

ulysses analysis

Ulysses Analysis: A Deep Dive into Joyce's Masterpiece

Introduction:

James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a monumental work of modernist literature, remains both celebrated and notoriously challenging. This comprehensive analysis aims to unlock the complexities of this epic novel, providing a roadmap for understanding its narrative structure, thematic concerns, and enduring impact. We'll dissect key chapters, explore the symbolism interwoven throughout, and delve into the profound influence *Ulysses* has had on subsequent literary movements. Whether you're a seasoned Joyce scholar or a newcomer intimidated by its reputation, this guide will equip you with the tools to appreciate the brilliance and power of this literary giant. Prepare to embark on a journey through the streets of Dublin, a journey into the mind of Leopold Bloom, and a journey into the heart of modern literature.

I. Narrative Structure: A Day in the Life, Reimagined

Ulysses meticulously follows the peregrinations of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus through Dublin on a single day, June 16, 1904. This seemingly simple premise belies the novel's intricate structure, mirroring Homer's *Odyssey* in a groundbreaking parallel narrative. Each episode corresponds to an episode in the *Odyssey*, not in a direct, literal sense, but through thematic and stylistic parallels. Joyce masterfully employs various literary techniques—stream of consciousness, interior monologue, and shifting narrative perspectives—to create a kaleidoscopic portrayal of Dublin life and the inner lives of his characters. The episodic structure, while demanding, offers a unique and rewarding reading experience, revealing subtle connections and recurring motifs as the narrative unfolds. Understanding the Homeric parallels enhances comprehension, highlighting Joyce's deliberate choices in characterization and symbolism. For example, Bloom's wandering mirrors Odysseus' journey home, while Stephen's intellectual struggles reflect Telemachus' search for identity.

II. Thematic Exploration: Identity, Memory, and the Modern Condition

Ulysses transcends a simple narrative; it's a profound exploration of universal themes. Identity, both individual and national, is a central concern. Bloom, a Jewish advertising canvasser, grapples with his place in a predominantly Catholic society, while Stephen, a young artist, wrestles with his intellectual and artistic ambitions. Their contrasting identities and paths converge and diverge throughout the day, highlighting the complexities of self-discovery in a rapidly changing world. Memory plays a pivotal role, shaping the characters' perceptions and actions. Past traumas and experiences constantly resurface, shaping their present realities. The novel masterfully blends the past and present, blurring the lines between memory and experience. The modern condition, characterized by alienation, disillusionment, and the breakdown of traditional societal structures, is powerfully depicted through the characters' interactions and their observations of Dublin's bustling streets.

III. Key Characters: Bloom, Stephen, and the Dublin Landscape

Leopold Bloom, the central character, represents the ordinary man grappling with the complexities of modern life. His journey is one of physical and emotional wandering, mirroring the internal struggles of a man searching for meaning and connection. Stephen Dedalus, the young intellectual, embodies the alienation of the artist grappling with artistic inspiration and the search for identity. His sharp intellect and rebellious spirit contrast with Bloom's more subdued nature. The city of Dublin itself acts as a significant character, a living, breathing entity that shapes the characters' experiences and reflects the social and political climate of early 20th-century Ireland. Joyce's vivid descriptions create a palpable sense of place, making Dublin an integral part of the novel's narrative fabric. The relationships between these characters, and their individual interactions with the city, form the core of the narrative's dynamic tension.

IV. Symbolism and Style: A Tapestry of Meaning

Ulysses is renowned for its dense symbolism, layered meanings, and innovative style. From recurring motifs like the color green to the symbolic significance of specific locations in Dublin, Joyce's use of symbolism enriches the narrative and invites multiple interpretations. The stream-of-consciousness technique, allowing readers direct access to the characters' thoughts and feelings, is a defining characteristic of the novel's style. This technique, coupled with Joyce's masterful use of language, creates a unique and immersive reading experience. The shifting narrative perspectives, moving seamlessly between the inner and outer worlds of the characters, contribute to the novel's complex and layered structure. The mastery of language, with its rich vocabulary and stylistic experimentation, continues to inspire and challenge readers decades after its publication.

