paradigmatic motions, swinging back and forth between formalism and historicism. In Joyce studies these paradigms intertwine, move in ruptures, and where formalism takes the upper hand, historicism returns with a vengeance, or vice versa. In spite of expressions of dislike, the need for exegesis was generally accepted among Joyce critics, albeit that the authority attached to annotations, censuses, and gazetteers tended (and tends) to be taken for granted; but other forms of archival studies and textual criticism were received much more reluctantly. The pages of the *James Joyce Quarterly* may be taken as a barometer of critical interests: in its first volume in 1963 there is a striking number of articles on exegesis and textual studies, but this interest waned rapidly; from the second volume onwards scholarship disappeared almost completely (in spite of the personal interest of the journal's former editors, Thomas Staley and Robert Spoo, in a material Joyce).

Since American universities had first started to buy up European Joyce archives in the late 1940s and throughout the '50s, a steady trickle of studies on textual issues by Thomas E. Connolly, Jack Dalton, David Hayman, Fred Higginson, Matthew Hodgart, A. Walton Litz, Joseph Prescott, and others accompanied the major flow of Joyce criticism in the 1950s and '60s. These scholars played a pioneering role, as they illustrated how rich and, especially, how complete the materials in the Joyce archives were; but with the exception of David Hayman, they belong to a lost generation of textual critics. The work they did was picked up, expanded and improved on by later students of the Joyce manuscripts, but they had not been able to convince mainstream criticism of the relevance of their learning. Connolly's edition of the *Scribbledebobble* notebook (1961) and David Hayman's *A First-Draft Version of "Finnegans Wake"* (1963) were quickly added to the canon of reference books. But since these editions were paratexts rather than exegetical tools, *Scribbledebobble* and *A First-Draft Version* maintained to most critics a rather problematical relationship to the final text. A. Walton Litz's critical history on the composition of *Ulysses* and *Wake* fared the same treatment, but *The Art of James Joyce* (1961) itself was hampered by a belief in the genetic fallacy. Matthew Hodgart noted a sense of "fatigue" in Litz's book when the scholar "advances in search of Joyce's meaning" but finds "himself caught in a vast and intricate cobweb" (221). What Litz couldn't stomach were the "limitations of Joyce's imagination" (Hodgart 221); to Litz's own frustration, the genesis of Joyce's writings revealed flaws in the construction of *Ulysses* and, particularly, *Finnegans Wake*, and a few years later he objected in traditional New Critical manner to attaching any great importance to genetic criticism: "The temptation to over-emphasize the critical importance of the manuscripts seems almost irresistible," he wrote, but the "finished work remains an independent creation, and its structure is the final arbiter" ("Uses" 103). Jack P. Dalton, another one of those early textual scholars, was the one to argue most vehemently for a radical turn towards textual scholarship. He was the first to recognize "the necessity, desirability, and practicality of emending the text" of *Finnegans Wake* (48) and in the same breath announced a full editorial program:

I find the text [of *Finnegans Wake*] less than perfect, and I have determined to carry out a textual critique. [...] I will publish results often during the years the work is in

progress, as incidental emendations, as miscellaneous emendations (of which a large number are already in hand), and as emendations for entire chapters. When possible, manuscripts will be discovered, or rediscovered [...], but more to the point is gaining access to the known material, and in this connection I am incidentally to begin shortly a complete transcription for publication of the notebooks at Buffalo, one of the two basic masses. All of the known extant material must be deciphered, learned, and subjected to systematic analysis. (48-49)

Unfortunately, none of his work appeared in full and very few people (not only for critical reasons, so the rumor has it) took notice of his textual critiques. Joyceans did not hesitate to recognize the value of textual scholarship like this. One finds critics like Harry Levin encouraging people privately to consult the great archives. One finds unreservedly positive responses to manuscript study, like the following comments on David Hayman's edition of *A First-Draft Version of "Finnegans Wake"* (1963) that show the manuscripts' potential for further in-depth critical analysis:

