Bloom's Death in "Ithaca," or the END of *Ulysses*

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This essay explores the notion that Bloom dies in the "Ithaca" episode. It investigates unresolved aspects of Joyce scholarship, such as the structure of Ulysses *and Joyce's narrative techniques, moving the reader toward a new understanding of "Penelope." Ultimately, readers will recognize that "Penelope" is not, in fact, the final episode of* Ulysses *but rather an event that is akin to the claim "it's the end of the world," or the end of* Ulysses *proper. Traditional criticisms of the last episodes are contingent upon the idea that* Ulysses *is a contiguous narrative about Stephen and Bloom's relationship. However, this is not the case. This essay demonstrates that with Bloom's death in "Ithaca," Joyce's final experimental episode "Penelope" becomes a fragmented text of simultaneity (metempsychosis) whereby the consciousness of the transfigured Bloom (transfigured through death) is fused with that of Molly. In other words, a single voice (before gender) comes to represent Bloom and Molly simultaneously, in the closest possible approximation of freedom — a fragmented self predicated upon the commonalities among anxiety, perversions and doubt.*

Keywords: "Penelope" / metempsychosis / Deleuze / Death / Bloom / Molly / Joyce

> Modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and of the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical
>
> —Deleuze, *Difference* ix

On August 7, 1921, Joyce wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver claiming, "Bloom and all the Blooms will soon be dead, thank God. Everyone says he ought to have died long ago . . ." (Joyce, *Letters I* 168). During this time Joyce was writing the "Penelope" episode while in the throes of preparing the other episodes of *Ulysses* for publication. Certainly, Joyce is expressing the frustration caused by the complexity of publishing *Ulysses*. However, his words can also be interpreted literally; that is, Joyce might literally be referring to Bloom's death in the novel. If Bloom dies in any sense of the word what does Joyce mean by "all the Blooms"? Perhaps Joyce is referring to various manifestations of Bloom in the novel and if

so, one of them might be derived from his unique relationship to Molly and, as I will demonstrate, to Bloom's death in the "Ithaca" episode. It is plausible that his death could be seen as a metaphor. But the reasons for, and the consequences of, his actual death make more sense when it is juxtaposed to the content and formal aspects of the "Penelope" episode. Metaphorically, Bloom's death could represent the ethereal meaning of the events of his day and night. I will expand on this to some degree; however, for the most part, this article explains my reasons for believing in the literal death of Bloom's character and its result, which is "Penelope." Joyce was obsessed with death. In *Ulysses* there are many prominent deaths, including Stephen's mother, Bloom's father and son, and Paddy Dignam. In *Finnegans Wake* there is, among others, Finnegan's death.

The "Penelope" episode is Molly's soliloquy, which begins when Bloom lies down with his head next to her feet. This arrangement is emblematic of an inversion taking place in his characterization and being. It is possible that the radical formlessness of pure past that comprises Molly's thoughts merge with the infinitely present or now of Bloom in "Penelope." Their amalgamation is a perfect example of Deleuze's infamous paradox of being where "no present would ever pass were it not past 'at the same time' as it is present; [and] no past would ever be constituted unless it were first constituted 'at the same time' as it were present" (*Difference* 81). In other words, Bloom's life is paralyzed by the traditional belief that the present passes only when another identical present arrives. Thus, the future, not as actuality but as possibility, never arrives. *Ulysses* appears to be held hostage, stuck in one present while waiting for the next sequential and identical present; in other words, it is a "dying" narrative, a story unable to exceed its own form and content until the "Penelope" episode breaks the impasse. How? Recall one of the few conversations directly witnessed by a reader between Bloom and Molly, where in a strangely prophetic moment Bloom defines the word metempsychosis. The implications of this powerful scene have been explained but, in my opinion, only tangentially. I will investigate Bloom's death and propose that through the act of metempsychosis he "dies" and then inhabits Molly, and together their voices constitute "Penelope" as the END of *Ulysses*—not in the sense of being the final episode (although it is), but more akin to someone saying that "it's the end of the world as we know it." In other words, it is the end of Joyce's writing as he knew it, which opened a new textual space where he sheds the exclusionary aspects of writing, those representations of the immediate past masquerading as the present. "Penelope," unlike *Ulysses*, is expressed through pure recollection—memories without structure—that dislodge fixed identities and agency from the stability of their respective principles and release them into the flux of pure description, continually rearranging past, future and present that is re-described into any potential present.

