

Applewomen and Sandwichmen: Profession and Identity in *Ulysses*

“Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in love, but always meeting ourselves”

—James Joyce, *Ulysses*, “Scylla and Charybdis,” lines 1044-6

I

Just as the ancient Greeks endeavored to use a ruler and compass to create a square equal in area to a given circle, so Joyce endeavored, in *Ulysses*, to use words to create fiction that would be equal to reality. *Ulysses*, then, is a novel that attempts to “square the circle” (Joyce 15.2401). The result is a many-sided work that comes remarkably close to the infinitely-sided actual. One of these aspects is the question of the professions, or lack thereof, of its characters. This proves true even for the characters themselves: in *Ulysses*, one sees many “sides,” or aspects, of each of them, while an actual individual (many of whom were inspirations for fictional ones), is impossible to constrain to any finite number of aspects, even by the individual himself. However, one large aspect of an individual’s identity is that of profession—professions allow one to earn money, and occupy a sizable portion of daily life: they concern *work*. In *Ulysses*, as in reality, characters are constantly identified, or even equated to, their professions. When John Henry Menton, for example, considers Leopold Bloom in “Hades,” he immediately asks: “—What is he? he asked. What does he do?” (6.700). Nonetheless, it must be remembered that one’s profession cannot be the sole determinant of one’s identity; in many cases, it cannot even be said to be the primary determinant. Is work, then, simply one of an infinite number of determinants of identity, no more important than any other? How much does one’s work matter

to one's sense of self? *Ulysses*, therefore, asks us to define the relationship between profession and identity.

A fitting tool for the solution of this problem is provided by one of Bloom's many scientific preoccupations during his day: "Parallax. I never exactly understood" (8.110-11). Hugh Kenner finds a simple example of parallax that Bloom unknowingly experiences in the "Lestrygonians" episode when he confuses Dunsink Time and Greenwich Time. The two times "differ by twenty-five minutes because astronomers in those two places observe the sun from stations separated by $6\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ of longitude; this is, precisely and technically, parallax" (Kenner 75). Although Bloom's knowledge of the term stems from its uses in astronomy, the general underlying principle is useful. Simply, parallax is the visible (but not actual) change in an object's position, based on its being observed from different locations; in Kenner's example, the different positions are Greenwich, near London, and Dunsink, near Dublin, and the observed object is the sun. This concept provides an analogy via which many portions of *Ulysses* can be understood in a novel fashion.

One's profession to some extent alters the way in which an individual experiences the world, for it provides a more or less discrete vantage point from which objects, events, and people are observed. An example of this is that Bloom, who sells advertisements for a living, pays more attention to and thinks more about the advertisements he sees throughout the day than a person who is not employed as an ad-canvasser presumably would. These two slightly different reactions to reality—of ad-canvasser and non-ad-canvasser—thus serve as an example of parallax, for the object (an advertisement) is seen from two different "locations" (the vantage points created by the two different careers). The same phenomenon occurs when an individual

mentally examines himself: he “sees” himself from the perspective of one who practices his occupation. If Molly Bloom considers herself (which she does, in “Penelope”), she will do so from the perspective of a singer. In other words, the relationship between profession and identity is that profession creates the lens through which one sees himself.

II

When Leopold Bloom eats with relish in “Calypso,” he is preparing for a day of walking through himself: “Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves” (9.1044-6). Therefore, he is meeting an ad-canvasser, for that has been his profession for some time. Meeting himself in this capacity will prove effortless, because 1904 Dublin had many ads and many ad-using businessmen to meet. Indeed, when he leaves 7 Eccles Street to buy the pork kidney, he very quickly spots Mr. O’Rourke outside his pub on the corner of Eccles Street, and thinks, “no use canvassing him for an ad” (4.111-12). An advertisement itself is before Bloom in one of the “cut sheets” in Dlugacz’s butcher-shop, where he is told of “the model farm in Kinnereth” (4.155-6). His bombardment by advertisements and his many thoughts of advertising will permeate his day, even if, as Breton points out,¹ it doesn’t happen to involve very much of the actual work he gets done. Among these thoughts are his many critiques of ads and dreams of better ones, as seen in “Lotus-Eaters” with the advertisement for the meeting of “Dublin University Bicycle and Harrier Club.”² Bloom thinks of it, “Damn bad ad. Now if they had made it round like a wheel. Then the spokes: sports, sports, sports: and the hub big: college. Something to catch the eye.” (5.552-4). In short, Bloom is not an apathetic worker

¹ See p. 108.