Part of the [*Wake's*] deliberate appeal is that it is easy, difficult and impenetrable by turns. It took seventeen years to write, and throughout that period Joyce was constantly elaborating his language, multiplying its allusiveness and ambiguity and adding, fusing or reshaping episodes. Mr. Hayman has rightly judged that a record of these changes and transpositions throws a great deal of light both upon the author's creative process and the direction of his thought [...]. This volume does not set out to provide a complete text, but read in conjunction with the final version so as to clarify Joyce's changes of expression or expansion of episodes, it provides an invaluable instrument for the advanced student or scholar for the task of uncovering and relating further layers of Joyce's meaning, and of elucidating the patterns of the *Wake* as a whole. (*British Book News*)

and

The main reason for publishing the MSS must be to enable the reader to understand *Finnegans Wake* better. There are, I think, two ways in which this better understanding may be brought about; the first is by providing the scholar with detailed textual histories so that he may pick over the prose line by line; the second is by making available to the ordinary reader a relatively simple Urtext, easily read and quickly assimilated. (Hart 130)

But responses like these were isolated instances. People expressed their doubts about studying the manuscripts or dismissed them outright: all the manuscripts show is that "Joyce liked to change things" but these changes "cannot be considered a contribution to the art of writing prose" (Kurman 477). Such utter disapproval of manuscripts and textual scholarship will return in my story. It was the rhetoric of illumination, transparency, stability, and foundation that critics objected to and arguments like Hart's or the reviewer's of *British Book News* were grist to their dismissive mill.

Dismissing the relevance of archival material is one matter, a general lack of interest is another. Unfortunately, that was the reality that textual critics and scholars were facing. Shortly after the dedication of the Joyce Tower at Sandycove in 1962, "a fine memorial to

Joyce and to the changing views of Ireland regarding him," Joyce bibliographer Herbert Cahoon lamented that the press had not waxed poetic when three American libraries purchased "three great collections of Joyce books and manuscripts" ("Papers of James Joyce"). As a museum, Cahoon realized, the Joyce Tower never had the pretense to serve the scholarly community; but in contrast, he regretted that the archives, the true and unacknowledged purveyors of Joyce's memory, would not contribute directly to the monumentalization of the Irish writer. An iconic Joyce takes precedence over a critical one. The ideas of scholarship only filtered through piecemeal (sometimes literally: milled to pieces) in the general reception, while the ones who should benefit the most, the literary critics, showed indifference.

Great efforts were made (and, I might add, continue to be made today) to increase access to Joyce's archives. Connolly's *Scribbledebobble* and Hayman's assembly of first drafts for the *Wake* were followed by Philip Herring's transcription of notebooks (1972) and early drafts (1978) for *Ulysses* and by Garland's publication of *The James Joyce Archive* between 1977 and 1979. This 63-volume facsimile reproduction under the general editorship of Michael Groden of every available scrap of paper pertaining to the composition of Joyce's work was surrounded by the words "visionary" (Groden 228) and "galactic importance" (Herring 86). But even when the manuscripts were not ridiculed as the useless "amassing of European literary holographs, drafts, toilet-paper jottings against the coming of Cisatlantic Doomsday" (Burgess 731), very few critics actually found any good use for these editions. As a reflection of the vastness of Joyce's art, the *Archive* did not live up to expectations of the editors. In 1981 Phillip Herring deplored: "These volumes have yet to make the impact on Joyce criticism that MS scholars had hoped and expected," and "Despite the riches therein, it seems unlikely there will be a gold rush to this new territory any time soon" (Herring 97, 87; Groden 231).¹⁰ The reasons are pretty straightforward: the genetic materials do not easily give up their secrets. A disparate set of materials, the notebooks and manuscripts demand close examination and collation, even when an editor has carefully arranged them, to yield any illuminating contextual readings. Very few critics, when they are able to overcome their resistance to this line of work, have the stamina to spend long hours combing through the materials, but content themselves with picking up a detail or two to corroborate a minor point.

Widespread unawareness of manuscripts contributed greatly to the confusion and controversy that mounted around Hans Walter Gabler's critical edition of *Ulysses* too. In 1973 a "Committee on the Text of *Ulysses*" was called to life to promote textual studies of *Ulysses* in preparation of a scholarly edition (Rossman 157); with Gabler as a member, the

¹⁰ The same comments will undoubtedly be made about the new publication of *The James Joyce Notebooks at Buffalo*, edited by Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer and Geert Lernout. This ongoing project definitely resulted from a small but substantial wave of genetic critics who began publishing in the wake of David Hayman's *The Wake in Transit* (1990) and the work on the genesis of *Finnegans Wake* by the Joyce cell of the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes in Paris. The quality of research and transcription as well as the durability of the presentation (each volume includes highly legible reproductions of original notebook pages) surpass by far any previous edition of notebook materials. However, as with similar projects from the past, one can only make proper use of the notebooks if they are studied in detail as texts in their own right and in relation to the final text for a protracted period of time.

