



“Tell You All”: A Glance into the Borderlands of Memory in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922)

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Abstract:

This article primarily and particularly reviews the relationship between personal memories and family secrets in James Joyce’s 1922 work *Ulysses* by taking specific chapters in the novel into consideration. Hailed as a masterpiece and often a subject of persistent analyses, Joyce’s work is a modern parallel to Homer’s *Odyssey* with its unabashed portrayal of the core of 20th-century Dublin society through its three central characters. One compelling lens through which to interpret the novel is as a profound exploration of memory, as the protagonists are presented as grappling with their pasts persistently. This study attempts to explore how the narrative techniques invoke secrecy and how these secrets unravel the connections between memory, its traces and the stories we tell about the past. By situating *Ulysses* as a memory text with a focus on Annette Kuhn’s theory on family secrets and memory, the article strives to offer a fresh interpretation of the relationship between the characters and decipher how secrets become a key narrative force in the text.

Keywords: Family secrets, Memory, Bloom, Narrative Technique, Personal Ghosts, *Ulysses*.

Introduction: *Ulysses* as a Memory Work

To live in a human society is to live on the foundations of the past and of memory. It is remembering and forgetting that shape our lives. Memory and its many layers dominate the contemporary fields of literary, scientific, cultural and historical studies following the ‘memory boom’ of the 1990s, necessarily opening up new discourses every day to understand the past, present and future. Memory studies, therefore, can be referred to as an intellectual odyssey into the profound effects of memory on identity, culture, and the fundamentals of shared human experience. In literary studies, the influence of personal recollections of writers on the creation of their characters, plot and their fictional world is often a point of attention and discussion. Such an attentiveness is enjoyed by Joycean fiction too, as the demanding interplay between personal memory and storytelling is not unfamiliar to James Joyce.

Hailed as Joyce’s literary masterpiece, the 1922 published work *Ulysses* is widely acclaimed for its tangled and often confusing narrative structure and innovative use of language. Nevertheless, one compelling lens through which to interpret the novel is as a profound exploration of memory. *Ulysses* is not merely the story of three people living through a single day in Dublin, but a collage of past and present where everyday moments are layered and patchworked with ripped pieces of memory. It emerges and lingers as a central theme in *Ulysses*. Throughout the novel, the central figures Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom and Stephen Dedalus are presented as grappling with their pasts; they confront their regrets, desires and lost opportunities persistently. When Leopold moves through the streets of Dublin, the reader gets immersed in his personal and collective recollections. The past is not confined to a linear progression; instead, it exists fragmented and overlapped, much like memories themselves.

Joyce’s use of the stream-of-consciousness technique mirrors the labyrinthine nature of mind and non-linear characteristic of memory through which “the reader is drawn into the flow of

the key characters’ minds wherein memory occupies a dominant place” (Nalbantian 77). The unpunctuated flow of thoughts of Molly Bloom in the novel, like Leopold’s, suggests the fluidity of her memory as she moves seamlessly between her past and present. In addition, *Ulysses* contains a plethora of references to Homer’s *Odyssey*, resulting in a multi-layered intertextuality which allows the readers to make connections between the novel and a larger literary and cultural history. Joyce manipulates these allusions, thereby contributing to the abundant interpretations that enhance the narrative. In doing so, he illustrates how literature transforms into a storehouse of shared memory that shapes and reshapes cultural narratives.

Ulysses is a memory work not only in its thematic exploration but also in its linguistic innovation. Joyce’s use of language, with its neologisms, puns, and multilingual elements, articulates cultural, literary, musical and even popular memories. Words and the ‘absence’ of words become vessels for memories, and language itself becomes a medium through which the characters confront their pasts. According to Frank Budgen’s testimony in *James Joyce and the Making of ‘Ulysses’* (1972), Joyce valued memory above all other faculties (53). Thus, Joyce’s compositional modes of interweaving textual motifs and its interconnections as well as his concern with mental activity is noticeable throughout the text. One implication for this is “Joyce’s desire for readers to engage with the text through multiple readings, which experience through time would deepen the function of memory as an integral process for the world of the book” (Simone 8). Joyce’s comment to Budgen that “imagination is memory” also presents an unresolved tension between creativity and memory that is evident in his work (Ellmann 661). He incorporates remembering and forgetting (the main themes of modernism) into his work, and this twentieth-century engagement with recreative and multilevel memory can also be observed extensively in many of Joyce’s contemporaries.

