# Joyce and Chaucer: The Historical Significance Of Similarities Between *Ulysses* and the *Canterbury Tales*

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Joyce and Chaucer

**Abstract**

This comparison of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales argues that correspondences between the works depend on writers with similar approaches reacting in like ways to similar historical circumstances. As direct influence of Chaucer on Joyce is unlikely, the startling similarities in structure (interlaced), tone (ironic), characters (the Blooms, Chaucer the pilgrim and the Wife), theme (journey), and shifts from beginning to end of the works must be accounted for in other ways. I therefore suggest that the eras in which both lived were in important ways alike, and that the writers shared certain temperamental characteristics as well as philosophical outlooks which inclined them to a significantly naturalistic portrayal of their times. Their attempts at such portrayal result in the complex worlds of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales, giving us works whose form and content not only demonstrate literary, fictional likeness but provide evidence for actual, historical similarity.

**Résumé**

La comparaison présente d'Ulysses et des Canterbury Tales soutient que les correspondances entre ces deux oeuvres dépendent d'une réaction pareille envers des circonstances historiques semblables de la part d'écrivains ayant une approche semblable. Comme une influence directe de Chaucer sur Joyce n'est pas probable, les ressemblances surprenantes de structure (entrelacée), ton (ironique), personnages (les Bloom, Chaucer le pèlerin et la Femme), thème (le voyage), et les décalages du début à la fin de ces oeuvres restent à être expliqués autrement. Par consé-

quent, je suggère que les époques où vivaient ces deux écrivains se ressemblaient d'une façon importante, et que les auteurs partageaient certains traits caractéristiques de tempérament aussi bien qu'un point de vue philosophique qui les disposaient à dépeindre d'une manière naturaliste (qui est significative) leurs époques respectives. Ces deux tentatives de représentation mènent aux mondes complexes d'Ulysses et des Canterbury Tales, et nous donnent des oeuvres dont la forme et le contenu se ressemblent non seulement au niveau littéraire et fictif, mais qui manifestent une similitude réelle et historique.

Für Mama und Papa,
and for Chris

## Table of Contents

# I. Introduction

This thesis will argue that there are significant similarities between Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales, and that the correspondences are not dependent on direct influence, but instead derive from writers with similar approaches reacting in like ways to similar historical circumstances.

First, however, it might be wise to review Joyce's direct contact with Chaucer, for though it does not give evidence of influence, it does point out that Joyce had a special regard for Chaucer, and particularly for the Canterbury Tales. In his schooldays Joyce wrote an essay entitled "Outlines of English Literature from Chaucer to Milton, both inclusive";[1] at age thirty he was examined on "The Good Parson of Chaucer" in order to gain a teaching position;[2] in later life he wrote Finnegans Wake, which contains several allusions to Chaucer and the Canterbury Tales. As he was writing Ulysses (ca. 1919), Joyce sat his friend Frank Budgen down one day and read to him the entire "Prologue" to the Canterbury Tales, "stopping often to repeat the lines and retaste the elegant humour of each one." Budgen remembers Joyce saying, "Of all English writers Chaucer is the clearest. He is as precise and slick as a Frenchman."[3]

Joyce bought two scholarly editions of Chaucer's Complete Works, one in Zürich and one in Paris, and he also possessed several anthologies with excerpts from Chaucer's poetry.[4] One of these contains the "General Prologue" to which Joyce pencilled in line numbers periodically; we can only guess what Joyce's motivation for this may have been. Perhaps it was to facilitate reference, perhaps it would have helped him memorize the lines. In any case, Joyce devoted considerable attention to Chaucer and particularly to the "General Prologue" of the

Canterbury Tales.

Joyce also spent the years from 1932 to 1936 attempting to publish his daughter's edition of A Chaucer A.B.C. Lucia Joyce decorated Chaucer's short poem--a translation of a prayer to the Virgin from Guillaume de Deguilleville's Pèlerinage de la vie humaine--with lettrines, illuminated capitals which began each stanza. In his preface to A Chaucer A.B.C., Louis Gillet, a member of the Academie Française, wrote:

> Joyce has always had an unbounded admiration for Chaucer. I have heard him say that the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, that gallery of portraits in which all the characters of Old England are reviewed, seems to him a miracle of artistry, a picture of unsurpassable movement and life. This wonderful work is probably one of the sources of inspiration of Dubliners and of more than one chapter of Ulysses. Perhaps the beautiful Marion Bloom herself is a descendant of that laughing, lively and buxom Wife of Bath.[6]

Joyce, calling Gillet's introduction "a fine preface,"[7] encouraged his friends to read it, obviously approving of Gillet's supposition. We therefore have reason enough to look more closely at the relation between Joyce's and Chaucer's works.

Joyce was eager to publish Lucia's illuminated alphabet as an antidote for her worsening mental condition. Who first hit upon the idea of using the lettrines on Chaucer's alphabet-poem is unclear; Gillet says he suggested it, while Joyce's letters imply the impulse was his own. Nonetheless, those letters suggest that the project was a great drain on Joyce's energies. Time after time Joyce cursed his difficulties in finding a publisher, and ultimately he decided that anyone who failed to subscribe for a copy of the special edition would no longer be a friend of his.[8] Perhaps it was this sense of desperation which led Joyce to publish a poem so antithetical to his own attitudes on religion. Chaucer's pious prayer to the Virgin does, however, recall a reverence Joyce had felt for the Madonna in his childhood, and per-

haps the memory of this gave him some comfort. Further, he may have sensed being part of a tradition which Louis Gillet describes in the preface to Lucia's book, beginning with Guillaume's Pèlerinage de la vie humaine, moving through Chaucer and Lydgate to Bunyan.

In his works, particularly Finnegans Wake, Joyce alludes to Chaucer several times, but the allusions seem gratuitous. Like many other writers, Chaucer seems to be inserted as a way of allowing Joyce to overtake him, to include him as just another literary presence subservient to the Joycean opus. For instance, in "The Hen" segment of Finnegans Wake (also known as "The Manifesto of ALP"), Joyce refers to Chaucer's Pertelote from the "Nun's Priest's Tale." There, the hen Pertelote represents the pragmatic stance toward life, scoffing at the bookish tendencies of her mate. And in Joyce's work, the hen displays a similar attitude toward texts when, pecking about she finds the letter on a dung heap. This epistolary fragment is discussed in the language of Edward Sullivan's commentary on the Book of Kells, with the implication, as O.K. Werckmeister argues, that the manuscript of Finnegans Wake, like the Book of Kells, is a colorful and convoluted affair likely in future to be buried in and recovered from a heap--as was the Book of Kells--by some being unlikely to appreciate its true significance.[9] Joyce takes pleasure in making all of literary tradition, even that of the medieval manuscripts, work for him, Chaucer no less than the Book of Kells.

There are many similarities between Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales; however, these do not occur because Joyce was particularly fascinated with Chaucer, but because Joyce's and Chaucer's methods, temperaments, and historical circumstances elicited a similar literature from them. Such a conclusion may be unusual but it is not unique; it

is a way of explaining a correspondence which seems "mysterious" as Eugene Vinaver writes, but not coincidental. Speaking about the significance of the forms works of art take, he says that some forms:

> . . .cut across the most sharply defined historical and national boundaries, affirming the existence of creative processes mysteriously linked together regardless of their sequence in time or their distance from one another in space. The statue of Adam at Saint-Denis and those of the saints at Notre-Dame recall some of the shining examples of the art of Praxiteles, as if across the gulf of centuries the sun of Greece had touched the cathedrals of France. Literature offers striking parallels to such correspondences.[10]

Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales demonstrate such a correspondence.

Both Joyce and Chaucer create interlaced structures, held up by temporal and spatial posts, which give the world of their stories a complex, labyrinthine sense. Furthermore, the writers complicate the tone of their works with "jocoserious" irony. Many characters populate the works, with similarities quite prominent between Molly Bloom and the Wife of Bath, and the central figures, Leopold Bloom and Chaucer the pilgrim. The underlying motif of both works is the pilgrimage, and yet both works depict blatantly secular journeys. Finally, both Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales were first published serially, with reactions to the works arriving before completion of the whole. Such a consideration highlights the great differences in style, structure, and tone between the early and late sections of the books. It also prompts a closer look at the writers' personal circumstances and the times in which they lived as a way of accounting for the change. The significant similarities between Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales stem from attempts at a predominantly naturalistic representation of the worlds surrounding the authors, worlds in transition from one way of life to another

and from one view of reality to another. Hence, the similarities of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales correspond to historical reality: both books are products of transitional periods with similar achievements and failures. Through formal analysis of literature, then, we can recognize affinities in certain works which reflect not only similar aesthetic values on the part of the writers, but also historical similarities which can be confirmed by historical research unrelated to the works themselves. I am in full agreement with Charles Muscatine who writes:

> Our obligation is to history itself; our problem is: How can we make literary research and literary understanding contribute to the full, rich, complicated whole that is the history of our culture?[11]

This thesis is one attempt to answer that question.

## II. Form

Outer versus Inner Form

A reader perceives chapter beginnings and endings because they are numbered or identified by large blank spaces or they have a row of asterisks to mark their presence. Such physical indicators section off, in the reader's mind, what happens in the plot. Let us call this the outer form. There exists as well an inner form. Within those physical separations and in spite of them there are personalities and ideas and images which recur and create a pattern in the mind of the reader. Because they recur they bind together the work in opposition to the outer form, which pulls sections apart from each other. The outer form is only important as a reader reads the work; it is a kind of stage direction. It can give an indication that time has passed from the end of one chapter to the beginning of the next, it can clarify the fact that new characters will populate the next chapter, and so forth. But once the work has been read, the reader doesn't care about the outer form, should he or she even be able to remember it; what stays in the reader's mind, with most narratives, is the plot, the characters, and the substance of the work surrounding those characters.

Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales are unusual in that the action of the whole work is less important than the separate features of each section. The Canterbury pilgrimage becomes background while the individual pilgrims and their tales move to the front. In Ulysses, movement is subordinated to characters' thoughts and to language itself. Even the punch from Private Carr is less significant than Stephen's reaction, when he thinks again of the Yeats lyric, "Who goes with Fergus?" Therefore, as with most works it is the inner form that remains with us;

and yet, this inner form exists differently in Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales than in other works.

## Method

The inner form of these works is a direct consequence of the ways the works were put together. We have no record of Chaucer's working habits, but medieval handbooks on the art of poetry and Chaucer's poems themselves make clear that writing was a process of accumulation. Geoffrey of Vinsauf's Poetria Nova, for example, has long sections on amplificatio and abbreviatio;[12] what counted was not telling a new story but amplifying and abbreviating an old one. Thus Chaucer could take Boccaccio's Filostrato and reformulate it, changing characters, making them more or less important, emphasizing the narrator's role with marvelous rhetorical flourishes, inserting translations from Boethius, bringing myths and other stories in as examples, giving astrological and scientific information, multiplying proverbs, and so forth. Part of Chaucer's genius is in his ability to balance these disparate elements and to make them contribute significantly to the story. In the end, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde is not just a plagiarized Filostrato.

Joyce's working method was "medieval." He says that his Jesuit education taught him to gather material, organize, and present it;[13] Ulysses gives us a marvelous example of this process. As with the Canterbury Tales there is an initial plan,[14] which we may discern in Joyce's "schema." This outline is perhaps less important to us in interpreting meaning in the work than it is in showing us how Joyce

patched his book together. Joyce wrote himself short notes of a word or two on scraps of paper, which he then collected in large envelopes. They were separated according to the episodes for which they were destined, and presumably this was done on the basis of a working "schema." Joyce would then consolidate these notes by copying them onto larger notesheets, and, in composition, as he used up the ideas contained in these short phrases, he would cross them out in colored pencil. Furthermore, Joyce added new material to the work at every stage of the composition and publishing process. There are jottings all over the typescripts, galley proofs, and page proofs.

Robert Jordan's definition of medieval art as "an art of superimpositions, adjustments, accomodations,"[15] fits Joyce's technique very well, and the medieval notion of the poem "as an edifice composed of prefabricated parts"[16] is equally apt. The writer had various bits of astrological or medical information, myths, Bible stories, songs, observations from experience, or proverbs at hand, and inserted them where appropriate.

Our perception of the inner form of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales is based to a great extent on this accumulative method of composition. The artist, by working with ready building blocks, will naturally use those which fit the need best at any particular moment. Or we can think of the prefabricated elements as colors on a palette, because this allows us to understand not only how the artist chooses the appropriate color for the appropriate place, but also how the artist returns to his favorite colors--or in this case ideas--again and again. We perceive the unit-by-unit construction of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales because of the "inorganic"[17] juxtaposition of elements, the

strange incongruities between one unit and the next; and yet, we perceive continuity in the long run because of the repeated parts, the favorite ideas, images, or phrases which return again and again.

The striking similarity between the inner forms of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales is based on this repetition of ideas and images. Chaucer and Joyce each had a "palette of concerns," as I will call it, with which he highlighted the existing skeleton-outline and the story being drawn in. Whenever the story would allow, the artist would dab in an appropriate idea from the palette of concerns.

## Chaucer's Concerns

Chaucer's potential palette for the Canterbury Tales can best be reconstructed from the two prose works, the "Tale of Melibee" and the "Parson's Tale." Between those two tracts we have most of the issues addressed with which late medievals grappled. The two represent accepted viewpoints, and the "Melibee," we know, is a close translation of the French "Livre de Melibée et de Dame Prudence" of Renaud de Louens.[18] The source of the "Parson's Tale" is unknown, but it was surely a sermon or theological treatise or a combination of those on Penitence and the Seven Deadly Sins. The one work is concerned with civil behavior while the other looks at the religious side of life, so that together they give a good idea of the significant concerns of Chaucer's time. Of these, Chaucer had a few to which he returns many times throughout the Canterbury Tales; they must have been especially important, instructive, or desired by his audience. These make up his personal "palette of concerns"; the following list is by no means exhaustive. (It includes

ideas which were already present in Chaucer's source stories. I have not made distinctions between concerns expressed in the sources and those we believe to have been original with Chaucer, on the assumption that Chaucer chose the stories in the first place because they expressed notions important to him, and rewrote those stories with emphasis on such ideas.) These are the concerns I find most frequently and emphatically expressed in the Canterbury Tales, regardless of the teller expressing them:

Fortune's mutability, chance
Destiny
Correct behavior for a king or leader
Authority, wisdom of elders, need for counsel and advice
Experience
Men and women, marriage, maistrie
True nobility, gentillesse not inheritable
Anger, revenge
One good turn begets another
Rhetoric, storytelling, language, words versus meaning
False appearances
Truth can be found in everything
Order, law

Though the Canterbury Tales are told by different pilgrims with various opinions on these topics, the dialogue is limited , and the really disgusting pilgrims betray their reprehensibility. The good and noble pilgrims likewise betray their ideality. The interesting balance is in the middle group, where the pilgrims have some vices but are nonetheless good people, one feels; they strike a balance between the difficult demands of the Christian or chivalric ideal and giving in totally to sin. Characters like the Wife of Bath, the Man of Law, and the Nun's Priest fall into this group. The Wife is perhaps lustier than she should be, the Man of Law "semed bisier than he was," and the Nun's Priest cuts rather a rounder figure than he ought. Nonetheless, they all comply with the rules of the tale-telling game and contribute

good "sentence." They are also the ones who raise more complex issues. The Wife's stand on "maistrie" must surely have been debated in Chaucer's time as it is on the pilgrimage; hers is a view challenging the orthodox opinion that a woman was subject to her husband. The "Man of Law's Tale" raises the question of storytelling, both in the Prologue and at the end of the tale with remarks thought to be made about John Gower, Chaucer's fellow poet. One need not know, however, that Gower was the object of these comments--and members of Chaucer's audience are not all likely to have known--to see what they suggest about the freedom and power of the author. In the prologue the Man of Law says that Chaucer the poet doesn't write of incest, "Of swiche unkynde abhomynacions," and he will not tell of them, either. A storyteller has a freedom and moral responsibility connected with the choice of tale he makes. Furthermore, in lines 1009ff. and 1086ff., we see the storyteller's freedom to make a tale more to his liking.