Committee indirectly led to the 1984 edition, but even with the support of the *JJQ* the Committee's work did very little to increase awareness of the textual condition of Joyce's novel. As a result, the reception of Gabler's edition was one of successive *Aha-Erlebnissen*, with critical allegiances rapidly shifting from one side to the other. It came as a surprise to many readers that Gabler had supplied the answer to Stephen's rhetorical conundrum: "the word known to all men." Although the love word appeared quite prominently in the "Scylla and Charibdis" episode in the Rosenbach manuscript, edited in 1975 by Clive Driver, nobody seemed to have noticed its presence there. Gabler's restoration of the love word in *Ulysses* was met by some with resistance and dismay: a crucial mystery in the text had now been solved. Not that the solution was not already known. On Richard Ellmann's suggestion, critical consensus maintained that the word known to all men was indeed love (other less-convincing contenders in the guessing game were "death" and "synteresis"). But the point was that Joyce allegedly had not revealed the answer, that the mystery was part of the esthetic intent of the novel. Gabler was implicitly accused of mutilating the pleasure of the text as esthetic arguments were brought to bear to counter textual evidence. These arguments ranged from the indifferent ("It is nice to know for certain, but I doubt whether this extra fact radically alters our reading of *Ulysses*" [Raine, "Pleasures"]) to the muddled (to print or not to print, both make "aesthetic sense" [Raine, "Pleasures"]). But very often this resistance simply boiled down to the fact that critics were not accustomed to this new text that Gabler was introducing and openly admitted their regret about the changes.

All of sudden, *Ulysses* had become a little bit less familiar as it forced critics to revise some of their favorite interpretations. A confrontation was occurring between the reception of Joyce's novel and its modes of production: the history of reading Joyce was moving away from the historical Joyce. And yet Joyce was not historicized. In return, the ensuing "Joyce wars" between Gabler and Kidd (and later Danis Rose) did more for Joyce's reputation than for actual knowledge about the composition of the text gained from these scholarly debates."¹¹ Gabler's edition did not radically alter received opinions and interpretations of *Ulysses*, but the controversy surrounding the authority of the text was taken up in the broader critical issue of how to read the text. Bernard Benstock expressed his doubts in resonant words that underscore the intangibility of a God-like Joyce pairing his fingernails: "What cannot fail to come into question is the nature of authority [. . .], the right of anyone to determine the fixed form of Joyce's *Ulysses* other than James Joyce" ("How Many Texts" 2). (What is largely ignored, of course, are the social conditions under which a text is produced [McGann, *Textual Condition* 60-64] several hands other than Joyce's have put their imprint on all editions of *Ulysses*.) Gabler's edition was nevertheless the result of the critical culture of the time, although it took some time for people to realize. Reviewing the Augmented Ninth, Brian Cheyette for instance upheld the division between editing and criticism when he wrote: "The Frankfurt symposium, Benstock argues, marked the ascendancy of French deconstructive theories, but the contradictions within the 'Joyce industry' become apparent

¹¹ " A certain hysteria lay behind these scholarly debates, which were fought in daily newspapers before they were considered in the "serene" setting of an academic conference; the first time that happened, with Gabler and Kidd both present, was at the Miami conference in 1989. On reading Charles Rossmann's history on the *Ulysses* controversy, one is certainly struck by the behind-the-scenes manipulations, power (ab)uses, *ad hominem* attacks, general shenanigans and waving of unpublicized lists with alleged corrections that drew away attention from the actual issues of critical editing.

when we remember that the same conference also introduced Gabler's *Ulysses*, a 'corrected' edition that [. . .] can only be undermined by these 'new critical approaches to Joyce texts' that are supposedly at the heart of Joyce studies" (17). But there was no real contradiction. In his introduction to the volume Bernard Benstock actually pointed out that the 1984 Symposium was set up as an occasion for launching the Gabler edition and commemorated Frankfurt for its blurring of boundaries between "insiders" and "outsiders" (between Joyceans and non-Joyceans) that challenged all orthodoxies (Introduction 4); he did not criticize Gabler the way Cheyette implies. Cheyette, like Benstock, did not support the definitive authority of Gabler's critical edition, but he went further than Benstock in that he tenuously claimed that the "new critical approaches" like poststructuralism would disempower Gabler and strip the edition of its wrongful claims to being definitive.