² See Gifford, 5.550n.

(in theory); he does not leave his profession in the office—he inhabits it. This is not to say that other thoughts do not recur in his mind with far higher frequency (the subject of Molly is an immediate example), but that he often thinks of it, even when he has at last returned home in the early hours of June 17 in “Ithaca.” It is perhaps common that a worker thinks of his job with this frequency, and sees himself through it in this way, but what sets Bloom apart is *how* he thinks of it. In the above example, Bloom doesn’t simply notice more details about the ad than the average person, or even stop at the thought that it is a bad ad; instead, he goes far enough to think of how he would make a better version of it. In a trice, he is able to imagine it.

For Bloom, advertising is “the modern art of advertisement” (17.581), instead of just “advertising.” Perhaps the most interesting thoughts of his about advertising as an art are his “habitually...final meditations” in “Ithaca”: “Some one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop in wonder ... reduced to its simplest and most efficient terms not exceeding the span of casual vision and the velocity of modern life” (17.1769-73). Bloom is thinking of the holy grail of ads; something, most probably, for which he himself will never be responsible. Nonetheless, one doesn’t imagine that the clerks and other white-collar working men in *Dubliners* prepare for bed by dreaming of the best clerical work that could be done. (Consider the *Dubliners* story, “Counterparts,” for instance: Farrington, a copyist in the law offices of Crosbie & Alleyne,³ spends his pre-sleeping hours beating his son.) No, “there is a touch of the artist about old Bloom” (10.582-3), and he may indeed take advertising almost as seriously as Stephen Dedalus takes art and J. J. O’Molloy takes law. It is not insignificant that this hypothetical advertisement is his final meditation, as this means that it comes after his idyllic,

³ See Norris’s footnote to p. 71 of *Dubliners*.

lofty and improbable “ultimate ambition” (17.1497) of an estate in the country, which takes up several pages beforehand. He thinks of a great ideal apart from the city of Dublin, of a different Bloom—“Bloom of Flowerville”—and then returns to “Bloom of 7 Eccles Street” (17.1581); it may be that Bloom shifts from an absolutely unrealistic dream to one that he feels is attainable. The “one sole unique advertisement” may be said to be Bloom’s “realistic dream,” which is not to be taken lightly. Men such as Farrington have the very realistic dream of drinking after work, which is realized easily enough, but Bloom’s dream *relates* to his work. For Bloom, being an ad-canvasser has become more than an effective way to provide for his family—it is something he seems to want to take to its highest conceivable point. The fact that his occupation has penetrated his consciousness to this extent serves as a clear indication of exactly how significant it is to him. Moreover, as he engages in his personal meditations, the final meditation he arrives at is one that would extend only from his present occupation. Although Bloom has not always been an ad-canvasser, the Bloom he dreams of in the future is refracted through the lens of this occupation, and thus he might be just the man who exploits the “infinite possibilities hitherto unexploited of the modern art of advertisement” (17.580-81).

It is almost strange, then, that Bloom’s employment as ad-canvasser for the *Freeman* is only the latest in a series of occupations in Bloom’s adult life, as it is preceded by at least four others. Molly sums up these jobs Bloom had in the past succinctly and chronologically in “Penelope”: “Thoms and Helys and Mr Cuffes and Drimmies” (18.1223-24), which is ostensibly corroborated by thoughts elsewhere, such as 8.156-160 and 17.482-86. The details regarding Bloom’s employment at Thom’s and Drimmie’s are somewhat ambiguous, for he thinks of them infrequently. However, there are multiple instances of the consideration of his employment at