> Som men wolde seyn how that the child Maurice
> Dooth this message unto this Emperour;
> But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
> To hym that was of so sovereyn honour
> As he that is of Cristen folk the flour,
> Sente any child, but it is bet to deeme
> He wente hymself, and so it may wel seeme. (II 1086-92)

In the grand design of a story there are movable and alterable parts with which the teller may play; it is a particularly fitting notion in a tale emphasizing God's grand design and the vicissitudes of Fortune. Chaucer was well aware of his creative power--witness the list of his works in the prologue of the tale--and the analogy of author and Author of the Universe would not have escaped him. The controversy over experience and authority also raises questions which might not have appealed to orthodox opinion, and the "Nun's Priest's Tale," with its anti-intel-

lectual thrust, adopts the attitude that we "would do better to keep our eyes open and our mouths shut,"[19] an emphasis on the experiential which appears more and more in Chaucer's later poetry. Thus the middle group, middle class, infuses the book with a certain positive life by arbitrating between the viceless and the churlish factions. Derek Brewer calls these the "official" and the "unofficial cultures," and says that the ways they are treated "are so extraordinarily frequent in Chaucer, by contrast with his contemporaries, as to be a principal defining quality of his work."[20]

Many critics have noted the tensions in Chaucer's writing, between the old and the new, the ideal and the real, the official and the unofficial. And on the list I have given of Chaucer's concerns, it is clear that there are opposing ideas among them: Destiny versus Chance, Authority versus Experience, Charity versus Anger, Substance versus Surface. Were it not for the mediating factors in the Canterbury Tales, like the attitudes of the Wife and Chaucer the pilgrim, the oppositions would clash without any hope of resolution. As it is, they are not resolved, but the middle group of pilgrims and tales suggests ways of defusing the antagonistic atmosphere.

## Joyce's Concerns

Joyce's palette of concerns[21] similarly contains many oppositions which defy resolution:

Past and present, history, transformation wrought by time
Death
Memory
Fluidity of being
Epistemology, perception

Sex
Coincidence
Destiny, fate
Rhetoric, storytelling, literature, language
Costume, appearances
Love
Fatherhood
Utopia

With Joyce it is difficult to define where a mere observation or detail ends and a real issue begins. Since there are so many associations to be made, different readers will naturally emphasize different ones. I do not wish to give a survey of all themes, however, but instead intend only to describe how these ideas are organized into a pattern as we read the book. The best way to imagine this pattern, which emerges in both Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales, is to think of the interlace, a complex, ribbon-like design characteristic of much medieval manuscript illumination.

## The Interlace

In fact, Donald Howard has argued that the best model for the structure of the Canterbury Tales is the interlace, because it demonstrates how the units of the work are put together:

> In literature interlaced structure was a way of interrupting a story line with another story line, of entangling many characters and many plots after the manner (in our time) of certain comic strips and soap operas. And the distinguishing feature of such a structure is the interruption or "juncture," the point at which a story line must be held in memory until its later continuation. The interlace as a visual design is only a convenient counterpart to this structure, a way of seeing it diagrammatically. . . .In such a visual design the continuous strand passes over or under itself, and at these points we lose sight of the strand--must imagine it continuing beneath the strand which crosses it.[22]

Howard gives a thorough and convincing analysis of the relationship of tale to tale, emphasizing the interlaced "story line."[23] The themes

I have listed from the Canterbury Tales are those Howard says make up "metastructures,"[24] the larger issues which give the Canterbury Tales a shape in the reader's mind. And I believe these can be explained in terms of the interlace as well. After all, any "story line" is carrying thematic significance with it, and the great works of literature --at least for critics--are the ones whose plots and subplots carry a complex nexus of thematic import. A few of these works manage to create a whole and believable world, and to me, the Canterbury Tales and Ulysses do so in similar ways. Not every important, world-describing book has this feature. As I will argue, Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales are similar and set apart from the rest in the way their introductions and conclusions hold up the elaborate interlace.

The interlace is not only appropriate for describing Chaucer's work, it can--with Joyce's encouragement--be used in discussing Ulysses as well. For Joyce himself remarked on the Book of Kells, whose interlaced designs are perhaps the most famous of all medieval manuscript illuminations:

> "It is the most purely Irish thing we have, and some of the big initial letters which swing right across a page have the essential quality of a chapter of 'Ulysses.' Indeed you can compare much of my work to the intricate illuminations."[25]

If we take the palettes of concerns I have described, and consider those ideas alongside a reproduction of, say, the famous "Chi Rho Page" from the Book of Kells, I believe my point will become clear. Look at the section where the two lines of the letter Chi cross, forming a diamond. Just as the story line swerves around like the ribbon of the interlaced pattern, so, too, does it happen with the themes. Each work is a journey which follows a road, but just when one has become accustomed

to one point of view or one issue, another one has crossed the path, demanding consideration. Yet the interlace is all made up of one strand, showing that "everything leads to everything else."[26] If a new theme crosses our path on the journey through the book, we are certain to come to that stretch ourselves. Though themes may be set in opposition, crossing each other, they are all ultimately on the same path. By making life their subject, by structuring their works on the classic motif of the pilgrimage, and by piecing their works together through similar techniques, Joyce and Chaucer give us two works whose inner forms are remarkably similar. When we reach that crossing from before, we remember it, but we are now coming to it from a different direction. We have a new perspective on it, often coinciding with a new pilgrim teller or style.

Hence we see the importance of memory for this form. The significance of an idea will not be driven home to us unless we are aware of its recurrence. As Leopold Bloom remarks: ". . .pray for us. Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us."[27] Medievals, with their predominantly oral culture, held a good memory a dear thing indeed, and rhetorical handbooks always had a section on Memory. Joyce, too, considered memory important. His own memory was excellent; he could recite long passages of prose, song lyrics, Bible passages, and poetry by heart. Hence it is not surprising we should see memery as an important aspect of his work's form. When we have finished the work, we remember the nexus of ideas it presented; we can see the interlaced pattern whole. Joyce calls this the"retrospective arrangement." When we do this, we have mastered the most difficult part of Ulysses. For

we have come to know a character by identifying the notions most on his or her mind, or we have bound different characters together despite their geographical, temporal, or temperamental distances from one another. Joyce demonstrates how the "retrospective arrangement" works in the "Ithaca" episode:

> Had Bloom discussed similar subjects during nocturnal perambulations in the past?
> In 1884 with Owen Goldberg and Cecil Turnbull at night on public thoroughfares between Longwood avenue and Leonard's corner and Leonard's corner and Synge street and Synge street and Bloomfield avenue. In 1885 with Percy Apjohn in the evenings, reclined against the wall between Gibralter villa and Bloomfield house in Crumlin, barony of Uppercross. In 1886 occasionally with casual acquaintances and prospective purchasers on doorsteps, in front parlours, in third class railway carriages of suburban lines. In 1888 frequently. . . .
>
> Of what similar apparitions did Stephen think?
> Of others elsewhere in other times who, kneeling on one knee or on two, had kindled fires for him, of Brother Michael in the infirmary of the college of the Society of Jesus at Clongowes Wood, Sallins, in the county of Kildare: of his father, Simon Dedalus, in an unfurnished room of his first residence in Dublin, number thirteen Fitzgibbon street: of his godmother Miss Kate Morkan in the house of her dying sister Miss Julia Morkan at 15 Usher's Island: of his aunt Sara, wife of Richie (Richard) Goulding, in the kitchen of their lodgings at 62 Clanbrassil street: of his mother Mary, wife of Simon Dedalus, in the kitchen of number twelve North Richmond street on the morning of the feast of Saint Francis Xavier 1898: of the dean of studies, Father Butt, in the physics' theatre. . . .
> (U 1457-8, 1465)

The "retrospective arrangement" occurs in our memory at once, and so a structural model taken from pictorial art--like the interlace--is the most fitting. It is also worth noting that each incident from the past is also related to a place; later, I will discuss how Joyce encourages us to remember the book itself in this way. To go through the whole of the two works and describe the interlaced structure would require hundreds of pages. I'll therefore choose a representative section of

each work and trace the way themes appear, disappear, and reappear, like the threads of an interlace.

Interlaced Structure in Chaucer's "Marriage Group"

Chaucer's Fragments III, IV, and V, commonly known as the "Marriage Group," provide a good example for the interlaced structure. Though most of the tales treat the relationship of men and women, "marriage" is not the only topic under discussion. Instead, many ideas hark back to earlier tales, while others foreshadow what will be emphasized in later stories. Marriage and "maistrie" are only the most obvious themes.

First of all, the Wife of Bath begins her prologue abruptly and forcefully:

> "Experience, though noon auctoritee
> Were in this world, is right ynogh for me
> To speke of wo that is in mariage" (III 1-3)

Here the broader, philosophical theme of experience versus authority is wedded to the question of marital woe, and it culminates in the Wife's ripping the pages out of her husband's "book of wykked wyves" (III 685). Jankyn, her husband, insists on reading to her what the authorities have to say about bad women, and quite naturally the Wife takes offense.

> "By God! if wommen hadde writen stories,
> As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
> They wolde han writen of men more wikkednesse
> Than al the mark of Adam may redresse" (III 693-96)

Women have just not had the chance to write stories about bad men, whom she knows from experience to exist at least in equal numbers with bad women. At the end of her own tale--about a "lusty bacheler" knight who

rapes a virgin--she explains that each person must prove his worth by virtuous behavior. The rapist knight learns from the Loathly Lady that "gentillesse" cannot be inherited but comes from God alone.

> Crist wole we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,
> Nat of oure eldres for hire old richesse.
> For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
> For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
> Yet may they nat biquethe, for no thyng,
> To noon of us hir vertuous lyvyng,
> That made hem gentil men ycalled be,
> And bad us folwen hem in swich degree. . . .
> For God it woot, men may wel often fynde
> A lordes sone do shame and vileynye;
> And he that wole han pris of his gentrye,
> For he was boren of a gentil hous,
> And hadde his eldres noble and vertuous,
> And nel hymselven do no gentil dedis,
> Ne folwen his gentil auncestre that deed is,
> He nys nat gentil, be he duc or erl;
> For vileyns synful dedes make a cherl. (III 1117-24, 1150-58)

What is interesting is that the Loathly Lady of the story supports her argument with "auctoritees," despite the Wife's earlier denunciation of them; Chaucer clearly cannot help but insert them, even if it tends to complicate a character's presentation to our modern eyes. Such was the medievals' love of "auctoritees."

> "Thenketh hou noble, as seith Valerius,
> Was thilke Tullius Hostillius,
> That out of poverte roos to heigh noblesse.
> Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boece;
> Ther shul ye seen expres that it no drede is
> That he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis" (III 1165-70)

Thus we have come away from the issue of marriage and experience to that of true gentility, and this argument is picked up again, two stories later, with the "Clerk's Tale."

This well-known tale is the legend of patient Griselda, ~~swooped~~ scooped up by the Marquis from her poor life to be his wife. She is so virtuous

that the Marquis cannot keep himself from testing her; he takes her children away, hides them, sends her back to her village to live in poverty, and then has her come back to his palace as a servant. When she proves her virtue and patience by putting up with all of this, her husband arranges to bring the children to her, to take her back into his house, and to restore to her all of the wealth and honor she deserves. However, the Clerk makes a point to interpret the story for us, lest we draw the wrong moral:

> This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
> Folwen Grisilde as in humylitee,
> For it were inportable, though they wolde;
> But for that every wight, in his degree,
> Sholde be constant in adversitee
> As was Grisilde. . . . (IV 1142-47)

This long ago and far away tale clearly needs some reinterpreting to be of significance for people like the Canterbury pilgrims. The moral reminds us of storm-tossed Constance from the "Man of Law's Tale," who kept her faith despite the misfortune which befell her, and because of that recalls also the treatment of Fortune in the "Knight's Tale." We see a "retrospective arrangement" emerging; among other themes the Fortune thread reappears with regularity. At the end of the tale we have the clerk's playful response to the Wife of Bath, saying that there could be no Griseldas today since the ancient gold of women is now alloyed with brass (1163-69), and he sings a sarcastic song encouraging women not to let themselves be bullied by their husbands, but to take charge.

> Ne dreed hem nat, doth hem no reverence,
> For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
> The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
> Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille. (IV 1201-4)

The attempt of the Clerk to turn his tale of an ideally virtuous woman

with a sadistic husband into an ironic comment on contemporary women makes clear that the song is only, as he says, to "stynte of ernestful matere" (IV 1175) by painting an exaggerated picture of the situation.

Between the Wife's tale and that of the Clerk stand the Friar's and Summoner's stories. These two pilgrims belong to the lower types, demonstrating the Wife's contention that "vileyns synful dedes make a cherl" (III 1158). Their tales show, as did the Reeve's and Cook's tales in Fragment I, how churlish behavior affects the individual and the group. They want to defame each other in front of the pilgrims by telling stories which point out the evil of the other one's profession, and they both call this "game." But their "game" engenders a cycle of anger and revenge which must be broken by the intervention of a nobler person. The "Friar's Prologue" shows this process in miniature. First, the Friar scowls at the Summoner, and then says:

> "I wol yow of a somonour telle a game.
> Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name
> That of a somonour may no good be sayd" (III 1279-81)

And he goes on to say what unpleasant things may be said of him. The Host asks that he please act in a way proper to his rank, but the Summoner retorts that the Friar should be allowed to say what he likes, because when it is his turn, the Summoner will get back at him by pointing out the crimes of friars. "Pees, namoore of this!" (III 1298) says the Host as he steps in to create order. Needless to say, the two churls have at each other in their stories; the Summoner's is particularly distasteful, ending with a discussion of how to divide a fart equally among twelve friars.

Despite the Host's admirable attempts to keep peace in the group, he is not himself exempt from giving in to his anger. He lashes out at

the Pardoner, who is, albeit, presented as the most despicable, evil person of the whole group. At the end of the Pardoner's tale, the Pardoner suggests that the pilgrims might like--for a fee, of course--to kneel down and receive pardon, since it could naturally happen that some one would fall off a horse on the ride and break his neck, and wouldn't it be better to be absolved first? "I rede that oure Host heere shal bigynne,/ For he is most envoluped in synne/ Com forth, sire Hoost. . .Unbokele anon thy purs!" (VI 941-3, 945). This assertion upsets the Host so, that he swears by the cross Saint Helen found that he would, if he could, cut off the Pardoner's testicles and enshrine them in a hog's turd. Without knowing it, the Host has sunk to the level of the churls with this angry curse. Not realizing his own wrath, the Host them condemns the Pardoner's ire, making the pilgrims laugh at his ridiculous, hypocritical outburst; it will take a nobler man, the Knight, to break up the fight so that the journey and the storytelling can continue:

> "Namoore of this, for it is right ynough!
> Sire, Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere;
> And ye, sire Hoost, that been to me so deere,
> I prey you that ye kisse the Pardoner" (VI 962-65)

The two angry men kiss and make up, and the pilgrimage can continue. Chaucer inserts these examples to demonstrate the kind of behavior that works against the good of all, what he so often refers to as the "common profit." And indeed, in the next tale--the Clerk's--Griselda is praised for her ability to maintain concord among the people:

> Nat oonly this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
> Koude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,
> But eek, whan that the cas required it,
> The commune profit koude she redresse.
> Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse

> In al that land, that she ne koude apese,
> And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese. (IV 428-34)

Thus we can make out a "retrospective arrangement" on the theme of anger, woven from the Reeve's and Cook's appearances through those of the Friar and Summoner, to that of the Pardoner. The microcosmic society of the Canterbury pilgrims is deprived of its order and sense of purpose with the vicious intrusions of these low characters.