In a letter to Roger McAlmon from September 3, 1921, Joyce wrote, "Meanwhile walking along the Seine I look for some secluded spot where I may 'catch a hold of Bloom and throw him in the bloody sea' (pron. 'say')" (Joyce, *Letters III* 48). The wordplay derived from Joyce's pronunciation of the word "sea" as "say" offers evidence for Bloom's death. Joyce is throwing him into the sea where the

pun on "say" implies his immersion in a sea of words that is tantamount to death. Joyce also urgently instructed McAlmon to ask Frank Budgen to return his copy of "Penelope," stating, "I shall give Molly another 2000 word spin, correct a few more episodes and write all over them and then begin to put the spectral penultimate Ithaca into shape" (Joyce, *Letters* III 48). It seems probable that Joyce's revised plan for *Ulysses* includes Bloom's death. If so, then the word "spin" implies a new twist for "Penelope" for which "the spectral penultimate Ithaca" contains the ultimate ghost: Bloom. Joyce provides an additional clue as to what the "spin" might mean for Bloom in a letter to Frank Budgen:

> the reader will know everything and know it in the baldest and coldest way . . . The last word (human all-too-human) is left to Penelope. This is the indispensable countersign to Bloom's passport to eternity. I mean the last episode, Penelope. (Joyce, *Letters* I 159–60)

In this passage Bloom's essence is reduced to a sign releasing him from the particulars of reality, which allows for "Penelope" to become his "indispensable countersign." Furthermore, Bloom's passport to eternity is a distinction between constituted reality and the emergence of a subject from the myriad of events and substances that freely interact with one another. To understand the above idea we must first demonstrate that Bloom dies and second locate the moment his death literally occurs. Interestingly, we are given a clue in the "Lestrygonians" episode when Bloom is handed a flyer and appears to have a premonition of his death. He reads "Bloo . . . Me? No / Blood of the Lamb" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 8.124/8–9). His comment is followed by the narrator, who declares that "God wants a blood victim" and then lists references to Bloom, "Birth, hymen, martyr, war, foundation of a building, sacrifice, kidney burntoffering, druid's altars" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 8.124/11–12). Noteworthy is the druid reference. T. D. Kendrick explains that a core Druid belief, quoting Lucan, is that the "same spirit has a body again elsewhere, and death is but the mid-point of a long life" (109). This belief, although not widespread, does appear in Celtic literature in such stories as Etain, Cúchulainn, and Bran (Kendrick 111). Joyce's use of Irish history and myth is well known; thus it makes sense that he would evoke the Celtic notion of the transmigration of souls. Before I examine where exactly in "Ithaca" Bloom dies, it is necessary to analyze Bloom and Molly's conversation about metempsychosis.

The conversation takes place in the morning before Bloom leaves to attend a funeral. Because this scene is crucial to my reading I have quoted it in its entirety:

> —Show here, she said. I put a mark in it. There's a word I wanted to ask you.
> She swallowed a draught of tea from her cup held by nothandle and, having wiped her fingertips smartly on the blanket, began to search the text with the hairpin till she reached the word.
> —Met him what? he asked
> —Here, she said. What does that mean?

> He leaned downward and read near her polished thumbnail.
> —Metempsychosis?
> —Yes, Who's he when he's at home?
> —Metempsychosis, he said, frowning. Its Greek: from the Greek. That means the transfiguration of souls.
> —O, rocks! She said. Tells us in plain words. (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.52/336–42)

Bloom adds:

> —Some people believe, he said, that we go on living in another body after death that we lived before. They call it reincarnation. (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.53/362–63)

The conversation begins to lose focus, so Bloom thinks to himself:

> —Better remind her of the word: metempsychosis. An example would be better. (Joyce, Ulysses 4.53/367)

And a few lines later:

> —Metempsychosis, he said, is what the ancient Greeks called it. They used to believe you could be changed into an animal or a tree, for instance. What they called nymphs, for example. (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.53/375–77)

