

**Finding Joy in
Joyce:
A Readers Guide
to Ulysses**

John P. Anderson

Finding Joy in Joyce: A Readers Guide to Ulysses

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SOURCES

To Prof. Louis Leiter, whose inspiration survived 35 years in the desert.

To Linda, Egan and Cameron, who gave me the strength.

To Leo, for encouragement.

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Excerpt (part of Figure 1) reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

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THE MASTER SPEAKS:

“[copulation is not the death of the soul because] there you are dealing with a mystery which can become anything and transform everything. Love-making can end in love, it often does, and so its possibilities can be limitless.”[James Joyce as reported by Arthur Powers]

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the most important novel of the 20th century. Published in 1922, Joyce's *Ulysses* still speaks forcefully to the subject of the human condition through art whose appeal transcends time and national boundaries.

The principal issue in this novel is creating individual meaning in modern life. This continues to be the principal issue for human kind as the 21st century opens. Stephen Dedalus, a principal character in this novel representative of the young Joyce, has the modern disease of the spirit, narcissism.

Joyce's medicine for the diseased spirit is a custom blend of self-realized individuality combined with a detached respect for the human unity. This blend combines Jesus and Buddha, not as they have been marketed by institutional religions but as they lived their lives as humans. In Joyce's blend, the respect for the unity does not limit human possibilities. Indeed, it is designed to maximize them. Joyce's Way to the eternal is for each individual to maximize his or her own human possibilities within recognition of the unity. Founded on his own personal experience of the human condition, Joyce's existential medicine can provide spiritual health in the 21st century.

The sublime joy in Joyce is the art by which the levels of existential meaning are brought forth. Many consider Joyce's art as seminal for modern literature. He enlarged the possibilities of prose with revolutionary techniques and methods of coherence. And his methods carry meaning. In Joyce's architecture, the material is cyclical and the part implies the whole. These patterns bear the imprint of Joyce's views of historical and ultimate reality: history is cyclical, and the human condition (the part) implies the nature of the powers that be, the gods (the whole). Joyce's art is, in my opinion, one of the wonders of Western civilization. My purpose is to make its power and beauty accessible to you.

But readers beware; reading Joyce can fundamentally alter your entire outlook on life. This is what Joseph Campbell, pre-eminent mythographer and life long Joyce reader (may he rest in peace), said

about reading Joyce:

But when you are reading Joyce, what you get is radiance. You become harmonized, and that is what it's about. It is not teaching you a lesson. It is feeding you, giving you spiritual balance and spiritual harmony.¹

If you want some of that some spiritual balance and harmony, that soul food, read on.

Magnitude of Subject and Power of Order

Joyce's novel confronts subject matter of immense magnitude—the nature and meaning of the human condition through the experiences of three principal characters in Dublin during the circuit of just one spin of the earth, about 20 hours. The subject is the human condition, not the gay or black or Irish or female condition, but the basic human condition. This confrontation takes place in the lives of three intense characters: Stephen Dedalus, a most narcissistic young artist; Leopold Bloom, a most compassionate adult; and Molly Bloom, Leopold's wife, a most passionate woman. Youth and adult, male and female. Joyce's focus through these three characters on the full tapestry of human consciousness, not just an expurgated version, insured for this novel both its titillating initial reception and mature continuing appeal.

Joyce's order has immense power. Each of 18 separate episodes of this novel is dressed in its own separate style. That style is designed from the pattern of its individual unifying subject theme. The novel has an independent beginning (Part I—3 episodes). The beginning leads to a middle that looks back and forward (Part II—12 episodes). It ends with closure (Part III—3 episodes). The plot portrays each of the three main characters at the center of a succession of fluid moments of the here and now surrounded by a maternal past. The names of persons, places and streets that carry important symbolic associations are largely drawn from actual Dublin. Through this satisfying structure, calamity moves to better fortune in a self-reflective format—the author writes about his earlier soul voyage that made him the author of this book.

This Guide and How to Use It

This guide is, as far as I know, unique in its attempt to give the

reader a rendition of the deep meaning of each part of the novel. Much of my interpretation is totally new. Not being an academic gives me liberties.