The picture of Griselda as an ideal peacemaker reminds us of Theseus in the "Knight's Tale," who keeps two brothers from killing each other, and of Alla in the "Man of Law's Tale," who will not pass judgement on Constance immediately, though she has been accused of murder. Instead, Alla thinks "he wolde enquere/ Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere" (II 629-30). Such people give a picture of the ideal leader, some one who is just, thoughtful, diplomatic, and will not come to hasty conclusions. Arveragus of the upcoming "Franklin's Tale" also portrays such a noble figure, who is willing to sacrifice his honor to maintain his wife's truth, and the long prose "Melibee," told by Chaucer the pilgrim, further demonstrates the qualities of judgment and decisionmaking which a leader ought to exhibit. Hence we see a pattern emerging concerning the correct behavior for a nobleman or king.

Meanwhile the question of marriage is brought to the fore again with the "Merchant's Tale." In his prologue the Merchant laments his own two-month-old marriage, saying his wife "is a shrewe at al" and "We wedded men lyven in sorwe and care" (IV 1222, 1228). Then he begins his tale with a long, ironic exposition of the bliss of wedded life, presumably the thoughts of a bachelor contemplating matrimony. The story itself is of a lecherous old man who marries a young wife and then

goes blind, so that he is unable to see his wife's act of infidelity. The gods intervene, however, with Pluto restoring the old man's sight to expose the infidelity, and his angry wife Proserpina putting a convincing excuse into the mouth of the infidel, so that all is well in the end.

Along with this picture of marriage we have the counselling scene, another idea which reappears often in the Canterbury Tales, and is hilariously represented in the Parliament of Fowls. Chaucer suggests that people who are in the position of making decisions should seek the aid of advisors, but there must be order and reason in the way counsel is given; otherwise countless voices give opinions which only serve to confuse. The best example is the "Melibee," which begins by showing the confusion of a general assembly and then goes on to an explication of how counselors should be chosen and what advice should be heeded. Here in the "Merchant's Tale" we have a similar situation. The old man decides he wants to be married and asks his friends how he should go about getting a wife.

> And for his freendes on a day he sente,
> To tellen hem th'effect of his entente. . .
> Diverse men diversely hym tolde
> Of mariage manye ensamples olde.
> Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, certeyn;
> But atte laste, shortly for o seyn,
> As al say falleth altercacioun
> Bitwixen freendes in disputisoun,
> Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his brethren two. (IV 1397-8, 1469-75)

The one brother says an advisor should merely mouth his lord's desires, for it is a fool who thinks "That his conseil sholde passe his lordes wit" (IV 1504). The other brother, however, gives the wise speech, saying that overhasty action is bad, that the bachelor should act as would one of our ideal leaders in a decisionmaking position, considering

the various possibilities: "it is no childes pley/ To take a wyf withouten avysement" (IV 1530-31). In the "Melibee" we have a greater variety of opinions on the efficacy of going to war or refraining from action, and since it has been suggested that that tale was written to advise John of Gaunt, we may well surmise that such advice and such scenes concerning counselors were frequent in the court at Chaucer's time. The Nun's Priest takes the opportunity to warn his audience against false counselors like our first brother in the "Merchant's Tale," saying that there are many liars in a court who care more about pleasing and flattering a lord than telling the truth (VII 3325-28). And we get another counseling scene in the "Canon's Yeoman's Tale," with the various apprentices trying to convince the alchemist why the pot blew up.

> Somme sayde it was long on the fir makyng;
> Somme seyde nay, it was on the blowyng,--
> Thanne was I fered, for that was myn office.
> "Straw!" quod the thridde, "ye been lewed and nyce.
> It was nat tempred as it oghte be."
> "Nay," quod the fourthe, "stynte and herkne me.
> By cause oure fir ne was nat maad of beech,
> That is the cause, and oother noon, so th'eech!"
> I kan nat telle wheron it was long,
> But wel I woot greet strif is us among. . . .
> Another seyde the fir was over-hoot,--
> But, be it hoot or coold, I dar seye this,
> That we concluden everemore amys.
> We failde of that which that we wolden have,
> And in oure madnesse everemoore we rave.
> And whan we been togidres everichon,
> Every man semeth a Salomon. (VIII 922-31, 955-61)

This scene of discord and confusion contrasts with the counselling scene of the "Merchant's Tale" since in the latter the issue is more important and it is clear which man gives the better advice. The bachelor's refusal to follow the wise brother's counsel leaves him cuckolded.

The "Squire's Tale" which follows the Merchant's continues the

marriage theme with the falcon's story of her false mate. But the emphasis here is less on the relationship than on the treachery and the wickedness of the avian adulterer, who:

> . . .semed welle of alle gentillesse;
> Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,
> It was so wrapped under humble cheere,
> And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,
> Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,
> That no wight koude han wend he koude feyne,
> So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures. (V 505-11)

This sin of false appearances or "hypocrisy" is what Chaucer, I feel, considers most evil of all, for it takes advantage of innocent and believing folk. The false falcon is likened to a serpent (V 512), and the only other character comparably wicked is the snake-like Pardoner: "Thanne wol I stynge hym with my tonge smerte" and, "Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe/ Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe" (VI 413, 421-22). The Pardoner is probably worse because he knows himself to be a "ful vicious man" (VI 459) and yet continues to feed his vices.

In both these stories the theme of false appearances is coupled with the idea of language, with rhetoric, with dressing substance with words, with using language to beguile. In the "Squire's Tale" we learn of the false falcon:

> "Ne nevere, syn the firste man was born,
> Ne koude man, by twenty thousand part,
> Countrefete the sophymes of his art" (V 552-54)

And similarly the Pardoner, "though myself be a ful vicious man,/ A moral tale yet I yow telle kan" (VI 459-60). The theme is especially interesting since it touches on Chaucer's own storytelling occupation. Before Dante, poetry was condemned as a lie, a mere fictitious veil in the way of truth. But Dante invested it with a high purpose, and Chaucer must have been angered by those people, like the Pardoner, who abused

the purpose. This could be one very simple reason for Chaucer's own humble stance as poet, and the explanation for why the Squire in this tale--along with a good number of the other pilgrim tellers--constantly apologizes for his ignorance in the art of storytelling.

> "Have my excused if I speke amys" (V 7)

> "It lyth nat in my tonge, n'yn my konnyng;
> I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng.
> Myn Englissh eek is insufficient.
> It moste been a rethor excellent,
> That koude his colours longynge for that art,
> If he sholde hire discryven every part.
> I am noon swich, I moot speke as I kan". (V 35-41)

> "Al be it that I kan nat sowne his stile,
> Ne kan nat clymben over so heigh a style,
> Yet seye I this. . . " (V 105-7)

If there is irony it is not in this humble stance, but in our own perception that Chaucer's tales are rhetorical masterpieces. The humble Squire unconsciously invests the last example witha punning rhyme on "stile/ style," a feat that would have thrilled his audience and saves Chaucer from the hubris of the Pardoner.

In the last tale of the "marriage group," the Franklin continues to place the focus on rhetoric and storytelling. His Prologue is an apology:

> "But sires, by cause I am a burel man,
> At my bigynning first I yow biseche,
> Have me excused of my rude speche.
> I lerned never rethorik, certeyn;
> Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
> I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,
> Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero.
> Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,
> but swiche colours as growen in the mede,
> Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte." (V 716-25)

Again we realize that there is a marvelous pun here on "colors," and that only a quite competent poet could do so much with it so simply and

so well. As he read these words to them, Chaucer's audience must have delighted in the pose. And for this reason I feel we have more of "our" Chaucer in this story than in many others; the Chaucer we know from his work--Donald Howard calls him "Chaucer the Man"--tends to come to the surface in these tales by the jolly, story-loving, plump men in the group. That the Franklin knows more about rhetoric than he will admit in his prologue becomes absolutely clear with this comment:

> For th'orisonte hath reft the sonne his lyght,--
> This is as muche to seye as it was nyght! (V 1017-18)

It is a satirical jab at poetic diction. But the most poignant comment on poetry itself comes in a scene in the middle of the "Franklin's Tale," where it is likened to magic.

Two brothers seek out a Breton clerk in Orleans, to find a way, by magic, to make water cover the dangerous rocks on the Brittany coast. This magician-clerk takes the two into his study to show them what tricks he can do; he conjures up fantastic images. By the end of the passage, with the strange insertion of "oure" instead of "their," with the emphasis on the books in the study and the quiet sitting still, and with the knowledge that these visions are, in fact, Chaucer's poetry, we come to see magic and poetry conflated, and the disparaging prefatory remark to the scene--"hooly chirches feith in oure bileve/ Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve"--loses its force.

> He shewed hym, er he wente to sopeer,
> Forests, parkes ful of wilde deer;
> Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye,
> The gretteste that evere were seyn with ye.
> He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
> And somme with arwes blede of bettre woundes.
> He saugh, whan voyded were thise wilde deer,
> Thise fauconers upon a fair ryver,
> That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.

> Tho saugh he knyghtes justyng in a playn;
> And after this he dide hym swich plesaunce
> That he hym shewed his lady on a daunce,
> On which hymself he daunced, as hym thoughte.
> And whan this maister that this magyk wroughte
> Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,
> And farwel! al oure revel was ago.
> And yet remoeved they nevere out of the hous,
> Whil they saugh al this sighte merveillous,
> But in his studie, ther as his bookes be,
> They seten stille, and no wight but they thre.
> (V 1189-1208)

The magician-clerk even evokes himself in his vision, dancing with his lady in a simplicity and humility unknown to Joyce and other Modern, auto-descriptive writers. Chaucer knows how to tread the fine line between boring doctrinal poetry and frivolous entertainment. As a storyteller, has first aim is to give moral instruction--"sentence"--but he knows this will be far more effective if it is engaging, magical, evocative.

For all its concern with rhetoric and storytelling, the "Franklin's Tale" provides an excellent end to the "marriage group" with an example of a couple who love, respect, and defer to each other in the perfect noble manner.

> Arveragus and Dorigen his wyf
> In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.
> Nevere eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene.
> He cherisseth hire as though she were a queene,
> And she was to hym trewe for everemoore. (V 1551-55)

It is the gentleman's version of the peace in marriage finally reached by the Wife and Jankyn at the end of the Wife's prologue (III 817-25).

Thus we see the ideas of marriage, counsel, authority, experience, anger, storytelling, leadership, order, true gentility, fortune, and false appearances weaving in and out of each other to form a textured interlace. While the "marriage group" is bonded by its concern for the relationships of men and women, the stories reveal other ideas which

radiate out of the marriage group, both recalling earlier themes and characters and foreshadowing those to come. Everything leads to everything else. I hope it is now clearer how Chaucer took these ideas, ones most important to him, and stuck them into his stories where they might be the most enlightening for his audience. Though he may have been breaking new ground for poetry with his introduction of questions regarding "maistrie," storytelling, and experience, most of Chaucer's ideas from his "palette of concerns" are fairly orthodox. It is in his characterization, which I will discuss later, that Chaucer reveals true innovation.

Joyce's Interlace

Describing the interlaced quality in Joyce's Ulysses is not as daunting a task as in Chaucer, because the work gives every indication that the effect was consciously intended. Joyce's main ideas appear, disappear behind others, and then reappear, clearly labelled with tags like "Agenbite of Inwit" or "metempsychosis." Joyce frequently refers to a "retrospective arrangement." If we think of each set of allusions throughout the book, and superimpose those sets retrospectively upon each other, what we have is an interlace design. Joseph Frank discusses Ulysses as his prime example of "spatial form."

> . . .the reader is forced to read Ulysses. . .by continually fitting fragments together and keeping allusions in mind until, by reflexive reference, he can link them to their complements. Joyce desired in this way to build up in the reader's mind a sense of Dublin as a totality, including all the relations of the characters to one another and all the events that enter their consciousness. The reader is intended to acquire this sense as he progresses through the novel, connecting allusions and references spatially and gradually becoming aware of the

> pattern of relationships. . . .Joyce cannot be read--he can only be reread. A knowledge of the whole is essential to an understanding of any part.[29]

A. Walton Litz concurs in his important book, The Art of James Joyce:

> Once the events and themes of Ulysses have become familiar, the entire work stands before one as a vast static 'Image'. And when the book is re-read with this 'complex' in mind, each succeeding passage yields a new set of relationships. Of course, the demands upon memory and imagination are prodigious; but they are prodigiously rewarding. The reader recreates in his mind an approximation of that total design which guided Joyce in the process of composition.[30]

The twin elements of space and time are brought to the fore when we read a work line by line, in the "nacheinander," and are then forced in memory to consider it spatially, in the "nebeneinander" (U 75). In this respect I think the "Wandering Rocks" episode offers us a microcosmic look at the whole of Ulysses, because we see there very clearly how the geographic locations of various characters become factors on a time axis. We are forced to construct--through retrospective arranging--a map of Dublin that will locate different characters in different places at one particular moment. Rereading through the episode then becomes a moment-by-moment spatial construction of Dublin between 3 and 4 p.m.

## Time and Space in "Wandering Rocks"

Father Conmee provides the time axis, while the vice-regal cavalcade gives us the spatial axis. Though Conmee does move through space, nonetheless it is his function in the episode to locate other characters in time. For example:

> Father Conmee passed H.J. O'Neill's funeral establishment where Corny Kelleher totted figures in the daybook while he chewed a blade of hay. (U 475)

We remember Corny Kelleher from "Hades," and the "daybook" and "blade of hay" are details which make the image vivid and memorable. Therefore, we arrange retrospectively when we read the second vignette:

> Corny Kelleher closed the long daybook. . . .Chewing his blade of hay he laid the coffinlid by and came to the doorway. (U 483)

We know this must come after Conmee has walked by, since then Kelleher was still writing in the book, and indeed Joyce confirms this with: "Father John Conmee stepped into the Dollymount tram on Newcomen bridge" (U 483). Thus, it comes after Conmee has walked by the funeral establishment, but not long after. Conmee thus gives us the temporal relationship, and it is as though his movements begin the falls of rows of dominoes, because once Conmee's and Kelleher's temporal relationship has been established, we can trace Molly Bloom's:

> Corny Kelleher sped a silent jet of hayjuice arching from his mouth while a generous white arm from a window in Eccles street flung forth a coin. (U 483)

And because of this we know, in the third vignette, how the begging one-legged sailor's movements are related in time:

> A onelegged sailor. . .jerked himself up Eccles street. . . . A card Unfurnished apartments slipped from the sash and fell. A plump bare generous arm shone, was seen, held forth from a white petticoatbodice and taut shiftstraps. A woman's hand flung forth a coin over the area railings. (U 485)

And because of this description we know vignette nine to come sometime later:

> --Did she? Lenehan said.
> A card Unfurnished apartments reappeared on the windowsash of number 7 Eccles street. (U 503)

Thus Father Conmee has knocked down one domino, which allows us to reconstruct in retrospect the times when the other dominoes hit each

other--Corny Kelleher leads to Molly, she leads to the one-legged sailor and then Lenehan in vignette nine, and further images in those vignettes which then reappear in later scenes serve to locate the goings-on temporally. This is what I mean when I say Father Conmee provides the temporal axis.