Bernard Benstock did not see Gabler and deconstruction as a contradiction, probably for good reasons. Gabler's idealist approach to correcting the text, selecting a virtual copy-text reconstructed from the genesis of the work itself rather than one of the existing editions, is paradoxically not historical in nature. Apart from John Kidd, many other textual scholars, including Philip Gaskell, Michael Groden, Robert Spoo, and Jerome McGann, have argued for the necessity of a more traditionally edited *Ulysses* which takes, preferably, the 1922 edition as copy-text because at least it was the one that Joyce knew (Rossman 157; Spoo 8). However, because its basis is genetic, Gabler's edition is not entirely a-historical either. Starting from the Rosenbach manuscript (also clearly a text existing in space and time) or a fair copy where the Rosenbach manuscript lies outside the direct line of transmission, Gabler rebuilt the text the way "Joyce wrote it" from the pre-publication materials, and along the way he carefully avoided the corruptions that typists and printers had introduced. His edition, therefore, is "non-corrupted" rather than "corrected" (Rossman 157-58). One could say that he cloned *Ulysses*. But then again, one senses, too, that the synoptic pages, in spite of the radically new way of presenting textual variants, elide the material form of the actual stages of revision. Gabler's intention, moreover, was to show just how unstable the text was, an idea that was appropriated by critics who defended Joyce's deconstructive use of language (Gabler 308-309).¹²

Apart from the publisher's varying nomenclature from "definitive" to "corrected" text ("definitive," as far as anyone knows, was never Gabler's own choice of words [Rossman 179]), the reception of the edition passed through at least two distinct phases. In the eighties, there was praise before there was protest, but the protest grew loudest. The initial feeling of euphoria for Gabler and his computer-generated text seemed almost impossible to resist, as Rossman suggests, and as deference initially quelled criticism, it opened the way at the same time to a critical downfall. Many welcomed the new, error-free text of *Ulysses*; but some soon objected that the purified text rather refined *Ulysses* out of existence and opined that it should not have been corrected at all. Textual scholars, all the while, quibbled with the editor

¹² For Vicky Mahaffey, for instance, Joyce's play on errors (as in the famous telegram "Nother dying" [*U* 3.1991]) is a reason to see all errors as part of the text's linguistic proliferation: "If we look to Joyce's texts for evidence of his intentions, we discover him minimizing the importance of authorial intentions by stressing the ways in which they are modified and reframed by the variable processes of writing, transmission, and reception. Joyce, then, uses his authority to recontextualize that authority against the broader backgrounds of history and production, insisting upon the irreducible oscillation between intention and circumstance" (181-82).

over fundamentals, over theoretical and methodological issues concerning textual editing, over choice of copy-text, over the authority and interpretation of the documents. But all critiques, from specialists and non-specialists, were quite conservatively directed at the reading text (the right-hand pages in the critical and synoptic edition were published separately as a trade edition in 1986), while Gabler saw the left-hand pages, or the reconstructed "continuous manuscript text," as the most important part of the project. The detractors practically dismissed this endeavor, for they considered these pages littered with totally incomprehensible diacritics and argued that the "general reader" would want a plain text to enjoy. The critics' implicit alignment with the general reader, however, entailed a bogus argument. Academic criticism had long ago broken its partnership with the common reader when it silently shifted from evaluating to interpreting literary works, but it continued to distinguish between the editor, who paves the way for interpretive work, and the reader, whose esthetic experience of the literary text is the only true experience.¹³