I suggest that after reading this Introduction, you read *Ulysses* episode by episode using this guide as follows. First read the episode of *Ulysses* through and don't worry about understanding it. Just read it through. Then read the related chapter of this guide. And finally reread the episode, this time deeply. That's right, it's not going to be easy, even with this guide. Joyce is worth the effort. Your investment will be returned several fold.

Because the individual episodes generally stand alone, you can have a satisfactory overall experience even if you have to lay the book aside from time to time. The *Ulysses* line references in this guide are to the Vintage Books 1986 corrected edition available in paper. Having that edition is not necessary, however.²

The episodes of this novel are related to parts of that grand old aristocrat, *The Odyssey of Homer*. The descriptions in this guide of the related chapters³ of Homer are sufficiently detailed so that reading that masterpiece as well should not be necessary. Homer's hero is Odysseus, which in Latin is Ulysses. Joyce chose his title to direct the reader to Homer's epic.

Since they have now been cited formally several times, let's just call *Ulysses* Ulysses or the novel and *The Odyssey of Homer* The Odyssey.

Meaning

This novel is an "open work," which even as to fundamentals is susceptible to various supportable interpretations. The ending is notoriously ambiguous in its implications for the Bloom future. Joyce wanted it that way. His work, which is a paean to individuality, is what it is to you. You can customize your own projection of the future of the Blooms. It is designed to work that way, as an individual truth. The costs of relativism are accepted.

The action begins on Thursday, June 16, 1904, the day Joyce had his first "date" with Nora Barnacle, the woman to be his partner in exile and eventually his wife for life. She reportedly "took him in hand"

on that first date. This novel is dedicated to the change in his life and soul that their relationship initiated. The search for meaning in this novel must start there. Based on my interpretation of the novel, Joyce found himself, his fundamental creative self, through his sexual love for Nora.

Joyce's Other Works and Interpretation of Ulysses

Joyce first wrote poems. One collection he named *Chamber Music*. In the time period covered by the novel, the artist character Stephen is still in the poetry stage. Joyce is not remembered for his poetry, and Joyce's critical view from maturity about his first efforts is important in understanding the presentation of Stephen in this novel.

At various times Joyce wrote articles on intellectual subjects now collected as *The Critical Writings* (CW). Some of the positions staked out in those articles return in the attitudes assumed in writing this novel.

Dubliners is a group of short pieces portraying spiritual corruption in Dublin and drawing for symbolic imagery on the Catholic Mass. That same subject and imagery appear in every other book he wrote. Next came *Stephen Hero* (SH), which Joyce eventually rewrote in tightened form as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (AP). Note the title is A Portrait not The Portrait, emphasizing possibilities rather than the one reading.

Joyce's first sustained masterwork, AP is concerned with the development of character and consciousness of one Stephen Dedalus and is largely if not wholly autobiographical. Since the same Stephen is in this novel, AP and SH provide important interpretive material for Ulysses. In AP, Stephen thinks the restrictions on his self-realization possibilities derive from Irish culture and the Catholic Church. In this novel, which continues the story of Stephen's maturation, he comes to realize the real enemy is closer to home.

In preparation for writing this novel, Joyce made notes on an episode by episode basis. The notes contain facts or ideas in highly summary form. These are referred to as Joyce's Notes and are obviously important in terms of the artist's intent.

Joyce wrote Ulysses from 1914 to 1921. During the early part of this same period, Joyce wrote an unsuccessful play *Exiles*. Its subject is

the necessity, as part of love, to allow one's mate to be unfaithful. Love, like the creation of art, must derive from the freedom to choose, not possession. This theme provides important material for the plot of this novel, which hinges on Bloom's reaction to his wife's adultery. Joyce's explanatory notes to *Exiles* are particularly helpful in this regard.

Joyce's last work, *Finnegans Wake*, is written largely in the language of dreams and without significant reference to external space/time reality. The achievements of the *Wake* include its own language and magnificent internal correspondences. The closing episodes of this novel register a gravitation pull in that direction.

Organization

This novel is organized into three parts. Part I features Stephen, part II Leopold Bloom, often referred as just Bloom, and part III Bloom together with Stephen and Bloom together with Molly.

The individual episodes are the jewels of this novel. Joyce's highest art blesses their internal organization. My explanations, organized episode by episode, are relatively longer for the early episodes since they set out tools for the entire novel. The Endnotes following each section of this guide provide details.