Partway through the "Wandering Rocks" we are introduced by a short sentence to the viceregal cavalcade, which gives us the spatial axis. "The gates of the drive opened wide to give egress to the viceregal cavalcade" (U 501). In vignette twelve, we see the cavalcade in spatial relation to Tom Kernan, who is sorry to have missed the spectacle:

> A cavalcade in easy trot along Pembroke quay passed, outriders leaping, leaping in their, in their saddles. Frockcoats. Cream sunshades.
>
> Mr Kernan hurried forward, blowing pursily.
>
> His Excellency! Too bad! Just missed that by a hair. Damn it! What a pity! (U 517-519)

The cavalcade passes various characters in different places. And in the last vignette of "Wandering Rocks" we get a long account of this trip through the city, locating all of our characters spatially, giving us a kind of summary of who has appeared and an introduction to characters --Miss Kennedy, Miss Douce, Gerty MacDowell--who will reappear later. The last vignette shows us "retrospective arrangement" at its most complete, the spatial coordination of figures attained by the infallible memory--an omniscient overview.

## The Large Structure of Ulysses

By the repetition of themes and images throughout Ulysses I believe we are intended to arrange an overview of a similar sort. The whole

book is a journey through the city like that of the viceregal cavalcade, and through the various summary devices at the end of Ulysses--lists in "Ithaca," for instance, which I will discuss and which are like this summary in the last vignette of "Wandering Rocks"--we are to recall, not characters, as in this instance, but themes, images, ideas, moods, which will fix the concerns of the book in our minds. Joyce gives us a final "Image," as Litz says,[31] of interwoven concerns. The interlace of ideas becomes a textured piece demonstrating the relativity of things. We may be introduced to ideas temporally as we read the book, just as we are introduced to the characters in "Wandering Rocks," but in our retrospective arrangement, once we have read Ulysses, we will see all of the ideas as they relate to each other, how they are interwoven, much as the streets of Dublin ultimately weave the characters of "Wandering Rocks" into a pattern. What we end up with is an "Image" of Dublin, intended as a metaphor for the world.

Joyce's interlace of ideas is held up by temporal and spatial posts similar to those of the "Wandering Rocks" episode. The Telemachiad introduces Stephen and his consciousness, but it also sets up a temporal sequence that functions in a way similar to Father Conmee. We posit a temporal connection between Stephen and Bloom when we see them both having breakfast. Bloom's meal may come later in our reading, but because Stephen has eaten, and perhaps also because of the energy we sense in "Calypso," we feel a new beginning; we move back and start the day afresh. the same cloud that depresses Stephen in "Telemachus" (U 17) depresses Bloom in "Calypso" (U 119); it is this image which confirms for us the simultaneity of those events and episodes. There-

fore, even if we do not have a "schema," we can understand the temporal relationships. At the other end of the book, the concluding chapters sum up the relationships of the whole, much as the cavalcade's movements draw the characters of "Wandering Rocks" together. In "Ithaca," for instance, the aforementioned cloud sets Bloom and Stephen in spatial relation to each other:

> the collapse which Bloom ascribed to gastric inanition. . . Stephen attributed to the reapparition of a matutinal cloud (perceived by both from two different points of observation, Sandycove and Dublin). (U 1457)

"Circe" and the "Nostos" episodes--"Eumaeus," "Ithaca," and "Penelope"--are the ones which help us to hold things in place in memory. That is, these latter episodes facilitate our retrospective arranging.

For example, when the "Daughters of Erin" recite their mock-litany in "Circe," we have actually a recapitulation of Bloom's chapters up to this point. Each phrase recalls the events of the respective episodes from "Calypso" through "Circe":

> Kidney of Bloom, pray for us
> Flower of the Bath, pray for us
> Mentor of Menton, pray for us
> Canvasser for the Freeman, pray for us
> Charitable Mason, pray for us
> Wandering Soap, pray for us
> Sweets of Sin, pray for us
> Music without Words, pray for us
> Reprover of the Citizen, pray for us
> Friend of all Frillies, pray for us
> Midwife Most Merciful, pray for us
> Potato Preservative against Plague and Pestilence, pray for us. (U 1081)

We may recall Bloom's having thought, "Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us. Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us" (U 813). The rehearsing of these images is an ad for the book itself, a way for us to remember the product. It

emphasizes Bloom in his epicurean aspect--"Kidney of Bloom," "Flower of the Bath," "Sweets of Sin," "Friend of all Frillies"--in his social aspect--"Mentor of Menton," "Canvasser for the Freeman," "Charitable Mason," "Reprover of the Citizen"--and playfully locates him in episodes where he is merely one of a crowd or an onlooker--"Wandering Soap," "Music without Words," "Midwife Most Merciful," and "Potato Preservative."

The book similarly remembers itself in Stephen's giddy "Dance of death," where the stage directions remind us:

> (Bang fresh barang bang of lacquey's bell. . .Conmee on Christass lame crutch and leg sailor. . .Corny in coffin steel shark stone onehandled Nelson two trickies Frauenzimmer plumstained. . .on hackney jaunt Blazes. . .Dilly with snowcake no fancy clothes. . .) (U 1265)

In fact, one could say the whole of "Circe" is a nightmarish recollection of the characters and objects of the book.

"Eumaeus," in its tired way, looks back on the day with Bloom recalling the events at Westland Row Station, suggesting Mulligan to be a bad influence, reading the funeral notice in the newspaper and the results of the Ascot race. These events which were present are now past and have become either history--like the Parnell affair the men discuss, which "Looking back now in a retrospective kind of arrangement all seemed a kind of dream" (U 1423)--or they have become story--like Murphy's tales, which may or may not be believed. Even the present moment is considered as potentially past, when Bloom considers making a story of his "Experiences in a Cabman's Shelter" (U 1413).

Retrospection becomes more pronounced in "Ithaca," where, as I have mentioned, Bloom recalls former nocturnal perambulations and Stephen thinks of others who have lit fires for him in the past (U 1457, 1465).

The famous passage on the source of the water is a kind of physical retrospective arrangement, with the turning of the tap triggering in memory the constellation of past activity its present appearance implies. When Stephen brings up the "Queen's Hotel," Bloom recalls his father's suicide there; when Bloom sings, Stephen hears "in a profound ancient male unfamiliar melody the accumulation of the past" (U 1515). Much is made of mnemotechnic (U 1515, 1567). Bloom gets satisfaction from tearing off a part of his toenail and smelling it:

> Because the odour inhaled corresponded to other odours inhaled of other unguical fragments, picked and lacerated by Master Bloom, pupil of Mrs Ellis's juvenile school, patiently each night in the act of brief genuflection and nocturnal prayer and ambitious meditation. (U 1571)

We learn much of Bloom's childhood and past life in this episode. The sound of the ringing bell sets off different memories for Stephen and Bloom:

> What echoes of the sound were by both and each heard?
> By Stephen:
> Liliata rutilantium. Turma circumdet.
> Iubilantium te virginum. Chorus excipiat.
> By Bloom:
> Heigho, heigho,
> Heigho, heigho. . . .
> Of what did bellchime and handtouch and footstep and lonechill remind him?
> Of companions now in various manners in different places defunct: Percy Apjohn (killed in action, Modder River), Philip Gilligan (phthisis, Jervis Street hospital), Matthew F Kane (accidental drowning, Dublin Bay), Philip Moisel (pyemia, Heytesbury street), Michael Hart (phthisis, Mater Misericordiae hospital), Patrick Dignam (apoplexy, Sandymount). (U 1551, 1553)

Such a list serves the same function as the last vignette of the "Wandering Rocks," giving us the names of various characters and placing them in spatial relation to each other. The difference here is the emphasis on the past, on recapitulation, on death, which is the clearest

instance we have of movement from present to past. Bloom's memory is a graveyard of long dead and recently dead friends, ideas, images, all to be recalled by the right situation or phrase or event. The difference between Stephen and Bloom is that Stephen sees the past as a nightmare and a snare, he has the youthful wish to fly by the net of history and begin anew, whereas Bloom's maturity and equanimity allow him a calm relationship with what has been. He wishes not to wake from the nightmare of the past; rather, "tranquil recollection of the past when practised habitually before retiring for the night alleviated fatigue and produced as a result sound repose and renovated vitality" (U 1591). Finally, as in the litany passage from "Circe," we have another mock-religious, perfect chapter-by-chapter summary of the book:

> What past consecutive causes, before rising preapprehended, of accumulated fatigue did Bloom, before rising, silently recapitulate?
>
> The preparation of breakfast (burnt offering): intestinal congestion and premeditative defecation (holy of holies): the bath (rite of John): the funeral (rite of Samuel): the advertisement of Alexander Keyes (Urim and Thummim): the unsubstantial lunch (rite of Melchisedek): the visit to museum and national library (holy place): the bookhunt along Bedford row, Merchant's Arch, Wellington Quay (Simchath Torah): the music in the Ormond Hotel (Shira Shirim): the altercation with a truculent troglodyte in Bernard Kiernan's premises (holocaust): a blank period of time including a cardrive, a visit to a house of mourning, a leavetaking (wilderness): the eroticism produced by feminine exhibitionism (rite of Onan): the prolonged delivery of Mrs Mina Purefoy (heave offering): the visit to the disorderly house of Mrs Bella Cohen, 82 Tyrone street, lower, and subsequent brawl and chance medley in Beaver street (Armageddon): nocturnal perambulation to and from the cabman's shelter, Butt Bridge (atonement). (U 1611-1613)

When we have the "blank period of time including a cardrive," we realize we are no longer in Bloom's mind, but that a narrator is speaking directly to us about our experience of the book. Joyce knows that repetition is a good aid for the memory, and he makes full use of it in

Ulysses to remind the reader of the structure and events of the book. "Penelope," too, is an exercise in memory, and as she thinks of the past Molly concludes "its like all through a mist makes you feel so old. . .how long ago it seems centuries" (U 1671, 1673). The "Telemachiad" serves as an introduction, while "Circe" and the "Nostos" are a conclusion, summing up events and setting relationships between characters. Again similar to the structure of the "Wandering Rocks" episode, the first and last sections serve as posts to hold up the interrelated middle scenes. The first is a way of beginning the domino-falling of ideas and images, and the last provides a help in the task of retrospective arranging, a way of putting those ideas and images into a pattern.

## The Large Structure of the Canterbury Tales

The Canterbury Tales' interlaced ideas and images are similarly supported by two posts: the "General Prologue" and the "Parson's Tale." Even more than the "Telemachiad," the "General Prologue" introduces parameters and players and ideas which will kick off the action and to which readers will later refer in arranging retrospectively.[32] The rules of the tale-telling game are set out, and the drawing of straws introduces the idea of chance, which the Knight will pick up and elaborate on in his story. The Miller will then pick up and elaborate on aspects of the "Knight's Tale," the Reeve will respond to the Miller's, and so on.[33] The domino-falling, linear tale-and-response soon becomes more complex when, as in the relationships between "Wandering Rocks" vignettes, a tale refers back to more than one tale and foreshadows issues to come.

The "Parson's Tale," like the retrospective-arranging devices of Ulysses, takes the form of a list: vices, their counterparts, venial sins, correct behavior. It makes the reader look back at the pilgrimage and organize key ideas retrospectively. When, for instance, the Parson says that the "Ypocrite is he that hideth to shewe hym swich as he is, and sheweth swich as he noght is" (X 394), we think of the false falcon from the "Squire's Tale" and of the Pardoner. The concern for true gentility is touched off with this sentiment:

> Eek for to pride hym of his gentrie is ful greet folie; for ofte tyme the gentrie of the body binymeth the gentrie of the soule; and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder; and alle we been of o nature, roten and corrupt, bothe riche and povre. (X 461)

We thus think of the Loathly Lady and of Griselda, who were poor but truly noble. The following passage expands the idea, bringing in the churls:

> Thynk eek that of swich seed as cherles spryngen, of swich seed spryngen lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord./ The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord. Wherfore I rede, do right so with they cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plit. (X 761-62)

The Parson also touches on the idea of counsel; it is a sign of humility "to assente to good conseil" (X 482), and this recalls the "Melibee" and other counselling scenes. Patience is praised; wrath is condemned: "Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certes. Allas!" (X 557). A man is reminded not to "use" his wife "withouten sovereyn desir of engendrure to the honour of God, or for the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body" (X 375), and he should respect her and treat her as his equal while she should not seek out dominion or "maistrie" over him (X 925ff.). Each of these concerns corresponds to concerns presented in the tales

themselves. It has been argued that the "Parson's Tale" is an enumeration of the Canterbury pilgrims' own sins.[34] Our minds do return to those pilgrims who exemplify a certain vice; we arrange them retrospectively as they relate to false appearances, wrath, lasciviousness. However, the effect of the "Parson's Tale" as one among the "Tales of Canterbury" is less to heap scorn on the pilgrims of the group than to emphasize to the audience or reader how he or she should act. This would have been the proper Christian attitude for Chaucer to adopt, to look at himself before judging others--if indeed, it should have occurred to him to think about it.

## The Labyrinth

The complex worlds portrayed in Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales have both been described as labyrinthine. As Donald Howard has written of the Canterbury Tales, the interlaced form suits this image of the labyrinth brilliantly, with its paths and abrupt turns, its intricacy and seeming unfathomability.[35] In fact, Chaucer in his Boece equates the two, describing "the hous of Dedalus, so entrelaced that it is unable to ben unlaced" (III 156-7). Medievals in general saw the world as an impenetrable maze, understood only by God. Similarly the house of Dedalus, or labyrinth, is perhaps the most appropriate image we can give the world Joyce describes. With a character named Stephen Dedalus who thinks of himself as a young Icarus, we're encouraged to see Joyce as the progenitor, the old artificer, creator of the labyrinth. Joyce played a game called "Labyrinth" every night for a time with his daughter Lucia as he was writing the "Wandering Rocks,"[36] and in the

schema, "Labyrinth" is suggested as the technique for that episode. Joyce's Dublin can easily be seen as a labyrinth, with its characters moving within the complex nexus of streets, looking for something. And all of Ulysses is an intricate maze to puzzle the reader. It is in this respect that Chaucer's and Joyce's works are more like each other than they are similar to Dante's Divine Comedy, a work which made deep impressions on them both. The concerns of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales are of this world, not divine. Instead of the ordered realms of God we have the confusing, labyrinthine, sublunar regions. Villains are not all punished, and good people are forced to suffer fortune's mutability. When we think we have caught hold of one idea, its opposite is thrust in our way; when we have gotten a grasp of one character, there are a dozen others whose opinions we must register. It is not merely the content of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales, but their remarkable, complex inner forms which express confusion and perplexity. Chaucer and Joyce wished to present such confusion because this is how they perceived their worlds, and they did not set their eyes on a paradise to come, but sought to teach readers about the world by recreating the world as example.

## III. Content

## Comic Irony

Chaucer and Joyce are "general ironists," and their books are built up on ironic bases. In the Canterbury Tales the situation of the story, with Chaucer the pilgrim wide-eyed, returned from his trip, and telling us about it, makes room for all sorts of ironic perceptions on our part. Similarly, the mock-heroic framework of Ulysses, with Bloom likened to the epic warrior and suitor slaughterer, provides a situation which will allow for many ironies. Hence the two works are not merely peppered with irony; they are in fact developed on an ironic assumption. And as D.C. Muecke writes, that assumption can only spring from a writer who sees the world with irony-colored glasses, some one he calls a "general ironist."[37] A general ironist will have discovered certain incongruities about our situation in the world, and though not everything he says need be ironic, the subject matter which he presents will generally tend toward the portrayal of such incongruities. Muecke continues:

> General Irony lies in those contradictions, apparently fundamental and irremediable, that confront men when they speculate upon such topics as the origin and purpose of the universe, free will and determinism, reason and instinct, the scientific and the imaginative, ends and means, society and the individual, art and life, knowing and being, self-consciousness (what is conscious of what?), the meaning of meaning, and the value of value. Most of these, it may be said, are reducible to one great incongruity, the appearance of free and self-valued but temporally finite egos in a universe that seems to be. . .incomprehensibly vast. . . . Such inescapable contradictions and incongruities as emerge from a consideration of the human condition are not ironic in themselves. They can become so only by the addition of the element of 'innocent unawareness'.[38]

Chaucer the pilgrim and Bloom are the characters who provide the "unawareness"which allows us to see the ironic contradiction in our

situation.