V. Enduring Legacy and Critical Reception:

Despite its initial controversy and critical challenges, *Ulysses* is now considered a cornerstone of modernist literature. Its influence on subsequent writers and literary movements is undeniable, paving the way for new narrative techniques and thematic explorations. The novel's impact extends beyond literature, influencing various art forms, including film, music, and visual arts. While critical interpretations vary, the novel's enduring appeal stems from its exploration of universal themes, its innovative narrative structure, and its remarkably vivid portrayal of human experience. The ongoing critical engagement with *Ulysses* speaks volumes about its continued relevance and enduring power.

Ulysses Analysis: A Detailed Outline

Name: Unlocking *Ulysses*: A Comprehensive Guide to Joyce's Masterpiece

Introduction: A brief overview of *Ulysses*, its significance, and the scope of the analysis.

Main Chapters (Detailed Analysis):

Telemachus (Episode 1): Exploring Stephen Dedalus's intellectual and emotional state, his relationship with Buck Mulligan, and the foreshadowing of his encounter with Bloom.

Nestor (Episode 2): Analyzing the classroom scene, Stephen's teaching, and his interactions with the students, highlighting themes of education and

authority.

Proteus (Episode 3): Examining Stephen's solitary walk along the beach, his internal monologue, and the symbolic significance of the sea.

Calyпсо (Episode 4): Focusing on Bloom's domestic life, his relationship with Molly, and the introduction of his everyday routines and thoughts.

Lotus Eaters (Episode 5): Analyzing Bloom's encounter with the barmaids and the sensual atmosphere of the pubs, exploring themes of temptation and desire.

Hades (Episode 6): Examining the funeral procession and Bloom's observations of the mourners, exploring themes of death, mourning, and societal hypocrisy.

Aeolus (Episode 7): Analyzing the newspaper office scene and the political satire, highlighting themes of media manipulation and public opinion.

Lestrygonians (Episode 8): Focusing on Bloom's lunch and his thoughts about food, exploring themes of physical hunger and emotional cravings.

Scylla and Charybdis (Episode 9): Analyzing the library scene and the discussion of Shakespeare, exploring themes of literature, criticism, and artistic creation.

Wandering Rocks (Episode 10): Examining the diverse characters and their interactions in Dublin, highlighting the city's complexity and dynamism.

Sirens (Episode 11): Focusing on the Ormond Hotel scene and the seductive atmosphere, exploring themes of temptation and musicality.

Cyclops (Episode 12): Analyzing Bloom's encounter with the aggressive pub patron, highlighting themes of nationalism, prejudice, and social conflict.

Nausicaa (Episode 13): Focusing on Bloom's encounter with Gerty MacDowell, exploring themes of voyeurism and sexual desire.

Oxen of the Sun (Episode 14): Analyzing the maternity hospital scene and the stylistic shifts in narrative voice, exploring themes of birth, life, and death.

Circe (Episode 15): Examining the dreamlike hallucinatory episode, highlighting the characters' inner demons and desires.

Eumaeus (Episode 16): Analyzing Bloom and Stephen's conversation at night, exploring themes of companionship and shared experience.

Ithaca (Episode 17): Analyzing the question-and-answer format, highlighting the intellectual and emotional culmination of their journey.

Penelope (Episode 18): Focusing on Molly Bloom's soliloquy, exploring themes of female sexuality, desire, and memory.

Conclusion: Summarizing the key themes, stylistic innovations, and lasting impact of Ulysses.

(Detailed explanations for each point in the outline would follow here, expanding upon the content already provided in the main body of the article. This would involve approximately another 700-800 words of detailed analysis for each episode, going into specific passages, symbolism, and character interactions.)

