

Joyce's ULYSSES Can Come To Life

By R. T. Smith

(Ed. note: I have tried to construct a valid and interesting guide for the reader who is assaulting James Joyce's ULYSSES for the first time. I have tried to make this guide articulate and broad enough to avoid criticism from the pillars of academia, yet, lucid, palatable, and brief enough to satisfy the tastes of the novitiate. Let me preface this series by saying that this capsule guide to ULYSSES is only one man's view. I am not, by any means, trying to pass it off as THE correct way to view the book. Of the many vantage points from which ULYSSES can be studied, this one seems to be a simple enough plan of attack for the beginner, although it still leaves many unexplained paradoxes and unsolved puzzles that await further explication. I use the word "beginner" here rather than "casual" because if one must read casually, then he should avoid Joyce's works. It took Joyce seven years to construct the labyrinthine microcosm contained in ULYSSES; he did not expect that it would be read in three or four nights and then returned to the library.

With this framework as a stepping-off place, the reader can discover new keys, new ciphers, new answers....)

ULYSSES is a story of men and of man. The plot-line is simple: On June 16th, 1904, a young poet and intellectual named Stephen Dedalus leaves his residence and heads for Dublin. His day is occupied by drinking, bantering, and intellectual debate, spiced with witticisms and profundities. Leopold Bloom, whose wife Molly is an adultress, spends the day running errands for Molly, trying to solicit advertisements for a Dublin newspaper, and enjoying his sexual fantasies. Stephen, half-drunk, and Bloom, the humanitarian well-wisher, meet at a maternity hospital late in the evening. Stephen and a friend depart for the red-light district of Dublin, followed by Bloom, who is worried about the drunken bard. In Nighttown, the two meet again in a brothel. Bloom saves Stephen from being cheated, assaulted, and arrested. Bloom takes Stephen home with him and a friendship begins. Stephen departs soon, leaving Bloom to go to bed, where Molly awaits her husband. She asks Leopold about his day; he lies to her about much of it; he sleeps; she soliloquizes about life, sex, and her relationship to Leopold as she drifts off to sleep.

In the eight-hundred pages of the Vintage edition of ULYSSES there is much more to the travels of Bloom and Stephen, and as many themes as you care to enumerate. These can best be discovered by examining the book a chapter at a time. First, a little

Gargantuan Classic Can Be Translated

information about Stephen Dedalus (who is created and developed in Joyce's A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN) and a little information concerning the correspondence between ULYSSES and Homer's ODYSSEY will be in order.

Each episode of ULYSSES corresponds (with one exception) with an episode in Homer's epic of travel and return. The first part consists of three episodes dealing with Telemachus, the son of Odysseus (or, in the Latin, Ulysses). Telemachus searches for his lost father and then helps him to kill Penelope's suitors. Stephen Dedalus is Telemachus. The second part of ULYSSES corresponds to the "Odyssey" proper. Odysseus encounters many hazards and delays in his voyage back to Ithaca. He overcomes all of the dangers of the trip and, with the aid of Telemachus, destroys the usurpers who are paying suit to his wife Penelope. This final part is entitled the "Nostos." Odysseus is played by Leopold Bloom, and unfaithful Molly is seen in the role of the faithful Penelope. The

book is full of Greek references far too numerous to catalogue, which serve as reminders of the Odyssey correspondence. There are other myths of classical origin in Joyce's microcosm - the myth of Daedalus and the Cretan labyrinth, taken from the fifth book of Ovid's METAMORPHOSIS; the myth of Satan's NON SERVIAM vow and his expulsion from heaven, from Milton; the wandering Jew (Bloom was born a Jew); and the mythical archetype of the hero-god, which Steven fulfills.

Stephen Dedalus was educated in Jesuit schools. He was a scholarly aestheticist who had not yet written anything of any real value. He considered himself an exile from his home, his country (he held Irish art in the highest contempt) and the Catholic Church (whose dogma and ritual both fascinated and repulsed him). His rejection of the Church was so strong that he refused to honor his mother's dying request to kneel in prayer by her deathbed. His conscience never escaped the guilt brought about by this action. Recently returned from Paris, (Saint) Stephen

D(a)edalus lives in a round tower with a blasphemous medical student named Mulligan. He will not live with his father and sisters, who live in Dublin, because he dislikes his father intensely. It is important to remember that Joyce identified with Stephen almost completely. The characters in ULYSSES are all modeled on characters in Joyce's own life. The reader must decide for himself whether Stephen or Bloom is the real "hero" of the book.