The "traditional schemata" provided for each episode refer to descriptions given by Joyce to Stuart Gilbert and to Carlo Linati as to his basic structuring techniques for each episode. These schemata, often tongue in cheek, give limited clues as to the meaning of the episode and serve to relate one episode to another through common structuring devices. The items in the schemata include for each episode a Greek name to indicate the parallel chapter of *The Odyssey* and a particular art, color, symbol, narrative technique and human organ.

Conceptual Structure of Episode

Each episode is based on a single concept, usually derived from Joyce's interpretation of the parallel chapter of *The Odyssey*. The unifying concept is most accessible in the opening and closing portions of each episode. Sometimes the unifying concept is encoded in the episode's first letter considered as a pictograph. In order to indicate thematic importance, all editions published while Joyce was alive magnified to full-page size the first letter of each part and capitalized the

first line of each episode.

Joyce loved to generalize, and his unifying concept for an episode is usually a highly generalized version of the point of the related Odyssey chapter. For example, Homer's Sirens sing to invite Odysseus and crew to stop at their island and retell old war stories. Joyce, in his Sirens episode, generalizes from the specifics of retelling old war stories to the concept of the sterility of living in the past as a special case of repetition without redemption.

Having established a single unifying concept for an episode, Joyce then collected into that episode as many of his own personal experiences and as many mythical, philosophical, religious or other cultural references as he could relate to the unifying concept, consistent with his notions of good taste. All of these references participate in the unifying concept. Extending in multiple dimensions and directions, Joyce's octopus-like sense of generalization is broad and powerful. The Jocotopus swings far and wide.

In some cases, Joyce incorporates references by including in the episode just some of the facts or names or incidents out of a myth. These partials I refer to as the "Connector Facts." They are designed to bring the entire myth or cultural reference into the episode.

The result of Joyce's procedure, building the episode from materials related to one concept, is that the entire episode resonates with the basic meaning and produces a kind of reverberation. Like a hologram, each part of the episode implies the unifying concept of the entire episode. In Joyce's artistic architecture, the part implies the whole. And this process is not accidental; this architecture carries the imprint of Joyce's view of ultimate reality—that the microcosm of humanity reflects the macrocosm of the gods. Life and art, fundamentally connected.

Art of the Episode

The episode is the format through which the author's aesthetic theory, presented in SH and AP, is implemented. This theory is fundamental to understanding the art of this novel. Here is the heart of the theory from those earlier works. Stephen gives Joyce's aesthetic theory using Latin terms (*integritas, consonantia and quidditas*)

borrowed from the theology of one of Joyce's gurus, the Catholic theologian-philosopher Thomas Aquinas:

The first phase of apprehension is a bounding line drawn about the object to be apprehended. An esthetic image is presented to us either in space or in time. What is audible is presented in time, what is visible is presented in space. But temporal or spatial, the esthetic image is first luminously apprehended as self-bounded and self-contained upon the immeasurable background of space or time which is not it. You apprehended it as one thing. You see it as one whole. You apprehend its wholeness. That is *integritas*.

...

Then, said Stephen, you pass from point to point, led by its formal lines; you apprehend it as balanced part against part within its limits; you feel the rhythm of its structure. In other words, the synthesis of immediate perception is followed by the analysis of apprehension. Having first felt that it is one thing you feel now that it is a thing. You apprehend it as complex, multiple, divisible, separable, made up of its parts, the result of its parts and their sum, harmonious. That is *consonantia*.

...

You see that it is that thing which it is and no other thing. The radiance of which he speaks is the scholastic *quidditas*, the whatness of a thing. This supreme quality is felt by the artist when the esthetic image is first conceived in his imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal. The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the esthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of esthetic pleasure, a

spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley's, called the enchantment of the heart.⁴

...

... This is the moment which I call epiphany. First we recognize that the object is one integral thing, then we recognize that it is an organized composite structure, a thing in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognize that it is that thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany.⁵ [first three paragraphs from AP and the last from SH]

Now this is fairly serious stuff. You don't have to plumb its depths right now, but you may want to revisit these principles of analysis as you go along episode by episode. Note the source of Joyce's aesthetics principles in theology. Aquinas used these terms in connection with a description in the Trinity of the Second Person, the Son. Aquinas used the terms "blaze of being" and "certain splendor" to describe *quidditas* or epiphany. Joyce will use these same ideas in describing the creation of art. Joyce's connection of art to theology is not accidental.