FAQs:

1. What is the significance of the title Ulysses? The title alludes to Homer's Odyssey, establishing a parallel narrative structure and thematic resonance.

1. What is stream-of-consciousness narration? A narrative technique that mimics the flow of thoughts and feelings in a character's mind.

1. Why is Ulysses considered a modernist masterpiece? Its innovative techniques, exploration of complex themes, and profound influence on subsequent literature.
1. What are the main themes of Ulysses? Identity, memory, the modern condition, alienation, and the search for meaning.
1. Who are the main characters in Ulysses? Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, and Molly Bloom.
1. What is the setting of Ulysses? Dublin, Ireland, on June 16, 1904.
1. How long does it take to read Ulysses? Reading time varies significantly depending on the reader's experience and approach.
1. Are there any good resources for understanding Ulysses? Numerous critical essays, scholarly articles, and companion guides are available.
1. What makes Ulysses so challenging to read? Its complex narrative structure, experimental style, and dense symbolism.

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text. He also deals adroitly with many of the puzzles Joyce hoped would keep the professors busy for centuries. Full of practical resources—including maps, explanations of the old British system of money, photos of places and things mentioned in the text, annotated bibliographies, and a detailed chronology of Bloomsday (June 16, 1904—the single day on which *Ulysses* is set)—this is an invaluable first resource about a work of art that celebrates the strength of spirit required to endure the trials of everyday existence. The Guide to James Joyce's '*Ulysses*' is perfect for anyone undertaking a reading of Joyce's novel, whether as a student, a member of a reading group, or a lover of literature finally crossing this novel off the bucket list.

ulysses analysis: American Ulysses Ronald C. White, 2017-06-06 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • From the author of *A. Lincoln*, a major new biography of one of America's greatest generals—and most misunderstood presidents Winner of the William Henry Seward Award for Excellence in Civil War Biography • Finalist for the Gilder-Lehrman Military History Book Prize In his time, Ulysses S. Grant was routinely grouped with George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in the "Trinity of Great American Leaders." But the battlefield commander-turned-commander-in-chief fell out of favor in the twentieth century. In *American Ulysses*, Ronald C. White argues that we need to once more revise our estimates of him in the twenty-first. Based on seven years of research with primary documents—some of them never examined by previous Grant scholars—this is destined to become the Grant biography of our time. White, a biographer exceptionally skilled at writing momentous history from the inside out, shows Grant to be a generous, curious, introspective man and leader—a willing delegator with a natural gift for managing the rampaging egos of his fellow officers. His wife, Julia Dent Grant, long marginalized in the historic record, emerges in her own right as a spirited and influential partner. Grant was not only a brilliant general but also a passionate defender of equal rights in post-Civil War America. After winning election to the White House in 1868, he used the power of the federal government to battle the Ku Klux Klan. He was the first president to state that the government's policy toward American Indians was immoral, and the first ex-president to embark on a world tour, and he cemented his reputation for courage by racing against death to complete his *Personal Memoirs*. Published by Mark Twain, it is widely considered to be the greatest autobiography by an American leader, but its place in Grant's life story has never been fully explored—until now. One of those rare books that successfully recast our impression of an iconic historical figure, *American Ulysses* gives us a finely honed, three-dimensional portrait of Grant the man—husband, father, leader, writer—that should set the standard by which all future biographies of him will be measured. Praise for *American Ulysses* "[Ronald C. White] portrays a deeply introspective man of ideals, a man of measured thought and careful action who found himself in the crosshairs of American history at its most crucial moment."—USA Today "White delineates Grant's virtues better than any author before. . . . By the end, readers will see how fortunate the nation was that Grant went into the world—to save the Union, to lead it and, on his deathbed, to write one of the finest memoirs in all of American letters."—The New York Times Book Review "Ronald White has restored Ulysses S. Grant to his proper place in history with a biography whose breadth and tone suit the man perfectly. Like Grant himself, this book will have staying power."—The Wall Street Journal "Magisterial . . . Grant's esteem in the eyes of historians has increased significantly in the last generation. . . . [American Ulysses] is the newest heavyweight champion in this movement."—The Boston Globe "Superb . . . illuminating, inspiring and deeply moving."—Chicago Tribune "In this sympathetic, rigorously sourced biography, White . . . conveys the essence of Grant the man and Grant the warrior."—Newsday