The most ready example in the Canterbury Tales is the "General Prologue," with its loving portraits painted by the naive narrator ("My wit is short") of pilgrims we know to be vice-ridden. The Physician who loves gold "in special" is nonetheless a "parfit praktisour"; the Prioress prefers to "countrefete cheere of court" and learn bad French rather than attend to other more mundane duties; the Man of Law "semed bisier than he was"; the Miller is lauded for his superlative ability in stealing corn; and the narrator applauds the Monk's well-argued preference to serve the world by hunting.

> What sholde he studie and make hymselven wood
> Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure
> Or swynken with his handes, and laboure,
> As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served? (I 184ff.)

We see past the narrator's limited understanding to the true moral position of these characters.

Similarly, we are able to make judgments about the characters of Ulysses by reading past Bloom's thoughts to the truth of the matter. Molly may seem to Bloom a first-rate singer, a beautiful and witty woman, but we know, regrettably, that she is a somewhat narcissistic, fat, adulterous soprano. Bloom's feelings about Stephen are similarly skewed. Stephen is no "professor and poet," as Bloom imagines in "Ithaca," at least not yet. But as with Chaucer the pilgrim's naive acceptance of his fellow travellers, we enjoy Bloom's acceptance of these two, and because of it we are more inclined to accept them as well, even though the irony points out just how far from ideal they are.

In the end, therefore, whether the discussion concern people or

ideas, both Chaucer the pilgrim and Bloom provide views which we must consider seriously. Immediately after his silly rhyme of "Sir Thopas," Chaucer the pilgrim tells a moral tale about prudence, judgment, and proper action towards one's enemies in the "Melibee." Bloom too dispenses wisdom regularly, despite the mocking tone in which it is generally received. The irony brings into focus those topics most important to consider. Love is such a topic in Ulysses, and the following passage from "Cyclops" is a crucial one.

> --Are you talking about the new Jerusalem? says the citizen.
> --I'm talking about injustice, says Bloom. . . .Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.
> --What? says Alf.
> --Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. I must go now. . . .
> And off he pops like greased lightning.
> --A new apostle to the gentiles, says the citizen. Universal love.
> --Well, says John Wyse, isn't that what we're told. Love your neighbour.
> --That chap? says the citizen. Beggar my neighbour is his motto. Love, moya! He's a nice pattern of a Romeo and Juliet. Love loves to love love. Nurse loves the new chemist. Constable 14A loves Mary Kelly. Gerty MacDowell loves the boy that has the bicycle. M.B. loves a fair gentleman. . . . (U 717)

We may laugh, but under these circumstances I believe most of us are inclined to come to Bloom's rescue. Our laughter joins us with Bloom. Love may not be the high, ideal commodity that is "what we're told," but we do sense it is "that that is really life." When in "Circe" we see the "New Bloomusalem" which this passage foreshadows, we see Bloom's hopes for a better world based on the charity he espouses in contrast to the Citizen's hatred and limited vision. We probably laugh at that passage in "Circe" as well, but when such high sentiments are accompanied by ones as violent, bigoted, and condemnatory as the Citizen's,

we naturally side with Bloom and protect him mentally. We do believe "there's a touch of the artist about old Bloom"; Joyce forces us to accept the nobility of an ideal vision by contrasting it with something he knows we cannot accept.

Irony presents itself in many ways, beyond the contradictions and naive characters. There are, for instance, several levels of meaning, which develop because of the use of the naive persona. When Chaucer the pilgrim praises the "worthy" Monk, we read "worthless" or "questionable," positing an authorial voice we understand to be speaking ironically through the mask. The authorial voice may be more difficult to track down in Ulysses, but we all recognize it when we hear it, or interpolate it when some ironic remark demands this. As Marilyn French writes:

> Beyond or behind the narrational point of view lies the authorial point of view, which must be distinguished before there can be any assurance as to what kind of statement is made in the novel.[39]

Finding the authorial voice is the reader's biggest task in Ulysses. And when one gets past all of the joking and clever puns and allusions one hears a very simple message about the need for Bloomian thoughtfulness, consideration, and charity in the world. Joyce himself said his message was simple and called Bloom a "good man."[40]

Irony reveals itself in parody as well. When the Parson says, "But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,/ I kan nat geeste 'rum, ram, ruf,' by lettre" (X 42-3), Chaucer is parodying the Northern alliterative tradition. Likewise, there is parody of an unknown metrical romance in Chaucer the pilgrim's "Sir Thopas." Joyce, of course, resorts to parody throughout Ulysses, most notably in the episode "Oxen of the Sun," where he imitates many of the styles in English literary history--but not

that of Chaucer. It is likely he avoided undertaking an imitation of Chaucer, since Chaucer wrote poetry for the most part and since he had another very worthy representative of Middle English prose--Mandeville--at hand as a source. The irony that surfaces in parody depends on an incongruity between the style and the subject matter (as it happens in Joyce) or the style and the situation (as in Chaucer).

The Canterbury Tales, like Ulysses, also has its element of the mockheroic in the hilarious "Nun's Priest's Tale." Dreams, science, scholarship are debated with verve by a pair of chickens. Pertelote seems to have appealed to Joyce enough to be enshrined as "Dame Partlet" in "The Hen" section of Finnegans Wake. Despite the comic, ironic treatment of significant themes--or perhaps I should say because of it--there is a moral to be drawn from the "Nun's Priest's Tale." It is perhaps more universal because the actors are chickens. Such moral generalizing takes place throughout Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales.

Irony calls upon us to use our judgment. It depends on a reader's or listener's perception of it; the writer sets down a clue to which the audience must respond. Both Chaucer and Joyce manage to lull the reader into such participation. Our moral sense is not only engaged but is also exposed to manipulation by the author. For irony began as a rhetorical device--eironia--a way of using words for persuasion, and Chaucer and Joyce both use it to further a specific moral position. As demonstrated above, Joyce places Bloom in situations so unpleasant that we cannot but "rescue" him, and this means taking on his opinion and rejecting the ironic mockery. Chaucer works on the assumption that we possess Christian values, such as forgiveness. He then uses it to persuade us to accept people like the Wife of Bath--who may be flawed

according to Christian doctrine--by showing us what makes them unique and interesting, and by emphasizing that they do not hurt or take undue advantage of others. These are values which come out of Ulysses as well. The admirable people, not only Bloom but Martin Cunningham or Mrs. Breen, for example, are those who make no unjust demands on others and, in fact, seek to aid those in trouble. Cunningham wishes to spare Bloom's feelings and to provide for the Dignams, Mrs. Breen goes to extraordinary trouble in caring for her mad husband. Bloom feeds the birds, fills Molly's requests for lotion and reading material, helps the Dignams, and ultimately looks after Stephen. We come away from both books with humanitarian values confirmed; charity, helpful action, and tolerance triumph.

Hence irony can depict the world as it is, with all of its ugliness and imperfection, and still advocate a tolerant, even-minded approach to it. Irony lifts us out of the dirty world and lets us view it with affection nonetheless. As I demonstrated in the last section, both Chaucer and Joyce depict a labyrinthine world, where the road of human life is of endless complexity. The content and form of the works work together to express this idea. And the ironic mode allows for a transcendence of the labyrinth, so that we move to a place above it, can perceive its complexity, realize this and accept it. Critics have noted how "Ithaca" and "Penelope" have a distancing effect.[41] "Ithaca" plays with Bloom and Stephen with scientific objectivity, so that they are placed in the physical, mathematical, historical world as small elements in endless series. "Penelope" moves off into another realm altogether, which Joyce called "infinity." Marilyn French writes:

> The novel suggests that if we were gods in the actual universe we could gaze down and discern interlocking patterns over the face of the earth, and would understand those patterns as mythic.[42]

Similarly, the "Parson's Tale" and "Retraction" move us out of the world and into a timeless, stable zone, where we can put what we have experienced into a meaningful pattern.

Joyce's eternity is cosmic and godless; Chaucer's is the orthodox Christian heaven. But this eternity has required a travel through and an acceptance of the imperfect world. Of Chaucer, Charles Muscatine writes:

> Serious irony can be made finally to expose the instability of this brittle world and by implication to turn our attention to a stable world of faith in God. Chaucer was always a Christian, then, and that solution for Chaucer lay beyond irony. The faith of the Retractation, of the Troilus Epilogue, of even the Nun's Priest's Tale, is a grand and final thing, and it is validated by the rich experience that has gone into the ironic vision even as the latter is finally transcended. This then, I should call. . .a final consequence of it [i.e., the ironic vision].[43]

I would argue that it is the same in Joyce. In both works irony is ultimately left off, the "innocently unaware" character is gone, and we hear a new, unusual voice--a powerful and affirmative voice--telling us how things really stand. Whether or not we find the "Amen" and the "Yes" convincing is for us to decide for ourselves. We may not believe the writers have succeeded in reconciling the world with eternity in the end, bringing all things to some kind of Christian or mythical unity. The point is that the "Parson's Tale" and "Retraction" and "Penelope" are not meant ironically.

## Characters

There are significant similarities between characters in Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales. Molly Bloom is frequently touted a reincarnation of the Wife of Bath,[44] Joyce presents "a franklin that hight Lenehan" (U 835, 837), Gerty MacDowell tries to be a lady after the manner of the Prioress, the Citizen exhibits the impatience of the churls. Joyce uses established character types and individualizes them, as Chaucer did. Though there is no definitive proof that Joyce drew directly on Chaucer, the fact that Joyce loved the "General Prologue," approved Louis Gillet's assertion of Chaucerian influence, and in at least one instance--that of Molly Bloom--created a character visibly Chaucerian, all point to a real, if indirect, connection between the two writers. Two examples of character similarity are worth exploring: first, that of Molly Bloom and the Wife of Bath, and second, Leopold Bloom and Chaucer the pilgrim.

Hard proof is lacking, but the many likenesses between "Penelope" and the "Wife of Bath's Prologue" do suggest the latter to have been a major influence for Molly's monologue. Both women seem to ramble from one topic to another, they go on and on so that the pieces reach extraordinary length, and they assert strong opinions which are women-oriented, a kind of surprise in works which have been predominantly male-centered. Furthermore, their preoccupations coincide, as do their views on those topics.

Both women are concerned about the loss of their youth, but will not allow it to curtail their enjoyment of life. Says the Wife:

> But age, allas! that al wole envenyme,
> Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith.

> Lat go, farewel! the devel go therwith!
> The flour is goon, ther is namoore to telle,
> The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle;
> But yet to be right myrie wol I fonde. (III 474ff.)

Molly, some twenty years younger and that much more vehement, decides: "I suppose he thinks Im finished out and laid on the shelf well Im not no nor anything like it" (U 1695). Despite their age they can still enjoy the prospect of a younger man. At the funeral of her fourth husband, the Wife sets eyes on her next matrimonial victim.

> As help me God! whan that I saugh hym go
> After the beere, me thoughte he hadde paire
> Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,
> That al myn herte I yaf unto his hoold.
> He was, I trowe, a twenty wynter oold,
> And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth;
> But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth. (III 596ff.)

Molly makes similar mental calculations as she considers a possible liaison with Stephen: "I suppose hes 20 or more Im not too old for him if hes 23 or 24" (U 1711); "a young boy would like me Id confuse him a little alone with him" (U 1639).

As Richard Ellmann has pointed out, both women feel that "sensual proclivities" ought to be indulged.[45] "Its only nature," Molly muses; "what else were we given all those desires for Id like to know" (U 1715, see also 1723). The Wife admits that she has always followed her "inclinacioun" (III 615), and comes out with some of the most marvelous lines in the language:

> Telle me also, to what conclusion,
> Were membres maad of generacion,
> And of so parfit wys a wight ywrought?
> Trusteth right wel, they were nat maad for noght.
> Glose whoso wole, and seye bothe up and doun,
> That they were maked for purgacioun
> Of uryne, and oure bothe thynges smale
> Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,
> And for noon oother cause,--sey ye no?
> The experience woot wel it is noght so. (III 115-24)

And both women say they are not particular whose affection they receive, "Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit. . .so that he liked me" (III 624-5); "no matter by who so long as to be in love or loved by somebody" (U 1715).

The point, however, is to hook a man, and it appears Molly and the Wife attended the same course in ensnaring a potential lover or mate. First of all, both find ways of enhancing their chances for "happening" to run into their desired object. Molly becomes interested in Boylan when she notices him eyeing her in the DBC, "and I went there for tea 2 days after in the hope but he wasnt" (U 1647), while the Wife attends all sorts of social events with the justification, ". . .what wiste I wher my grace/ Was shapen for to be, or in what place?" (III 553-4). Once they have engaged their men in conversation they speak of dreams, as if to give the liaison supernatural substantiation: "I seyde I mette of hym al nyght" (III 575); "I let out too much the night before talking of dreams" (U 1647). And both believe their love-lives are completely under the control of such supernatural forces, as evidenced by Molly's faith in the cards (U 1711) and the Wife's in her astrological signs (III 616). An alluring appearance is of course a must; while Molly has her blouse "open in the front to encourage him" (U 1681), the Wife makes sure to show herself off in her "gaye scarlet gytes" (III 559). Both women enjoy the effects of a good glass of wine or ale (U 1661; III 475ff.).

Once married the women complain that their husbands don't provide them with enough clothes. "I have the violet pair I wore today thats all he bought me out of the cheque he got on the first. . .Ive no clothes at all," "I haven't even one decent nightdress" (U 1661, 1673), thinks Molly. The Wife rails at her husband:

> Sire, olde kaynard, is this thyn array?
> Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?
> She is honoured over al ther she gooth
> I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty clooth. (III 235)

They desire more control of the money to do what they would like, and are angry that funds are locked away from them since they believe they have the right and the ability to handle them. The Wife scolds, "But tel me this: why hydestow, with sorwe,/ The keyes of thy cheste awey fro me?/ It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee!" (III 308); while Molly thinks regretfully, "I could often have written out a fine cheque for myself and write his name on it for a couple of pounds a few times he forgot to lock it up" (U 1723). Given their lack of financial control, however, the women are forced to negotiate sexually for what they want.

> I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
> If that I felte his arm over my syde,
> Til he had maad his raunsoun unto me;
> Thanne wolde I suffre hym do his nycetee. (III 409)

And Molly complains, "he wont spend it Ill let him do it off on me behind provided he doesnt smear all my good drawers" (U 1723). Both women know exactly where they stand in relation to their husbands and resent the constant spousal complaints. "What do they ask us to marry them for if were *so* bad as all that come to yes because they cant get on without us" (U 1649). And the Wife: "What eyleth yow to grucche thus and grone?/. . . Ye be to blame, by God! I sey yow sooth" (III 443, 450). Both Molly and the Wife are vigorous, lusty women who are not afraid to hit below the belt in order to gain some control, and yet they can be kind once they feel they have a say. They ultimately only wish for respect, love, some freedom, and a good time every now and then.