In this first phase, the reception of Gabler's edition thus started from a confusion of horizons of expectations that influenced the controversies surrounding the edition, where scholarly discussion spilled over into the broader reception: a scholarly edition, with full apparatus and textual variants, is intended for a different readership than a non-scholarly edition. But in the case of Gabler, neither the publisher nor the reviewers fully made this distinction. Even Gabler himself did not fully make the distinction.¹⁴ George Bornstein remarks that "the community of Joyce scholars, so receptive in many ways to the rise of theory in literary study, showed itself largely unprepared to cope with the implications of Gabler's approach for notions of textual stability" (*Material Modernism* 119), although, he implies, the edition was actually intended for them. In spite of fierce criticism from different corners, the Joyce industry—and therefore most of Joyce's readers (until Penguin temporarily pulled Gabler off the market)—accepted the Gabler edition as the standard, authoritative text, because in general quibbles over textual matters could as usual be set aside and in particular textual critics did not understand the novelty of Gabler's editorial policies.

Not until a later phase was Gabler's scholarly achievement appreciated. Jerome McGann once asked provocatively: "Would anyone think that Hans Gabler's edition of *Ulysses* is a work to be read?" (*Textual Condition* 96). But to him the question was mainly rhetorical, for he drew the distinction between scholarly and non-scholarly editions. He calls Gabler's edition a postmodern work, befitting to its emergence in the cultural climate of the mid-eighties, and praises Gabler's left-hand pages for its maintaining and divulging textual instability: the synoptic text does not erase textual alternatives but keeps them as possibilities, whereas the right-hand corrected text makes those editorial decisions and limits the possibilities to only one reading: "Gabler's *Ulysses* does not erase the marginalized reading, however, but merely places it in its appropriate historical position" (*Social Values* 191). Picking up on these "marginalized readings," George Bornstein in his recent book,

¹³ "John Crowe Ransom has demurred that "it is not anybody who can do criticism," a pursuit that is best performed by trained experts ("Criticism, Inc," quoted in Segall 119).

¹⁴ "Rose's "Reader's Edition" suffered from a similar fate: his aim to produce an edition for the general public was despised, by scholars, as editing to "taste" rather than textual rigor (Spoo 8) and, by critics, as dumbing down the text. As an icon of high-modernism, *Ulysses* retains its aura of being untouchable; in this respect, Rose's *Ulysses* is met with the same kind of scepticism that surrounds "modernized" versions of Chaucer and Shakespeare.

Material Modernism, simply and elegantly demonstrates how a reading of the synoptic text reveals the rationale behind the composition process, particularly the stages during which the writer wove specific themes and motifs into his text. By way of example, Bornstein traces the accretion of one such particular theme—the linkages between Black, Jewish, and Irish identities, and the way in which the text gradually embraces cultural hybridity (127-39)—to demonstrate the possibilities of a genetic approach for literary criticism in general. What matters to these critics (it is no coincidence that their specialty is textual editing) is no longer the definitive "corrected" text, nor even the results of editing, but the theoretical implications of Gabler's edition.

The central issue in the debate surrounding the Gabler edition is a question of authority (the authority of the copy-text for textual editors and the authority of the "corrected" text for critics), an issue that was also very much at the forefront of theory in the eighties. Feminism and poststructuralism actively deconstructed notions of authority, even the authority of discourse itself, since deconstruction exposes the rhetorical devices underlying the premisses of an argument in order "to show how [discourse] undermines the philosophy it asserts" (Culler 86). The role of the poststructuralist critic, in the words of Joycean Colin MacCabe, is "not to provide the meaning of Joyce's work but to allow it to be read" (3). In fact, the work cannot be interpreted at all; any exegesis, so the argument goes, is misguided because the work is not a crossword puzzle. What needs to be studied instead is the medium, not the message, and the way meaning is produced. In this, MacCabe echoes J. Hillis Miller, who defines literary theory as "orientation to language as such," a move that has brought about "the displacement in literary studies from a focus on the meaning of texts to a focus on the way meaning is conveyed" (Hillis Miller 283).