Measure each episode according to these principles. Joyce designed his episodes to be apprehended as art objects in and of themselves, not as images of space-time or emotional reality. Consider each episode as the bounded object you apprehend. The parts to be related to each other and to the whole include the subject, narrative style, symbolic subtext, texture and atmosphere produced by the narrator or narrators and the degree of realism used in the presentation. The radiance or epiphany of the overall effect is successful only if the reader manages a deep penetration of the meaning. The epiphany is usually the unifying concept for the episode.

Proper Art

In terms of Joyce's objectives, his theory of proper and improper art is instructive:

The tragic emotion [result of proper art], in fact, is a face looking two ways, towards terror and towards pity, both of which are phases of it. You see I use the word arrest. I mean that the tragic emotion is static. . . . The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I used the general term) is therefore static. The mind is [by proper art] arrested and raised above desire and loathing.⁶ [material added]

Note the emphasis on aesthetic arrest, which raises the mind "above desire and loathing." Consider preliminarily the common aspects shared by aesthetic arrest and general Buddha-like detachment, in whose gentle arms the ego-induced emotions of aggression and desire are arrested.

The emphasis on proper (static) and improper (kinetic) is in relation to art—what is proper to or the property of art. For example, advertising, which just happens to be Bloom's business, would by necessity be kinetic or pornographic under this definition since it is designed to create desire for the advertised product.

Since pity and terror are proper effects of art but their near relatives desire and loathing are not, the definitions of pity and terror are key:

Pity is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the human sufferer. Terror is the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human sufferings and unites it with the secret cause.⁷

The phrase "grave and constant" means what is "irremediable" or inherent in the human condition; and the "secret cause" refers to

inevitable death of humans, the ground of all that is grave and constant in human sufferings.⁸ These grave and constant aspects of the human condition are the mortar in Joyce's art. This is the material with which he intends to connect with the reader. This is the principal Joyce subject matter, the eternal aspects of the human condition which transcend time, culture and locale.

These academic concepts are critical to understanding the subtleties of this novel because they indicate what Joyce is trying to accomplish. Notice that pity and terror, the static emotions produced by tragedy, inherently involve a connection or unification with other humans—**uniting** with the human sufferer or **uniting** with the secret cause. As a consequence, an assumption of some sort of human unity is built into the very foundation of Joyce's theory of literary art.

This human unity is the common ground where the artist Stephen and the compassionate Bloom meet. This is also the common ground where Joyce meets his reader. The human condition, the natural human condition, is Joyce's subject, not the latest whims or hot subjects. That is why his art lives on and on through time and crosses language boundaries.

And these basic concepts of proper art translate into important lessons as to the proper method of literary composition. They suggest how to do it to get the right result. Here are the lessons as to proper composition method issued by Stephen for Joyce in AP:

Even in literature, the highest and most spiritual art, the forms are often confused. The lyrical form is in fact the simplest verbal vesture of an instant of emotion. . . . He who utters it is more conscious of the instant of emotion than of himself as feeling emotion. The simplest epical form is seen emerging out of lyrical literature when the artist prolongs and broods upon himself as the centre of an epical event and this form progresses till the centre of emotional gravity is equidistant from the artist himself and from others. The narrative is no longer purely personal. The personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing

round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea. . . .The dramatic form is reached when the vitality which has flowed and eddied round each person fills every person with such vital force that he or she assumes a proper and intangible esthetic life. The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The mystery of esthetic like that of material creation is accomplished. The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.⁹

In other words, the detached, restrained dramatic form is best. In that mode, the characters have independent existence on their own terms. The author does not possess them in order to make a personal statement for or against something; the actions of the characters are born of their own nature. The author frees his characters from the author's own subjectivism and in an impersonal process creates more possibilities. Is this beginning to sound like unconditional love? Following this line of association, the detached charity or compassion of the Buddha and Jesus would be the counterpart of the dramatic mode in art.