Wisdom Hely's and Joseph Cuffe's; the former is a "stationer and printer" and the latter is a business of "cattle, corn, and wool salesmen."⁴ Bloom seems to have worked at Hely's for "six years" (8.158) and looks back on his time spent there contemptuously: "Well out of that ruck I am" (8.142). This seems to be in part because he had ideas for Mr. Hely (albeit not as grand as the "one sole unique advertisement"), which were turned down. Bloom mentions two of these ideas in "Lestrygonians," the first being "a transparent showcart with two smart girls sitting inside writing letters, copybooks, envelopes, blottingpaper" (8.131-33) and the second "the inkbottle [he] suggested with a false stain of black celluloid" (8.137-38). These ideas are not to be taken to show that his work for Hely concerned "the gentle art of advertisement" (7.608); rather, at least one of his tasks was "collecting accounts of those convents" (8.143). Thus, the fact that Bloom had these ideas is not only in line with his characteristic curiosity and inventiveness, which is exemplified elsewhere in the novel, but significant in how it shows that in his previous occupation, he had aspirations similar to his dreamlike advertisement. One may not unrealistically suppose that *those* ideas occupied his night-time considerations when he worked for Hely, and thus that Bloom's employment was similarly ubiquitous in his thoughts at that time as well. Then, as now, Bloom dreamt of an idea for his place of employment that was far beyond what he was required to do (and not wanted to do either). When he worked for Hely, he saw himself as a worker for a stationer, and looked ahead to what the Bloom employed as such might do to improve the company for which he worked, as he does with the advertisement in "Ithaca."

⁴ As Gifford mentions in 6.703n and 6.392n.

Bloom's employment with Joseph Cuffe is perhaps equally as significant as his work at Hely's, but the manifestation of its relation to his identity differs slightly. Bloom remembers working for the cattle salesman clearly and feels that he gained some knowledge from his employment there. He exhibits the latter in "Cyclops" when the group of men arrives at the topic of foot and mouth disease, much to the unnamed narrator's criticism. "Bloom coming out with his sheepdip for the scab....and the guaranteed remedy for timber tongue. Because he was up one time in a knacker's yard...till Joe Cuffe gave him the order of the boot" (12.833-35, 837). As Gifford explains,⁵ what Bloom is enumerating here are cures for cattle diseases. Later in the passage, the narrator goes on to give Bloom the appropriate appellation of "Mister Knowall" (12.838), which certainly fits Bloom at this moment in the text. However, Bloom's exhibition of this knowledge is interesting because, as the narrator mentions, he possesses expertise about it related to his former occupation. In other words, he feels he is qualified to speak about the subject because of his work experience. Thus, his *former* profession becomes the medium through which he still sees himself. Consequently, he presents himself to the other men as one with particular knowledge of the subject of cattle, perpetuating his image as "Mister Knowall," which is also upheld by his fervent curiosity and interest in science.

Leopold Bloom's love of science, which seems to result from an inherent interest in knowledge in general, is one of his most fascinating traits, for it may indeed be the second most frequent topic in his thoughts, after Molly and before his present and past jobs. Throughout the novel, one witnesses Bloom's interest in medicine, physics, mathematics and (perhaps above all) astronomy. However, Bloom's understanding of the sciences is severely limited by his relatively

⁵ See 12.833-34n, 12.834n and 12.834-35n.

short education, and by the fact that he “had ever loved the art of physic as might a layman” (14.255-56), which describes his interest perfectly, when “physic” is generalized to the sciences as a whole. As with the incidental example of cattle diseases above, Bloom tends to play the part of “Mister Knowall” with his slight knowledge. In “Wandering Rocks,” Lenehan recounts Bloom playing this role: “Bloom was pointing out all the stars and the comets in the heavens...the whole jingbang lot...He knows them all, faith” (10.567-69). Lenehan is joking here, but the event he describes is a fitting example of how Bloom conceives himself as something of a scientist or scholar (although he is conscious of his limitations) and often thinks or acts accordingly, the examples of which are many. Bloom’s slight knowledge of science and various topics was presumably gathered through his personal inquiry and “research,” partly evidenced by the presence of two volumes on astronomy and one on geometry in his bookshelf (17.1373, 17.1391-93 and 17.1398-1407); As Molly potently puts it, “he knows a lot of mixedup things” (18.179-80).

It is as if the pursuit of the knowledge of “mixedup things,” or the consideration of those he knows already, is Bloom’s hobby, perhaps as drinking is the “hobby” of many of the other Dubliners. Unfortunately for Bloom, the limitations of his knowledge often yield erroneous conclusions on his part; alas, he may only ever play the part of the scientist. This concept is portrayed well in “Ithaca”: “As a physicist he had learned that of the 70 years of complete human life at least $\frac{2}{7}$, viz. 20 years are passed in sleep. As a philosopher...As a physiologist...” (17.1760-64). Here, Bloom is actually given the titles of physicist, philosopher, and physiologist, despite that he is *very* far away from having anything resembling that level of education. However, this may, in fact, be of very little importance—relative to the average Dubliner, who