Molly initially never speaks the word metempsychosis, yet Bloom strangely answers her as if she did. While Molly tries to locate the word in her book with a hairpin Bloom blurts out "Met him what?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.52/336). Finally, when she does find the word she asks, "What does this mean?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.52/337). This posits an uncanny out-of-sync exchange illustrating how information overlaps within their consciousness across a temporal delay. The pair appears so well acquainted or well connected one wonders if she even needs to speak what he already knows. Or does Bloom somehow ponder the word through her eyes while she silently reads it? Hugh Kenner speculated that Bloom's question is a response to "a murmur the narrator has not transcribed" or to a nonexistent question he calls a "no-murmur" or "no-questions" (82). After Bloom actually reads the word metempsychosis, the next line is purposely obscure, causing one to wonder who says, "Yes, Who's he when he's at home?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.52/340). Perhaps it is Molly confirming that he understands which word she is having trouble with or perhaps it is Bloom thinking out loud. Nonetheless, the tone and off-topic content of this sentence suggests that a third entity is, perhaps, speaking for them. This ghostly line unifies their thoughts. It is in this sense that Joyce is throwing Bloom into the "say." A few moments later Bloom offers a definition: "Some people believe, he said, that we go on living in another body after death that we lived before" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 4.52/362–63). According to Fritz Senn, the above conversation concerns Molly's plan to divert Bloom's attention away from her forthcoming sexual indiscretion with Boylan, and she uses the word metempsychosis to distract Bloom because she knows he "loves to explain, to hold forth . . . so she throws him a bone" (Senn 112). At first glance Senn seems correct, because in addition to the instances from the conversation above the word metempsychosis or "met him

pike hoses" appears seven other times in *Ulysses* for various reasons. And because the word is initially linked to the conversation between Molly and Bloom each repetition appears to evoke their conversation and its surreptitious undertones.[1] On the other hand, Maria Tymoczko argues that the word metempsychosis "reverberates through *Ulysses* like the thunderclap in *Finnegans Wake*" and serves as the "philosophical center of the reanimation of all mythologies" (44). Eric Levy agrees that metempsychosis is intertwined in *Ulysses* but argues it signifies the "sequential change of circumstance, perspective, and condition undergone by the individual in the course of a lifetime"; in other words a metamorphosis (359). However, I think it is Joyce who is throwing the reader a bone, because the word metempsychosis is more than a mere distraction for Bloom, a method to structure myth, or a mode of character metamorphosis in the novel. Interestingly, I think that it hangs on D'Arbois de Jubainville's explanation that in the Celtic version of metempsychosis a person upon death moves into a new body that is a continuation of their original life "with all of its ups and downs, [and] all of the social relations" (198). Contrary to the traditional interpretations of the word metempsychosis (and each subsequent occurrence) I see it as an indicator of how Bloom and Molly's individual events and thoughts blur together to break down the boundaries separating their respective identities.

Further, it is the action itself of Bloom transmigrating into Molly that allows Joyce to write from a more inclusive or immanent position to account for the contingent, random, and infinitesimal aspects of humanity. In other words, Joyce saw that

> what we say of a life may be said of several lives? Since each is a passing present, one life may reply another at a different level, as if the philosopher and the pig, the criminal and the saint, played out the same past at a different levels of a gigantic cone. This is what we call *metempsychosis*. (Deleuze, *Difference* 83–84; emphasis mine)

Deleuze is criticizing identity and representational thought because they support a predetermined mode of being. He accomplishes this by separating substance from the social and political surface effects that create subjects, like Bloom and Molly. Deleuze, like Joyce, extracts the salient variations and differences occurring at any given moment in one's experiences from the opaque cover of identity to make signs requiring interpretation and not obedience.

The moment Bloom realizes that he has forgotten his latch key (when he and Stephen arrive at 7 Eccles Street) foregrounds the event where Bloom "dies" and merges with Molly into what I call, following Joyce's lead in combining names, BlooMolly.[2] Upon arriving at home Bloom has two choices: either to wake Molly, or enter the house through an unlocked basement window. He decides to climb over the railing and we learn that he

> lowered his body gradually by its length of five feet nine inches and a half to within two feet ten inches of the area pavement and allowed his body to move freely in space by separating himself from the railings and crouching in preparation for the impact of the fall. (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.546/85–89)

There are inconsistencies with what follows in the novel. First, we are told that Bloom lets go. However, the next question "Did he fall?" is contradictory (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.546/90). The previous description is very precise and clear; thus it is odd that the questioner would need to inquire into the outcome unless, possibly, something else occurred. Further, in the question the word "fall" bluntly focuses on Bloom's impact and not on his free-fall through space, which the adverbs "gradually" and "freely" previously indicated. It is here that the narrative is inadequate and lags behind the actual action. Ironically, the question, "Did he fall?" is never answered, but in its place a description of Bloom's weight is given, evoking his obsession with the physics of falling bodies. Recall the "Calypso" episode where Bloom ponders the "law of falling bodies: per second per second" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 5.59/44–5) which is the formula showing that a falling body accelerates uniformly. Thus, an alternate event emerges: Bloom stumbles headfirst as he tries to climb over the rail and falls almost nine feet to his "death" to become a specter or ghost. If this is true then it does begin to explain why the overt presence of objects and the verbose digressions of the "Ithaca" episode consume Bloom—he dissipates into the text.

