1-1-2003

Aesthetic Revolutionaries: Picasso and Joyce

Joy M. Doss
joydoss@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://mds.marshall.edu/etd

Part of the Classical Literature and Philology Commons

Recommended Citation
Abstract

Aesthetic Revolutionaries: Picasso and Joyce

Joy M. Doss

Picasso's Cubist works and Joyce's Ulysses transcend tradition, merge time and space, and radicalize form. By accomplishing these feats, the two men become seminal embodiments of Modernism. This thesis examines the conceptual and formal qualities shared by Cubism and Ulysses. With particular attention given to changing concepts of space and time, similarities between the works are related to four characteristics generally attributed to Modernism: deviance from tradition, an emphasis on form, fragmentation, and appropriation of popular culture. The monumental effects of these works on society are examined in the conclusion. The legacy of these aesthetic revolutionaries is unavoidable and continues to infuse Western society in the twenty-first century.
Table of Contents

List of Figures  iv

Chapter I
   The Giants of Modernism  1 -- 6

Chapter II
   Critical Responses and Connections  7 -- 13

Chapter III
   Radicalizing Form  14 – 43

Chapter IV
   Continuing Influences on Contemporary Society  42 -- 51

Figures 1 – 15  52 – 66

Works Cited  67 – 72

Select Bibliography  73 – 78

Curriculum Vitae  79-80
List of Figures

Figure 1  The Stone Breakers
Figure 2  The Studio: A Real Life Allegory of the Last Seven Years of My Life
Figure 3  Mont Sainte Victoire
Figure 4  Gertrude Stein
Figure 5  Les Demoiselles d’Avignon
Figure 6  Cottage and Trees
Figure 7  Nude Woman
Figure 8  Woman with Pears
Figure 9  Still Life with Fan
Figure 10  Still Life with Chair Caining
Figure 11  Table with Bottle, Wine Glass, and Newspaper
Figure 12  Landscape with Posters
Figure 13  Maggi-Kub Tin
Figure 14  Guitar—cardboard
Figure 15  Guitar—metal
Chapter I

Giants of Modernism

The spirit of a decade strikes properly upon all of the arts. There are ‘parallel movements.’ Their causes and their effects may not seem, superficially, similar. (Pound, “Dubliners” 399)

The twentieth century began with an explosion of creative ingenuity in the arts and sciences. In art, Cubism disrupted five hundred years of Western artistic tradition and value. In literature, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* challenged the century old concept of the novel. Both disruptions may seem insignificant in the chaos of progress, World War I, and increased industrialization of life, but these men had a profound effect outside their respective genres. Picasso’s Cubist works and Joyce’s *Ulysses* transcend tradition, merge time and space, and radicalize form. By accomplishing these feats, the two men become seminal embodiments of Modernism.

This study will examine the conceptual and formal qualities shared by Cubism and *Ulysses*. With particular attention given to changing concepts of space and time, similarities between the works will be related to four characteristics generally attributed to Modernism: deviance from tradition, an emphasis on form, fragmentation, and appropriation of popular culture. Beyond their description as innovative experimentations in form, both *Ulysses* and Cubism also manifest anti-historicism, relativism, and simultaneity. These manifestations are closely connected to the Modernist culture of the early 1900s.
As the new century began, thinkers and scholars in philosophy, psychology, science, physics, music, and theater offered Western culture unconventional and disturbing information. Darwin’s theory of evolution, published and distorted in circulation throughout households, represented an example of how linear explanations and historicism failed to satisfy the minds of the new era. The publication of Freud’s dream theory provided a better model of the human experience, perception of displacement, and fragmentation of contemporary life. Dreams are not necessarily linear in time or logical in place, but their fragmentary images may provide an understanding based on the analytical rather than the historical. Einstein’s theory of relativity opened new modes of perception. This theory also conveyed the necessity for multiple viewpoints in order to have a full picture of reality. Through the proliferation of knowledge, intellectuals assumed an uneasiness toward the stability of life. Scientific theory became the ultimate standard and test of validity. Industrialization was the culmination of progress, further fragmenting the common laborer’s life in his minute participation and specialization of mass production. These changes and breakthroughs in thought produced a paradigmatic shift that revolutionized Western culture. This pivotal period of transformation has been termed Modernism.

Modernism remains one of the most controversial and contested terms among scholars through all disciplines. There are varying opinions as to when Modernism originated. Even dating the onset of Modernism is difficult with dates ranging from the Renaissance to present day. For example, Professor Richard Brettell settles on the opening of the 1851 Crystal Palace as Modernism’s beginning (6). Historian Norman Cantor finds the 1880s demarking “a major historical turning point in the modern world,”
and places the origin in that decade (8). After surveying Modernist essays and criticism, Professor Peter Childs says most scholars end Modernism at “1930, 1950, or yet to happen”(14). Despite the debate over the timeline, the twentieth century Cubist works of Picasso and Joyce’s *Ulysses* fall under all Modernist dates. Picasso began Cubism in late 1907 and moved to a different style in 1914. Joyce began formulating the idea for *Ulysses* in 1907 and finally had the book published in 1922.

The major debates over Modernism center on exactly what characterizes this movement. The most recent *Oxford Dictionary of Art*, edited by Chilvers, conspicuously eschews defining *Modernism* though it provides details for all other “–isms.” Art professor Charles Harrison defines *Modernism* as a term “imply[ing] a type of position or attitude—one characterized by specific forms of response towards both modernization and modernity” (6). Professor Peter Childs prefaces his book with a definition given by Malcolm Bradbury:

> It [Modernism] is experimental, formally complex, elliptical, contains elements of decreation as well as creation, and tends to associate notions of the artist's freedom from realism, materialism, traditional genre and form, with notions of cultural apocalypse and disaster. (1-2)

These elements are especially visible in the works to be discussed. Joyce and Picasso imagined their works as decreations because they broke traditional molds by reducing their art to basic form. But by doing this, both created works wholly new.

Bradbury and McFarlane articulately relate the ideas and history of Modernism in their anthology and out of the many definitions they discuss, this one seems to encapsulate the term well:
It [Modernism] is a revolutionary movement, capitalizing on a vast intellectual readjustment and radical dissatisfaction with the artistic past—a movement that is international in character and marked by a flow of major ideas, forms and values that spread from country to country and developed into the main line of the western tradition. (28)

In a 1992 article, Marjorie Perloff tackles the Modernism debate and creates a chronology of the word’s usage. She deduces fourteen characteristics of the term that critics through time seem to agree upon. Four of these characteristics will be examined in this study: avant-garde experimentalism with a rejection or reaction to the past; visual abstraction and defamiliarization as well as complexity of form; spatial form and temporal disorientation; and appropriation of popular culture leading to a breakdown of hierarchal art forms. The first two characteristics can best be understood through Modernist notions of time and space.

Nineteenth and twentieth century philosopher Henri Bergson contemplated time and presented ideas concerning simultaneity—“time is the continuous progress of the past, which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances” (qtd. in Fleming 578). He affirmed the sense of anti-historicism by observing our perception of moving images and deducing that the duration of time is not recognized as a succession of divided moments, but rather as a fusion of moments (Ades 202-3). This concept of fused moments would play out largely in Joyce’s Ulysses, particularly in the “Penelope” episode. Molly Bloom’s thoughts in this episode flow uninterrupted through her years with Leopold, her rendezvous with Boylan, her neighbors’ lives, and her career rivals. The stream-of-consciousness style of the narrator imitates the flux and fusion of individualized experienced time. According to Bergson, “Intuition probes the flow of
duration in its concreteness; analysis breaks up duration into static fragmentary concepts” (qtd. in Ades 204). Though Molly’s thoughts seem fragmented, they are some of the first literary lines that represent how we process information, in a continual, associatively connected fashion. Though he is rarely mentioned today, Bergson’s theory left a significant influence on philosophers, writers, painters, and poets of the twentieth century. Concepts of time had not been altered since the establishment of the Julian calendar and thus Bergson’s perceptions were significant.

Space and time are key elements to Joyce’s and Picasso’s work. Traditionally the nature of visual art invited treatment of space. Artists had dealt with concepts of depth and linearity in their interpretations of space. Traditionally literature tended to be narrative and linear in progression of time. With an emphasis on simultaneity, achieved through fragmentation, in Picasso’s and Joyce’s works, literature and art converge in the 1900s. When Picasso incorporated simultaneity in his Cubist works, concepts of time not previously contemplated in art were required. Simultaneity in Joyce’s Ulysses required a concept of space not previously required in literature. This makes the two fields available for comparisons and parallelisms.