The revolutions in literary criticism that transpired in the wake of poststructuralism took place to a fair degree within the realm of Joyce studies and reinforced the resistance to scholarship. The complexities of Joyce's work and his endless play with language attracted the kind of minute semiotic analyses in which poststructuralism engaged. Moreover, thinkers like Derrida, Kristeva and Lacan themselves worked with Joyce and admitted to his influence, so that it was quite natural that any changes in the field of literary criticism in general were played out directly in Joyce studies. Poststructuralism gained and retained a striking dominance and Joyce critics created a powerful rhetoric to rebuke conventional scholars as that "small but scholarly arsenal" of "conservative critics" who relied on "the stylistic and thematic conservatism of the early manuscript drafts" (Norris 1-2). Since the 1980s, the thought, the very suggestion, of providing closure to a literary text caused even greater anxiety than was the case for an earlier generation of critics. The "word known to all men," or any other readings from the manuscripts for that matter, illustrates how sticky the debate can get as critics question the relevance of evidence not provided by the text itself. Michael Begnal is a case in point when he questioned genetic critics for using "quotes from the notebooks as if they were, or bore the same weight as, quotes from *Finnegans Wake*. The proper relationship of the notes to the text is something that still needs to be established and clarified" ("Continental Genetics"). What he refers to, however, is not just the "proper relationship," an issue that is indeed subject to debate and interpretation, but the proper "hierarchy" of notes to text. A critical assessment of the evidence at hand is obviously a prerequisite of any form of historical study and rightly gives a historical rationale to deconstruction (Culler 129; Frantzen 1 12 -1 3), especially since Gadamer and Hayden White

have theorized the effect of subjectivity on historical interpretation; yet not the "packaging" of evidence but its weight and degree of authority is at stake here.

The crucial point is, of course, that in the wake of the various critical dogmas of the late twentieth-century, it remained unpopular to be interested in the author—"that would [appear] to be sentimental, nostalgic, repressed, unliberated" (Wright 64). In the course of thinking about what literature is, theorists put forward persuasive antitheses to the seemingly rigid methodologies of "old-fashioned" scholarship: they talked about authorial /authoritarian versus open texts, transparent versus self-reflexive and self-conscious texts, passive or readerly versus active or writerly texts. At the same time, they transferred hermeneutic powers to an abstract reader, who is in no way to be identified with an actual, historical reader. The political intents behind these antinomies are, again, quite valid, but their application, ironically, continues to be restricted to the world of institutions (including established interpretive communities such as universities and scholarly journals). But do they really serve the (common) reader?

In all fairness, methodological differences like these can become quite paradigmatic as one plays out one generalization against the other, or the failings of one critic against somebody else's insights. Nonetheless, whereas a resistance to theory is largely a generational phenomenon, the resistance to scholarship is endemic to the profession as a whole. Archival studies are rarely thought of as an end in itself. As a tool they have their place, but as a study of history in its own right their relevance is constantly questioned. In particular, genetic criticism, the study of the pretexts for *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, has implicitly or explicitly addressed many of the old shibboleths between critics and scholars, but its revisionist notions about the author and his texts have not yet sufficiently impacted the wider field of Joyce studies.

Much of the work done by *Wake* critics on the manuscripts and notebooks over the past fifteen years is preoccupied with the question of how to read the pretexts and how to read them in relation to the printed text. The sense with which critics address these questions obviously derives from the ongoing need to defend their methods against the prejudice of the genetic fallacy. Yet, despite objections, the benefits of genetic criticism have been made abundantly clear from early on that a study of the composition process is well suited to bring out and explore the richness of the text. In his review of Hayman's *First-Draft Version of "Finnegans Wake"* (to return to this early instance for a moment), Manly Johnson praised the edition in that it "help[s] in judging how well Joyce has met two of the major artistic problems—those of language and form" (37) and that it is possible to assess how Joyce's achievements (*i.e.* the final text) measure up to his intentions. At the same time, he saw the *First-Draft Version* as offering a turning in the critical appreciation of *Finnegans Wake*, putting Hayman's claims about the *Wake*'s "aesthetic unity," which the manuscripts now illustrate, against, among others, Wyndham Lewis' objection that Joyce's final work is "an effect merely of a technical order, resulting from stylistic complications and intensified display . . . and mechanical heaping up of detail" (Johnson 37).