The possibility of Bloom becoming a specter or ghost is further reinforced by the following question, "Did he rise uninjured by concussion?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.546/100). In other words, he is uninjured by injury. Yes, Bloom does rise; however, the answer, "Regaining new stable equilibrium he rose uninjured though concussed by the impact" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.546/101), raises a question as to what Bloom's actual condition is. Compare the line above to the bare pragmatic line from the Rosenbach Manuscript, "He rose uninjured though shocked by the impact" (Joyce, *James Joyce* Ulysses, *A Facsimile of the Manuscript* P622–23 L780–81 N669–70). The Rosenbach line is the more direct statement that one would expect if Bloom just hopped down. But the actual line in the novel was revised and relies on the meaning of the biblically latent words "rise" and "rose" to exceed the signifier, evoking a death and resurrection paradigm. Richard Madtes argues that "the drop into the area is part of the resurrection motif" and is "underscored by mention of the 'feast of the Ascension'" (Madtes 90). Hence, "regaining new stable equilibrium" is Bloom's "being of becoming," which is the Deleuzean conception of death and resurrection linking "different with the different" (Deleuze, *Difference* 115). This kind of event is exactly what Deleuze had in mind when he explained that "becoming isn't part of history; history amounts only to the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to become, that is to create something new" (Deleuze, *Negotiations* 171).

After Bloom disappears, Stephen perceives images of his movements through a window which provokes the question, "Did the man reappear elsewhere?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.547/113). After four minutes we learn that Stephen perceives a candle moving about the room and then "in the open space of the doorway the man reappeared" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.547/117). The ethereal words from this section, such as "glimmering," "semitransparent," and "softly," privilege a ghostly resurrection rather than actual materiality. In fact, Bloom appropriates similar incorporeal attributes indicated by a gesture occurring in the next two questions, "Did Stephen obey his

sign?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.547/118) and "Of what similar apparitions did Stephen think?" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.547/134). It seems that Stephen is watching Bloom as an apparition. In the first question, the phrase "his sign," confuses the pronoun "his." This pronoun refers to both Bloom's gesture for Stephen to come in and more importantly, it refers to Bloom himself as a totality in the form of a sign to Stephen. Bloom as a sign is mapped onto the next question inquiring into the contents of Stephen's mind, asking what similar "apparitions" appeared to him. The word apparition is the act of appearing, although this is not its common usage. Typically, it is used to signal a unique manifestation, such as a ghost. Does not Hamlet's father's ghost come to mind? Joyce is marking the beginning of Bloom's transmigration into Molly. There are many facts indicative of Bloom's dispersal once he and Stephen are inside the house. For example, their relationship fades into what can only be termed as "too much information" whereby Stephen, Bloom, and a reader easily become disinterested. Additionally, the transmigration points to a new way of *being* for Bloom hinging on the dichotomy between masculine and feminine attributes that will appear in "Penelope." These are evident in an answer from "Ithaca" describing Bloom; "Because of the surety of the sense of touch in his firm full masculine feminine passive active hand" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.551/288–90). This gender conflation has been explored by Joyce scholars, but not in a way that explains why or how gendered attributes flow freely between individuals.[3]

The form and content of "Penelope" are radically different from the first ten episodes and distant from the preceding seven episodes.[4] Vicki Mahaffey reaches across *Ulysses* to connect the "Penelope" episode with *Finnegans Wake* because, she claims, both evade representational techniques of "automatic categorization" by creating a "model that draws its power, not from lack, but from excess [or] waste" (221–22). For Sheldon Brivic, "Penelope" is the opposition between masculine attributes and the feminine topology where "Joyce exposes the unfairness of the gender system" (142). Joseph Valente concisely compresses several theories of Molly into two camps. He argues that she is either symbolically manufactured from "archetypes or stereotypes of woman" or repackaged to express "female desire through a male pen" (191). Most of these brilliant theories share, in my opinion, a common belief that "Penelope" differentiates itself while simultaneously maintaining continuity with the patriarchal fantasy and the overtly masculine reality of *Ulysses*. These theories are predicated upon understanding *Ulysses* as a novel comprised of a series of interconnecting events, brute forces, and malleable characters, with "Penelope" as its radical conclusion. However, Mahaffey's idea comes closest to the real purpose of "Penelope," which is, I believe, to forge a gap between itself and *Ulysses*. This is evident in many of the most widely debated questions concerning *Ulysses*: Why does Bloom and Stephen's relationship dissolve in "Ithaca"? Why does Molly, who has been largely absent from *Ulysses*, dominate the end? Why do "Circe," "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca" have such clear narrative structures while being filled with conflicting, defective, and outrageous content? These questions may never be fully explored if we continue to make an unfortunate suture between *Ulysses* and "Penelope," which is why we must focus on the gap between them.