The radical change Picasso and Joyce brought about in art and literature is perhaps most indebted to the prevailing avant-garde philosophies and theories of their era. However, it appears impossible to construct a list of books or pamphlets that both read in order to locate shared sources. Several pieces of Joyce’s early library collection, most of which were probable influences on Ulysses, were looted when he left them in an apartment in Trieste during World War I. He divided his later library among friends a few years before his death, keeping only those works he wished posterity to
list. Those who inventory Picasso’s houses have listed his visual works, not his books. Unfortunately, records of items existing in estates at the time of his death are only available to family. Both men, however, as recounted through numerous remembrances by friends, were avid readers of newspapers and contemporary scientific and philosophic thought. Because both were also published in the same journals, The Egoist and The Dial, which dealt with contemporary continental issues in literature, art, and philosophy, each most likely had knowledge of the other’s work. Throughout 1907-1922, the time when both men brought about monumental change in their respective fields, they moved in the same circles of people and cities, without meeting, and produced works reflecting the same understanding of time and space conceptualized. The reader/viewer of the twentieth century would have to participate synaptically in order to gain understanding of these works.

From this brief overview of Modernism, this study moves in the second chapter to cover early criticism of both artists’ works and criticism that links the two. Chapter three, then, will compare both artists’ experimentation in view of their respective canonical traditions. In particular, the study will examine form, defamiliarization, and fragmentation against an understanding of space and time. The breakdown of high art through appropriation of popular culture will also be examined. In the final chapter, the effect of these works on art, literature and Western society will be suggested.
CHAPTER II

Critical Responses and Connections

When traditional ways of knowing the world collapse, traditional forms of expression are invalidated. In desperation the artist turns to new areas of experience in search of vitality and authority.

(Litz, *Art of James Joyce* 53)

Picasso and Joyce have inspired an industry of scholarly activity and commercial productions, from reprints of their original sketches and notes to t-shirts and shot glasses enshrined with their names, faces, paintings or writings. What more could possibly be added to these collections? Invariably new approaches to examining such cultural icons arise and with temporal distance, we gain a better perspective on their influence and their relationship to the Modernist era. Articles and books, conferences and symposiums not only enrich society’s understanding of these men and their works, but they also open new avenues for further exploration.

Early reviews of *Ulysses* were mixed. Many intellectuals instantly claimed the novel a success while others found it to be madness. Pound declared *Ulysses* as the novel that picked up where Flaubert left off (Pound “Ulysses,” 403). Pound begins his review of *Ulysses*, “All men should ‘Unite to give praise to *Ulysses*’; those who will not, may consider themselves with a place in the lower intellectual orders”(403). He was also a proofreader of *Ulysses* and after reading the text episode by episode, he would send Joyce letters commenting that it was “obscure, even obscene, as life itself is
obscene in places, but an impassioned meditation on life” (“Joyce” 416). T.S. Eliot in his essay “Ulysses, Order, and Myth” writes, “I hold this book [Ulysses] to be the most important expression which the present age has found” (1-2). Other critics were not so receptive. John Eglinton in his “Dublin Letter” from 1922 writes of Ulysses, “There is an effort and strain in the composition of this book which makes one at times feel a concern for the author” (622). In addition, Virginia Woolf considered the novel “a waste of energy” (396).

The reception of Cubism was much the same. Art critic Neil Cox quotes the French press’ description of Cubist art as: “morally dangerous, excessive, outrageous, offensive –and of course, a great copy”(6). A 1910 article by journalist Gelett Burgess described Picasso’s art as “reek[ing] with the insolence of youth; they [the artworks] outrage nature, tradition, decency. They are abominable” (qtd. in Cox 85). While Gertrude Stein supported Picasso until her death, her brother Leo declared Les Demoiselles a “horrible mess” and had nothing more to do with Picasso’s art (175). Critic and dealer Kahnweiler stood alone as the dealer of Picasso while other Parisian dealers, like Vollard, who had represented Picasso through his blue and rose periods, would have nothing to do with Cubist art (209).

The Picasso and Joyce industries have evolved from these bases. As time has passed, the validity of these art pieces is no longer questioned. Scholars continue to shed light on neglected areas in the works of both artists and rather than exhausting the subjects, this continued attention complicates and creates separate debates. No doubt much remains to be uncovered and discussed. It is usually impossible to realize the effects on culture, canon, and traditions in the era when changes are taking place.
Thus it is imperative for further studies of literature and art that solid foundations of study be established for this revolutionary era. It is true that these two men cast shadows over many other pertinent artists of the same era and afterwards. The major trend currently is to create substantial studies for these shadowed artists as well and to cast aside the giants who have dominated critical studies for so long. There are a number of reasons to continue studying the giants and now, with almost a century since their radicalizing concepts, perhaps we can come to understand the transfusion of their effects throughout Western society.

A casual perusal through any Modernist art book will find a chapter or more on Picasso and as well a book on Modernist literature will have a chapter on Joyce. In William Everdell’s *The First Moderns*, both men are given separate chapters along with Strindberg, Einstein, Freud, and Schoenberg. In sentences throughout critical studies the two men’s names are incorporated in a list of people who changed or greatly influenced the twentieth century. But few texts examine the two side by side, perhaps because of the gargantuan legacy of each and the seemingly infinite body of critical work compiled on nearly every aspect of their lives, works, and influences. In the later half of the twentieth century, a few scholarly texts have surfaced that combine elements of the works or biographies of Picasso and Joyce.

In his 1993 article, “Searching for Modernism’s Genetic Code: Picasso, Joyce, and Stevens as a Cultural Configuration,” Daniel Schwarz looks for similarities among the men and their genres hoping to find the “essential ingredients of modernistic culture” (1). He weaves together characteristics and specifics of their works, along with biographical material, to present how well these men completely manifest Modernism.
Cultural studies professor Robert Scholes published a 1990 article linking Picasso and Joyce; however, “In the Brothel of Modernism” places Joyce’s and Picasso’s primary center in the brothel: Picasso in his Les Demoiselles d’Avignon and Joyce in the “Circe” episode. Since both works significantly changed the artists’ lives, Scholes asserts that the brothel was their “aesthetic space” (1).

Scholes also connects the two men through their use of mythology. Picasso, late in his life, often represented himself in paintings as a bull, and Joyce, in his early works, based the character Stephen Dedalus on his life. Scholes elaborates on the connection between the bull and the engineer of the labyrinth. After linking the artists’ lives in the first section of the essay, he explores the composition of Picasso’s Les Demoiselles and compares it with Manet’s Olympia in the second section, and grapples with recent discoveries by critic Michael Groden on the composition and meaning of Joyce’s “Circe” episode.

Scholes, especially in the final portion of his essay, is trying to explain why Modernism is almost completely male dominated: “Modernism . . . has a distinctly masculist structure that is embodied most clearly and powerfully in its images of the brothel . . . with its powerful division of sexual roles” (20). While this shared area between Joyce and Picasso has not been explored by many, this article is focused on only one painting and one episode of Ulysses.

Jo-Anna Isaak’s 1981 article titled, “James Joyce and the Cubist Esthetic,” is an eloquently presented examination of the possible connections between Joyce and the works of certain Cubists and Futurists. Isaak looks for sources Cubists and Joyce could have shared and discusses several contemporary theories with which the men might
have been familiar. She focuses on several elemental keys to Modernism: fragmentation, space, and form.

In the late 1970s, Archie Loss published a thesis on Joyce and dealt in his final chapter with Joyce and Cubism. Though he touches on Picasso, Loss allots a greater portion of this chapter to the connection between Joyce and the Impressionists, an idea which undoubtedly comes from early critic Ezra Pound, who initially believed Joyce was continuing the tradition of Flaubert. Loss explores the Cubist connection, linking two collages with the “Aeolus” episode of *Ulysses*. He also spends a considerable portion of the essay examining connections between Joyce and the Futurists. Several years later, Loss condensed his work on “Aeolus” and created a separate article, “Joyce’s Use of Collage in ‘Aeolus.’” While these scholars have found value in comparing artists from separate genres, there are those who do not find such comparisons fruitful.