Literature Review: In search of Buried Memories

Joyce's *Ulysses* has long been a focal point for scholars of memory studies since its critical reception and its recognition as a milestone in modernist literature. Memory's infinite importance in the composition of *Ulysses* has been acknowledged by Joyce himself; he has relied on it for the advancement of his characters, content, structure, and aesthetics. This impressive use of memory is one vital factor that contributes profoundly to the modernist experimental nature of the narrative, to the extent that it regulates and governs its form. Joycean scholarship has extensively explored the nature of memory in *Ulysses* and how it converges with various dimensions of identity, history, religion and race. In relation to the novel's "diversity of perspectives", John Paul Riquelme emphasises how the work requires the reader "to understand [the novel] through memory of various kinds" (11). Scholars have thus been able to comprehend and interpret numerous forms of memory at work in the text (including personal memory), thereby opening up alternative perspectives for studying not only the representation of memory in literature but also the many articulations of modernist literature itself.

The most notable among these studies is JS Rickard's *Joyce's Book of Memory* (1999), in which he elucidates how Joyce's novels, especially *Ulysses*, operate as a "mnemotechnic" - a technique for preserving and remembering personal, social, and cultural pasts. Rickard positions the role of memory as central to the construction or deconstruction of identity in *Ulysses*, where personal memory operates to bridge the gap between characters' past and present selves. However, beyond its advantages, Rickard claims that personal memory (for the characters) is not merely a "storehouse" of data but often a "snag" or "mnemic abscess" that leads to paralysis (35). His central question regarding the nature of personal memory - whether it has undergone mummification or mummary, whether it can be buried and dug up later or

instead remains masked and hidden - further points towards Joyce’s representation of personal memory in his narratives.

John Paul Riquelme makes an observation similar to Rickard’s in his article ““Preparatory to anything else”” (9-34) concerning the configuration of personal recollections. Riquelme’s memory-informed close reading of *Ulysses* takes into consideration the ‘Eumaeus’ episode as a case study where he claims that the text “includes instances of remembering in which words for memory do not explicitly appear”, yet the implied references are no less present (20). Moreover, he strives to interpret the novel’s concluding “yes” towards the end of his article; he equates “yes” to the body remembering in an extreme instance of subjective, experiential recollection. His observations on the origins of “yes” as not “masked, forgotten and obliterated” can be closely associated with Rickard’s question regarding mummery and mummification. Riquelme, therefore, indirectly follows through on Rickard’s argument: his interpretation of concluding “yes” suggests that secrets or buried memories in the novel possess a strong tendency to manifest themselves, ultimately becoming an affirmation of revelation.

Michiya Goda, in her 2006 article ““Take the Starch out of Her”” (107-117), employs an analogy of soil, similar to Rickard’s idea of burial and unearthing, to present deeper, unacknowledged individual truths. She takes this a step further by positioning secrets as symbols or motifs in the novel, and her observations position them in close relation to the tensions expressed in the text. Goda furthermore brings to light the relevance of the “tell-you-all” motif in relation to the notion of secrets in *Ulysses*. While Goda prioritises the relationship between Bloom and Molly, Hailey Haffey’s article “Speak, Suck, Bite . . . Kiss” (206-230) centres on the mother-son relationship between Stephen and his mother in relation to the secrets surrounding them. Haffey’s study on Stephen’s thoughts unveils the prevalence of underlying secrets and taboo aspects within relationships in Joyce’s narratives, notably in *Ulysses*.