In the dramatic mode, the object of the writing is presented only in relation to itself. Explanatory lead-ins and background information are intentionally omitted. The author shows but doesn't show and tell. Nothing is spelled out, and the reader must participate to supply the missing pieces. Objects, characters and thoughts are presented objectively, just as they appear in real life. Characters are only in the immediate present. They may remember the past or project into the future but they do so from the present. These characteristics make the material hard to come by, but ultimately satisfying.

By contrast, the romantic lyrical mode is guided by the artist's self-indulgence and is an immature pursuit of beauty and truth. In that

mode, the end product is slave to the author's emotional subjectivism and agenda. For this reason, the end product does not have access to the unlimited possibilities that flourish only in artistic independence. In this novel, the intentional use of improper tools by Joyce is a signal to look for limitations in the characters or their behavior in that episode. The style used by Joyce serves as a metaphor for a particular mentality.

The most basic human passions propel the plot of this novel. Indeed, the summary reads much like a daily soap opera—artist Stephen struggles for freedom and human connections, compassionate Bloom is cuckolded and hot-blooded Molly has her first sex in many years. The curve of this plot of passions is shaped by Joyce's theory of proper art. During the course of this novel, the characters change in the direction of the human psychological equivalents of the dramatic literary mode that produces arrest. Life and art, art and life.

Proper Art and the Reader

So much for the artist. But what's in it for you the reader? What is this about your soul being transformed?

The detached artist produces art that can arrest the reader. This arrest is a kind of fascination that "stops the clock." The reader must be receptive and open to possibilities in order to have this kind of experience. In this fascinated state, the reader leaves his or her normal ego state, which is characterized by a sense of separation, isolation and emptiness and which is standard equipment for many materially successful persons. In fascinated arrest, this ego state collapses, at least for a moment.

Leaving the ego state, the arrested reader enters a new realm in which detachment and a special sense of individuality and unity prevail. That's right—individuality and unity. In the right dimensions, they are mutually supportive, not opposites. The sense of individuality is intense, nurtured by the companion sense of unity. This is a soul altering experience for many, an experience of greater depth of existence. Don't be put off by the fact that several previous attempts to reach this same ground have been rather tawdry. And it is no coincidence that the effect of Joyce's art is a prescription for Joyce's existential medicine for life.

Because of the power of the art, the reader unites with the

human sufferer or the secret cause, and the reader's soul is changed in proportion to the strength of the detachment.¹⁰ Here's Joseph Campbell talking about Joyce's notions of dramatic art and aesthetic arrest in Buddhist terms (the Buddha was known as the one "thus come"):

. . . And whenever anything is experienced that way, simply in and for and as itself, without reference to any concepts, relevancies, or practical relationships, such a moment of sheer aesthetic arrest throws the viewer back for an instant upon his own existence without meaning; for he too simply is—"thus come"—a vehicle of consciousness, like a spark flung out from a fire.¹¹

Read Joyce and you can feel the Buddha. And by the way, the Buddha can reach the suburbs. He is not put off by nice yards and big houses.

Art and the Gods

One of Stephen's main concerns in this novel is the relationship of the individual, particularly the artist, to the forces of the macrocosm, to the gods.¹² The artist has, Joyce believed, a particular interest in this issue because the artist must reach the eternal domain of the gods in order to produce the highest art. That which is grave and constant in the human condition necessarily involves, in this view, the issue of the relation of the cosmic forces operative in our universe to our brief individual human passage in and out of energy consciousness. Act One in this drama is the subject of the legend of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, the last time the Big Guy and the little guys were together. That legend, bathed in Joycean interpretations, is an important construct in this novel.

In the case of Joyce as reflected in Stephen, the two institutional religious controllers of this relationship of the macrocosm with the individual microcosm were (1) from his upbringing, the Roman Catholic Church and (2) from his readings in the then popular Theosophical movement and the powerful writings of Hegel and Schopenhauer, the transcendental Hindu/Buddhist traditions. The Catholic Church controller offered a brokered, indirect and guilt oriented relationship with a distant god, definitely a second-hand, second-best experience. The Hindu/Buddhist traditions promised the divine spark in everyone but emphasized passivity and caste in the face of inevitable suffering in life.

As traditionally depicted by his institutional representatives, Christ is hanging on the cross and the Buddha is in passive position, lying down.