The most striking evidence of a gap between "Ithaca" and "Penelope" is reflected in the real "59 page gap" made by Joyce in the Rosenbach Manuscript. As Clive Driver noted, "Ithaca I [is] written on 33 leaves starting at one end of this notebook, and Penelope [is written] on 27 leaves, [and] there are 59 blank leaves between them" (Joyce, *James Joyce* Ulysses, *A Facsimile of the Manuscript* 42). Furthermore, the gap formed by the 59 blank leaves is strengthened by the fact that the twenty-seven "Penelope" leaves are inverted in the notebook. It is critical to clarify this point. "Penelope" was deliberately written upside down and located at the exact opposite end of the notebook from where the "Ithaca" episode was written. This pagination forces us to read "Penelope" by inverting the notebook and then reading back toward the beginning of the novel—an act that not only radically separates "Penelope" from rest of the book but erases *Ulysses* as one reads.[5] This inversion is also a perfect metaphor or mirror of Bloom's inverted head to feet sleeping position apropos of Bloom and Molly's transmigration. Hans Gabler posits a similar position claiming that *Ulysses* ends with the "Ithaca" episode and that "Penelope" (re)presents the past seventeen episodes (Gabler 66). I agree that *Ulysses* ends with "Ithaca." However, I believe that "Penelope" is more than just a reiteration of *Ulysses*. In fact, "Penelope" is more *Ulysses* than *Ulysses*. "Penelope" takes the salient surface effects of meaning away from the events and actions of reality and then makes them available for use in any number of alternative series based on how Molly's (and Bloom's) thoughts engage them. My interpretation that Bloom must be erased from existence in "Ithaca" to sustain "Penelope" is marked, as Sebastian Knowles noted, by the large black dot at the end "Ithaca," which seems to signify Bloom's death; the full and final stop.[6]

Throughout *Ulysses* a great deal of evidence supports the interpretation that Molly and Bloom will be expressed as a single entity, evidence that in itself is strange and increasingly exceeds any marital closeness. Molly and Bloom share many similar experiences and thoughts throughout *Ulysses*, such as pondering their life while sitting on the toilet, fantasizing about being the opposite sex and self-indulgent behavior. Certainly they mirror one another, but do they converge, and if so why? Joseph Valente posits the notion that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-woman offers an explanation because becoming-woman, like "Penelope," is a process that moves past subjugation and sexual discrimination. Valente argues that in "Penelope" desire is not "representational, the repetitive expression of incurable, individual lack," but instead like becoming-woman it models "desire as pro-ductive, a collective, ongoing assemblages of breaks and flows . . . across a plane of immanence" (193). Valente's point supports my claim that Bloom merges with Molly and their overlapping masculine-femininity is evident in the novel. For example, Bloom thinks to himself "O, I want so to be a mother" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 15.403/1817) and "(*a sweat breaking out over him*) Not man (*he sniffs*) Woman" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 15.436/2961). While Molly, on the other hand, thinks to herself "god I wouldnt mind being a man and get up on some lovely woman . . ." (Joyce, *Ulysses* 18.633/1146–47) and ". . . yes imagine Im him think of him . . ." (Joyce, *Ulysses* 18.610/96), along with ". . . I saw he understood or felt what a woman is

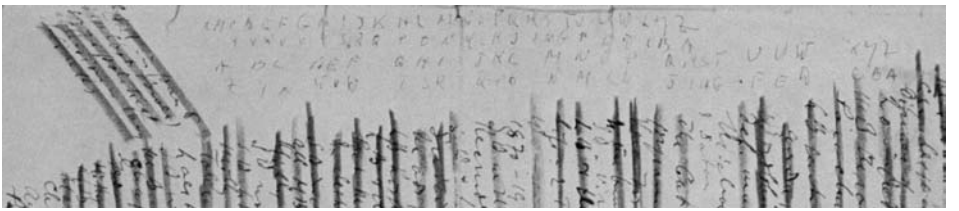

Figure 1

and I knew I could always get round him . . ." (Joyce, *Ulysses* 18.643/1178–79). These similarities suggest that when interpreting "Penelope" we must see it as an ongoing production using attributes that span across individuals into what Valente called "a new-minor style" (205).