ulysses analysis: TELEMACHUS - An analysis of the first chapter of James Joyce's '*Ulysses*' Juliane Ungänz, 2008-05-23 Seminar paper from the year 2007 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, University of Paderborn, language: English, abstract: At first sight, *Ulysses* might appear intimidating. The reader's reaction might vary from confusion to excitement to enthusiasm or even resignation. F. Scott Fitzgerald said the novel made him feel a "hollow, cheerful pain" and remarked: "The book makes me feel appallingly naked." To Stephan Zweig *Ulysses* is not just a novel, to him it is a "witches Sabbath of the spirit, a gigantic 'Capriccio',

a phenomenal cerebral Walpurgisnacht. [...] Something evil is its root." Ulysses is not a novel, it's an epic. Inspired by Homer's adventures of the voyager hero Odysseus Joyce expanded a short story to almost a thousand pages and created a one-of-a-kind portrait of Dublin, at the start of the twentieth century. Hence, Ulysses does not actually mirror the ancient epic, neither does it recall Irish history as presented in a history book, solely in terms of social and political events and changes....

ulysses analysis: The Adventures of Ulysses Bernard Evslin, 1989-04 The occasion of forty years of teaching at Amherst by William H. Pritchard, the renowned critic of Frost, Jarrell, and many others, has generated a remarkable collection of essays by former students, colleagues, and friends. The essays themselves are a spectrum of contemporary, criticism, ranging from classroom memoirs to analytic essay-in-criticism to assessment of the state of academic letters today. These contributions, a tribute, by reason of their very range, are a salute to the breadth of William Pritchard's circle of literary acquaintance. Under Criticism demonstrates the fine persistence in certain manners of approach and habits of focus that go, among that circle, under the name of criticism. Drawing foremost on their engagement with the literature before them, Christopher Ricks, Helen Vendler, Patricia Meyer Spacks, Neil Hertz, David Ferry, Paul Alpers, Joseph Epstein, and Frank Lentricchia -- as well as fifteen other critics and men and women of letters -- reinforce Professor Pritchard's prescription that in order to have a hearing, the critic needs to keep listening.

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ulysses analysis: Ulysses by Numbers Eric Jon Bulson, 2020-12-22 Ulysses has been read obsessively for a century. What if instead of focusing on the words to understand the structure, design, and history of Joyce's masterpiece, we pay attention to the numbers? Taking a computational approach, Ulysses by Numbers lets us see the novel's basic building blocks in a significantly new light—words, paragraphs, pages, and characters, as well as the original print run and the dates marking the beginning and end of its composition. Numbers provide access into Joyce's creative process, enhanced by graphs, diagrams, timelines, and maps, and they also give us a startling new perspective on the proportions that continue to structure, organize, and pace the reading experience. Numbers are there to help us navigate the history of Ulysses from its earliest material beginnings, and they offer a concrete basis upon which we can explore the big questions about its length, style, origins, readership, and design. An innovative computational reading on both a micro and macro level, Ulysses by Numbers is a timely intervention into debates about the use and abuse of quantitative methods in literary analysis. Eric Bulson demonstrates how reading by numbers can bring us closer to the words of Ulysses, helping us rediscover a novel we thought we already knew.