Both of these traditions protected the faithful from suffering but at the cost of restricted possibilities. The Catholics offer protection from suffering at the cost of guilt. Joyce rejected this trade-off because guilt corrodes and reduces the spirit whereas suffering increases human possibilities. The Hindu/Buddhist tradition offered a way to avoid suffering but at the cost of passivity and caste. Joyce rejected passivity because, as he might have put the point, the Buddha lying down all the time misses most of life.

Joyce cherry-picked from both of these sources in developing a customized spiritual approach to life that made sense to him and which is expressed in this novel through Stephen and Bloom. In his quest for maximum self-realization, Stephen gravitates away from the institutional religious controllers and back to the genuine original articles, Jesus and Buddha as they lead their lives, Jesus and Buddha as humans. They are viewed as radical apostles of profound personal experience and personal illumination, proponents of growth of soul or self-realization. In addition, since Joyce found kindred concepts in Tantric Yoga, images from that tradition are used throughout the novel.

Joyce practices metaphysics in this novel and equates the divine with potential. The essence of “being” and of god is more possibilities, not just in the human realm but in nature and evolution. That which promotes more human possibilities is sacred and that which restricts human possibilities is profane. More possibilities in art and more possibilities in life. For Joyce, god is in the possibilities.

In the first episodes, Stephen struggles against the forces of restriction that limit possibilities. In the last episode, we are given a glimpse of the sacred realm of possibilities through the fluid thoughts of Molly as earthmother. With this ending, the liberating Flow of the Mothers replaces the restrictive Law of the Fathers.

Joyce’s ultimate philosophy is based on the human, the natural human not the hair shirt ascetic human. If the image of god is reflected in humans, it must be reflected in what is most natural to humans. What is most natural is most god-like. And for Joyce the most natural human

functions are the sexual instinct and the creative imagination. In his life, these functions came bearing the most energy. When liberated from self-indulgence, these functions serve as portals to expanded perception, to Joyce's gods. In their mature form, their core is impersonal, reflective of the distant Father recumbent in the void.

The Soul, The Mass and The Trinity

Elements of Ulysses are framed on the Catholic concepts of the Mass and the relation of the Father and Son in the Trinity. Joyce approaches these concepts as attempts to understand the relation of man's soul to possibilities and to the gods, not as dry speculation on the nature of the godhead. Joyce approaches the gods as the sum of all forces in the universe but, unlike the trend of current theories, treats the creation of mankind as an important event. By the way, I use the terms god and gods with and without capitalization as interchangeable terms.

The Mass is necessary, in the view of the Catholic Church, because the only possible portal for the connection of humans to god is a humiliating sense of sin, separation from and loss of god, and the corresponding constant need for renewal. The Mass, the Catholic instrument of change, is used throughout this novel as a structuring device to frame the changes in Stephen.¹³ But Joyce uses the Catholic Mass in a way to point out its failure as a passport to the universal powers. Joyce's human mass is used to elevate the real and liberating connections that he believed humans share with the universal powers, the creative imagination and the sexual instinct.

The Trinity is the Catholic Church's version of the relationship of god to humans. The Father created the universe and sent His likeness the Son into the world of time and space in the Incarnation, and together they send the Holy Spirit into human hearts. Joyce, following the lead of St. Augustine, brings the Trinity into the human soul. Indeed, Joyce will find in the different theories of the Trinity analogies for Stephen's youthful self-indulgence and more mature self-realization.

Vico Patterns

The cyclical theories of history of Giambattista Vico, an 18th Century Italian philosopher, provide important patterns for this novel. Vico viewed as inevitable four stages of history: (1) mythical age of the

gods or theocratic (2) heroic or aristocratic (3) human or secular and (4) chaotic to be followed by a ricorso, a return to the first stage. Each Vico stage has a language, character, jurisprudence and method of reasoning in tune with a basic mind set.¹⁴ In this system, language and history are parts of the same whole. In this system, you will sense the fundamentals that historical reality is cyclical and the part implies the whole.

The parts of this novel are sequenced by reference to the Vico cycle. In Part I, the first episode reflects attempts by the theocratic forces to control Stephen's soul, the second episode presents a similar attempt by mock heroes and commercial aristocracy, and the third episode is ruled by the thoughts of Stephen, his own secular productions. Part II is built on the chaotic stage and a ricorso in the movements of Bloom, the wandering Jew. He starts at home, leaves and returns. The Vico cycle repeats in an artistic dimension in the last three episodes of Part III, as the three step sequence governs the basic mindset of the narrator.