Leopold Bloom and Chaucer the pilgrim are both pudgy, bumbling men with kind hearts and a lot of curiosity. Bloom keeps reminding us that he must try those Sandow's exercises, and in "Ithaca" we learn that he weighs "eleven stone and four pounds" (U 1461). Inviting Chaucer the pilgrim to tell his story, the Host comments:

> He in the waast is shape as wel as I;
> This were a popet in an arm t'enbrace
> For any womman, smal and fair of face.
> He semeth elvyssh by his contenaunce. (VII 700ff.)

Both Joyce's own illustration of Bloom and the Ellesmere portrait of Chaucer the pilgrim reveal short, round figures.[46] And it should not surprise us when we see the portrait of the poet Chaucer looking much like his Ellesmere counterpart in Thomas Hoccleve's De Regimine Principum.[47] Medievals did not share our scruples about separating the poet from the persona; in fact it made sense to them for Chaucer the pilgrim to resemble Chaucer the man.

On the other hand, we know Joyce cut a rather slimmer figure than Bloom, and had a far lighter complexion; it is Stephen Joyce most resembles physically. And yet we know that, like Stephen, Bloom embodies many characteristics of James Joyce. It is as though, by making Bloom physically so different from himself, Joyce was more able to look at those characteristics objectively, distance them from himself, and thereby treat them lightly.

What we have in Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales is the author's division of himself. He has separated his artistic side from his civic side and made that everyday self the object of laughter. Conversely, he has placed artistic abilities in characters who incur our disfavor. Stephen is an incomplete and rather unadmirable character; though his

mind is active one senses the want of expansion where his emotional and physical life are concerned. Stephen is the young Joyce, and in Ulysses is immature, callow, does not feel the need to eat, wash, or dress as others do. His inner withdrawal from the people of Dublin, his exile, is self-willed and fatuous. One feels he could use a dose of Bloomian consideration and humor. Similarly, the Pardoner of the Canterbury Tales is the most artistically accomplished of the pilgrims, and yet we feel put off by him as well. His story is so beautifully crafted that he manages to dupe the pilgrims; we are repulsed by his offer of pardons when he sees how he has entranced the group and can cheat a few pence from his fellow-travelers. Yet Chaucer is clearly present in this story. Even as he is condemning the base, monetary motives of the Pardoner, he is pointing out how powerful is the gifted storyteller. Chaucer and Joyce both raise questions about the artist in society, and do it by contrasting a thin, self-conscious artist with a round, world-loving, older man.

This jollier fellow becomes something of a joke, and yet it is this character who controls how we gauge our own perspective on the work. Bloom's relationship with Dublin shows us how to judge that city; Chaucer the pilgrim controls our view of the society represented by the Canterbury pilgrims. Through their spectacles we come to our conception of the meaning of the work. It is not the artist in the works, then, but the civic-minded bumbler who leads us to the authorial point of view. In this way Bloom and Chaucer the pilgrim become laughable stand-ins for the authors themselves. They are the personae upon whom the entire tone of the work is based.

## The Journey

From even before the Odyssey, life has been seen as a journey along a road or river, and in most traditional treatments of the theme, the importance of the journey lies in the destination.[48] Odysseus only undergoes his adventures through a desire to get home and to reclaim the roles of ruler, father, and husband that Ithaca represents; Aeneas is driven, often in spite of his fatigue and desires to the contrary, to found the eternal city of Rome; Dante moves through hell and purgatory to find paradise. Insofar as the Canterbury Tales and Ulysses are modelled on these older works, they, too, show concern for their destinations. The pilgrims do seek the shrine of St. Thomas, who "them hath holpen whan that they were seeke," while Bloom, like Odysseus, returns after wandering to his home and familiar bed.

And yet, our two pilgrimages are ones quite different from the traditional model. While the goal of the quest may be noble, it seems subordinate to other concerns. In Ulysses, what matters more than Bloom's return home to Molly is his quasi-communion with Stephen, whether it be in the drinking of the cocoa, the mutual urination, or the shared conversation. Similarly, the trip in the Canterbury Tales seems merely a means for bringing together a group of loquacious and excitable pilgrims from different classes to tell all sorts of stories.

Therefore, the most obvious characteristic about these pilgrimages is that they are not spiritual but secular. Chaucer's pilgrims may have a pious goal but their taletelling game, albeit containing religious elements, is a worldly pursuit for a real prize: a free dinner. Apparently this is not unlike the pilgrimages that actually took place in the

late Middle Ages. For most people those trips were an excuse for tourism, for meeting new people, having a good time, and seeing interesting sights.[49] And this fact, known to Chaucer's audience, would have supplied humor, as the chasm between the pilgrims' behavior and the piety they should have been exhibiting on their trip became ever greater and more blatant--finally to be cut off by the "Parson's Tale." It is important to note that it is the audience, not the pilgrims, who perceive this disparity. In Ulysses, Bloom actually partakes of more religious ceremony during his pilgrimage through Dublin than the Canterbury travelers do. He not only goes to mass, but attends a funeral service and burial as well. Aside from this there are constant reminders of the Church all around him, and he ponders the effects of dogma and ritual. Such observations lend credibility to arguments that Joyce partially structured Ulysses on the mass or the stations of the cross.[50] Furthermore, they emphasize how Joyce wished, like Chaucer, to outline the vast gulf between how people actually live their lives in this world and how, ideally or even practically, a good life should be lived. It is we, the readers, who perceive this. The circumstances of this world make it well nigh impossible to achieve the forgiving, selfless, peaceful, loving attitude of the ideal Christian, and this is the more painfully obvious when, in Ulysses, the man most Christ-like in the book turns out to be a Jew unschooled in the commands of the New Testament. Bloom is like Chaucer the pilgrim, who, as Donald Howard writes, "stumbles into Christian charity unawares. We, with the implied author, perceive his intellectual errors, but his foolish generosity infects us all the same."[51]

Hence, the wayfaring motif is put to new purpose. In both Ulysses

and the Canterbury Tales we are asked to identify to a great extent with the main or morally correct character(s) and move along the way with them, while rejecting the uncharitable approaches suggested by figures like the Citizen or the Summoner. In this sense, both works are "didactic" (though not to the degree that the word is generally applied to a specific literature with the aim of moral instruction). The wayfaring, life-as-pilgrimage motif is used to present the world to us. But because the mediators of the message, that is, Bloom and Chaucer the pilgrim, are for different reasons unaware of what they are presenting, it is the reader who becomes Everyman, choosing between the presented possibilities. To look at it another way, the works are, for the reader, a kind of Bildungsroman, teaching him or her about life in the world. Instead of the education of the wayfaring characters, we have the education of the reader.

## Effects of Serial Publication

As I mentioned above, the forms of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales reflect their "medieval" method of composition, a method consisting of "superimpositions, adjustments, accomodations" as Robert Jordan writes.[52] Such a method of composition in turn depends on how the work will be presented, whether orally to an audience, in print to a solitary reader, in segments or all at once, with pictures or without, with music or without, and so forth. And though Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales could be seen to differ in this respect, with Joyce writing for a solitary reader and Chaucer writing for a live, dramatic reading, I would argue that their ends were rather more similar than different.

First of all, it is clear that Chaucer looked beyond his oral audience to a solitary reader when we consider his oft-quoted line, "Turne over the leef and chese another tale" (I 3177). He was very concerned that scribes copy his works carefully, so that posterity might read them unblemished, as evidenced in the Troilus (V 1795) and in his short poem, "To Adam, his Owne Scriveyn."[53] And Joyce, we know, loved music and the sound of words, and wrote for the ear perhaps even more than for the eye. He often read to friends from Ulysses, made a recording of a passage, and later said that the obscurity of Finnegans Wake would vanish if people would only read it aloud. Hence both writers were concerned with oral delivery as well as visual perusal. A somewhat more neglected aspect is that each wrote with the knowledge that his grand work would be presented at first in fragments; that is, both Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales were "published" serially.

Ulysses came out in segments in the Little Review from 1918-1920, and the Canterbury Tales, we believe, was read--"published"--a few stories at a time to the court over a period of several years.[54] No one has studied how the reactions of readers and listeners to the "published" material affected the composition of later episodes, and indeed this is a difficult chore and of tentative value, since one cannot hope to come to a clear answer. However, we must keep in mind the fact that both writers, before they had finished their works, were already getting responses to their early fragments, and might well have formulated the later parts or reshaped the whole of the work with these reactions in mind.

Ulysses, for example, was exciting all manner controversy, ultimately

even a law suit. The Little Review carried a section called "The Reader Critic," where anxious readers would ask the editors, for instance, "Now tell the truth,--do you yourselves know where the story is at the present moment, how much time has elapsed,--just where are we? Have you any clue as to when the story will end?";[55] with the editor's proud reply, "Joyce has perfected a technique that has enabled him to avoid almost all but those rabid for literature."[56] There were, of course, animated discussions about Joyce's "cloacal obsession," as H.G. Wells called it.[57] When the January 1920 issue was suppressed by the authorities, one reader wrote, "surely the post office authorities should recognize that only a few read him [Joyce], and those few not just the kind to have their whole moral natures overthrown by frankness about natural functions."[58] To this a Bostonian replied:

> The mistake you people make is in thinking that we "prudes" who don't like Joyce are concerned with morals. . . .Does morality have anything to do with the average person's desire for privacy concerning the "natural functions"? Not at all; it is delicacy, lack of vulgarity. . . .The only cure for the nausea he causes is the thought that "only a few read him."[59]

And to this a poet made reply, "If I can eat I can eliminate--it is logic . . .My machinery is built that way"; however, she then tellingly went on to admit, "I have not read 'Ulysses.' As story it seems impossible --to James Joyce's style I am not yet quite developed enough--makes me difficulty."[60] Indeed, much of the discussion in the Little Review centered on Joyce's obscurity, with most readers unhappy about it. "Joyce will have to change his style if he wants to get on. Very few have the time or patience to struggle with his impressionistic stuff-- to get nothing out of it even then."[61] Or, "The impressionistic prose

of James Joyce begins to be a bit bewildering, even to those who believe that he is on the right track."[62] And, "I cannot see that the drivel that passes for conversation in the Joyce atrocity is improved by the omission of quotation marks. Joyce's pleasing habit of throwing chunks of filth into the midst of incoherent maunderings is not at all interesting and rather disgusting."[63] Despite these kinds of letters the editors of the Little Review, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, continued staunchly to defend Joyce's work, with the latter writing that the artist "has no concern with audiences and their demands. . . .The only concern of the artist is to try in one short lifetime to meet. . .inner compulsions."[64]

Joyce was excited by the controversy his book brought about, and it may well have incited him to write even more explicitly of human "natural functions" in the episodes "Nausicaa" through "Penelope," in order to shock the prudes. For those episodes were written just during and after these discussions, and unlike their predecessors, there are "natural functions" present in every one of them. Furthermore, the complaints about Joyce's obscurity might also have deepened his commitment to become even murkier, for the episodes "Oxen of the Sun" through "Penelope" seem universally to be considered the most difficult.

Finally, Joyce's work attempted to become larger, more all-embracing or universal, just at the time when some significant readers began to question its general artistic value. As A. Walton Litz writes:

> The final stage in the growth of Ulysses marked a turning-point in Joyce's artistic development. It was during the last three years of composition (1919-1921) that he wrote the intricate later episodes and revised the opening chapters, seeking to fuse the entire work into an organic whole.[65]

This change came just after criticisms in the Little Review, one of the more considered ones being written by the artist Marsden Hartley:

> I wonder if we do not hear the strumming of the mosquitoe's wing a little excessively in Joyce. Is the space around things large enough? Does he care for entirety as much as the whimsie en passant?. . . .Artistry comes in fullness.[66]

And an even more condemning analysis came from the Times Literary Supplement, reprinted in the Little Review in 1920. Though the writer lauded Joyce's "courage" and his accurate depiction of life, the question of artistic consequence arose again.

> Faced, as in the Cemetery scene, by so much that, in its restless scintillations, in its irrelevance, its flashes of deep significance succeeded by incoherent inanities, seems to be life itself, we have to fumble rather awkwardly if we want to say what else we wish; and for what reason a work of such originality yet fails to compare. . .with "Youth" or "Jude the Obscure." It fails, one might say simply, because of the comparative poverty of the writer's mind. But it is possible to press a little further and wonder whether we may not refer our sense of being in a bright and yet somehow strictly confined apartment rather than at large beneath the sky to some limitation imposed by the method as well as by the mind. Is it due to the method that we feel neither jovial nor magnanimous, but centred in a self which in spite of its tremor of susceptibility never reaches out or embraces or comprehends what is outside and beyond?[67]

This anonymous essay then appeared, three years after the publication of Ulysses, in the Common Reader of Virginia Woolf. And after this statement we see Joyce writing "Ithaca" in 1921, where the characters do stand "at large beneath the sky," and where Joyce deliberately uses an expansive and objective style to get "outside and beyond" Bloom and Stephen.

Perhaps it is ridiculous to suggest any sort of causal connection between readers' responses such as these and the writing Joyce undertook after. For there is the possibility that Joyce never looked beyond his

own pages in the Little Review to these discussions of his work, and had he read them, why should he have been affected by their criticisms? Nonetheless, the readers' views do underscore for us the fact that toward the end, Joyce did become stylistically more obscure, sexually more candid, and gave Ulysses a certain unity and a greater significance with his revisions of the earlier episodes and his composition of "Circe" and the "Nostos" episodes. Even if ultimately of little significance, the readers' opinions and their temporal relationship to Joyce's alterations are certainly interesting. If Joyce was not responding directly to criticisms, then we must look to the changes in his circumstances and his interests which might help to explain why there is such a difference between the beginning and the end of Ulysses. First, however, I would like to show how the piecemeal "publication" of the Canterbury Tales might have influenced Chaucer's attitude toward the whole of that work.

Unlike Joyce, Chaucer was employed at the court. It was a time of vicious political in-fighting, and he had to tread lightly, writing unpolitical ~~by~~ but pleasing poetry if he wished to remain in favor. At one point he even pleaded poetically for funds, in his 'Complaint to his Purse": "To yow, my purse, and to noon other wight/ Complayne I, for ye be my lady dere!/ I am so sory, now that ye been lyght. . ." and so forth. Chaucer concluded with an Envoy to King Henry IV.

> O conquerour of Brutes Albyon,
> Which that by lyne and free eleccion
> Been verray kyng, this song to yow I sende;
> And ye, that mowen alle oure harmes amende,
> Have mynde upon my supplicacion![68]

Such was the position of the poet and civil servant in the late Middle Ages.

This envoy shows how tactfully Chaucer made his request and, needless to say, he got what he asked for. It is important always to remember, in reading Chaucer, that his position was relatively insecure, for this must have had an impact on the subject matter and style of his poetry. Furthermore, he wrote not only for the solitary reader but for oral delivery as well, and hence the needs and circumstances of a sizeable courtly audience must be taken into account. Moreover, as regards his serial publication, we must conclude with Bertrand Bronson that Chaucer's first concern "was, obviously, to finish pieces of moderate length, which might be heard at a single sitting. For his conditions, the short story in verse was the ideal form."[69] If he later chose to fit these smaller pieces into a more complex form, very well, but in the meantime, his serial form encouraged him to produce "small and self-contained units,"[70] both morally instructive and amusing, which could be read on one afternoon. Only later would he have returned to the larger design, so that he might place those units in the most desirable order, adding some jokes or proverbs, if these proved popular, or even reassigning tales to different pilgrims. One effect I believe has to recur as often as it does in Chaucer's poetry because of its success with his audience is the cry, "awak!" It first appears in the Book of the Duchess.