perhaps has no such interest in scholarship, Bloom may indeed be a “physicist.” This clearly breaks down in his conversation with Stephen in “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca,” because Stephen is not, of course, an average Dubliner; Bloom is consequently forced to pretend to understand. At any rate, Molly, Lenehan, the narrator of “Cyclops” and presumably others recognize these “scholarly” interests of Bloom (whether or not they realize that he is in fact very ignorant). He projects the identity that others perceive through scholarly professions and clearly sees himself with the same tint of scholarship, and this is perhaps as important a part of his identity as his actual profession. In short, Bloom still constructs his identity through profession here, but in this case, he simply appropriates the profession of another, and—as Bloom thinks in “Nasuciaa”—“What harm?” (13.885).

Molly Bloom is a rare woman in 1904 Dublin: she works, but her work, unlike that of many of the women shown working in the book, is not dull or menial, for she is a singer. Unlike with Bloom and some of the other men in the novel, the reader is not permitted to actually witness Molly working—he only hears about it through Leopold Bloom, the comments of other men, and Molly herself. Nonetheless, the tenable connection between her career and her identity is strongly felt. Bloom is often being asked or telling others about her upcoming concert tour, as when Hynes inquires, “Mrs B. is the bright particular star, isn’t she?” (12.993). Indeed, it may well be that Bloom actually speaks more about Molly’s career than he does of his own. Apart from the quasi-distinguished nature of Molly’s profession, the close connection between her and her work likely owes a great deal to how she “displayed at an early age remarkable proficiency as a singer having even made her bow to the public when her years numbered barely sweet sixteen” (16.1442-44). In conjunction with the suggestions of some of her thoughts in

“Penelope,” this indicates that Molly has been singing (including before others) since she was very young; her connection with her profession is thus very deeply-rooted. Partially as a result of this connection rooted in youth, Molly seems to have no doubts about her talent and appeal as a singer, as is seen throughout “Penelope.” She thinks of Fanny M’Coy “trying to sing [Molly’s] songs” and of “Kathleen Kearney and her lot of squealers...they don’t know how to sing a song like that” (18.878, 888-89); the latter seems to imply that while the others don’t know “how to sing a song like that,” Molly *does*. In addition, it indicates a feeling of possession over the songs she sings (which are not written by her). While she thinks of various other topics in “Penelope,” her stern confidence when she thinks of singing shows that she, like Bloom, inhabits her profession. Moreover, the identification others make between her and her profession (likely strengthened by the fact that she is a woman who works) indicates that they see her through the medium of her occupation, which, in conjunction with Molly’s own thoughts, suggests that she also creates a fair portion of her identity by observing herself through the lens of her profession.

A subtler relation between Molly and profession is that one of the jobs she thinks she might have done was entirely contingent upon her gender. She thinks of when Bloom “said [she] could pose for a picture naked to some rich fellow in Holles street when he lost the job in Helys” (18.560-61). This type of “opportunity” is truly (as with Bella Cohen and the prostitutes in “Circe”) an opportunity for a woman to sell her body as a product for male consumption. While Bloom produces the product of ads and others produce or sell other products, they do not directly sell the human body. While it seems that this previous opportunity for employment was a singular one and that it was not accepted, one can imagine the consequences regarding identity Molly would have faced had she pursued it. One of the most visited topics in her internal

monologue is sexuality and sexual relations; had she taken that picture, this would have been further blended with her profession. Note that these two concepts are already mixed; Boylan is the man organizing the concert tour, and Molly suggests she has interacted sexually with others that she has worked with, such as Bartell d'Arcy (18.273ff). Additionally, her profession as a singer has a sexual aspect as well: "Ill change that lace on my black dress to show off my bubs" (18.900-901), she thinks. Thus, her current profession is already inextricably tied to her gender. However, in the case of the photograph, the two would be merged; she would thus be forced to see herself through the medium of the sale of herself—in brief, *she* would come to identify herself as a product. This would have the potential for catastrophe, but what is alarming is how close she is to this identification in her present occupation. When she performs, for some of the audience members, she is also an exhibition—for them, she is an entertaining "service" that is not very far from being a "good" that is exchanged. Bearing that in mind, it doesn't seem that Molly gives this present relation (or would have given the one resulting from the photograph) much importance; after all, she does *choose* to "show off her bubs," and she is not unfamiliar with male sexual desire: "its well for men all the amount of pleasure they get off a woman's body...always I wished I was one myself for a change" (18.1379-81). In fact, she is conscious of this sexual aspect; perhaps it may only be a part of her profession and thus identity because she *allows* it to be.