Bible Connections

The Bible, like *The Odyssey*, is an important structuring device for Ulysses. Like the Bible, this novel is written largely in the literary language of myth and metaphor,¹⁵ is an open work with several meanings,¹⁶ and presents existential wisdom with an emphasis on human concerns.¹⁷ One central myth of the Bible is deliverance, from the Exodus of the Old Testament (OT) to the redemption promised by Christ's crucifixion in the New Testament (NT).¹⁸ Likewise, in the novel both Stephen and Bloom are delivered to an increased freedom and an enlarged view of the possible dimensions of life. In addition, the progression of styles in this novel tracks the movement in the Bible from the more realistic, more historically "world" oriented OT to the more spiritual "word" oriented NT.¹⁹ This novel, like the Bible, moves from the objective to the self-referential.

Joyce uses several biblical characters in this novel, particularly the Jewish prophet Elijah. He figures prominently, both on the surface and in the coil springs of the plot. As the master of transitions, Elijah charts courses in a novel about redemptive changes.

In attempting to create a modern sacred text, Joyce co-opted the primary technique used by the NT authors and editors to bind the NT to

the OT.²⁰ This technique is known as typology (types that share traits in common). The NT was apparently constructed so that events in the NT would be viewed as “fulfilling” the events in the OT, as Christ came to “fulfill” the Jewish Law. The typological method of interpretation of scripture was developed by early Church fathers, such as Chrysostomos who shows up in Stephen’s very first thought in the novel.

In this system, as interpreted by Eric Auerbach:

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure (the two events) are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension . . . of their interdependence is a spiritual act

This type of interpretation obviously introduces an entirely new and alien element into the antique conception of history a connection is established between two events which are linked neither temporally nor causally—a connection which it is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension. . . . It can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence, which alone is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding. The horizontal, that is the temporal and causal, connection of occurrences is dissolved; the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal;²¹

Joyce uses the typological technique throughout this novel. Joyce believed that in order to have maximum power, his art must both rest in the concrete here and now and reach by symbolism to the eternal

beyond. In this emphasis, it shares fundamentals with typology. But in his use of this technique, Joyce replaces the Church fathers' vertical dimension of divine reality with his own version of the structure of divine reality. In his view, the vertical dimension of ultimate reality is self-realization because self-realization is the only human path to divine proximity. Moreover, Joyce uses the typological technique in a degrading sort of way in order to undermine the Church's "Law of the Fathers," the sense of the Law as an external source of control and personal justification.²²

This novel is also full of other concepts that share fundamental traits with Biblical typology. In reincarnation, a favorite Joyce subject, a previous soul is reborn in a new body. The experience in the new body, influenced by karma, gives new meaning to the results of the prior life. Through Joyce's abundant use of Dante and Shakespeare, their works are given new meaning in Dublin and "fulfilled" in the intensification of modern consciousness. Art in general fulfills prior experience on which the artist based the art. The soul, as expounded by Stephen, reads backward as an expression of prior experience and forward as the potential for the future. These similar concepts, like typology, do not operate on the basis of cause and effect or logic.

In the end, for Joyce the associations and connections resulting from the typological and similar processes become values in themselves. Compassion and connections. His revelations in the human realm become open-ended. As Iris Murdoch has one of her characters say, "The good feel being as a total dense mesh of tiny interconnections." Interestingly, this approach foreshadows the current model of the quantum connectedness of the entire universe.

Stephen, Bloom and Molly as Joyce

Stephen and Bloom started out in Joyce's mind as parts of himself— young and older, idealistic and practical, artistic and scientific, and centrifugal and centripetal. Then Joyce gave them artistic life in the dramatic mode and independent action in the story line. While they function as independent characters, they remain connected through the text by common experiences, dreams and thoughts. Ultimately, they connect through Molly, who represents a magnified version of Joyce's

experience with Nora.

In symbolic association, Stephen generally represents a version of Jesus and Bloom a version of Moses. Together they share a version of the Buddha and Dante, both of whom were exiled, highly individualized and giving (Dante means the “giver”). Molly represents the feminine principle in all its manifestations: temptress, mate and earthmother. These symbolic associations are not fixed and bend and merge throughout the novel.