The existing scholarship on personal memory in *Ulysses* has produced significant insights pertaining to the presence of secrets at work in the novel, and the findings of this review support the conception that secrets are indeed present and very much crucial to the text. The proximity to an implication of secrecy is evident in Rickard's observations on *Ulysses* as he expounds that Bloom and Stephen “must deal with a complex set of memories buried in the pasts” (35). Rickard, even though he raises questions as to fathom these “troubling memories”, fails to light upon ‘why’ they are paralysing beyond their emotional weight. Similarly, while Goda identifies secrets as a symbol, she falls short in perceiving the function of secrets in a broader narrative context. As readings of *Ulysses* transform with the sustained scrutiny of the idea of secrets, the review directs toward the need for further inquiry, and this article seeks to respond to the identified gaps in the existing research.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Ulysses, as a narrative of memory and modernity, presents its characters as extensively engaging with different types of memory. Joyce's obsession with memory compelled him to use it as a “mnemotechnic” approach in which the various kinds of memory became strategies by means of which he created an “odyssey of memory” (Rickard 181). Taking the individual memory processes in *Ulysses* alone into consideration reveals the complexity associated with them, as the key characters' individual memories are of a different nature. Stephen, the young artist, struggles with the traumatic and repressed memories of his past, chiefly associated with his deceased mother. Leopold Bloom has semantic memories, those “Bloomisms” or “the uneasy but scrupulous recollection of a factual near-miss” (Ellmann 36). Molly Bloom's memory process is associative and involuntary, presented through her monologue in the final episode of the novel. To examine this in detail, this article draws its conceptual framework from existing scholarship on memory in *Ulysses* as well as from a few key texts that lay the foundation for this investigation.

The first is British cultural historian Annette Kuhn’s work *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (1995), which aims to complicate the understanding of how memory works culturally. Written as a semi-autobiography and a strong cultural criticism, Kuhn explores how identity is constructed through the interplay of personal and collective memory. Her treatment of the methodology of memory work asserts both the active nature of memory and the significance of recollections as solid evidence for the awakening of critical consciousness. Kuhn postulates family secrets as a structural necessity that sustains its authority on power relations and thereby renders memory a site of conflict where meanings are contested. This is a perspective that this article also adopts in its analysis of Joyce’s *Ulysses*. She further adapts and utilises the Freudian psychoanalytic concept of “the return of the repressed” to a memory studies framework through which secrets are analogised to ‘shadows’. She stresses the essentiality of bringing these shadows to light to apprehend the mythic aspects of family drama.

Another key text is Michiya Goda’s article “Take the Starch Out of Her”, which offers substantive insights into the use of various symbols and motifs in the selected novel. Her analysis of the chapter and passages “slightly soiled” by Bloom’s unconscious mind becomes pivotal as we strive to perceive the underlying narrative forces in the novel (Goda 108). Similarly, Suzette A. Henke’s analysis of the characters in *Ulysses*, utilising phenomenology and existential philosophy, provides critical understanding to the study of different dimensions of personal memory in the text. Henke’s concept of personal ghosts haunting characters’ tortured mindscapes is particularly valuable in the context of this study (*Joyce’s Moraculous Sindbook* 181). While much has been said about the study of memory in *Ulysses*, there remains a gap in the existing scholarship regarding a comprehensive discussion of the correlation between family secrets and memory in the text. As opposed to a generic, general remembrance of the past, Joyce returns to vividly remembered interconnected details with emotional and sensorial intensity. Tracing these details in connection with secrets not only allows one to

understand the extent to which memory operates in the text, but also brings attention to the often-neglected narrative patterns in modernist literature.

This article primarily and particularly reviews the relationship between personal memories and family secrets in *Ulysses* by taking specific chapters in the novel into consideration. It also attempts to explore how the narrative techniques in the text invoke secrecy and how the secrets unravel the connections between memory, its traces and the stories we tell about the past. The article further investigates the nature of secrets and confession as well as Bloom’s role as a secret-bearer in the novel through the theories and concepts proposed by Annette Kuhn and Michiya Goda in their selected works. Along with Kuhn’s methodology of memory work and her views on the varied expressions of family secrets in culture, the paper incorporates Goda’s theories on the significance of certain motifs in *Ulysses* and Henke’s study of the novel as a phenomenological life-world to establish the research framework. This article adopts a qualitative analysis approach rooted in literary theory and memory studies. The primary method employed is textual analysis, through which the novel *Ulysses* is examined as a memory text.