ulysses analysis: Ulysses S. Grant Brooks Simpson, 2014-10-21 Many modern historians have painted Ulysses S. Grant as a butcher, a drunk, and a failure as president. Others have argued the exact opposite and portray him with saintlike levels of ethic and intellect. In Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph over Adversity 1822-1865, historian Brooks D. Simpson takes neither approach, recognizing Grant as a complex and human figure with human faults, strengths, and motivations. Simpson offers a balanced and complete study of Grant from birth to the end of the Civil War, with particular emphasis on his military career and family life and the struggles he overcame in his unlikely rise from unremarkable beginnings to his later fame as commander of the Union Army. Chosen as a New York Times Notable Book upon its original publication, Ulysses S. Grant is a

readable, thoroughly researched portrait that sheds light on this controversial figure.

ulysses analysis: Summary & Analysis of Grant ZIP Reads, PLEASE NOTE: This is a summary and analysis of the book and not the original book. If you'd like to purchase the original book, please paste this link in your browser: <https://amzn.to/2tamNi3> Historian Ron Chernow provides an in-depth and unapologetic look at the man behind the legend in Grant. Chernow's exhaustive, 1,100-page tome is based on extensive research and a clear intent to dispel negative assumptions that followed a great general and president throughout and beyond his life. Chernow's bestselling biography has been on the Amazon Most-Read Charts for over 35 weeks! (June 21st, 2018) What does this ZIP Reads Summary Include? A brief synopsis of the original book Detailed timeline of the life of Ulysses S. Grant Key takeaways from his military and political careers Background on his family and personal life Editorial Review Background on Ron Chernow About the Original Book: Ulysses S. Grant was a man who suffered through many trials and tribulations before finally achieving tremendous success, only to be thrown down again by a cruel twist of fate. Ron Chernow details this unusual man's background and experiences in Grant. Chernow's detailed history of the president's life will captivate you and may leave many readers surprised. DISCLAIMER: This book is intended as a companion to, not a replacement for, Grant. ZIP Reads is wholly responsible for this content and is not associated with the original author in any way. Please follow this link: <https://amzn.to/2tamNi3> to purchase a copy of the original book. We are a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, an affiliate advertising program designed to provide a means for us to earn fees by linking to Amazon.com and affiliated sites.

ulysses analysis: Ulysses S. Grant Geoffrey Perret, 2009-04-23 Not since Bruce Catton has there been such an absorbing and exciting biography of Ulysses S. Grant. "Grant is a mystery to me," said William Tecumseh Sherman, "and I believe he is a mystery to himself." Geoffrey Perret's account offers new insights into Grant the commander and Grant the president that would have astonished both his friends, such as Sherman, and his enemies. Based on extensive research, including material either not seen or not used by other writers, this biography explains for the first time how Ulysses S. Grant's military genius ultimately triumphed as he created a new approach to battle. He was, says Perret, "the man who taught the army how to fight." As president, Grant was widely misunderstood and underrated. That was mainly because he was, as Perret shows, the first modern president—the first man to preside over a rich, industrialized America that had put slavery behind it and was struggling to provide racial justice for all. Grant's story—from a frontier boyhood to West Point; from heroic feats in the Mexican War to grinding poverty in St. Louis; from his return to the army and eventual election to the presidency; from his two-year journey around the world to his final battle to finish his Personal Memoirs—is one of the most adventurous and moving in American history.

ulysses analysis: The Bloomsday Book Harry Blamires, 1974

ulysses analysis: No-Man's Lands Scott Huler, 2010-01-05 When NPR contributor Scott Huler made one more attempt to get through James Joyce's *Ulysses*, he had no idea it would launch an obsession with the book's inspiration: the ancient Greek epic *The Odyssey* and the lonely homebound journey of its Everyman hero, Odysseus. *No-Man's Lands* is Huler's funny and touching exploration of the life lessons embedded within *The Odyssey*, a legendary tale of wandering and longing that could be read as a veritable guidebook for middle-aged men everywhere. At age forty-four, with his first child on the way, Huler felt an instant bond with Odysseus, who fought for some twenty years against formidable difficulties to return home to his beloved wife and son. In reading *The Odyssey*, Huler saw the chance to experience a great vicarious adventure as well as the opportunity to assess the man he had become and embrace the imminent arrival of both middle age and parenthood. But Huler realized that it wasn't enough to simply read the words on the page—he needed to live Odysseus's odyssey, to visit the exotic destinations that make Homer's story so timeless. And so an ambitious pilgrimage was born . . . traveling the entire length of Odysseus's two-decade journey. In six months. Huler doggedly retraced Odysseus's every step, from the ancient ruins of Troy to his ultimate destination in Ithaca. On the way, he discovers the Cyclops's Sicilian cave, visits the land of