But in spite of the more openly *critical* approach to the pretexts, there is continuing disapproval. Critics want manuscript study to be utilitarian but deny it any wider claims. Robert Caserio, for instance, professes himself to be "one of the countless admiring users" still of Hayman's *A First-Draft Version of "Finnegans Wake,"* but regarding Hayman's study of

the early composition process in *The 'Wake' in Transit* he proves unwilling to accept Hayman's method, because it does not do anything for interpretation: "I do not understand the stakes because the scholar has given me none" (748). He finds that Hayman's "rummaging" through the notebooks is not justified because the research does not sufficiently affect or change current critical notions of Joyce's text (748), and discards the scholar's work altogether: "Identifying himself with the researcher-gatherer of specimens, Hayman refuses the role of strong interpreter" (75 1). Caserio's metaphor of the hunter-gatherer-not quite politically correct is not accidental. It perpetuates the practice of looking down on archival research as a "mindless stockpiling of information," as a crude and unsophisticated enterprise, lacking the subtleties and intricacies of newer methods (Graff 89; Frantzen 21-22), damaging even to the integrity of the literary work owing to the idea (very much in tune with the concept of the verbal icon and its connotations of well-rounded perfection) that a text can be analyzed to death. No matter whether criticism is ahistorical, or programmatically antihistorical, there is a continuing tradition of treating scholarly work with suspicion.

Historical methods are portrayed as claiming to *ground* the text and attempting to stabilize meaning. While there is certainly reason to demystify the rhetoric of objectivity in the way it emerged from the nineteenth century, to set aside any effort of conventional scholarship to circumscribe historically the literary work is another matter. To find fault with one scholar's biases does not automatically invalidate the method (Frantzen 11 1). (In any case, in spite of many bold assertions about facts and proof, one need not overlook the historiographical truism that any two scholars rarely agree absolutely on each other's interpretations of the presented evidence.) By contrast, the most salient feature of genetic criticism is the historicization of our readings by referring these interpretations back to the pretextual stages of composition. This practice, moreover, is quite to the point for Joyce's writings, considering (as is often stated) that Joyce did not "finish" but simply abandoned *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* when circumstances prevented him from continuing. The works and the manuscripts therefore share a state of incompleteness with each other, revealing that there is no well-wrought urn but only a coming-into-being of the text through an intricate process of trials, errors, hesitations, reconsiderations, coincidences and so on. Rather than molding it to perfection, Joyce simply stopped shaping his book, so that in the end the final text is just one more step in the writing process that happens to be the last one. In the end, the text is not simply an unstable, boundless entity (one could say in questioning the boundaries of the text that poststructuralism has not gone far enough) but in fact *the* text might not exist at all, as Louis Hay claims. The (immaterial) literary work exists only in the form of (material) versions, redactions, editions ("verbal works may be intangible, but they generally come to us tied to objects," as Tanselle argues [x]). The material text, moreover, is further destabilized as it is not an end-product but the result of a writing process, a concatenation of trials and errors, aborted attempts, beginnings and rebeginnings, changes and redirections, deletions and additions (see Hay). Joyce's works, too, show the death of the text as the manuscript archives foreground the material nature of his writing. His writings did not result from a clear plan, a predetermined set of ideas, a flash of inspiration, a single, unified moment of Intention; Inspiration, as Shelley famously described it, starts to fade like a burning coal when writing begins. Shelley believed that the physical labor of writing, of transferring thoughts to paper, is a poor match for the metaphysical moment of inspiration that preceded it. But intentions don't work that way. Each step along the discontinuous path of composition involves a new intentional moment; each time a new decision is made, it gives

new impetus to the writing process. Ultimately, rather than censoring intentionality like a dirty word, the genetic critic historicizes these various intentional moments by comparing draft stages and analyzing the interface between pretext and text.

Genetic criticism is only the last in a long line of critical practices which look at Joyce's pastness through the production and reception of his writing. It seems likely that others will follow, since Joyce studies, with varying degrees of success, are currently riding along on the new waves of Cultural Studies and New Historicism. But although the purposes of genetic criticism and New Historicism may be intertwined, their praxis and reception are not. These new historical readings of Joyce on the one hand indeed engage in one form or other with the past (although, with the danger of sounding overly polemical, one can question whether it is Joyce's past they engage with) to elucidate a historical understanding of his work, but only a portion of them does so through active engagement with primary, historical documents or artifacts. (The differences between literary and historical methodology are nowhere more apparent than here: as trained readers of literature armed with the vocabulary of critical theory, these critics demonstrate a natural reflex to treat evidence as textual only; as a result, the evidence is isolated from its context and its meaning easily overdetermined.) Genetic criticism on the other hand takes its very rationale from engaging with primary materials, Joyce's textual archive, but because of the specific nature of this engagement and the documents themselves, this historicity is taken for something traditional, old-fashioned.