Notice that all three main characters have had fractured family experiences. Bloom lost his father to suicide, Stephen his mother to cancer and Molly her mother to desertion. They all have what has become a very modern problem, as individual liberty has fed selfishness. Joyce’s family life was fractured by his selfish father’s spendthrift habits, drunkenness and lack of support for the individual development of his many children. During Joyce’s youth, their family fell from the garden of respectability and inherited financial independence to the hardship of poverty. Joyce’s mother died of cancer (on August 13, 1903) when Joyce was 21, basically worn out from child bearing and family stress. As the novel opens, Stephen is still, ten months and three days later on June 16, 1904, in mourning over her death and feeling guilty as a result of refusing her deathbed call for submission to her Catholic faith.

Attitude

This Book is full of playfulness and humor, some of it quite juvenile. And as for the basic purpose of it all, comedy and joy are the summit of art:

For desire urges us from rest that we may possess something, but joy holds us in rest so long as we possess something. . . . All art which excites in us the feeling of joy is so far comic and according as this feeling of joy is excited by whatever is substantial or accidental in human fortunes the art is to be judged more or less excellent: and even tragic art may be said to participate in the nature of comic art so far as the possession of a work of tragic art (a tragedy) excites in us the feelings of joy.²³

Joy produced by arrest—that's the right stuff.
Read on and find the Joy in Joyce.

ENDNOTES

1. Campbell, J. *Mythic Worlds, Modern Words* (New York: Harper Collins, 1933) p. 272.
2. For help with unfamiliar places and names, Gifford, D. *Ulysses Annotated* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) is excellent, but it is not needed for a basic understanding of the novel.
3. The divisions of Homer are actually called Books, but I use the term chapter to avoid confusion.
4. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Viking Press, 1956) pp. 212-213. This work is hereinafter referred to as AP.
5. *Stephen Hero* (New York: New Directions, 1944) p. 213. Thomas Aquinas used these three Latin terms to describe the Second Person in the Trinity; Joyce, for reasons which will become clear, found that source most appropriate for a description of apprehending art. Watch for the images of the Son and artist to be joined.
6. AP, p. 205.
7. AP, p. 204.
8. Joyce, J. *The Critical Writings* edit. by E. Mason and R. Ellmann (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959) p. 144. This work is hereinafter referred to as CW.
9. AP, pp. 214-215.
10. Frye, N. *Words with Power Being a Second Study of The Bible and Literature* (San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990) p. 71. This work is hereinafter referred to as Frye II.
11. *Myths to Live By* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972) p. 137.
12. In the interests of even-handedness, I will not capitalize references to deities unless required by the context.
13. For all the detailed information concerning the Mass, see Lang, F. *Ulysses and the Irish God* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press,

- 1993).
14. Klein, M. *A Shout in the Street* (New Directions) pp. 327-345.
 15. Frye II, p. 99.
 16. Frye, N. *The Great Code The Bible and Literature* (San Diego, Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1990) p. 65. This Book is hereinafter referred to as Frye I.
 17. Frye I, p. 67.
 18. Frye I, p. 50.
 19. Restuccia, F. *Joyce and the Law of the Father* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) p. 53.
 20. For the material in this and next paragraph, see Restuccia p. 20 et. seq.
 21. Auerbach, E. *Mimesis The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953) p. 73.
 22. Restuccia, p. 20 et. seq.
 23. Paris Notebook as quoted in Kenner, H. *Dublin's Joyce* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956) p. 156.

Part I – Summary

Part I introduces Stephen Dedalus, a young and self-absorbed artist with a fragmented soul and primed for a change. This is the same Stephen from AP and generally representative of the young Joyce. This initial focus on Stephen and his narcissism prepares for a marked contrast with our unlikely but compassionate and integrated hero, Leopold Bloom, who is generally representative of the older Joyce. The zone between the younger and the more mature Joyce, the zone of change, is the terrain of this novel.

The three episodes of Part I are related to the first chapters of The Odyssey that focus on Telemachus, the young son of Odysseus. The narrative in Joyce's first three episodes proceeds chronologically through the morning. Part II will revert to the same hours covered by Part I. By