Studies that cross disciplines have often raised objections. In one chapter of her 1986 dissertation “The Use and Abuse of Pictorial terminology in Discussions of Modernist Fiction,” Deborah Schnitzer argues that

> Correspondences between Cubism and Joyce’s *Ulysses* . . . prove to be misleading because the whole concept of the Cubist Narrative involves a contradiction in terms, a contradiction based on persistent misreadings of the actuality of the optical synthesis in Cubist art and the nature of its challenge to accepted standards of resemblance. (Abstract)

While it is agreed that “the concept of the Cubist Narrative” can be seen as a “contradiction in terms,” her assertion that this “contradiction [is] based on persistent misreadings . . . of the optical synthesis” is not convincing. This assertion fails to
acknowledge the boundaries Ulysses crosses in terms of form, aesthetics, and the play between space and time.

Various authors have written on the artistic qualities of Ulysses. In his book titled The Art of James Joyce, Joycean scholar A. Walton Litz chronicles Joyce’s compilation of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake and stresses how Joyce composed pictorially. Litz does not, however, make comparisons with Cubism. Joyce’s long-time friend and artist Frank Budgen likens Joyce’s writings to the art of Rodin (91), the Impressionists (93), and the “Cyclops” episode to Cubism in his book The Making of Ulysses. In his article “Manet, James’s Turn of the Screw and the Voyeuristic Imagination,” Daniel Schwarz includes several mentions of Ulysses in comparison with works by Manet and also poses inquiries as to whether Picasso drew inspiration from Manet for some of his art. Critic Morton P. Levitt has recently written two articles, one comparing Joyce to the artist Vuillard, the other comparing Joyce to the artists Cézanne and Diebenkom. In “Joyce and Vuillard: ‘The Music of Painting’” Levitt states that no one has studied in depth a connection between Joyce and one artist or art period (211). In the same article, Levitt lists the Modernist collaborators, Stein and Picasso, Bunuel and Dali, Woolf and the Impressionists, and Mann and Schoenberg and while it is interesting to look at the art of each connection side by side, these well-known pairings have limited the scope of studying parallel movements (211).

Picasso and Stein are often paired together. Stein was one of his great supporters and Picasso was a regular guest at her home, but Stein was not Picasso’s sole influence nor did they work side by side. Her work can definitely be considered fragmented and Modernist, but her audience in the twenty-first century is significantly
reduced, while Picasso’s and Joyce’s expands. An examination of their work can perhaps provide the greatest manifestations of Modernism and Modernist culture.
Chapter III

Radicalizing Form

What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see. In the absence of such training there can only be, in William James’s phrase, ‘a bloomin’ buzzin’ confusion.’ (Kuhn 113)

The similarities between the works of Joyce and Picasso are perhaps best presented against their contemporary understanding of space and time. Joseph Frank was the first to investigate this in his 1945 essay “Spatial Form in Modern Literature.” Frank explores the works of Pound, Eliot, Mallarmé, Flaubert, Joyce, and Proust and finds Pound’s definition of an image to be of “fundamental importance for any discussion of modern literary form”: “An ‘Image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time” (qtd. in Frank 85). This, Frank elaborates, is the key to understanding how the seemingly disparate fragments of modern literature solidify to form a whole. The reader briefly configures the whole in space. Thus, the basis of modernist literature, and this can also be said of modernist art, is elusively conceptual. Once the radical nature of form in the works of these Modernist giants is examined, it is easily seen that the changes made to form align under early twentieth century avant-garde notions of time and space. However, it is necessary to understand the tradition, the historically defined and accepted ideas, behind each field in order to contrast the departure Picasso and Joyce effected. In the words of T.S. Eliot:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation, is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot
value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. (qtd. in Schwarz 2)

Picasso, schooled in artistic tradition from an early age and having attended the finest art academies throughout Spain, was acutely aware of the history of Western art. With the exception of the Dark Ages, the history of Western art is the history of reproducing objects, people, and landscapes as faithfully as possible to visual perception. The Greeks, the Romans, and the masters of the Renaissance, the Baroque, the Realists, Neo-Classicists, Romanticists, and Impressionists all drew on mimesis, the visual imitations of nature to present and interpret reality. Traditionally, Western art had also depicted the powerful and voiced their agendas. Art had also traditionally been made of fine materials and judged against a background of visual conventions introduced by the Greeks and Romans. But against radical technological and scientific advancement, perceptions of reality drastically changed and this change called for a revolution throughout the humanities.

The change that Picasso brought to art, though seemingly abrupt, had its precursors in tradition. The mid-nineteenth century social realist paintings of Gustave Courbet offended art collectors as he unabashedly turned away from the idealizations of classicism and depicted the social conditions of the working class. The Stone Breakers, probably his most well known piece, depicts an honest, serene, pastoral setting with a boy and man at work (fig. 1). However, once the subject matter is studied questions arise. Why is the child not in school? Why is the old man working? Their clothes are torn and worn and their labor on stone tells the viewer that these males live an uneasy, arduous existence. The drab monochromatic, earth-toned color scheme easily lends
thought to the drab, monotonous life the two must lead. The sharp contours and angles of their bodies provide implied lines that point downward, creating a heavy, down-trodden aspect to the painting, an aspect more forcibly laid upon the men by the dark hill in the background which presses them further down. The stratification or fragmentation of societal levels inherently embodies injustice for the poor, and Courbet was attempting to prick the consciousness of upper society. Thus, the Paris salons rejected him for some time. In a later work, *The Studio: A Real Allegory of the Last Seven Years of My Life*, Courbet depicted himself at the easel with his back turned on the model (*fig. 2*). The nude, classic representative of Grecian and Roman art, awaits attention, but Courbet will show none. Courbet’s rejection of classical Greek idealism marked the beginning of art’s escape from the confines of tradition. Importantly, however, Courbet created this change through content rather than painting technique.

The succeeding Impressionist artists were primarily concerned with light and the retinal intake of images. Atmosphere took predominance over subject matter. The artists Monet and Renoir strove to paint impressions of landscapes, flowers, or city scenes. In their work, the technique of painting is affected but not the subject matter.

Particularly important to the Cubists was the work of Post-Impressionist Cézanne. Cézanne began experimenting with traditional landscapes and simplifying them into cylinders, blocks, and cubes. This approach produced a flattening of the surface and a sense of ambiguous space, which is easily seen in his *Mont Sainte-Victoire* composed from 1904-6 (*fig. 3*).

In *Mont Sainte-Victoire* houses placed atop trees and fields also placed atop mountain and sky make this typical landscape unfamiliar. The perspective is not
receding as the eye would perceive a landscape covering this vast distance. Objects that seem to be houses and trees are reduced to cubed swatches of color. Interestingly, the subject matter is perceivable through an impressionistic-like atmosphere but there is a discernable sense of unfamiliarity and irregularity of perspective, which was unseen in art until this time. While this type of landscape is simplified (details omitted with only reduced, basic shapes portrayed), for the viewer who expects direct mimesis from art, the effect is bewildering. This pull away from tradition in Western art was similar though perhaps not as pronounced in the tradition of literature.

The form of the novel was developed at the beginning of the eighteenth century and was popularized by such authors as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett. At the time of its invention, the novel had a clearly marked beginning, middle, and end. With the notable exception of Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, the novel also usually followed a prescribed linear episodic order that was broken into chapters and sometimes partitioned into sections. In his book, *Development of the English Novel*, Wilbur Cross breaks down the types of novels in existence before 1899:

> It has come to be demanded not only that a novel must possess an orderly structure, but that it shall be a careful study of some phase of real life, or of conduct in a situation which, however impossible in itself, the imagination is willing to accept for the time being as possible. (26)

Additionally, he categorizes novels into novels of character and novels of incident. He deemed all novels either adventures or romances. The novel was a large, usually multi-volume production. With notables like Austen, Scott, Dickens, Bronte, Gaskell, Eliot,
Hawthorne, James, Hardy, Stevenson, and Kipling, the novel does rotate between the adventure and the romance and sometimes an amalgamation of the two. Only in works of the later half of the nineteenth century do representations of psychological explorations probing the darker sides of the human psyche evolve, for instance in Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, and Henry James’s *Turn of the Screw*. In his conclusion, Cross laments the future of the novel:

> Besides tearing down and building anew the internal structure of the novel, the contemporary novelists would seem to have modified permanently its outer form. Hardy has cut the three-volume novel down to one volume. (293)

Though the form was changing, the change was slow and gradual. At the end of the nineteenth century, the linear narrative, usually voiced by an omniscient or third person narrator, was only beginning to incorporate additions such as dialogue and multiple voices. Joyce, just as well educated in literature as Picasso was in art, took the developments of the literary tradition and in ways similar to Picasso created a rupture in the genre.