the dead in Italy, ponders the lotus from a Tunisian resort, and paddles a rented kayak between Scylla and Charybdis and lives to tell the tale. He writes of how and why the lessons of The Odyssey—the perils of ambition, the emptiness of glory, the value of love and family—continue to resonate so deeply with readers thousands of years later. And as he finally closes in on Odysseus's final destination, he learns to fully appreciate what Homer has been saying all along: the greatest adventures of all are the ones that bring us home to those we love. Part travelogue, part memoir, and part critical reading of the greatest adventure epic ever written, No-Man's Lands is an extraordinary description of two journeys—one ancient, one contemporary—and reveals what The Odyssey can teach us about being better bosses, better teachers, better parents, and better people.

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ulysses analysis: *The Return of Ulysses* Edith Hall, 2008-01-30 Whether they focus on the bewitching song of the Sirens, his cunning escape from the cave of the terrifying one-eyed Cyclops, or the vengeful slaying of the suitors of his beautiful wife Penelope, the stirring adventures of Ulysses/Odysseus are amongst the most durable in human culture. The picaresque return of the wandering pirate-king is one of the most popular texts of all time, crossing East-West divides and inspiring poets and film-makers worldwide. But why, over three thousand years, has the Odyssey's appeal proved so remarkably resilient and long-lasting? In her much-praised book Edith Hall explains the enduring fascination of Homer's epic in terms of its extraordinary susceptibility to adaptation. Not only has the story reflected a myriad of different agendas, but - from the tragedies of classical Athens to modern detective fiction, film, travelogue and opera - it has seemed perhaps uniquely fertile in generating new artistic forms. Cultural texts as diverse as Joyce's Ulysses, Suzanne Vega's Calypso, Monteverdi's Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria, the Coen Brothers' O Brother Where Art Thou?, Daniel Vigne's Le Retour de Martin Guerre and Anthony Minghella's Cold Mountain all show that Odysseus is truly a versatile hero. His travels across the wine-dark Aegean are journeys not just into the mind of one of the most brilliantly creative of all the ancient Greek writers. They are as much a voyage beyond the boundaries of a narrative which can plausibly lay claim to being the quintessential global phenomenon.

ulysses analysis: Fun Home Alison Bechdel, 2007 A fresh and brilliantly told memoir from a cult favorite comic artist, marked by gothic twists, a family funeral home, sexual angst, and great books. This breakout book by Alison Bechdel is a darkly funny family tale, pitch-perfectly illustrated with Bechdel's sweetly gothic drawings. Like Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis, it's a story exhilaratingly suited to graphic memoir form. Meet Alison's father, a historic preservation expert and obsessive restorer of the family's Victorian home, a third-generation funeral home director, a high school English teacher, an icily distant parent, and a closeted homosexual who, as it turns out, is involved with his male students and a family babysitter. Through narrative that is alternately heartbreaking and fiercely funny, we are drawn into a daughter's complex yearning for her father. And yet, apart from assigned stints dusting caskets at the family-owned fun home, as Alison and her brothers call it,

the relationship achieves its most intimate expression through the shared code of books. When Alison comes out as homosexual herself in late adolescence, the denouement is swift, graphic -- and redemptive.

ulysses analysis: Ulysses Annotated Don Gifford, Robert J. Seidman, 2008-01-14 Rev. ed. of: Notes for Joyce: an annotation of James Joyce's Ulysses, 1974.