If Molly and Bloom metempsychose into "Penelope" then many confusing points could be clarified. For example, we never witness them speaking together in "Penelope." This is critical because Molly does directly reiterate thoughts that clearly originate in Bloom's mind and reflect activities that occurred to him earlier in the day. How does Molly know these things? Recall another conversation that is described in "Ithaca" moments before Bloom falls asleep. We learn that Bloom withholds information from Molly despite the fact that we are told that his story is "unaltered by modifications" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 18.605/2267). He never mentions the medical students nor where he met Stephen, yet in "Penelope" Molly thinks, "I hope hes not going to get in with those medicals leading him astray to imagine hes young again coming in at 4 in the morning . . . and then starts giving us his orders for eggs and tea . . ." (Joyce, *Ulysses* 18.628/925–30). How does she know that he ran into some medical students? Certainly it is possible that outside of the narrative he told her these things. However, the amount of time between coming to bed and falling asleep is very short, thus a logically detailed discussion is precluded. In other words, Bloom might have told Molly everything, which seems unlikely, or somehow Bloom's experiences are channeling through Molly.

In the *Ulysses* note-sheets from the British Museum Joyce scribbled an interesting reversed alphabet cipher[7] in the margin (Joyce, Ulysses *Notes & "Telemachus"* 73) [see figure 1]. This curious note along with Helen Georgi's claim that Joyce was fascinated with numerology (Georgi 311–12) led me to wonder if it were possible that a ciphered relationship exists between Bloom and Molly's names. If so, then the fusion of their signifiers would further support my premise. Cryptology is not new to Joyce studies, but most analyses of this kind concern *Finnegans Wake* because it appears to have many more scrabbled words and messages. In *Joyce and Cryptology: Some Speculations*, Hugh Staples explains that Joyce's use of hidden writing or obfuscation is based mostly on the cryptogram, acrostic and anagram (167). Staples writes that Joyce used cryptology to create a "fuller and clearer exposition of the meaning of individual passages and of the work as a whole than could be gathered together from the scattered hints in his conversation, his letters, and his book" (169). Interestingly, Staples observes that in *Finnegans Wake* the names of two inventors of different cipher methods appear: "Beaufort and Playfair" (170).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
BLOOM	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
	Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	MOLLY
	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	

Figure 2

Although my investigation does not presuppose that Bloom's and Molly's names are secret texts, there is the possibility that a keyword might exist that in conjunction with their names would unlock messages in *Ulysses*. Nonetheless, my point is that their names are intertwined in a unique relationship to one another that shares letter types, a reverse cipher and a numerological patterning.

Certainly the most obvious connection is that Molly Bloom's full name comprises both names. Furthermore, both names are composed of the same three letters which are M, L, and O and two additional letters B and Y that are unique to their particular names. Using Joyce's reverse cipher one can see that the letters B-Y and L-O relate directly while the letters M-M appear offset in an indirect diagonal relationship (the direct code is M-N, which is a combination that appears a few times in *Ulysses*: see Sebastian Knowles' analysis [of scrambled letters] of the words Nother and Mother [Knowles 25–6]). Their names are almost an exact code of each other's name [see figure 2]. Additionally, if both alphabet series are numbered from 1 to 26—A to Z, two interrelated numerical codes are formed. By spelling Bloom one can read its corresponding number, the letter B = 2, L= 12, O =15, etc.; thus his name is the numerical sequence 2, 12, 15, 15, 13. Molly's numerical sequence (following the inverse A-Z sequence) is 13, 15, 12, 12, 2. If we arranged their codes into a spatial composition with one on top of each other they practically mirror one another. Furthermore, when read normally (follow the arrows in the diagram) they reveal a unique crisscross circular path suggesting a continuity of their being [see figure 3]. Interestingly, if Bloom's name is reversed—"moolB"—in a manner similar to the British Museum pagination and to Bloom's unique sleeping position, an intriguing paralleling emerges which aligns the codes at the ends [see figure 4]. One anomaly occurs because the middle three numbers of each name align in a ying/yang manner of 12s and 15s. Together, their full names inversely mirror each other in a truly circular pattern indicating their final merger in bed and the completion of the metempsychosis process. Finally, if we look at the paired codes and add their numbers together—for example M is 13 /14, O is 15/12, and L—we find that the sum is always the number 27. Helen Georgi explains that Joyce believed that "two is the magic number, seven is the mystic number."[8]

Finally, James Card's brilliant analysis shows how "Penelope" deliberately manipulates and contradicts facts and statements, which I believe confirms my