> This messager com fleyinge faste
> And cried, "O, ho! awake anoon!"
> Hit was for noght; there herde hym non.
> "Awake!" quod he, "whoo ys lyth there?"
> And blew his horn ryght in here eere,
> And cried "Awaketh!" wonder hye. (BD 178-183)

Then we have it again in the House of Fame (II 556-560) and in the Troilus (I 729-756). Such a cry would have roused a lethargic, overfed audience to attention as well as amused them with its double applicability.

Finally, by saying in the "General Prologue," "Also I prey yow foryeve it me,/ Al have I nat set folk in hir degree/ Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde" (I 743-45), Chaucer tactfully--if indeed these lines were written early on--left himself space to rearrange his work later, placing nobles next to churls, reassigning tales to different tellers, and making shifts and additions to the work as a whole. It is likely he added the "Parson's Tale" and "Retraction" (Fragment X) when he realized he would not have the time to complete his large plan, wishing at least to give the Tales an ending.

Both writers, then, published their works serially but gave themselves the freedom to amend the final product so as to unify the parts into a whole. It is likely that the audience's reactions affected later work on the books, but since this cannot be proven unequivocally, we must look to other possible reasons why we see a substantial change in the style, tone, and subject matter from the early to the late work on both Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales.

* * *

When we look at all of the similar aspects of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales in combination--the form, tone, characters, theme, method--we see that they work together toward an expression of the full variety and complexity of life. Each literary aspect is the most all encompassing of its kind: the ironic tone allows for multiple meanings, the sheer number and variety of the characters strain the reader's ability to keep track, the pilgrimage-as-life idea allows maximal flexibility on the author's choice of themes and subject matter, and the

medieval working methods involve a flexible framework which caters well to this inclusivity. The writers have made room for both comic and tragic happenings, and they have expanded the literary endeavor by their inclusion of themselves, making the work a study not only of the world of nature and society but of art as well. They have even deftly implicated the reader or listener in the whole process, so that the audience, distant as it may be from the authors' writing tables, is included. Finally, in their choices of literary devices and in their approaches, the writers have made certain to allow space for continued additions, should they desire or find a need for them.

In the following section I will focus on this freedom to amend, adopted by both authors, and suggest that the changes we experience from beginning to end of the works reflect and in fact incorporate shifts in historical ideas. Hence it will be necessary momentarily to review the historical circumstances of Chaucer's and Joyce's times.

# IV. The Writers and their Times

## Historical Circumstances

Historical circumstances are particularly important to consider here, given the many changes affecting people's lives at the time and the tremendous amount of time spent on each work. Joyce began Ulysses in 1914 and it was published in 1922; Chaucer's writing extended, we believe, from 1386 to his death in 1400. With this passing of time came not only a change in personal circumstances, but also in the larger political situation, both of which factors would have influenced the writers' outlook and attitude toward the work.

The periods just before and during the lifetimes of Chaucer and Joyce witnessed huge shifts in significant areas of life.[71] Both progress and decline in the 14th and 19th centuries underscore the instability of those ages, particularly in the areas of political organization, philosophical thought, natural disaster, ecclesiastical power, social stratification, economic life, education, scientific inquiry, technological innovation, and artistic expression.

Fourteenth-century England was fraught with political strife. Edward II had trouble with the Scots, and his inability to lead brought about his deposition and murder, by the wishes of his wife, no less. Edward III took over from his mother, and though he appears to have been a more competent king than his father, he committed his country to fight the French in what would become known as the Hundred Years' War. Next in line came Richard II, the grandson who got a lot of bad advice and who, after having done away with those he felt were traitors, was himself deposed and gotten rid of by the next king, Henry IV. A fortunate result of having such weak kings was the growth of parliamentary power,

especially in the House of Commons, which gained a strong hand in matters of justice and taxation.

Natural disasters caused innumerable problems. Famine in 1315 exacerbated the effects of an economic depression, and the Black Death, which most vehemently appeared in 1348 but struck again twice after, killed one third of the population. The most significant repercussions were economic and political. With the shortage of labor, wages increased substantially, there was an oversupply of goods with shrunken markets, and much arable land was left uncultivated. A resulting tension between landowners and workers brought about the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, and the trickery employed by young Richard II in squelching the uprising did not win him favor with his unhappy people.

In fact, social tension was so great that sumptuary laws were passed, indicating how each class was to dress; Robin Hood became a heroic figure. Yet to fund the war, the crown was forced to turn to the merchant class, a group growing rapidly on account of the prosperous wool and cloth trade. And such economic changes in turn signaled the end of the feudal era and the move toward capitalism.

The church was suffering during this century as well. The papacy was moved to Avignon for reasons of security. Meanwhile the well-known abuses of the Pope brought on reformist movements like that of Wyclif --which would set the stage for the Protestant Reformation--and heresies abounded. Finally, in 1378 a botched papal election resulted in the Great Schism, with a Pope each at Rome and Avignon, and sometimes a third in the wings. While all of this brought down the credibility of the papacy, it did have the advantage of bringing together artists and

thinkers--Petrarch, for instance--in Avignon, a place more accessible to Englishmen than was Rome.

One of these Englishmen was William of Ockham, who was called to Avignon to defend his notions on reason and faith. He held that the two were entirely incompatible, since all that we come to know we learn from the individual manifestations we perceive (the "accidents") rather than from any abstract entity (a "universal"), and hence there is no way we can argue the existence of God through reason, or on the basis of what we know. This is the opposite of what Aquinas had so systematically argued in the previous century. Even though his teachings were condemned, Ockham's ideas were "spreading like oil," as David Knowles writes, and his success is "proof that Ockham was no solitary innovator. His name and his works became famous because they exactly suited the temper and the tendencies of his age."[72]

Ockham's ideas, generally called "nominalist," in fact inspired scientific inquiry, and great advances were made in the fields of mathematics, motion, and optics, by people like Buridan and Oresme. Furthermore, technological progress changed all aspects of life. England achieved great victories against France in 1346 and 1356 with the skillful use of the new longbow; the invention of the cannon altered war methods radically. Better ships and navigational instruments facilitated trade and exploration, while every individual's life was affected by the development of the clock. Clocks were soon built which would not only tell time but give astronomical information and amuse with parades of puppets at each chiming. Many feeble-sighted must have welcomed the invention of eyeglasses.

Education was changing rapidly, with the most significant result being the rise in literacy. Copyists were flooded with requests for books. A sense of history was also emerging among the people; now was no longer a part of some eternal present, but was a time quite distinct from what came before and what was to come.[73] There was an interest in the ancients, who were definitely part of another time and place, and great debates were held concerning whether noble pagans would be saved or damned in the end. The rise of the vernacular as evidenced in Dante and Chaucer suggests a sense of national identity, while the reintroduction of portraiture implies a sense of self and a desire to be remembered by posterity. The tenor of the time was violent, death was everpresent, and many were overcome with feelings of imminent apocalypse. While some sought escape in mysticism or religiosity (for example Margery Kemp), others did in sensual pleasure (for example the heretics of the Free Spirit) and material comforts (like some of Chaucer's pilgrims), and yet others applied themselves pragmatically, seeking to make progress and straighten out existing problems despite a probable end of the world. Chaucer describes all of these types to some extent, but we sense from his poetry that he himself must have belonged to the last group, and that, as I have argued above, he in fact emphasized the need for and wisdom of such practical and judicious behavior in his works.

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were an equally unstable period, with amazing advances and simultaneous disasters.[74] The rate of technological progress was stupefying, with people's lives changed radically through the development of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the underground railway, photography, films, canned food,

not to mention the invention of dynamite, the expansion of the steel industry, and the development of reinforced concrete. These advances made possible other feats. In 1883 the first skyscraper was built in Chicago, and flying machines and automobiles were soon to arrive as well. Science kept pace: Darwin's Origin of Species was published in 1859; Pasteur developed his germ theory of disease and his method of "pasteurization"; Gregor Mendel conducted his experiments on heredity; x-rays and radium were discovered by Roentgen and the Curies, respectively; aspirin was invented; Freud founded psychoanalysis; and Einstein articulated his theories of relativity. In scholarship, new disciplines emerged, including archaeology, sociology, even literary history. And the arts went through countless phases, including romanticism, realism, neo-classicism, impressionism, naturalism, cubism, and so forth. It was a time of experimentation and innovation. Though developed throughout the century, however, the technological innovations made their first real impact on people's lives in the 1890s, when they were made available on the general market. As Norman Stone writes:

> There seemed to be no end to this process of improvement. In 1895 the novelist Henry James acquired electric lighting; in 1896 he rode a bicycle; in 1897 he wrote on a typewriter; in 1898 he saw a cinematograph. Within very few years, he could have had a Freudian analysis, travelled in an aircraft, understood the principles of the jet-engine or even of space-travel.[75]

This means that Joyce, born in 1882, was at a most impressionable age when many of these changes were taking place.

Simultaneously, there were destructive forces at work. Industrialization brought many people to the cities, and the poor pay, deplorable working conditions, desperate living circumstances, and unfriendly

relationships between workers and management created class tensions which ultimately led to the writings of Marx and Engels and the formation of a labor movement, not to mention radical liberal, socialist, and anarchist political factions. The established churches lost ground to the new materialist, realist points of view. Nietzsche declared that God was dead. Imperialism seemed to many a cure for the problems of unemployment and restricted trade (due to an economic slump and resultant protectionist measures), though it only served to shift focus from domestic problems and create tensions between the European powers. With such uneasy international relations, the powers concocted peacetime alliances which they felt would protect against war, though the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy, and the Franco-Russian alliance ultimately only served to drag everyone into the First World War. Had it not been for these alliances, for the dreadful advances made in weaponry, for the careful organization of military personnel, and the availability of large trained armies, the First World War would not have been as devastating as it was. Indeed, it might merely have remained a relatively small, local conflict. Tragically, however, it not only wiped out much of a generation of European men, but also changed most people's ideas about nations and governments, values previously believed in, and the power--or more accurately, lack of it--and moral responsibility of the individual.

What these periods have in common, then, is their instability--a constant play between progress and disaster. They share: the advent of war, made more devastating by improvements in war technology and transport; an expanding international trade with far-reaching changes in the

domestic economy; a more demanding merchant and middle class, leading to class conflict; an interest in technological innovation and scientific inquiry; a rise in literacy; and a decline in the power of the established Church.

## The Authors Themselves

Another factor one cannot ignore in determining the tenor of a work is the temperament of its author. Joyce grew up among confident Victorian writings, and within a rigid Jesuit educational and religious system against which he felt compelled to rebel. He rejected the church--or struggled to do so all his life--and as a young man advocated the cause of Ibsen and Hauptmann. The political experience of his youth was dominated by the quest for Irish Home Rule and the figure of Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell's downfall seemed to Joyce a prototype for the betrayal of the visionary by the mob of the ignorant and insensitive. This is how he saw his fellow Dubliners, and it became Joyce's personal mission to create a conscience for his race. By the time he wrote Ulysses we see in the irony both a recognition of the folly of such an ambition and the simultaneous belief in the nobility of the undertaking.

Leopold Bloom gives us a glimpse of some of Joyce's more human and generous impulses. Joyce sought to help his friends where he could, he was a concerned father, was, apparently, a faithful husband, enjoyed entertaining, had a marvelous sense of humor, and left enormous tips. On the other hand, as Ellmann's biography makes clear, Joyce was also much like Stephen, an arrogant, selfish, and demanding man who often taxed the patience, not to mention the pocketbooks, of those around him.

His wife Nora admitted that he was a difficult man to live with, and many of his statements are rather misogynistic, despite the fact that Joyce owed most of his existence as a writer to the selfless efforts of energetic and intelligent women. He lost or discarded many of his friends, and yet it seems he always had a dedicated bunch around him, willing to supply him with beds and ties and socks and even living accomodations.[76]

We know very little about Chaucer's personality; in fact, the "Chaucer" we feel we know tends to be the one we sense in the poetry, an "implied author" with whom we commune.[77] His life records do not once mention his having been a poet, and indeed, in the circles in which he moved he was probably first regarded as keeper of customs, diplomat, member of Parliament, or brother-in-law of John of Gaunt's mistress, all roles he did fill at various points in his life. Political involvement appealed to him, unlike Joyce, and he was in close touch with the nobility. His relationships with women seem to have left him with more respect and understanding for them than Joyce managed to muster. There is, however, the interesting and baffling connection of Chaucer with the legal case brought by Cecily Champaigne, "de raptu meo," where he is likely merely to have been a witness, and yet could have been the defendant to the charge of abduction or rape. In spite of this and other legal proceedings in which he was involved--mostly concerning financial matters--he was a religious man who gives all indication of having loved life.[78]

These stark differences between the two writers tend to obscure the similarities which, however, small in number, are yet quite important. Both Joyce and Chaucer were very interested in language and its

innovation. They delighted in flights of rhetoric, were avid readers on all subjects, and not only cited authorities in their works but developed "theories" of their own for their characters. Both men suffered economic hardship at some point, which creeps into their works, as does the evidence of their travel. They were witty, enjoyed performing their works and making others laugh. They liked a good story. However, they were fatalistic men, ultimately, and the Canterbury Tales and Ulysses both evidence a desire to unify people through charity; an idea which is not so surprising if we consider their common religious background. Both men had families and lived until about the age of sixty.

## Structural and Stylistic Shifts in the Work of Joyce and Chaucer

The fact that both writers travelled to different parts of Europe must be taken into consideration when we look at their work. For instance, critics ought to take greater account of what the last words of Ulysses --"Trieste-Zürich-Paris 1914-1921--signify. For not only did the writing of the work span many years, but Joyce himself was journeying from city to city as his protagonist wandered the streets of Dublin. Perhaps it is merely coincidence that Ulysses was begun in the same year as the First World War; a very real consequence of that conflict, however, was that Joyce was forced to leave Trieste for Zürich. The big structural shift toward the end of the novel corresponds fairly neatly with the end of the Great War, and Joyce's move to Paris. Therefore, if we look at the larger structural units of Ulysses we can divide Joyce's work into periods. The Trieste period produced the Telemachiad; Bloom came on the

scene and took shape in the Germanic atmosphere of Zürich; finally, the Paris period brought us "Oxen of the Sun" and the following, overwhelmingly linguistic-metaphysical episodes, not to mention the reworking of earlier chapters with the intention of making them conform to these more complex later ones. "Trieste-Zürich-Paris 1914-1921," then, tells us that Ulysses is a work place-and time-bound.

Literary historians have divided Chaucer's work into periods as well. We speak of Chaucer's "French," "Italian," and "English" periods. At first, he wrote under the influence of the French romances, clearly evident in his Book of the Duchess. Then his trip to Italy and subsequent acquaintance with the Italian writers (Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio in particular, not to mention the Ancients with whom they brought him in touch) changed his style and subject matter, resulting in a grand and harmonious work like Troilus and Criseyde. Finally, the "English period" marks another shift in Chaucer's style, where he comes into his own and produces particularly individualistic works, like the "Wife of Bath's Prologue," the "Canon's Yeoman's Tale," and the "Nun's Priest's Tale." There are quibbles among critics about the naming of these periods, but they serve to identify and characterize the shifts in Chaucer's poetry and are therefore useful.

Significant for the Canterbury Tales is that it partakes of both the "Italian" and "English" phases of Chaucer's writing. I will focus here on Fragment I, since it illustrates this shift visibly.[79] The "Knight's Tale" clearly belongs to the "Italian" works: it is based on a poem of Boccaccio and contains all the elegance and symmetry, the high style, and the philosophical tone we associate with those works. It is

a courtly, chivalric story, set in ancient times and full of pageantry and glamour. The characters on earth are balanced by a parallel complement of gods in the heavens, and the plot revolves around two cousins, Palamon and Arcite, who are of comparable nobility and prowess and are vying for the hand of one Emily. The poem is divided into four parts of roughly equal length, and is written in a highly rhetorical style. Its most salient feature is, perhaps, its philosophical tone; ideas and direct translations from Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy abound. Hence the "Knight's Tale" is characterized by unity, harmony, and grandeur.