**Breaking with Tradition**

Both Joyce and Picasso began their careers in accordance with prescribed rules of their discipline. Picasso produced respected works comprising what is now known as his blue and rose periods, while Joyce wrote *Chamber Music* and *Dubliners*. These works were not yet published, but they were written by 1906. There are minor characteristics that arguably could be seen as precursors to revolutionary works. Picasso, for instance, was obsessed with depicting circus performers, and Joyce presented homoerotic and sexual issues in sections of *Dubliners*. These initial works,
however, constituted no great deviation from tradition. But they did bring both artist and writer recognition in their fields. Coincidentally, both men began experimenting around 1907-1908, Joyce in Trieste and Rome, and Picasso in Paris.

The first examples of Picasso’s derivation from tradition can be seen in his work after he viewed a 1906 exhibition of African masks at the Trocadero in Paris. He began incorporating mask shapes in his art, perhaps first seen in the portrait of Gertrude Stein (fig. 4). Though Gertrude was perhaps not the most attractive woman, she did not have offset eyes. The sharp contours of her face that pierce down to a slightly rounded ‘V’, the sharp line of her nose that projects itself slightly to the right center of the chin, the elongated forehead, and the stretched-pea shaped eyes, all undeniably show the influence of the masks. His experimentation with the shape of the face continued to show in some of his drawings of nudes as well as self-portraits throughout 1906. However, the effects of the mask on Picasso’s art are most easily seen in one of his most famous works, Les Demoiselles d’Avignon (fig. 5).

Though it is debatable whether Cubism began with Picasso’s Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, created in 1907, art critic Neil Cox notes, it “is . . . the traumatic rupture that enables Cubism to begin” (73). The style of the painting unquestionably marks the beginning of dramatic change in modern art. The sharp contours of the women’s bodies project multiple artificial lines of perspective aimed in various directions. The faces contort and the hard blocks of the bodies twist in such ways that the viewer must take time to determine the connection of limbs to body and head to torso. The stares of the women confront viewers and the presentation of twisted, angular bodies disturbed viewers’ sensibilities of art and life.
This painting shocked even the avant-garde art world of Paris. The rumor that Picasso had gone mad spread throughout Montmartre and many believed he was completely finished as an artist (Everdell 247). Critic Leo Stein would have nothing to do with Picasso’s art after he viewed the piece (Stein 175). This painting, however, was not on display for the public. It was being viewed in Picasso’s studio and was not exhibited until 1912 or 1915.

Joyce’s influences were more traditional than a show of African masks, but they still had a dramatic effect on his work. Henrik Ibsen was one of the looming influences on Joyce’s work. During his college days, Joyce taught himself Norwegian in order to read Ibsen texts in their original language. Throughout letters to his brother Stanislaus and friends, Joyce consistently refers to Ibsen’s influence on his work. Just as Ibsen, Joyce incorporated ghosts into his works, gave a voice to women, and used average people as characters. Joyce, too, attacked the bourgeoisie and in addition embraced aspects of early feminism.

Another influence on Joyce was John Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World*. While in Rome, Joyce learned of the riots that broke out in the streets of Dublin over Synge’s play. In Joyce’s biography, Richard Ellmann writes that though Joyce was initially elated by the embarrassment brought on Yeats and Lady Gregory, he could not get the riots out of mind. He wanted the sensationalism that Synge had, which prompted him to write, “Synge’s art 'is more original than my own'” (qtd. in Ellmann, *James Joyce* 267). Amidst dire living conditions, having children, and switching jobs every few months, Joyce was searching for something that would make him the “Jesus
Christ” of literature (Ellmann, James Joyce 255). While finishing Dubliners during 1906-07, Joyce began to create a story of a Dublin Jew, which he called ‘Ulysses.’

He intended ‘Ulysses’ to be part of Dubliners, but he decided the ideas for the work required more room than a short story allowed. During his stay in Rome, Joyce did not work on Ulysses, but he collected several experiences that would be folded into the novel. His wanderings throughout Italy along with varying job positions, caused him to compare his nomadic, exiled status to that of the Jews. This brought back memories of a Dublin Jew, Alfred H. Hunter, who once helped Joyce. Hunter becomes an early model for Leopold Bloom. Joyce’s squalid, cramped living quarters presented conditions that Molly and Leopold Bloom would have. Joyce also wrote political columns for an Italian newspaper and this gave him the experience Bloom would have in the newsroom of the “Aeolus” episode. According to Stanislaus and Ellmann, these columns brimmed with political fervor for socialism and Fenianism that perhaps only resurfaces in the “Cyclops” episode. Along with several woes Joyce experienced in 1907, in early 1908 Nora miscarried a boy (Ellmann, James Joyce 255). For a time, Joyce was fixated on the dead fetus and this most likely lead to Bloom losing a son. During this period Joyce also began collecting maps, public notices, magazines, newspapers, anything from Ireland, specifically Dublin. These circumstances prepared a platform for Ulysses to be constructed.

Inversion of Form

After 1908, Joyce and Picasso excel in radicalizing the form of their traditions. From Les Demoiselles, Picasso proceeded to experiment further with form and technique. Of the elements, form was critical to the Cubist and particularly its distortion.
By seeking to break up linearity, Picasso broke with the most effective and convincing methods for creating the illusion of three-dimensional space. The technique of linear perspective, developed by Brunileschi during the Renaissance, created a spatial illusionism that implied linear time. Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper, for instance, is an excellent portrayal of linear, central perspective. The angular shapes of the apostles and the lines implied by their visual direction all point inward toward the pyramidal Christ figure who is centered and emphasized through the contrasting back lighting. The orthogonal lines of the walls and ceiling converge into the vanishing point which, placed in the forehead of Christ, both affirms his importance as our center of attention and creates the illusion of deep space.

By inverting the perspective, Picasso spilled the contents toward the viewer instead of drawing in the viewer. This effectively defamiliarized art. In the almost monochromatic Cottage and Trees, the house and the tree spill forward or seem to advance toward the viewer instead of receding into the distance (fig. 6). The tree, house, and vegetation are imposed each on top the other creating a strange flatness to the image as well. Cottage and Trees is the antithesis of traditionally learned perspectival techniques in art training. The fragmented planes in Picasso’s Nude Woman also project toward the viewer, appearing to spill out of the picture plane (fig. 7). The artificial lines point to disparate points beyond the viewer, reflecting the multiple viewpoints and, in effect, a simultaneous whole. But this whole is not necessarily created on the canvas. Can one clearly see a nude woman in this painting? Most likely not. The schematization of this piece, and Cubist art in general, is a simplified version of the subject matter, though most viewers would hardly concur that it is easy to
decipher. Where is the woman’s head? Where are her feet? Merely staring at the picture will not bring these elements out. The whole is created through the assemblage of sharp contours and cubes in the viewer’s mind. Thus the image is completed in conceptualized space if only for a brief moment.

These early Cubist paintings have the effect, not of receding space, but of planes inverted and projecting toward the viewer. Rather than depicting space as linear and receding, these images present space as simultaneous, largely due to their lack of a focus or center. The viewer is not drawn into the painting as with the Last Supper but is confronted with immediacy and energy from the spilling, overlapping, and fragmented planes. In this respect, Cubist art reflects one of Bergson’s thoughts that our perception of time is composed of multiple simultaneous occurrences which blur into one another creating reality and experience (Fleming 579).