The plethora of professions in *Ulysses* goes far beyond Bloom, Molly, and Stephen, and even beyond *Ulysses* itself, as seen in the example of Martin Cunningham, who was first introduced in the short story "Grace," in *Dubliners*. In his appearances both in *Ulysses* and "Grace," Cunningham possesses two significant general characteristics: he is very kind and

helpful, and his occupation in Dublin Castle makes him privy to what may be succinctly called “secret knowledge.” The latter is seen in both works in very similar ways—both concern a “suspicious” Jew. In “Grace,” Tom Kernan mentions that one of the men he drank with at the time of his accident was named Harford, prompting Cunningham to utter “—Hm. . . . When Mr Cunningham made that remark people were silent. It was known that the speaker had secret sources of information” (Joyce 136-37). It is then strongly implied that this Harford is Jewish: “he had become the partner of a . . . Mr Goldberg, in the Liffey Loan Bank . . . Though he had never embraced more than the Jewish ethical code his fellow Catholics . . . spoke of him bitterly as an Irish Jew” (137). This episode’s counterpart is found in “Cyclops,” when Cunningham responds to Ned Lambert’s inquiry about Bloom’s religious affiliation, and in reference to allegations that Bloom was involved with the strongly Irish nationalist group Sinn Fein: “He’s a perverted jew . . . it was he drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system. We know that in the castle” (12.1635-37). This “secret knowledge” is particularly intriguing because Cunningham only has access to it because of his profession; as doctors, lawyers and other professional workers each have a type of language, so Cunningham has access to information that is not available to the general public. However, while the information itself is possessed only by Cunningham and others in the Castle, the knowledge that he possesses such information is apparently well known, as indicated in “Grace” above. As such, a principal component of others’ perception of Cunningham is this knowledge—as corroborated in “Grace” in the description of him as “well-informed” (135). By extension, his career is thus a ubiquitous component of his perceived identity. Just as “Grace” speaks to his perceived identity, *Ulysses* shows that the identity others assign to Cunningham is not unlike that which he perceives for himself; in

“Grace,” the reader is told of his secret knowledge, but in *Ulysses*, he exhibits it himself.

Although the reader is unable to read Cunningham’s inner monologue, the above justifiably implies that he sees himself through his profession-given privilege of secret knowledge, and thus at least partially constructs his personal identity on the profession that gives this privilege.

It is also worthwhile to consider Bloom’s thoughts about Martin Cunningham in “Hades,” which Breton mentions at the start of his article. As he rides with Cunningham, Jack Power, and Simon Dedalus to the funeral, Bloom thinks of Cunningham and his drunkard wife: “Setting up house for her time after time and then [she] pawning the furniture on him every Saturday almost. Leading him the life of the damned...Monday morning. Start afresh. Shoulder to the wheel” (6.349-52). Breton reads this as expressing Bloom’s belief that Cunningham “attempts to ease the burden caused by his domestic troubles by putting a ‘shoulder to the wheel’” (106). This indeed seems likely, and thus adds another dimension to Cunningham’s relationship with his profession—it is an escape. Put another way, it is easier for Cunningham to perceive the world and himself through the filter of his profession, because it doesn’t necessarily include his wife. If one continues this analysis, he arrives at the plausible idea that this escape through occupation doesn’t completely work, for Cunningham seems to be frequently busy helping others. If one assumes that he cannot be wholly altruistic in his action of helping people such as the Dignam family and Tom Kernan, it may be that Cunningham does these charitable acts as another measure to mitigate his misfortunes with his wife. This may not be the case, but it implies that some workers cannot be made content simply with the lens of their occupation—rather, they must add another lens by engaging in a “hobby.” This would not be an improbable explanation for Bloom’s fervent interest in science, or perhaps even Molly’s

adultery. Breton argues that “Bloom also has domestic troubles and responds to crises and insecurities by embracing a work ethic” (106). Following this reading, it is not unlikely that Bloom’s “hobbies” are a type of response to his domestic troubles as well.