Discussion: Personal Memory and Family Secrets in *Ulysses*

Ulysses, set in a real place with almost all characters being real or closely based on a real person, draws its striking details from Joyce’s memory, however the most obvious fact about the book is that “it is his autobiography in a thin covering of fiction” (Hodgart 69). The first episode titled “Telemachus”, narrated as a continuation to Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), presents a day in the life of Stephen Dedalus who is the protagonist in that novel. Stephen’s roommate Buck Mulligan, through his blasphemous witticisms, teases him for his gloominess which surfaces from the recurrent thoughts of his mother’s recent death. As stated by Henke, “Mulligan uses all the sentimental rhetoric at his command to arouse

Stephen’s unconscious guilt” (16). Because of refusing his mother’s deathbed request, Stephen is viewed by Mulligan and by the society as a man guilty of matricide. Constantly haunted by womb images, Stephen’s “free floating anxiety of existential dread” tells the virgin reader of *Ulysses* that there is something secretive about Stephen’s familial relations; there is more than the guilt of primordial memory, “more and more galling, of his having consented to live in his mother, then to leave her” (Beckett 240).

In the “Telemachus” episode, it can be inferred that the memories of his past affect Stephen’s senses, which is evident from his experiences of both literal and metaphorical sensory pain. His thoughts become a tool of self-torture as the vivid images of his dying mother saturate his mind:

Silently, in a dream, she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes. Across the threadbare cuffedged he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice behind him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting. (Joyce 5)

Later, when a cloud begins to cover the sun slowly, it becomes “an early morning mnemonic trigger” which induces in Stephen a vision of his mother (Valente 5). He thinks, “I sang it alone in the house, holding down the long dark chords. Her door was open: she wanted to hear my music. Silent with awe and pity I went to her bedside. She was crying in her wretched bed” (Joyce 8). Here, music becomes a stimulus in evoking the memories of the young artist. The episode also provides an insight into Stephen’s complicated relationship with his mother and it quietly reveals that beneath the mask of paradox, Stephen harbours a “secret” terror: his

blatant refusal of his mother’s last wish was his determination to escape the nets of family, country and religion.

It is essential to understand the essence of Dublin society presented by Joyce while analysing the nature of secrets in *Ulysses*. The author paints a vivid picture of the Dublin community, and one fact that can be easily surmised from the narrative is that everyone knows everyone else. They are aware of the past and present of their neighbours; they know what is happening and has happened in others’ lives, which makes it impossible to keep secrets in the community. An information one considers as a secret might be known to everyone in the city, However at the same time, one (mainly the protagonist) might be unaware of a reality that everyone thinks everyone knows. Hence Joyce’s Dublin has secrets that are both private and public at the same time. Annette Kuhn, in her essay “From Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination”, states that, “secrets, perhaps, are a necessary condition of the stories we are prompted by memory to tell about our lives” (231). From the beginning of the novel, we are not given a reason as to why Stephen left his home. People in Dublin, including his roommate Mulligan, believe that they understand Stephen and the reason for his gloominess, but the actual reason remains a secret: he refuses to consume his past in the present. Stephen cannot deny that the past exists, but he asseverates that it exists only as memory, not as emotion. Once we realise that his action was a result of his determination to create himself anew, to not repeat either his own past or his father’s, and so in some respects, not to have a past at all, we discern that Stephen’s secret is indeed his family secret. However, his struggle to bury the ‘corpse’ of his past is hindered viciously by the reality that his family secrets function as Kuhn’s “shadows”, those painful, unlovable aspects of life that families ruthlessly edit out of their public image (*Family Secrets* 7). These shadows cannot remain permanently hidden, because as Kuhn argues, the repressed inevitably returns, often in more monstrous forms (7). Ergo, the secretive nature of his family life has roots in his past and reverberations in the present.

For Stephen, the past is like a scene of crime; therefore, he is burdened with the necessity of forgetting. What he fails to understand is that the nature of his family secrets cannot be comprehended “until the memories behind the secrets are brought to light and looked at closely” (Kuhn 231). An active work of memory is required for this, yet Stephen strives to become “half-real” by his active forgetting (Lynch 69). In the case of *Ulysses*, Kuhn’s returning shadows evince themselves through what Suzette Henke terms “personal ghosts” (Henke 182). The notion of personal ghosts is fundamentally defined as “a construct of tortured memory”, and what is notable in the case of Stephen is that, rather than a ghost – something that conventionally evokes horror and psychological distress – his mother appears as a shadow, and what renders this shadow ghostly or horrifying is the secret associated with it. The secret manifests itself through the apparition, or if we connect it to Kuhn’s formulation, the apparition becomes the secret’s monstrous returning form. The “Nestor” episode of the text can be recognised as an example for this, where the ghost of Stephen’s mother, May Dedalus, which haunts him in the first episode “gives way to the haunting shadow of time” (37). One of the major themes of this particular episode is the “burial of the dead”. The answer to the shaggy dog riddle that Stephen asks his students, “the fox burying his grandmother under a holly bush”, indicates nothing but Stephen’s desire to bury his mother’s ghost beneath the layers of past history (Joyce 22). But Stephen, the fox, must delve into the ground to uncover the corpse of his guilt, as Joyce expresses, “A poor soul gone to heaven: and on a heath beneath winking stars a fox, red reek of rapine in his fur, with merciless bright eyes scraped up the earth, listened, scraped and scraped” (23).