ulysses analysis: Women and Men Joseph McElroy, 2023-01-17 Beginning in childbirth and entered like a multiple dwelling in motion, Women and Men embraces and anatomizes the 1970s in New York - from experiments in the chaotic relations between the sexes to the flux of the city itself. Yet through an intricate overlay of scenes, voices, fact, and myth, this expanding fiction finds its way also across continents and into earlier and future times and indeed the Earth, to reveal connections between the most disparate lives and systems of feeling and power. At its breathing heart, it plots the fuguelike and fieldlike densities of late-twentieth-century life. McElroy rests a global vision on two people, apartment-house neighbors who never quite meet. Except, that is, in the population of others whose histories cross theirs believers and skeptics; lovers, friends, and hermits; children, parents, grandparents, avatars, and, apparently, angels. For Women and Men shows how the families through which we pass let one person's experience belong to that of many, so that we throw light on each other as if these kinships were refracted lives so real as to be reincarnate. A mirror of manners, the book is also a meditation on the languages, rich, ludicrous, exact, and also American, in which we try to grasp the world we're in. Along the kindred axes of separation and intimacy Women and Men extends the great line of twentieth-century innovative fiction.

ulysses analysis: The Little Review "Ulysses" James Joyce, 2015-01-01 James Joyce's Ulysses first appeared in print in the pages of an American avant-garde magazine, The Little Review, between 1918 and 1920. The novel many consider to be the most important literary work of the twentieth century was, at the time, deemed obscene and scandalous, resulting in the eventual seizure of The Little Review and the placing of a legal ban on Joyce's masterwork that would not be lifted in the United States until 1933. For the first time, The Little Review "Ulysses" brings together the serial installments of Ulysses to create a new edition of the novel, enabling teachers, students, scholars, and general readers to see how one of the previous century's most daring and influential prose narratives evolved, and how it was initially introduced to an audience who recognized its radical potential to transform Western literature. This unique and essential publication also includes essays and illustrations designed to help readers understand the rich contexts in which Ulysses first appeared and to trace the complex changes Joyce introduced after it was banned.

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is to validate a reading of Joyce in negative terms. Central to the enquiry is an examination of the roles of irony and of indeterminacy. Irony, interpreted in metaphysical rather than merely rhetorical terms, is envisaged as deriving from two separate if related orientations, one associated with Friedrich Schlegel, the other with Gustave Flaubert. Insofar as Joyce's work (including *Ulysses*) owes more to the latter than the former, it forgoes the genial humour central to Schlegel's theories, and embraces instead the ironic detachment and formal control of a Flaubertian perspective. Such irony (which entails a suspicion of sentiment and a related dehumanisation of character, as in some of the stories in *Dubliners*) becomes normative in Joyce, and along with a similarly deflationary parody pervades *Ulysses*. In addition, a persistent indeterminacy is established as early as 'The Dead', so that it becomes impossible in that story to adjudicate between not just contradictory but mutually exclusive interpretations. Such indeterminacy is pushed to further extremes in *Ulysses*, with its notorious proliferation of narrative perspectives. As a corollary to the work's encyclopaedic inclusiveness and quotidian particularism, every detail tends to assume the same significance as every other; the consequence being that (in Gyorgy Lukacs' famous formulation) we lose all sense of any 'hierarchy of meaning'. From that it is but a step to Franco Moretti's assessment that in *Ulysses* everyday existence remains 'inert, opaque - meaningless', and that in fact the whole point is to represent the meaningless precisely 'as meaningless'. Indeterminacy, in effect, ushers in the possibility of nihilism. The analysis of *Ulysses* culminates with the attempt (unavailing in both cases) to discover in either Bloom or Molly a genuine source of countervailing affirmation. The study concludes with a brief consideration of the polysemic vocabulary of *Finnegans Wake* as a logical extrapolation of the poetics of indeterminacy.

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