III

In ostensibly stark contrast to the three characters mentioned above, the reader encounters “the superior, the very reverend John Conmee S.J.” (10.1), which satisfies a public curiosity about the contents of a priest’s thoughts. For the most part, John Conmee’s thoughts and actions are unsurprisingly priest-like—he walks to Artane as any Dubliner presumably would, salutes and is saluted by many Dubliners and good-naturedly allows a child to mail a letter he needs to send, all the while thinking very frequently of religious topics. However, two instances of his interaction with and thoughts about women are worthy of consideration. As Father Conmee walks along Mountjoy square east, he catches sight of a woman named Mrs. M’Guinness riding by in a carriage, at which he marvels slightly: “A fine carriage she had... Well, now! Such a ... what should he say? ... such a queenly mien” (10.65-7). His hesitation in what he should *think* Mrs. M’Guinness’s appearance should be described as implies, at the most basic level, that his vocation has conditioned him to choose his words carefully. However, he may be attempting to conceal an attraction to the woman, even from his own thoughts. This is not improbable, because, while Mrs. M’Guinness is “silverhaired” (10.62), the actual John Conmee (1847-1910) would have been 57 years old in 1904.⁶ Thus, it would not be unreasonable for him to find some attraction to her, which he would presumably be used to repressing. The second example comes when Father Conmee “perceived [a woman’s] perfume in the car” (10.128) when he is riding the

⁶ See Gifford, 5.322-23n.

tram. The significance in this small act is that Conmee “perceives” her perfume, instead of “smelling” it. Objectively, both terms function in the same way, but “perceives” has a much more detached, even scientific connotation, while “smelling” is the common term for such an act. Thus, Conmee once again appears to have a certain level of separation from the aspects of a woman that may be considered attractive—as he repressed a less proper description of Mrs. M’Guinness, here he relegates a “smell” to a “perception.” This difference is slight, perhaps, but noticeable nonetheless. In this way, Conmee serves as one of the most potent examples of how one sees through the medium of his profession—he actively alters his thoughts and reactions to reality because he is a priest.

In fact, Father Conmee is not the only priest mentioned in *Ulysses* that seems to censor himself; in “Penelope,” Molly recalls confessing to one Father Corrigan, and a peculiar part of his speech. “He touched me father...but whereabouts on your person my child on the leg behind high up was it yes rather high up was it where you sit down yes O Lord couldnt he say bottom right out and have done with it” (18.107-11). As shown, Father Corrigan exerts extra effort to avoid saying the word “bottom,” serving as an example of a priest actively censoring his speech, even with a word that is not overly inappropriate. This is not to be understated; in prompting one to censor his speech, the occupation of priest thus impacts the very medium which human beings use to communicate with one another. In this fashion, it is a profession not unlike Martin Cunningham’s, or that of a doctor or lawyer (as mentioned above), as it creates a slightly different “language” for the professional. The difference here is indeed slight, but an impact on one’s language is one that impacts his processing of the outside world, as well as the construction of his identity and how others perceive him. Indeed, Molly later contradicts herself

when she thinks of some of the books that Bloom brings her, which are supposed to be written by a priest, “about a child born out of her ear because her bumgut fell out a nice word for any priest to write” (18.489-90).

Unlike any of the characters hitherto mentioned, Stephen Dedalus does not yet have a job that he will consistently return to—instead, he has a job in “Nestor” that he has decided to leave by “Circe,” and is in active pursuit of his self-imposed dream: to be an artist. As such, he must be considered both as a teacher and a twenty-two-year-old seeker of his ideal. Stephen is only described as a teacher for less than five pages of the many that concern him in *Ulysses*, and his thoughts outside of “Nestor” scarcely consider teaching. Thus, it can be immediately inferred that Stephen does not place much importance on his position as a teacher; Mr. Deasy’s prediction “that [Stephen] will not remain here very long at this work. [He] was not born to be a teacher” (2.401-2) seems to prove true. At any rate, he teaches long enough to receive a paycheck, and the children he instructs serve as intellectual stimuli, as Bloom might say (16.1221). Perhaps most importantly, Sargent, the student Stephen helps with sums after class, provokes his consideration of maternal love. Considering him, Stephen thinks, “Ugly and futile...Yet someone had loved him, borne him in her arms...Was that then real? The only true thing in life?” (2.139-40, 143), an observation that will be uttered in an altered form aloud during Stephen’s discussion in “Scylla and Charybdis.” Apart from this stimulation of his intellect, Stephen doesn’t reap any significant amount of benefit from this occupation, nor does he seem particularly well-suited for the work, as seen in the aftermath of his riddle to the children: “He stood up and gave a shout of nervous laughter to which their cries echoed dismay” (2.116-17). Instead, he approaches the position from the perspective of one yearning to be a writer, in the same way that he approaches himself