Annette Kuhn, in her essay, states that the memory texts are driven by two sets of concerns. The first deals with how memory influences the stories we tell about the past, in the present, and the second with the mechanisms that trigger memories, such as pretexts and cues from the past that linger in the present, that is, “the past of the living memory” (232). The “Nestor”

chapter presents Stephen as determined to fly beyond the labyrinth of history, evident from his statement, “history is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake” (Joyce 28). Because the nightmare of history, for Stephen, “is a composite of deterministic forces that threaten individual creativity” (Henke 39). Apart from the biographical trauma that it enfolds, the nightmare can also carry the ghosts of Stephen’s personal and familial trauma, as his past is one of the major hindrances to his creativity. Then in a sense, the family secrets of Stephen - “the past of the living memories”- is also a nightmare: the nightmare of everyday history. In the “Proteus” episode of the novel, Stephen considers turning off the beach to visit his aunt, Sara. But the thought of his father’s mocking reaction to such a visit refrains him from going there. He imagines the scene if he were to visit and thinks, “houses of decay, mine, his and all” (Joyce 33). Stephen’s disgust for his family prompts curiosity in the reader, creating an interest to know why he feels ashamed of his family and distances himself from them.

Beginning with a description of Leopold Bloom through his passion for the inner organs of beasts and fowls, the fourth episode of the novel “Calypso” introduces the Bloom family. The chapter gives off the impression that every family is unhappy in its own way and that “a family without secrets is rare indeed” (Kuhn 230). Bloom finds two letters and a card in the hall, one from Blazes Boylan for his wife Molly Bloom, and the other is for Bloom, from his daughter Milly. Bloom passes the letter and the card from Milly to Molly; she puts Boylan’s letter immediately under her pillow and reads Milly’s card. Bloom believes Molly and Boylan are having an affair, but his thoughts reflect his powerlessness in preventing Boylan’s planned afternoon visit. Bloom experiences the pangs of familial separation that morning, as Milly has been separated from Bloom by her maturity, his son Rudy by death and Molly by her imminent infidelity. Molly’s infidelity in the novel is a secret everyone knows.

Even the chapter is named after a goddess whose name means “the concealer”. For the reader unfamiliar with the Blooms, suspicious behaviour, mysteries, and potential scandals present a

concerning initial impression about the family. In this episode, Molly is the Calypso who conceals her letter from Boylan under her pillow while Bloom successfully conceals his disappointment and pain from Molly. As an initial reaction to his wife’s infidelity, Bloom experiences what Henke describes as “psychological enclosure” (12), a condition that closely resembles Rickard’s notion of “mnemic abscess” (42), which results in mental and emotional paralysis. Here, the secret becomes a dead weight that paralyses him, much as it does Stephen. Not only the characters, but the narration of the episode itself functions as a “concealer”. In Kenner’s elaboration of the episode, he notices:

“Calypso”, the first Bloom episode, abounds in little skips of that sort, hiatuses, narrative silences. There is much that the Blooms do not say to each other, much also that the book does not offer to say to us. Pondering such instances, we may learn how largely *Ulysses* is a book of silences despite its din of specifying, and may notice how eloquent is the Blooms’ rhetoric of avoidance and also the author’s. (*Ulysses* 48)

The narrative silences become the defining traces of Blooms’ domestic reality, and it echoes Kuhn’s methodology of treating silences and absences as evidence. The silences mark the repressed reality’s return in the family’s edited and curated narrative flow, thereby shaping their everyday interactions. “Calypso” is full of secrets and secretiveness that are designed to create suspense and curiosity about the Blooms. As he walks around, Bloom is suspicious of different people or the public in general. The cynical and suspicious lens through which he views the public sphere carries important implications for what we see of his relationship with his family. The chapter also shows that letters function as a medium to carry the secrets of the Blooms, asserted by Norris in her essay on the episode that “in a self-reflexive gesture that comments on the ability of writing to be secretive, Joyce has the Blooms conceal pieces of paper with writing on them from each other and from the reader” (233). The Bloom family may be involved in a myriad of sexual entanglements and enigmas if we were to consider the

absences as evidence and piece together the mysteries and secrets conveyed by Bloom, Molly’s secret letter, and the ambiguities in Milly’s letter for the first time.