The episode entitled "Telemachus" focuses on several themes. It begins with a Catholic introit and a cross (razor over mirror), and is permeated throughout with religious symbols and references. Theology is the primary theme of the episode; both pagan and Christian theology are treated in a rather ironic juxtaposition. Malachi (Buck) Mulligan constantly alludes to Stephen's Jesuit education and Greek name. Mulligan, who is St. John, Mercury, and Antinous (Penelope's chief suitor) is the first of a series of characters who have more than one symbolic reference. He leads a eucharistic breakfast, sings the blasphemous

Gregorian "Ballad of Joking Jesus", Baptises himself, and continually mocks the quieter Stephen throughout the episode. Another important theme is that of usurpation; Stephen is the heir (of Odysseus and of Irish art) who has lost his inheritance to Antinous and England (played by Haines, a visiting Englishman whose nightmares drive Stephen from his own tower). Stephen's dead mother is symbolic of the Christian concept of God, and Stephen's regret at not praying at her bedside ("agenbite of inwit") may be interpreted as regret for his self-imposed exile from the church. Although Stephen equates God with a noise in the street, He must be an extremely loud noise, because Stephen's thoughts often center around theology. Stephen would not pray for his dying mother, yet he will not wear any color but the black of mourning - one of many paradoxes in his character. Since a primary symbol is the heir, all of the characters of this episode are young. All but one. The old milk woman who brings her wares to the tower in Ireland personified - she must leave without collecting her fee; she is subservient to Haines; and the milk she sells is not her own, but a cow's.

The identification of Stephen with Hamlet is introduced along with the theme of "the Son striving to be atoned with the Father." Stephen, by the end of this episode, can already be seen as an exile (Mulligan keeps the key to the tower, although Stephen pays the rent), a sharp blade (Buck's name for Stephen, "Kinch", is the onomatopoeic representation of the cutting sound of a knife), and a prophet (the tower is referred to as "Omphalos", the navel of the world - Delphi, origin of the Apollonian oracle and alleged center of the earth). He departs for his teaching job with a promise to meet Mulligan and Haines at The Ship, a tavern, at 11:30 p.m.

The technique of this episode is narrative, but it is spiced with bits of dialogue that make it one of the easiest episodes in the book to understand. The reader must try to keep in mind all of the themes and subtle references mentioned in this episode, because they will all reappear later in some form or another.

Feedback

Mizell "Refutes" Charges

Dear Editor,

Yes, Mr. Editor, the Student Government is alive and well in Union B-6, but I am surprised that you are aware of this fact since you have not attended a legislature meeting this year. I do recall your attending one meeting last Spring from which you promptly departed after apologizing for the farce called EMFC which appeared in the newspaper after you took over as editor. However, your face has not shown up once since then. Yet you can sit and write an editorial stating that the "blind are trying to cover the eyes of their fellow members." Upon what second hand source do you base this information, and why should you accept it without first investigating it personally? What have you or any of the students at UNC-C got to lose by attending the legislature meetings? Nothing! Yes there are many possibilities to be gained from this. Ever legislature meeting is an OPEN meeting where visitors are more than welcome. However, no matter how much this fact is publicized, neither the students nor any of the faculty will take the time to attend. The legislature has had only two visitors this year. Miss Alice Folger and Mr. Ben Chavis attended a meeting at which Mr. Chavis addressed the meeting with a list of grievances. He was not being granted a privilege to be allowed to speak before the legislature, because ANY student attending UNC-C may do so. And most importantly, any student may ask a legislature member to introduce an idea for him in the form of a formal motion.

Yet it seems that the students here are content to sit back and

let the legislature members play mindreaders, trying to second-guess what useful ideas may be lurking in the heads of the students.

But, Mr. Editor, you will reply that it is the duty of each legislature member to seek out the students and ask them for suggestions. On many occasions I have done this and invariably they can never think of anything concrete. This is such a tremendous help in finding out what the students want. Also, each time I suggest to some people that they attend a legislature meeting, the replies range from "I don't have the time" to "I'm not interested in that legislature stuff." These replies come from the so-called "active" students on campus as well as from the ones who come only long enough to attend classes. These people are difficult to help!

Having read last week's editorial several times, I have some questions to ask. Why doesn't the Student Legislature have any business allocating student activity fees? May I ask whose consensus it is that we did a poor job? Could this perhaps be R. T. Smith's own group of friends? Personally, I feel the legislature did as good a job as any other group could have done. Also, how can you make such rash statements as "The legislature indignantly (and obnoxiously) refused to accept Mr. Billups'

recommendation? Since I was on the committee which discussed this matter, I happen to know that the memorandum was viewed from several different angles before a recommendation to refuse it was made. The committee felt it had a better solution to suggest. Also, I don't recall anyone being "indignant", and certainly no one was obnoxious.

Of course I realize that you, Mr. Editor, rely on words and phrases such as these in order to add sensation to your editorials. This has been done by you before and I must admit that you had me believing one of your "sensational" editorials this year until I found out the true facts behind the situation. I believe you mentioned the blind trying to cover the eyes of others. This phrase would seem to be the number one description of your own actions.

Actually, no one should be surprised by the editorial which appeared last week. The newspaper has been criticized several times this year for not attacking the legislature and other organizations as has been done in

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