The effect of simultaneity was created partly through the inversion of perspective but also through the use of multiple overlapping planes of color. By imposing a grid and presenting objects and images as fragmented, displaced, overlapping, and multi-perspectival, Cubism constituted a visual amalgamation of Freud’s dream theories, Nietzsche’s philosophy of human will, Bergson’s philosophy of the duration of time, and Einstein’s theory of relativity. Gertrude Stein wrote of Picasso’s visual perception:

Really most of the time one sees only a feature of a person with whom one is, the other features are covered by a hat, by the light, by clothes for sport and everybody is accustomed to complete the whole entirely from their knowledge, but Picasso when he saw an eye, the other one did not exist for him and only the one he saw did exist for him as a painter . . . . he was right, one sees what one sees, the rest is a reconstruction from memory and painters have nothing to do with reconstruction, nothing to do with memory,
they concern themselves only with visible things. (qtd. in Fitz 228-29)

By rejecting linear perspective for the depiction of simultaneous perspective, Cubism also rejected the concept of visual narratives. A simultaneous perspective only assumes the present, thus only producing fragments of the same moment. Picasso ardently sought to represent this idea: “To me there is no past or future in art. If a work of art cannot live always in the present it must not be considered at all” (Picasso 216). Therefore, the visual reality sought by Picasso could not be presented as a perceptual reality, but as a reality that was intellectualized and conceptualized. Concentrating heavily on form and construction, Cubism constituted a removal of art’s traditional narrative content by overturning the grammar of visual language.

The strangeness of the simultaneity and the multiple perspectives achieved by both Ulysses and Cubism defamiliarize ordinary subject matter. Examining Woman with Pears, the viewer sees that Picasso is representing a traditional art subject matter—the portrait (fig. 8). The perspective, however, is distorted. It is easy to see a clothed woman with dark hair seated by a table that holds a bowl of pears. But would it be possible to identify the woman? No. Picasso tells that she is his lover, Fernande, but there is no specific resemblance.

Still Life with Fan presents a similar conundrum (fig. 9). Where exactly is the fan? What constitutes the still life? The objects are not completely abstract but are presented in an unfamiliar way. Picasso defamiliarized these typical, traditional art subjects, such as landscapes, portraiture, and still lives, by breaking up the image(s) in sharp contrasting planes. This effect Joyce managed to accomplish in a different medium.
In manners comparable to the Cubists, Joyce defamiliarized the form of the novel. In *Ulysses* the absence of linear, narrative, sequential chapters and insistence on a broken episodic order initially puts the reader off balance. The first episodes chronicle Stephen Dedalus’ awakening and preparations for the day. With the fourth episode, the reader is again at 8:00am but now with Leopold Bloom. Contrary to the traditional novel, *Ulysses* is composed of overlapping episodes, sharp and fragmented, resembling an early Cubist painting or Bergson’s theory of time constituting a fusion of moments. The stylistic tone of the narrators varies from episode to episode to keep the reader off balance. These opening lines give a glimpse of the changes in narrative voice:

From “Aeolus,” “IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS” (116);  
From “Lestrygonians,” “Pineapple Rock, Lemon Platt, Butter Scotch. A Sugarsticky girl shoveling scoopfuls of creams for a Christian brother” (151);  
From “Scylla & Charybdis,” “Urbane to comfort them the Quaker Librarian Purred: -And we have, have we not, those priceless pages of Wilhelm Meister?” (184);  
From “Wandering Rocks,” “The Superior, the Very Reverend John Conmee S. J., reset his smooth watch in his interior pocket as he came down the presbytery steps” (219);  
From “Sirens,” “Bronze by Gold Heard the Hoofirons, Steelyrining Impertnthnthnthnthn” (256).

These contrasting and differing voices of the narrators create abrupt shifts throughout the novel, sharply defining each episode against the other while each episode carries on the various storylines of Bloom and Dedalus. Joyce writes,

I understand that you may begin to regard the various styles or the episodes with dismay and prefer the initial style much
as the wanderer did who longed for the rock of Ithaca. But in the compass of one day to compress all these wanderings and clothe them in the form of this day is for me only possible by such variation which, I beg you to believe, is not capricious. (Ellmann, Letters 129)

Besides the overlapping episodes and simultaneous viewpoints, Joyce also adjusts grammatical and storyline devices. In Ulysses, he makes abundant use of interior monologue. Without quotation marks or indentations, the narrator’s voice collides with the character’s interior thoughts, creating a text in flux that the reader must ride. An example occurs in the opening scene with Bloom, as Joyce moves from narrator, to Bloom and the cat speaking, to Bloom’s inner thoughts seamlessly, without grammatical inscriptions. These switches are so common in current literature that we likely fail to appreciate their advent. Only perhaps Flaubert and Proust had attempted writing like this, but they did not attempt to construct the mirrored labyrinth that Joyce managed. Again this seamless inner monologue reflects the experience of duration as described by Bergson. The use of dialogue in literature had been carefully denoted by quotation marks alerting the reader to a shift in voice. Joyce had omitted some grammatical marks in Dubliners; however, the unmarked shifts in Ulysses are more difficult to follow.

Joyce also created an anticlimactic storyline and anti-heroic protagonist. Despite his Odessian adventures, Bloom returns to Penelope not to throw out the suitor but to lie in the suitor’s residue. For an adventurer, Bloom is an anti-hero. He is paralyzed in his marriage state since the death of his son. This paralysis not only links Bloom with Joyce’s earlier characters in Dubliners, but its perpetuation and lack of resolution creates a continuous monotony that parallels the monochromatic colors Picasso used in
his Cubist works. Circularity is also presented in the novel's beginning and end. Richard Ellmann has noted that “the first word of the book is ‘Stately’ and the last ‘Yes,’ the first and last letters being reversed so that the serpent has his tail in his mouth at last” (qtd. in Bebee 179). The cyclical pattern tying the beginning and ending of the story is experienced more fully in Finnegans Wake. However, the even keel of plot and anti-heroism of Bloom changes all succeeding literature.

Joyce’s last episode of the Telemachia is focused on change of form, hence its title, “Proteus.” Change is not only occurring with Stephen at this point in the novel, but the storyline switches to Bloom in the following episode. The opening paragraphs are significant to this study for Stephen’s idea of perception: “Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs” (37). Here Stephen seems to acknowledge the simultaneous intake of various materials visually. Calling it “thought through [his] eyes,” Stephen is correlating this landscape montage to thoughts streaming through the mind. Though Stephen’s interior monologue is not as free as Molly’s, the seed for thought and language, not just visuals, in space is planted early in the novel.

Joyce’s inversion of traditional form is displayed in his use of stream-of-consciousness found prominently in the last episode, “Penelope,” which operates as Molly Bloom’s soliloquy. With sparse punctuation and rarely any paragraph breaks, this episode spans forty-five pages with fragmented thoughts as: “Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple of eggs since the City Arms hotel when he used to be pretending laid up with a sick” (738). Perhaps
here there is an obvious tie to Freud’s thoughts on how we assess information and how we think through associations. Joyce described this episode in a letter to his friend, Frank Budgen:

The first sentence contains 2500 words. There are eight sentences in the episode. It begins and ends with the female word Yes. It turns like the huge earthball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning. Its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb, and [. . .] expressed by the words because, bottom (in all senses, bottom button, bottom of the glass, bottom of the sea, bottom of his heart) woman, yes. Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to me to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilizable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent Weib. Ich bin das Fleisch das stets bejaht. (Gilbert Letters, 170)

The effect of a woman’s private thoughts running without grammar, without censor in literature, not subversive literature, was unprecedented. Even in the above letter, published in 1957, Stuart Gilbert inserts ellipses and makes a footnote “Unprinted here but easily imagined by adult readers.” Joyce delightfully wrote of the experience of Molly Bloom climaxing, her enjoyment, her fantasies, and the flow of her menses most likely because he wanted controversy.