in “Proteus” and the discussion of his thoughts about Shakespeare in “Scylla and Charybdis.” It may indeed be that Stephen takes on what he feels the perspective of the writer is, and in doing so places himself very snugly in the perspective of one who is aspiring to be— (instead of currently acting as) a writer. In any case, this perspective is omnipresent in the above examples, and in his silent monologues and utterances in general—more than any other character, perhaps. Additionally, his perspective makes him vastly different from the characters hitherto considered; while others’ perspectives are often determined from their present occupation, Stephen’s present occupation is almost entirely irrelevant, while the future he aspires to permeates his outlook on the present.

Finally, there is another profession which is undoubtedly one of the most frequently mentioned in *Ulysses*: medicine. The novel begins with Buck Mulligan, a medical student, and medicine is the art of “The Oxen of the Sun,” in which the birth of a baby in a hospital is paralleled with the “embryonic development” of literature, and a group of medical students converse. However, a distinction must be made between the medical student (e.g., Buck Mulligan, Lynch and Punch Costello⁷) and the practicing physician (e.g., Dr. Dixon in “The Oxen of the Sun”). While Dr. Dixon is the only medical doctor that appears in the novel, the medical students appear still more irreverent and crass in his more refined presence. He responds to a crude discussion stemming from Nurse Callan’s entrance and subsequent departure by asserting, “I want patience...with those who, without wit to enliven or learning to instruct, revile an ennobling profession which, saving the reverence due to the Deity, is the greatest power for happiness upon the earth” (14.823-26). The “profession” to which he refers seems to be nursing,

⁷ See Gifford’s assertion of their status as medical students, 14.193n.

but his sense of reverence for those of that profession—who are surely indispensable in his daily work—implies that his disposition includes the appropriateness and formality that one typically associates with a doctor. It need not be belabored that medical students in *Ulysses*, and Buck Mulligan in particular, are extremely crass, irreverent, and even cold, including in relation to their own profession. (See Mulligan, “You saw only your mother die. I see them pop off every day...and cut up into tripes in the dissectingroom” (1.204-3).) In all probability, Dixon was just as crass when he was a medical student, and his reverence may be something he acquired when he began practicing. Still, Bloom is troubled that “the mere acquisition of academic titles should suffice to transform in a pinch of time these votaries of levity into exemplary practitioners of an art” (14.899-901). What Bloom wonders at is exactly the phenomenon of a person *acquiring* a profession as a certain type of man (irreverent, in this case), only to be transformed *afterward* by the permeation of his newfound career throughout his consciousness. These “academic titles,” it seems, grant a profession that gives a different way of perceiving reality and oneself, and in doing so prompt a drastic reconstruction of the individual’s identity.

IV

Despite the wide variety of occupations considered above, the professions of the examined characters inevitably serve as a medium through which they at least partially see the world and themselves. Taken together, this indicates just how impactful one’s choice of occupation is on their life. However, the topics that were considered in Part II (Bloom, Molly, and Martin Cunningham) differ greatly from those considered in Part III (priesthood, Stephen Dedalus and medicine). The professions of the former, their respective benefits and effects

notwithstanding, are far less honored and elevated in society than those of the latter. Even Molly's profession, with its concomitant entertainment of and attention from the masses, is not as highly revered as the latter three. Father Conmee is saluted by nearly every one he walks past, medicine is "an art which most men anywise eminent have esteemed the noblest" (14.901-2), and Stephen's realization of his goal would entail the creation of an enduring work of literature. Simultaneously, Bloom dreams of the perfect advertisement, Molly is extremely confident in her deeply-rooted performance abilities and Martin's job provides him with knowledge inaccessible to the general public, which gives him a certain degree of prestige (though not as high as that bestowed by the second three professions). Each occupation lends something to its practitioner, but he or she is also *enveloped* in his or her occupation and sees outward and inward through the lens their occupation creates, regardless of how highly esteemed it is. Occupation, then, may be said to be a great equalizer—whether an occupation is very esteemed or not at all, it restrains the employee with the bonds of perspective.

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