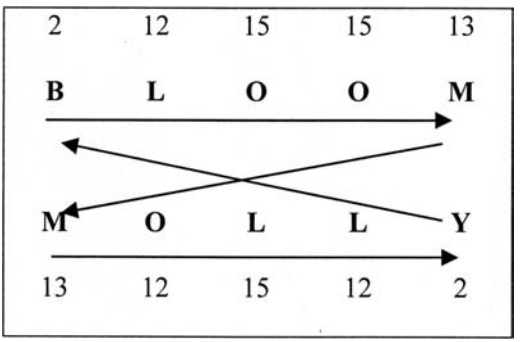

Figure 3

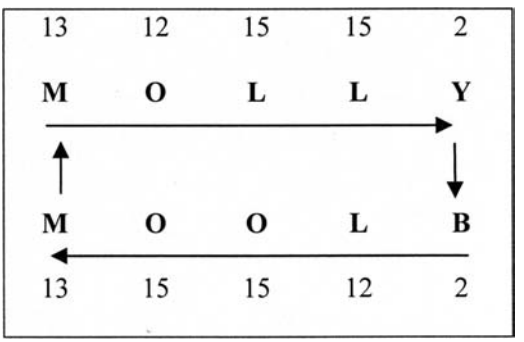

Figure 4

interpretation that "Penelope" *is* composed of Bloom's and Molly's souls battling one another. Card claims that "Penelope" could never be seen as a singular stream of consciousness because what "passes through her mind is contradicted by something else that passes through it" (Card 38). I believe that this something else is Bloom. Alyssa J. O'Brien shows that "fifty-four percent" of "Penelope's" content is inserted in nine different stages, making its construction into "a dynamic, unending process of adding words." She concludes that "Penelope" is intent on transforming reality through linguistic rearrangements; thus, "Molly Bloom cannot be seen as a conventional character at all" (O'Brien 9). Molly, O'Brien claims, is fabricated from several historical and fictional female typologies that undermine the "conceptualization of gender as a fixed attribute" (O'Brien 23), further noting that "transformation, metamorphosis, and metempsychosis are clearly cardinal interests for Joyce throughout *Ulysses*" (O'Brien 8). However, by limiting "Penelope" only to women O'Brien misinterprets Joyce's paradox that Bloom and Molly are

> (parsed as masculine subject, monosyllabic onomatopoeic transitive verb with direct female object) . . . (parsed as feminine subject, auxiliary verb and quasimonosyllabic onomatopoeic past participle with complimentary masculine agent). (Joyce, *Ulysses* 16.604/2218–22)

Joyce's work seems to reject the endemic failure of any binary organization formed by writing in favor of what he called the "void incertitude," which is a space containing a circularity of actions and a multiplicity of being(s). In *Joyce Upon the Void:*

The Genesis of Doubt, Jean-Michel Rabaté writes that Joyce is most certain, ironically, when his written declarations exceed or confuse manliness. Rabaté shows how Joyce, in a letter written to Budgen, confuses gender when using the German word "Fleish." Where Joyce should have used the female form, he chose instead to use the masculine form. According to Rabaté, Joyce's work is predicated upon inversion and simultaneity as the grounds from which writing itself emerges, whereby "Molly's female 'yes' answer[s] the male no" (Rabaté 55) and which Bloom transposes into, "Nes, Yo" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 15.430/2766). In other words, writing must not accept the contradictions revealed by, for example, the artifice of gender. Instead writing must embrace difference as a positive attribute confirming the incomplete, yet ironically (dis)connected, paths between ideas, experiences and consciousness. Rabaté's idea of inversion and simultaneity in *Ulysses* points us toward Deleuze's notion that "being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that which is said differs: it is said of difference itself" (Deleuze, *Difference* 36). Deleuze means that we are composed of internal forces that are simultaneously contradicting and coalescing into a subject. And these forces exist in the same initial manner before they are arbitrarily "selected" by one's contingent interests. Thus, Bloom's actual death (or for those unwilling to accept his demise, his metaphoric death) and his subsequent transmigration into Molly reveals how disruptions, simultaneity of events, interruptions, multiple viewpoints, conflation of pronouns and surreptitious speaking voices constitute subjectivity rather than representational models based on the identical, the cohesive and the unified. Joyce reorganized reality and writing to challenge presupposed interpretations of being/becoming in the world. "Penelope" reveals Bloom and Molly to be a singularity in the raw pragmatic sense of the word, as undifferentiated consciousness before subjectivity, whereby "a single voice raises the clamor of being" (Deleuze, *Difference* 35). This kind of transmigrating writing or as Adaline Glasheen asks "who is who when everyone is someone else" (lxxii) is most evident in Joyce's last work, *Finnegans Wake*.