In the fifth episode, named “Lotus Eaters”, we see Leopold Bloom meandering through Dublin while en route to Patrick Dignam’s funeral. The chapter offers a critique of Joyce’s Dublin while highlighting Bloom’s free-flowing thought processes. The title of the episode alludes to the Lotus-eating Dubliners, who are forgetful of their homeland, reflecting a sense of loss of identity that permeates this era of Irish history. Likewise, Bloom suffers from a feeling of forgetting or identity loss, which shows up as aimless wandering. As Kuhn states, “from the voluntary amnesias of repression to the wilful forgetting of matters it might be less than convenient to recall, secrets inhabit the borderlands of memory” (230). Here, in this episode, Bloom distracts himself from going home as he is dreaded by the thoughts of the infidelity his wife would commit that afternoon and chooses to procrastinate by letting his subconscious float and fantasize the sights around him. He attempts to push away the personal ghosts: those spectres, including the memory of his dead son Rudy as well as the living spook of Boylan. The chapter also reveals that Bloom is having an epistolary affair with a girl called Martha Clifford, under the pseudonym Henry Flower. Bloom receives a letter from Martha, filled with escalating desires but the phrase in her letter “tell you all” is of particular importance (Joyce 64). The phrase appeals to the “secret-bearer Bloom”, and it haunts his mind as “tell you all” indicates “tell you all the secrets” (Goda 110). The phrase, being significantly associated with the idea of secrecy and confession, appears as a motif in the chapter.

The motif of “tell you all” again hovers in a passage representing Bloom’s reverie on a holy picture of Christ between Martha and Mary; Bloom thinks “she listens with big dark soft eyes. Tell her: more and more: all. Then a sigh: silence. Long long long rest” (Joyce 65). In another moment, Bloom’s musings on the act of confession also reflect his obsession with “tell you all”. Bloom ponders, “Confession. Everyone wants to. Then I will tell you all. Penance. Punish

me, please. Great weapon in their hands” (68). On a deeper analysis, the phrase can be associated with the “secret-bearer” role of Bloom. More than a representation of the unfulfilled promise of hermeneutic memory - where there is a voluntary search to unravel and cure the past - the phrase becomes a linguistic manifestation of the existential enclosure of the hero, which he refuses to relinquish yet. In the same episode, while Bloom attends a mass, he thinks, “Bald spot behind, letters on his back: I.N.R.I? No: I.H.S. Molly told me one time I asked her. I have sinned: or no: I have suffered, it is. And the other one? Iron nails ran in” (66) which has mainstream interpretation, as claimed by Maud Ellmann, that “both misreadings emphasize the sadomasochistic side of Christianity” (63). However, viewing this quote in another light, by focusing on the emphasized words like ‘Molly’, ‘sin’ and ‘suffered’, it can be interpreted as Molly saying “I have sinned: or no: I have suffered” which is reminiscent of her dark secret – adultery. These sentences, as stated by Goda, “conjure up an illusion of the Blooms’ mutual confession” (114). The phrase “tell you all” appears in the “Nausicaa” episode as well, and its recurrence can be interpreted as a mode of expression of Bloom’s enclosure.

In “Eumaeus” episode in the final part of *Ulysses*, the reader witnesses Bloom and Stephen coming together; Bloom rescues Stephen from getting into a fight with a British officer, buys him coffee and tries to engage him in conversation and finally invites him home. Uncertainty, ambiguity, and coincidence are prevalent throughout the entire chapter as things may not be what they seem: the conflict between appearance and reality then becomes central. The chapter gives off the impression that the two men were destined to be together, to solace one another in exile and despair, and “the two men recognize their mutual concern for humanism and the similarity of their day’s experiences” (Henke 210). Stephen and Bloom build a rapport based on trust and sympathetic goodwill amid stories of wonder and notoriety. Bloom becomes more honest with himself as he gets more open with Stephen. Bloom contemplates adultery, but he avoids the pain of direct confrontation.