As I have tried to show, critics still all too easily take for granted the dichotomies in literary criticism between traditional, authorial, exegetical readings of a work and a hermeneutics that claims the open-ended, multifarious, polysemantic text and its esthetics as its domain. In my view, these approaches are effective only if they consider Joyce as an author from the past and his texts, and all that comes with them, as historical artifacts in their own right. As Paul Hamilton writes: "History and aesthetics do seem to have this vital fact in common, that they are concerned with events which are particular and individual rather than instances of the application of a scientific law" (14). But criticism upholds an Aristotelian division between history, which deals with what is possible, and poetry, which strives for a complete understanding of the world. Criticism continues to focus mainly on what is linguistic, intangible and therefore timeless in the literary text. It continues to look at the interface between text and reader, leaving the interface between author and text out of the loop. Thus even today, at a time when an interest in historical issues is at the forefront of the discipline, traditional forms of scholarship, such as textual editing and manuscript study, rarely find a place in the critical enterprise. The notion that they are foundational still clings to them.

Nonetheless, scholarship itself has not remained blind to the influence of theory and has undergone a transformation away from foundational practices. Scholars distanced themselves from the historicist practices of previous generations; however, if there was "bad" history, the solution was not to chuck it, as the New Critics and later the Poststructuralists did, but to produce "better" history (Graff 179, 183; Frantzen 111). This turn towards a new historicism (a turn that took place in English as well as history departments) happened under the influence of criticism and theory, and implied a tacit acceptance of criticism's loftier goals. Nonetheless, under the influence of hermeneutics, the new historicism accepted the subjectivity of the historian; the scholar and critic have this in common: they both subject themselves to interpretive processes. But instead of seeing the tasks of scholarship and criticism as symbiotic—or at least complementary—activities, many

critics saw in this historical relativism the end of history; the past, irretrievable from its origins, had been turned into mere text and the literary work a free-for-all of inexhaustible meanings unbounded by any historical limitations.¹⁵

To recuperate the author is perhaps old-fashioned, and so too is the desire for going to the sources and recovering original meaning, but only so long as we persist to treat historical contexts as marginal phenomena that infiltrate the text to try to ground its meaning. One must take the admonition "to historicize" for something broader, something more culturally rewarding too, than handing the literary text back to the reader loaded with contextual information. In studying literature, the point is not only to understand the effect of history on literature but also the effect of literature on /as history. It means asking different questions, probing for different answers, and getting different results. To recuperate the circumstances of literary creation, the methods, the modes of production is to study *critically* what happened in the past (knowing that the "historical event and artwork" are fixed in time but not the interpretations (Hamilton 181). Ben Johnson once famously praised Shakespeare that he was a man not born for his age alone but for all time. So, surely, to understand the man's past, and to understand how past generations understood that past, is a fitting tribute to such greatness too.

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¹⁵ In his excellent history of the English profession, Gerald Graff does not give credit to this reinvention of scholarship. He argues that since the rise of theory in the 1970s, criticism and scholarship created a "truce," aligning themselves against the fads and fashions of "-isms" and "post-s" in the humanities. While the difficult, esoteric discourse of theory indeed puts theory in the same position, where philology once was, of alienating the general reader, it remains hard to justify that criticism actively takes up a position with scholarship against theory owing to the complete ban on authorial questions. However, Graff does not look at the state of "historical" literatures (Old and Middle English and Early Modern), nor for that matter to the state of textual criticism pertaining to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. He correctly takes New Critics to task for their tendency to examine literary works from earlier periods "tendentiously and anachronistically" "in the light of a modernist poetics" and for their predilection for poetry that resembled more readily "the moderns in their imagistic complexity" (Graff 197-98), but he does not go into the consequences of this attitude. As both the method and the type of literature one was reading precluded the relevance for historical approaches, the division between "lower" and "higher" forms of literary study was not lifted but became more acute, because the fundamental need for scholarship was no longer felt to be there.

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