Immediately after this, however, we read the infamous "Miller's Tale," a bawdy, dirty, but very funny story. It is also concerned with the efforts of two young men to win a lady, but there is nothing noble about their desire or the means they devise to obtain their end. As Donald Howard writes:

> With repeated lines snatched from key moments in the Knight's story, with fancy love-talk used incongruously, with a parallel situation prompted by motives of a wholly different character, with farts and hot coulters for a tournament, the Miller's Tale parodies the literary qualities of the Knight's and ridicules the circumstance it describes, the resolution it comes to, and the tone in which it is told.[80]

The "Miller's Tale" looks back at the "Knight's Tale" and, by poking fun at it, changes it for us. We are made to see the ridiculous side of the chivalric way of life and cannot help but laugh at the pomp and philosophy surrounding something so down-to-earth as marriage or sex. Then the Reeve gets back at the Miller with his tale, becoming a bit more crude and cruel, and afterward the Cook begins with what looks as though it would have become the crudest tale of all, were it complete. Donald Howard rightly emphasizes the "degenerative movement[81] in this Fragment.

We begin with something stately and end with something disgusting.

This movement also reveals for us the shift from the "Italian" to the "English" style; the "Knight's Tale" gives us the former, the tales of the Miller and Reeve demonstrate the latter. In an interesting article, Stephen Knight has argued that the morally good characters in Chaucer remain medieval "types," but that the villainous characters are novel and individualistic.[82] This is pertinent to our sense of a shift here, between the noble characters of the "Knight's Tale," who represent an old order, and the freer, rascally population of the "Miller's Tale." Brewer has called these the "official" and "unofficial cultures" which Chaucer is depicting vying for power on the road to Canterbury and, more generally, in English society,[83] and Howard speaks of the Knight's world as in a state of obsolescence, a chivalric social order on the way out.[84] Indeed, as demonstrated above, Chaucer's society was changing rapidly, and the middle and peasant classes were moving up, and tapping on the doors of the nobility. They were members of the "unofficial culture," as yet unrecognized by the crown and clergy as a force in society, but emerging slowly as a powerful group to be reckoned with--witness the Peasant's Revolt, 1381. Chaucer describes his chivalrous Knight as an ideal on the old pattern, and in fairly abstract terms:

> A Knyght ther was, and that a worthy man,
> That fro the tyme that he first bigan
> To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
> Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie. (I 43-46)

The Miller, on the other hand, is an immediate physical presence. Though he conforms to what people expected of a Miller, to a "type," the description is not at all abstract but vivid and detailed.

> The Millere was a stout carl for the nones;
> Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.
> That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,
> At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.
> He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;
> Ther was no dore that he nolde heve or harre,
> Or breke it at a rennynge with his heed.
> His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
> And ther to brood, as though it were a spade.
> Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
> A werte, and ther stood a toft of herys,
> Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
> His nosethirles blake were and wyde. (I 545-57)

Because of the details of his might and his appearance, the barnyard similes and the occasional alliteration, this description contains more movement and life than that of the Knight.

Stephen Knight goes further and argues that such differences between Chaucer's good characters and his churls parallel the differences in thought prevalent at the time, between Realism and Nominalism. The old, Realist position advocated the existence of universals, sublime essences which made up a Reality far greater than any mere humans could attain to. Objects in the world were only accidents, part of a lesser reality. In terms of literature, then, the Realist position posits that:

> . . .all men are in reality the same. And within the larger similarity there are smaller similarities--types of men. There are good men, bad men, pious men, blasphemous men. The actual private existence and appearance of the man is unimportant compared with his type, his placing in one of a certain number of ideal types. . . .this is clearly the theory of allegorical literature. . .[and] also impinges upon non-conceptual literature like medieval romance. Sir Orfeo is not an individual character, he is a perfect noble king. We have no concept at all of what he look like.[85]

But Ockham and his Nominalist followers persuaded most people, by the end of the 14th century, that reality was not some unfathomable essence, but that which they could see, hear, taste, smell, and feel. And this is what we get in the description of the Miller, line after line of

sense impressions. What makes Chaucer's poetry seem real, then, are these naturalistic details, and it was these elements which more and more people in his own time were perceiving as "real" as well.

The description of the Knight in the "General Prologue," it must be admitted, does contain details, the battles in which he fought, for instance; and the portrait of the Miller contains elements like his thievery, which belonged to the medieval "type." The descriptions were, after all, written at the same time. But as we weigh the evidence we see that these two characters and their stories nonetheless exemplify, on the one hand, the outgoing old order and traditional mode of thought, and, on the other hand, the incoming new order and emerging Nominalist philosophy. Chaucer probably felt freer to experiment and innovate with his less distinguished characters, since none of these lower class sorts could have been present at his readings to take offense.

The structural counterpart for Chaucer's stylistic change is his incorporation of a stately "Knight's Tale" into a motley Canterbury frame. The themes of love, order, and authority which are emphasized in that story are not only parodied in the "Miller's Tale," but are subjected, as they recur in their interlaced fashion, to repeated scrutiny in many contexts of many tales. Thus, the ordered view of the "Knight's Tale" fizzles into a variety of perspectives, and we are free to choose which concept of love or authority seems truest or most desirable to us--though there is a strong suggestion that one ought to go along with the noble view. Such a multi-faceted presentation, though hinted at in the early poetry--for example in the cacophonous bird parliament--has, on such a grand scale, the impact of something entirely new in Chaucer.

Similarly, we see Joyce straying away from his dominant style in Ulysses first, tentatively, when he momentarily leaves his protagonist alone in "Hades." Until now, we have been in either Stephen's or Bloom's mind, or watching those characters guided along by an omniscient third person narrator. Then, all of a sudden, the narrator leaves Bloom altogether to catch the conversation between Cunningham and Power:

> --I was in mortal agony with you talking of suicide before Bloom.
> --What? Mr Power whispered. How so?
> --His father poisoned himself. . . .
> He glanced behind him to where a face with dark thinking eyes followed towards the cardinal's mausoleum. Speaking.
> --Was he insured? Bloom asked. (U 207-9)

This is our first indication that we will move out from the two main characters into Dublin, and see what the Dubliners think of Bloom. From here we must take in other points of view, and this is most visibly affirmed in the next episode, "Aeolus," when we come across its large headlines. Even if we discount the headlines for having been added later--in 1921 when Joyce recast his earlier chapters--the episode begins to reach out for other points of view, as Bloom is not always on the scene and we see from the action and dialogue how the Dubliners treat their protagonist. Thus Joyce, like Chaucer, changes his style and structure to incorporate other perspectives.

But Joyce does not stop here, leaving well enough alone; he shifts his entire narrational stance. At first, the plural perspectives he presents are only those of the Dubliners, coming to us through a consistent third person omniscient narrator, as in the "Hades" example above. But then the narrational position moves, so that the narrator operates under certain limitations of character--as in "Cyclops"--or

of linguistic possibility--as in the other episodes, where Joyce chooses a specific and limited range of language, be it that of Anglo-Saxon prose or the catechism. With this shift from the omniscient narrator to one of linguistic experiment we are often involved in such intricate language that the reading becomes very difficult and one has the sense of being unmoored. As I have argued, however, the authorial voice is discernible despite the movement of the narration. It is one mind which has put together the whole, and one can generally find one's way back to a stable creating cosciousness.

Language provides the difficulty; while it was a vehicle before, it has now become an object. "Oxen of the Sun" attempts to relate what happens at the hospital, and every now and then one does have a sense of being blessed with some conventional narration. But even then the rowdy drunkenness and eccentricity of those characters makes comprehension cloudy. The little world presented there is not our world, and the language is not ours, either, so that we have neither of the two holds we can generally count on. "Circe" takes this method to an extreme, and foreshadows Finnegans Wake with its passages of sleepy, dream-like language.

This Paris period, as I have called Joyce's linguistic phase, is characterized by Joyce's "centrifugal" method, with its "ideal of inclusiveness." Such an approach is opposed to the earlier "centripetal" one, with its "ideal of dramatic compression," as Walton Litz explains in The Art of James Joyce.

> This movement from 'centripetal' to 'centrifugal' writing during the evolution of Ulysses mirrors a general change in Joyce's artistic stance. A process of selectivity harmonizes with his early notion of the 'epiphany', which assumes that it

> is possible to reveal a whole area of experience through a single gesture or phrase. In shaping the Portrait Joyce sought continually to create 'epiphanies', and to define Stephen's attitudes by a stringent process of exclusion; later in his career he attempted to define by a process of inclusion. The earlier method implies that there is a significance, a 'quidditas', residing in each thing, and that the task of the artist is to discover this significance by a process of distillation. In the later method it is the artist who creates the significance through language.[86]

Like Chaucer, Joyce undergoes a "technical revolution," as Litz calls it, which reveals not only a new style but a complete shift in aesthetic and in purpose. Joyce, instead of seeking the essence of a thing, now adds more and more phrases--even into the last stages of the proofs--in an attempt to come closer and closer to an exact creation of the moment in the novel. The language attempts to bring the thing or mood into existence, rather than to describe what is already there in nature.

This shift parallels the movement around the turn of the century, from a Naturalistic to a Symbolist point of view in the arts. Naturalism sought to capture the stark reality of existence; Symbolism wished to explore past the surface appearances of things. Arthur Symons describes the shift in his 1899 book, The Symbolist Movement in Literature, an important work which actually brought the whole trend into focus at the time.

> The forces which mould the thought of men change, or men's resistance to them slackens; with the change of men's thought comes a change of literature, alike in its inmost essence and in its outward form: after the world has starved its soul long enough in the contemplation and the re-arrangement of material things, comes the turn of the soul; and with it comes the literature of which I write in this volume, a literature in which the visible world is no longer a reality, and the unseen world no longer a dream.[87]

In Joyce, it is Finnegans Wake which most obviously moves into the

unseen world. But the turning point from the seen to the unseen occurs, as I have argued, toward the end of Ulysses. There, Joyce leaves off his emphasis on "the contemplation and the re-arrangement of material things" and looks to the spiritual and metaphysical. Even "Ithaca," the socalled scientific episode, is looking for the unseen relations between people and things, contemplating the "unknown," the "void incertitude," and the "apathy of the stars." It is the episode which connects Bloom with his universe, and actually frees him from his material, Dublin existence; as he drifts off to sleep he flies through "everchanging tracks of neverchanging space" (U 1631).

## Conclusion

This makes both Joyce and Chaucer artists of transition, whose own careers and works reflect the transitional historical periods of which they are a part. The many changes in people's lives in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries brought about a new view of reality, and Chaucer demonstrates both the material changes and the shift in perception. Joyce, too, records the tenor of his time, including the material details--newspapers, clothes, trams--and the change in emphasis from these material things to inward states.

Chaucer's work, however, testifies to a shift toward naturalism. His art witnesses a movement away from the allegorical world of "types" to very real characters with unique personalities in vivid detail. Joyce, on the other hand, moves away from naturalistic to symbolic portrayal. His characters come to stand for mythical types, most clearly evident in Finnegans Wake, but emerging at the end of Ulysses as well. Joyce

ended his career looking at universals, while Chaucer was leaving the universals for the realm of particulars. Chaucer leans toward the historical and naturalistic while Joyce takes up the ahistorical and symbolic. Indeed, the careers of the two could be said to mirror each other. Having written dream visions (Book of the Duchess, House of Fame, Parliament of Fowls) and a history (Troilus), Chaucer winds up with a depiction of common folk in contemporary England (Canterbury Tales). Conversely, Joyce begins with his portraits of folk in contemporary Ireland (Dubliners), moves through a history of his own consciousness (Portrait) and ends up with his own dream vision (Finnegans Wake).

What we have in Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales are the transitional points of two artists' careers, where the everswinging pendulum between accurate depiction of appearances and emphasis on inner truth is at approximately the same point. Both artists were interested in presenting reality and the truth, and at this point in their careers they were choosing a fairly naturalistic method. Chaucer apologizes:

> But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,
> That ye n'arette it nat my vileynye,
> Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere,
> To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,
> Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
> For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
> Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
> He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan,
> Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
> Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,
> Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
> Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe. (I 725ff.)

Joyce gives the same excuse for using foul language in a letter of 1906, when he writes, "he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard."[88]

This naturalism comes forth not only in speech or the appearances

of people and objects but also emerges in the form of the work itself. The fictional content of narratives is often derived from existing sources of another era--and it is no less true of the individual Canterbury Tales than of the general plot of Ulysses--so that it is the form, broadly defined, of the story's reworking which provides us with the locus of historical meaning and which best indicates the writer's originality and ideas. Both Joyce and Chaucer manage through their highly original forms to convince us that the picture of their time is true. Both place their works in contemporary surroundings, with the world portrayed as a confusing one, like an interlace or labyrinth, where there is no order or hierarchy, with leads which go this way and that, with cruel people and uncomfortable situations, and with the constant recognition that Canterbury and Jerusalem or the "Orangegroves and melonfields north of Jaffa" and Gibralter are a long way away. We may get nearer through Bloom's reveries and we may approach the shrine of St. Thomas, but in neither book do we actually reach the goal. As readers, we sent off into "infinity," as Joyce calls it, and are left to draw conclusions for ourselves.

By comparing these two works I think we can come closer to seeing the important correlation of historical circumstances--filtered through the writer's consciousness and imagination--and form. The times were perplexing and threatening, and the complex forms of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales give us full measure of that confusion and fear. In the journey of Everyman we encounter chaos. The writers both indicate that a solution can come through the charitable treatment of one's fellow human beings; but lacking that dream's fulfillment the works end in the

writers' depiction of an "equanimity" reached in the realization of man's powerlessness in the hands of time or of God. Seeing Chaucer's Canterbury Tales through Joyce's Ulysses allows us to use modern conceptions--of irony and naturalism, for instance--to explain the mysterious way in which Chaucer's work, even 600 years later, remains accessible to us today. Many of the deepest concerns of our own age are to be found as readily in the Canterbury Tales as they are in the work so representative of our own century, Ulysses.

The similarities of Ulysses and the Canterbury Tales suggest no direct influence of Chaucer on Joyce, but they do point--and it is perhaps a more interesting notion--to some similar effects of history and individual artistic temperament on literary form. I hope my study will confirm that through the formal analysis of literature we can posit the existence of pivotal points in the history of ideas, and verify these with reference to historical research outside the literary work itself. Indeed, if Joyce's Ulysses and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales are significantly similar, expressing opposing movements in thought toward and away from naturalism, then perhaps we can look more intelligently at our own historical moment by studying the problems of Chaucer's time. Such considerations and such an approach might give us a way, as Charles Muscatine writes, to make literary research and literary understanding contribute to the complicated whole that is the history of our culture.[89]

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75. Stone, 15.
76. See Ellmann JJ.
77. Howard, "Chaucer the Man," 45.
78. See Kane, George. Chaucer, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984; and Brewer, D.S. Chaucer, London: Longmans, Greens and Co., 1953.
79. Howard, Idea, 227-247; Muscatine, Poetry, 126.
80. Howard, Idea, 238-239.
81. Ibid., 245.
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83. Brewer, Tradition, 125, 120ff.
84. Howard, Idea, 94ff.
85. Knight, 38.
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89. Muscatine, Poetry, 5.

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