The blossoming friendship between these two men can also be inferred as a significant result of the interconnectedness and similarities of their respective memories. Bloom then shows Stephen a photo of Molly, hoping it will “speak for itself” (Joyce 534). Here, the phrase “speak for itself” can be interpreted as a synonym of the “tell you all” motif, and it shows how Bloom always associates Molly with the act of revelation or precisely “confession”. It indicates Bloom’s ardent wish for Molly to confess her infidelity. Many critics have suggested that by showing Molly’s picture to Stephen, he is “pimping” for her, “offering her to Stephen in a covert homosexual liaison” (Henke 213). S. A. Henke, in her work, defies this interpretation and puts forward her idea that Bloom alludes to Molly in order to establish intimacy with Stephen because Molly is a significant part of his identity. Bloom believes Stephen will appreciate him for his pride in his wife’s attractiveness and achievements. Henke asserts, “But more importantly, Bloom wants to share with Stephen his own passionate admiration for the “mother-wife” and “earth-goddess” at the focal point of his consciousness. This is the only gift that Bloom can offer his newfound son” (213). Bloom offers Molly for public worship by presenting her sombre image. Richard Terdiman’s take on friendship and memory is relevant here. He affirms:

Friendship - the personal and the discursive connection active here - is a conduct of memory. Like all mnemonically mediated experiences, in an uncanny instantiation of action at a distance, the ties by which friendship calls and binds us assert themselves unbidden, in the “wrong place”, uncontrolled and unconstrained by proprieties of logic and canons of pertinence. As with love, these derogations of conventional appropriateness in no way diminish friendship’s force or its demand upon us. (“Given Memory” 187)

Both Bloom and Stephen have incomplete families as they have lost someone; Bloom has lost his son Rudy and Stephen suffers from the actual lack of his mother and willed lack of a father.

So, the friendship between these two men, which arose from the family secrets (or pain) known to everyone, can be seen as a conduct of memory. The succeeding episode “Ithaca” portrays the strengthening of the two protagonists’ friendship.

In “Ithaca”, Bloom and Stephen proceed to Bloom’s house, partake of cocoa and cream, acknowledging the bond between the two men. Narrated in the third person through a set of questions and answers, the chapter vividly presents the conversation between the two men and the “common factors of similarity between their respective like and unlike reactions to experience” (Joyce 544). At one instance, when Bloom chants an anthem, it evokes in Stephen an auditory sensation: “he heard in a profound ancient male unfamiliar melody the accumulation of the past” (565). Bloom’s visual sensation is that “he saw in a quick young male familiar form the predestination of a future” (565). This indicates the intricate connections between the two key figures’ past and future. The accumulation of Stephen’s past caused by the “unfamiliar” melody asserts the need for him to confront his past in order to proceed to the predestined future as the surrogate son of Leopold Bloom. Kuhn’s argument on the binding power of memory is of particular importance here. The act of remembering binds Stephen and Bloom into “shared subjectivities and collectivities” (156). The moment of “accumulation of past” Stephen hears in Bloom’s anthem marks the point at which personal memory expands into a collective historical consciousness. Even though the events of the episode appear inconsequential, it is in this episode that Bloom realises that it is the first time he has enjoyed “interindividual relations” with anyone since Rudy’s death (Joyce 545). Bloom’s way of living is drastically altered by his encounter with Stephen. By establishing a transubstantial relationship of paternity with Stephen, he overcomes ten years of mourning for his consubstantial infant son. This also marks the culmination of what Henke calls “existential liberation” of consciousness, where the characters finally confront their personal ghosts and purgate themselves from them. In doing so, they free themselves from the solipsistic fear that

has haunted them from the beginning of the novel and transcend toward a condition of shared experience.