Perhaps Joyce’s best attempt at simultaneity is found in the central “Wandering Rocks” episode. The episode, composed of eighteen scenes with overlapping characters, actions, and locations, challenges the linear nature of language. The scenes wind the reader through Dublin with various minor characters in the novel. Interestingly the change of perspective through Dublin creates a labyrinth to follow. Part of one scene is mixed into another and, in some cases, occurrences that have transpired in earlier episodes or will take place in future episodes are depicted.
In the first scene, for example, the viewpoint comes from Father John Conmee, who is leaving his office for his habitual afternoon prayer in the country (219-24). Amongst many, he passes a one legged sailor who asks for alms and he sees Corny Kelleher “[chewing] a blade of hay” (219-21). In the second episode, Corny Kelleher view is depicted, “chewing his blade of hay . . . [he] looks idly out [and sees] Father John Conmee [stepping] into the Dollymount tram” (224-25). In the third episode, the perspective of the one legged sailor is presented. He is still seeking alms and he “bays” to an open window “---home and beauty”; the blind is drawn and “a card Unfurnished Apartments slip[s] from the sash . . . a plump bare generous arm shone, was seen, held forth from a white petticoatbodice and taut shiftstraps” (225-26). Much later in the book, we learn this plump arm belongs to Molly Bloom, who is then preparing for her rendezvous with Blazes Boylan. As critic Jo-Anna Isaak points out, “Not only are figures fragmented and dispersed in the way they would be on a Cubist canvas; they are also multiplied and presented from different angles simultaneously by reflection and refraction” (79). The divided portions of this episode gain momentum through their varying lengths coupled with the increasing number of overlapping characters. In the end there is a swirl of events occurring concurrently and, thus, a whole instant of Dublin time is presented but only understood conceptually.

The overlapping of sequence and time in “Wandering Rocks” creates a conceptualized sense of simultaneity. The relativity of perception as described by Einstein was permeating the humanities. The fragmentation and stratification of urban life affected Joyce. He fought against the inherently linear structure of language. According to Litz, “Joyce’s work on Ulysses is characterized by a growing conflict
between his aesthetic ideal of ‘simultaneity’ and the consecutive nature of language” (Art 56). The idea of simultaneity formally expressed through language seemed impossible. But according to popular theories of time and space at Joyce’s time, this simultaneity could conceptually occur and Joyce managed such a feat. Much like Cubist images, which are void of grand content, the emphasis in the “Wandering Rocks” episode is on the miniscule, mundane, and perhaps, insignificant moments in these characters’ day. Such a focus on the microcosmic dimensions of existence had not been given in a literary work previous to Joyce. The episode does not add to the plot or create any momentum for the story, but serves as an example of Modernist fragmentation and cinematic experience. Life is experienced piecemeal and may or may not add up to something in the end.

Compositional Methods

The compositional techniques of Joyce and Picasso not only mirror each other but are also examples of the predominating Modernist characteristics of fragmentation and simultaneity. Each man seized the tradition of his genre and skewed the perception and relation of the viewer to the medium. The breakdown is simple: mythology comes to be represented by the simple Leopold Bloom, complex scholar Stephen Dedalus, and lusty Molly Bloom; a still life is faithfully represented in Still Life with Fan but only in essence and fragmentation with details omitted. It is the viewer’s expectations and learned traditional perspective that interprets this material as quite complex and incomprehensible. These art forms, however, were not unlike the Modernist era in which they were created.
While nature and objects imposed their appearances onto the work of previous artists, Picasso inverted this creative procedure. He imposed a grid on nature and objects. Picasso painted images conceived from multiple angles simultaneously. He once remarked, “You may ask me to draw a bowl and I can draw you a bowl perfectly round, however, if I paint the bowl, the grid may so impose itself that the bowl becomes square instead of round” (qtd. in New Ways). Picasso made multiple, sometimes hundreds of sketches before he started a painting. He also drew heavily on the techniques and art of his predecessors, a fact that has brought much criticism. Susan Glassai’s recent study, Picasso Variation on the Masters, explores Picasso’s blatant use of other artists’ work throughout his career. Picasso imitated El Greco, Velázquez, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Rousseau along with many others. He experimented with their styles and colors, but created wholly different art works.

More critically debated is whether Picasso actually used some form of geometry and intentionally constructed multi-perspectival works. There are critics who refute these notions. In his essay “On the ‘Multiple Viewpoint’ Theory of Early Modern Art,” critic John Richardson argues that the novices of the art world have perpetuated a multiple viewpoint theory. While it is arguable whether the Cubist artists actually used some “hermetic geometry” to compose “ideally geometric solids which are then fragmented by the shifting viewpoint of the moving observer,” Richardson finds this idea absurd (129). He does not believe painters would have delved into geometry or physics to create: “... Cubists do not portray fragments of single objects; rather, they create pictures from discontinuous fragments and elements of marks”(Richardson 134).

However, in the video New Ways of Seeing, William Rubin, Picasso specialist
and Director of Painting and Sculpture at MOMA, very articulately describes and shows through an examination of several paintings that Picasso was presenting subject matter from multiple points of view. This can be verified by x-raying a drawing or painting to see the stages of additions that were made to the specific piece. Despite Richardson's claim that Picasso did not use geometry, Picasso was intrigued by mathematics. He attended weekly intellectual sessions at Gertrude Stein’s house, and Leo Stein specifically remembered Picasso's interest piqued at discussions of numbers and hidden dimensions (176). From assorted biographies it seems clear that Picasso was very interested in new theories, especially those connected with time, space, and perception. Because he did not write, it is difficult to pinpoint what Picasso's intentions were, but clearly from his circle of friends and his interests, he was experimenting with various new concepts.

Similarly, Joyce was also using a grid, current theories, and colored cubes to construct Ulysses. It took nearly sixteen years for Joyce to compose Ulysses. The episodes were written non-sequentially. In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, Joyce writes:

> In all seventeen episodes of which, including that which is now being typed and will be sent in a day or two, Hades, I have delivered six. It is impossible to say how much of the book is really written. Several other episodes have been drafted for the second time but that means nothing. (Ellmann, Letters 113)

Joyce collected information everywhere he went. According to Joyce's friend, Frank Budgen:

> I have seen him in the space of a few hours collect the oddest assortment of material: a parody on the House that
Jack Built, the name and action of a poison, the method of caning boys on training ships, the wobbly cessation of a tired unfinished sentence, the nervous trick of a convive turning his glass in inward turning circles, a Swiss music-hall joke turning on a pun in Swiss dialect, and a description of a Fitzsimmons shift. (qtd. in Litz, Art 8)

Many of these esoteric fragments of information went into Ulysses. Joyce kept packets with pieces of notes in each. Each packet corresponded to a particular episode. According to critic A. Walton Litz, “Joyce laboured to a predetermined pattern; each fragment of material he gathered was marked for a specific place in the novel’s general design. The entire work, with all its complex internal allusions, seems to have developed in Joyce’s mind as a single vast ‘image’” (Art 9).

Paralleling Picasso’s many sketches, Joyce made numerous revisions to the episodes once they were typed. Almost as soon as Joyce sent off the handwritten manuscript of each episode to his secretary, Claud Sykes, he would follow with a postcard, “for ‘old shrunken breasts’ in description of the old milkwoman read ‘old shrunken paps.’ For ‘plunged’ in description of Buck Mulligan searching for handkerchief read ‘plunged and rummaged’” (Ellmann, Letters 109). The revisions grow more laborious and Joyce more stubborn in his refusal to back down from his demands to typesetters and various publishers. “Circe” was rewritten at least nine times (Ellmann, Letters, 155). Many episodes were changed to include new information that came to Joyce as he was writing another episode:

Last night I thought of an Entr’acte for Ulysses in middle of book after 9th episode “Scylla and Charybdis.” Short with absolutely no relation to what precedes or follows like a pause in the action of a play. It would have to be balanced by a mautine (very short) before the opening and a nocturne (also short) after the end. What? I agree about the
explanation of syphilis. I always thought the etymology was syn philais (together with loving, connected with it) but a man named Bradley says the other. Moly could also be absinthe the cerebral impotentising(!) drink of chastity. Damn Homer, Ulysses, Bloom and all the rest. (Ellmann, Letters 149)

The majority of Joyce’s notes are fragments, but it is interesting in this particular letter that Joyce thinks of constructing the episode musically. This would be another example of trying to escape the expectation of narrative by mimicking another art form. While music can be narrative, most composers place an emphasis on form and the end result is often abstract.

Joyce also used unusual methods of note taking. A. Walton Litz points out in The Art of James Joyce’s Ulysses, the scraps of information are jotted down to act as associative devices for Joyce. It is only one angle of the whole that will recall the whole to Joyce’s mind. For instance a page from one of Joyce’s early notebooks reads:

The last to touch that cork pays
cork drawing machine
R {Bugaboo}
L {as cold as brass}
airy feet of dancers
rocks
Egypt fear death
Hellen no
Thebes, Egypt Mycene, Orchomenos
de Beotie.
This may have meaning only for Joyce, but it provides an example of how Joyce’s mind operated and how he compiled information for *Ulysses*. These fragments can be seen as corollary to the fragmentation of Cubist art. Joyce not only wrote a Cubist novel, but he also composed cubistically. Scholars continue to squabble over what Joyce meant in his notes and what his sometimes undecipherable handwriting depicts.