Notes

1. While walking through the Street Bloom recalls his earlier conversation with Molly; thinking to himself, he clarifies, "Met him pike hoses she called it till I told her about the transmigration" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 8.126/112–13). After having just masturbated while watching Gerty, Bloom begins to reflect on his surroundings saying, "Thinks I am a tree, so blind. Have birds no smell? Metempsychosis. They believe you could be changed into a tree from grief" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 13.309/1118–19). Here, after Mrs. Purefoy has given birth Bloom considers the "wonderfully unequal faculty of metempsychosis . . ." that will transform the frivolous and vulgar medical students, who speculate that Mrs. Purefoy was impregnated by someone other than her husband, into proper doctors (Joyce, *Ulysses* 14.334/897). In a dream-like state Bloom imagines that through the "wonder of metempsychosis, it is she, the everlasting bride, harbinger of the daystar, the bride, ever virgin. It is she, Martha, thou lost one" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 14.338/1099–1101). Paddy Dignam appears in the brothel in the form of Esau (son of Issac from the book of Genesis) which is made possible "By metempsychosis. Spooks" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 15.386/1226). "*Venus Metempsychosis, and plaster figures, also naked, representing . . .*" is a direct reference to Bloom and Molly's discussion in the morning (Joyce, *Ulysses* 15.400/1706; emphasis Joyce's). Finally it appears in a description of what Bloom imagines are Molly's problems one of which is her use of foreign words

that she deduces by sounding them our phonetically or "by false analogy or by both: metempsychosis (met him pike hoses)" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.562/686).

2. I am evoking the linguistic technique of merging characters' names used by Joyce and which I believe is endemic to metempsychosis. Some typical examples that conflate identity and attributes are Stephen and Bloom as Blephen; or D.B. Murphy in "Eumaeus," the failed unionist sailor whose name combines the surnames of Dedalus, Bloom, and Murphy.

3. Carol Siegel claims that Joyce's use of transgendered subjectivity challenges traditional literary conventions. Thus, Bloom's subjugation to feminine attributes is a form of destruction and creation which, she believes, structures both Bloom and *Ulysses,* noting that ". . . metempsychosis has been connected to the central problem of Bloom's day: whether or not he will be able to create a new version of himself in a new body" (Siegel 180). Kimberly Devlin reviews many scholars' points of view on this matter and posits the notion that Molly is composed of many subtropes of "masculinity and femininity" (82).

4. Most readers, according to Richard Madtes, realize that *Ulysses* is distinctly divided into two parts: the "comparatively conventional" first ten episodes, and — beginning with the "Sirens" episode — the last eight episodes, which are a departure into a new world of "experimentation and innovation" with "involved structures and intricate technical effects" marking Joyce's "declaration of independence from linguistic convention" (Madtes xi-xii).

5. At first glance this inversion of the text and the gap between episodes appear to be rather insignificant. But, as countless critics have discovered, nothing is ever insignificant in Joyce's work. Furthermore, this seems to be the only instance of a gap of this kind in any fair copy manuscript. In the "Biographical Description of the Manuscript" from *James Joyce* Ulysses*, A Facsimile of the Manuscript*, Clive Driver describes the inversion and gap as follows "Penelope: 27 leaves in the same notebook as Ithaca I. In writing this episode Joyce turned the notebook upside down and began on the last leaf" (42). Furthermore, in *James Joyce,* Ulysses *"Ithaca" and "Penelope" A Facsimile of Manuscripts & Typesets for Episodes 17 & 18*, Michael Groden describes that "Joyce turned the book around and began 'Penelope' at the other end" (viii). Certainly an argument could be made that this was a way for Joyce to work on both sections without limiting the amount of pages he might need. But its rarity suggests otherwise.

6. I am indebted to Dr. Knowles for his astute connection between my theory of Bloom's death and the "unanswerable large black dot" from "Ithaca" (Madtes 107). See also Briggs.

7. In "Ithaca" the reverse cipher is used to create a cryptogram to conceal Bloom's pen pal Martha Clifford's name and address (Joyce, *Ulysses* 17.592/1801). For a detailed examination of the Bloom/Clifford cipher see Knowles (21–2).

8. Georgi explored an alpha-numeric code, derived from Masonic tenets and based on Pythagorean teachings using the numbers 1–9 with three letters assigned to each number system, which would appeal to Joyce. Using this system Bloom's code is 2, 3, 6, 6, 4 and Molly's name is 4, 6, 3, 3, 7. There are relationships of movement between the last number of Bloom's name (4) and the beginning number of Molly's name (4). Also note that the first number of Bloom's name is 2 and the last number of Molly's name is 7; when placed next to one another they form the number 27.

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