The final episode of *Ulysses* - “Penelope”, written in the mode of stream-of-consciousness of Molly Bloom, tells her story by drawing from her memories of the past and present circumstances. Her thoughts move like a tide – flowing forward, breaking, rolling back upon one another. In Frank Budgen’s words, her “monologue snakes its way through the last forty pages of *Ulysses* like a river winding through a plain, finding its true course by the compelling logic of its own fluidity and weight” (262). Molly’s unspoken thoughts reveal her to be better than what other characters think of her. Her thoughts reveal her deepest secrets to the reader, about her past lovers and even trivial objects, like the bed in her room. Molly draws the past into the present through creative memory. She thinks about the past all the time, but her mind suppresses distance and manipulates duration. She never distinguishes between the past and the present; her life’s experiences are presented to the reader in one seamless image. Each of the three time modes coexist and is contained within a continuum in space. Mulvey and Bloom, Gibraltar and Dublin, are presented as simultaneous objects of mental perception. Molly’s memories are localized, connected to a system of places. The episode is thus, “timeless”. In memory texts, Annette Kuhn argues that discrete events “telescope or merge into one another”, thus producing a sense of synchrony (*Family Secrets* 162). Such telescopic temporalities characterise the final episode “Penelope”, thereby collapsing the distance between Gibraltar and Dublin (past and present) into a single, synchronous plane. Molly’s unpunctuated stream-of-consciousness, where she intermingles her memories of Mulvey, Bloom and Boylan, exemplifies these merged temporalities with non-linear organisation where time is “pulled out of a linear frame” to capture the actual “structure of feeling” associated with remembering (163). Here, Molly achieves what Henke formulates as “existential purgation” by spatialising her consciousness and redeeming herself from the dead weight of cuckoldry.

Molly uses a demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ to designate her infidelity, as she cannot speak of her “adultery” directly. But this final episode, saturated with the thoughts of Molly, proves that her adultery, like Bloom’s onanism, could have an affirmative, liberating and redemptive function in the novel. As Henke puts it, “intercourse with a virile lover frees Molly from erotic frustration and conjugal resentment. It allows her to relate to her husband as an individual whom she loves and wants to protect” (225). Frank Budgen notes that Molly “dwells in a region where there are no incertitudes to torture the mind and no Agenbite of Inwit to lacerate the soul, where there are no regrets, no reproaches, no conscience and consequently no sin” (265). Despite her sensual fascination with Stephen, Molly’s reverie goes beyond physical desire to an expression of “maternal solicitude” (Henke 245). Molly catalogues Stephen’s development as she thinks back to their past exchanges. She romanticizes both lost boys Rudy and Stephen, “one through death and the other through time” (Haffey 224). Thus, for both Blooms, Stephen functions symbolically as the lost son who reunites the couple. Molly defies the nightmare of personal history by drawing the past into the present in a transcendent moment of ecstasy. She creates from recollection - dreams, associations, secrets and fantasies - the fascinating world of “Penelope” that provides answers to the reader’s questions on the secrecy of the key characters, and of all the characters in the novel, “Molly Bloom alone perceives the cyclical nature of recurrent personal history” (Henke 250). Her memory does not lead her back into the past; rather it expands her present into a limitless possibility of the mind.

Conclusion

The beginning of the novel poses the question as to what sort of family is at stake in this book, and in the end, Joyce presents family as an idea, an abstraction that provides the model for so many forms of belonging. The secrets and memories it embodies even if the memories are one individual’s, their associations extend far beyond the personal. The memories, as Annette Kuhn asserts, “spread into an extended network of meanings that bring together the personal with the

familial, the cultural, the economic, the social and the historical” (232). *Ulysses*, as a memory text, unfolds the connections between memory and the past, memory and time, memory and place, memory and experience, memory and images, memory and the Unconscious, of its characters. It is their secrets and memories of the past that connect Stephen and Bloom, and in the final episode, Molly unites them in their shared humanity. By the same token, it is Bloom’s and Molly’s untold known-to-each-other secrets and fond memories that unite them in the “Penelope” episode. Ultimately, the progression through the various episodes of *Ulysses* suggests that family secrets in the text is not just a symbol or a static object to be hidden, but a dynamic necessary condition for the construction of selfhood and communion as well the narrative of the novel. As a memory text, *Ulysses* constantly calls to mind the collective nature of the activity of remembering without the need for confessions. Thus the “unstoppable” prose of “Penelope” in the end, and Molly’s ‘yeses’ are not only the ultimate positive affirmations to Bloom, but also her way of revelation “yes I will [tell you all] Yes”. The novel, thus concludes with a discursive act of existential purgation for all the Joycean protagonists, achieved through the ever-merging past and present in Molly’s mind.

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