With a vast amount of information collected and cross referenced, Joyce had to devise a system of order. “I am here again with MSS and pencils (red, green, and blue)[. . .]” (Ellmann, *Letters* 173). Joyce color-coded his notes within each episode. Fragments that were linked together were colored the same. Critic and friend of Joyce, Valery Larbaud describes Joyce’s notes:

> It [*Ulysses*] is a genuine example of the art of mosaic. I have seen the drafts. They are entirely composed of abbreviated phrases underlined in various-coloured pencil. These are annotated and intended to recall to the author complete phrases; and the pencil-marks indicate according such episode. It makes one think of the boxes of little coloured cubes of the mosaic workers. (qtd. in Litz, *Art* 12)

This description of Joyce’s method of composing easily presents similarities to Cubist construction. Joyce created a strange cross-referencing system for *Ulysses* that obviously made sense to him but still partially baffles scholars trying to schematize it.
Joyce set out to write “a little story of a day” but he did so in a different way than earlier novelists who avoided topics to fit the social order or norms. He set the novel to mirror the organization of the Homeric epic, The Odyssey. Each episode of Ulysses follows, albeit sometimes rather obscurely, an adventure of Homer’s Ulysses. Complicating the Homeric grid are many other themes, such as Hamlet, Don Giovanni, human anatomy, colors, and music. The Homeric grid is confining enough that it should cause the reader to take into account the characters who may double to meet the grid’s specifications; for instance, Molly Bloom acts as Calypso, Penelope, and perhaps Hamlet’s mother, producing a literary version of multiple perspectives and simultaneity.

Appropriation of Popular Culture

Collectively Joyce and Picasso were conceiving and almost identically organizing their radical work during the same years and coincidentally reinforcing the concepts and elements of Modernism. Both men, however, were not fully satisfied. Beyond concepts of space and time, Joyce and Picasso further reduce or enhance, depending on one’s taste for literature and art, their art through the introduction of lower class elements into their traditionally elite fields. Critic Daniel Schwarz writes that these two artists actually “turned for inspiration and stimulation both to the middle class of the impersonal and indifferent urban culture and to the classless culture of music halls, circuses, and street and arcade performers” (“Searching” 5). This is highly probable. When Joyce and Picasso decided to go a step further, they did it the same year, 1914. In this year Picasso began assembling collages and brought color back into his art. Joyce changed directions with Ulysses and decided to de-emphasize interior
monologue and focus on form. According to critic Hans Gabler, Joyce had been writing in a distinct style not unlike what he had used in Portrait with a concentration on interior monologue of Stephen and it was not until years into the writing that Joyce shifted to “emphasize form itself” (qtd. in Rose xi). Based on the work of Joycean scholar Michael Groden, Gabler asserts that “Ulysses can be regarded as a mosaic bearing the visible imprint of its change in direction and in form in the years 1914-1922” (Rose xi). Whatever brought about these shifts in their work, perhaps the beginning of World War I or new lovers, the effect of these changes ultimately opens portions of high culture to the masses.

Picasso introduced new art forms and techniques, such as collage and assemblage sculpture, and also implemented materials never before used in high art. He composed paintings with integrated pieces of bedspread, oilcloths, and rope as in Still Life with Chair Caining (fig. 10). The rope makes up the frame of the picture while the chair caning is pasted onto the lower left hand corner of the canvas. In this collage, the letters “JOU” are visible. The introduction of labels in high art is also unprecedented. “JOU” is often found in Picasso’s collages presumably because it was the bold letters of the French newspaper, Le Journal. “Jou” also relates to the French jouer meaning to play, which Picasso was undoubtedly doing with his artwork and his viewers.

Picasso also decided to rough up his paint by adding sand and dirt. Importantly, color begins to come back into Picasso’s paintings, primarily through the labels. While the first phase of Cubism had stayed virtually dark and monochromatic in color, the second phase brought color back to Picasso’s palette.
Collage was a radical change in art. To go to a salon or collector’s home and see a Renoir or Manet was a refined event. Art was pleasing, perhaps slightly disturbing to the beholder; but imposing everyday materials, such as oil cloth, which any house maid or mechanic could buy at a local store, into a piece of art was absurd and appalling to most collectors. This brought too many questions. By imposing labels into art, is Picasso recognizing the value of the artistic design? Is the person who designed the label also an artist? What is the value of the person who paints the sign onto the storefront or sets the type for print? Could these people be artists as well? It is doubtful that Picasso ever thought through such questions. He did not analyze his work or even try to theorize about it.

Cubism has kept itself within the limits and limitations of painting, never pretending to go beyond it [. . .] Our subjects might be different, as we have introduced into paintings objects and forms that were formerly ignored. (Picasso 217)

Picasso also sought to play with the viewer by wittily choosing his labels. In Table with Bottle, Wine Glass, and Newspaper he created a pun out of Le Journal by using only the “urnal,” which relates to the French urinal (fig. 11). Recognizable to French viewers as coming from their newspaper, “urnal” sent viewers into further associations of irreverence. Landscape with Posters also made use of labels (fig. 12). “Kub” copied from a can of bouillon cubes also reminds the viewer of Cubism (fig. 13). This drawing on a popular advertisement created a dialogue with the viewers that art had not accomplished on a mass level. The lower classes now had an entry to question and perhaps understand art.

Picasso also integrated unrefined materials into sculpture. His cardboard Guitar
is the most famous example of his sculpture (fig. 14). He demands that the viewer imagine some of the missing pieces. He colored the guitar with crayons and pasted the paper together. He liked it so well he ordered one to be made from sheet metal (fig. 15). Here again questions arise. Who is the artist—the one who orders the guitar to be made or the one who makes it? By incorporating the labels, ready-made materials, and unrefined elements to art, Picasso appropriates banality and vulgarity to high art.

In like fashion, Joyce appropriates vulgarities and baseness into literature. Critic R. B. Kershner argues in the Introduction to Joyce and Popular Culture that Joyce actually plays with the Carnival. He further argues that the incorporation of base elements into literature creates a relationship between high art and popular culture that is “dialogical” (11). One of the most shocking incidents for Joyce’s contemporary audience, yet one that all can identify with, occurs in the “Calypso” episode when Leopold Bloom goes to the bathroom: “Leaving the door ajar, amid the stench of mouldy limewash and stale cobwebs he undid his braces” (68-70). Going to the bathroom is a universal experience, but never had it been so unabashedly placed inside a novel by an author of high literature. This description, however, pales in comparison to Bloom’s sadistic fantasy in the “Circe” episode where he is pinned down by whores and ridden by the male/female madam, Bello/Bella: “I’ll ride him [ . . . ] (He bends sideways and squeezes his mount’s [Bloom’s] testicles roughly shouting) Ho! Off we pop! I’ll nurse you in proper fashion” (534). Readers of pornographic stories might have been accustomed to such divergences, but the mass novel reading audience, along with literary critics, were shocked.

Interestingly both critics Daniel Schwarz and Robert Scholes liken the “Circe”
episode to Picasso’s *Les Demoiselles*. Schwarz postulates that this scene is a recollection from Joyce’s first visit to France. Scholes further explores connections and investigates Walter Benjamin’s assertion that the prostitute was a key symbol to the Modernist artist because “she was subject and object in one, both the seller of flesh and the fleshly commodity that was sold”(5). The artist could identify with this position perhaps on several levels.

Along with the Cubist artists, Joyce also used labels. Throughout *Ulysses* there are references to Guinness stout, the Irish Independent, and Bass ale to name a few. Joyce used headlines as well. Ironically, the “Aeolus” episode is set in a newspaper office and the narrative is sporadically interrupted by headlines such as: “WITH UNFEIGNED REGRET IT IS WE ANNOUNCE THE DISSOLUTION OF A MOST RESPECTED DUBLIN BURGESS” (118); “LOST CAUSES NOBLE MARQUESS MENTIONED” (133); and “DIMINISHED DIGITS PROVE TOO TITILATING FOR FRISKY FRUMPS. ANNE WIMBLES, FLO WANGLES—YET CAN YOU BLAME THEM?” (150). These words do not necessarily add meaning to the episode, but the headlines serve as devices for inverting traditional narrative form. Archie Loss explores “Aeolus” in relation to Cubism in his thesis and also in an article, “Joyce’s use of Collage in ‘Aeolus.’” He believes that “Aeolus” and the Cubists demonstrate that “art is both an imitation of reality and a transcendence of that imitation, and the artist both the maker and mocker” (“Joyce’s Use” 179). Picasso and Joyce certainly seem to be mockers, and Picasso would most likely agree with Loss: “Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of truthfulness of his lies”(Picasso 215).
Both artists toy with reality. Comparable to the various visual planes created in Cubist art, Joyce plays with varying planes of reality. The characters and narrators of the novel grapple with Irish politics, Irish history, and Irish folklore. According to Joycean scholars Danis Rose and John O’Hanolin, Thomas Fitzgerald “the silken knight” who is mentioned in “Telemachus” (45) and “Wandering Rocks” (231) was actually the tenth Earl of Kildare. Having heard a rumor that his father was executed in the Tower, he withdrew allegiance to the English crown and thereby eventually met his end (xx). When Fitzgerald is introduced in the first episode, there are three men with him, Edward Bruce, Lambert Simnel, and Perkin Warbeck; all were actual usurpers of the English crown in Ireland. Several scholars, Rose and O’Hanolin, R.B. Kershner, and David Glover have delved into English and Irish newspapers to find Joyce’s source material and have been successful in correlating advertisements and articles with the text. Ironically, many of the facts or stories that were used came from English newspapers since Irish newspapers were scarce on the continent, especially during World War I (Rose xxii).

Along with fragments of Irish history, actual Dublin street names and places are used throughout the novel as well, for instance, Eccles Street. Joyce dedicated himself to portraying objects, places, and actualities much like they were in his contemporary reality. In one of his letters to his aunt Josephine, he asks, “Is it possible for an ordinary person to climb over the area railings of no 7 Eccles street, either from the path or the steps, lower himself down from the lowest part of the railings till his feet are within 2 feet or 3 of the ground and drop unhurt” (qtd. in Litz, “Ithaca” 43). He would not complete his episode until he had an answer.
Many characters in *Ulysses* are also based on people Joyce knew. Many of the same characters in *Ulysses* are also found in *Dubliners*. Thus, the reader is bounced from fictional past and present to Irish reality and actuality, past and present. This bouncing mirrors the ricocheting experience of the multiple perspectives a Cubist piece may have on the viewer. Exemplifying Modernist elitism, the novel assumes and plays on readers’ knowledge and takes them to multiple conceptual levels.

*Ulysses* and Cubism, operating on the basis of conceptualized realism, produced intellectualized experiences. Picasso did not haphazardly construe his Cubist art—hundreds of sketches prove otherwise. The same is true of *Ulysses*. Joyce spent at least seven years writing but at least fourteen years thinking about it. Joyce boasted that his work would keep professors busy for years as they puzzled out his allusions, elaborate schematization, and archaic references. Readers must bring knowledge, particularly knowledge of the Modernist era, in order to understand *Ulysses*.

Picasso and Joyce disrupted centuries of concepts. As full embodiments of the early twentieth century paradigmatic shift, Cubism and *Ulysses* have come to represent the era of Modernism. These changes could probably not have occurred without the advancements of artists and writers in their respective fields. However, one of the most important dramatic changes these two men accomplished was to integrate popular culture into literature and art. Though Cézanne might arguably be called the father of Cubism and Flaubert, Proust, or Lawrence maybe seen as inventors of change within the literary tradition, it is Picasso and Joyce who have come to signify change within their tradition. Both became household names, *Time* magazine front-page men, and both have legacies that have endured perhaps because of their shock value. The
general population may not have been ready to embrace the art or literature of Picasso and Joyce, but their experimentation with forms influenced artists and writers for the remainder of the century, an influence experienced in all levels of society.
Chapter IV

Continuing Influences on Contemporary Society

A head, he [Picasso] told me, was a matter of eyes, nose, mouth, which could be distributed any way you like---the head remained a head. And so Picasso made innumerable heads on this novel pattern, sometimes throwing in some hair and teeth for good measure. (Leo Stein 177)

Joyce’s *Ulysses* is an . . . eye, ear, nose, and mouth, a sensory nerve exposed without choice or check to the roaring, chaotic, nonsensical cataract of psychic or physical happenings, and registering all of this in an almost photographic way. (Jung 402)

The effects of Cubism and *Ulysses* on later art and literature have been monumental. The twentieth century never again experienced such saturation of innovation and revolutionary change in either field. Cubist art transformed concepts in architecture, graphic design, furniture design, textiles, and popular culture. Joyce’s extensive use of stream-of-consciousness style and full development of an anti-heroic character were transformative to fiction, theater, and poetry. Although inhabiting the distinct worlds of art and literature, Picasso and Joyce run parallel in their exploration of defamiliarization techniques; their search to revolutionize conventions of space and time; and their aim to incorporate the changing ideas of science, philosophy, and psychology into their works. Their influence not only trickles down their respective genres but is also visible in the whole of Western society. Both Cubism and *Ulysses* gave birth to a myriad of movements---Dada, Surrealism, the Beat writers, Pop Art, and Abstraction. The rejection of tradition by both men opened a door for expression that mirrored the catastrophic and enormous change in Western society at the time.
Picasso’s and Joyce’s works, though considered elitist by many today, actually gave the public a language or mode of commenting on ever-progressing capitalistic society. Both men in base, vulgar, humorous, and mundane tones represented freedom of expression. These representations were eventually accepted into high society, and this acceptance opened art, literature, and the rest of the humanities to the masses. According to Foucault and others, the direction, morals, and persuasion of the masses resides in the reins of the powerful, who are inherently the wealthy. The dominant discourse is set and effected by the decisions of the elite. Interestingly, despite class and national identity, these men were able to permeate the elite, high society and effect changes. Because both had a respectable reputation in their fields beforehand, it is likely this allowed their later works to be accepted. Their work, however, currently occupies an elite position and the products of these socially lower class men reign in the canon of the humanities. These men, once seemingly connected to that knowledge which Derrida described as being on the edge of a culture, were brought mainstream, and their work ingested so that the creators have been absorbed in the dominant discourse and have become two of the dead white males that dominate Western artistic accomplishment.

The art that follows Picasso’s unmistakably bears his influence. Duchamp would most likely have found it impossible to display his ready-mades in galleries before Cubism. How could this be art? Picasso’s art opened up this possibility through his incorporation of labels and unrefined material in art. Duchamp was avant-garde in perceiving functional objects as art and thus making them non-functional. If a label created by a designer and draftsman could be incorporated into high art and be
accepted, why not a urinal? Could the design of the urinal with its soft, hypnotic curves be lesser art? Duchamp aimed to draw attention to the question of originality and piss, so to speak, in the face of the Western aesthetic condition.

Mondrian undoubtedly owes much to Cubism. His blocks of color in square grids are not cubes but a further, flat simplification. He tried to return to essentials, incorporating only basic colors, flatness, and simple vertical and horizontal lines into his paintings.

The work of Jackson Pollock with his violent flicks of paint scattered about the canvas would hardly have been realized without Cubism. Pollock struggled to bring something new to art. His early pieces easily display the influences of the Cubist, but his notoriety came with his paint dropped canvases. Many people remark that they could easily do the same; however, he was the first to do this and have the pieces hung on museum walls.

The work of Andy Warhol would seem to be impossible without the introduction of base materials into Cubist art. His incorporation of ready-made objects and use of mechanization for means of producing art, along with his collaborative pieces that sometimes only included his urine as contribution, makes him a prime example of a Cubist after product. Warhol consistently used cheap, everyday materials and exemplified monotony in his excessive use and reproduction of photographic portraits of famous people, for instance Marilyn Monroe, Jackie Kennedy Onassis, Mao, and Queen Elizabeth II.

In architecture, Picasso’s influence was also acutely felt. Frank Ghery’s names Picasso as his primary influence. His spiral-like building, the Bilboa, in Spain was
created out of swirling metal and he stated that this design would have been impossible without Cubism (New Ways).

Textile design was also greatly affected. Patterns and colors began overlapping the other and juxtapositions once thought wrong were made and sold. For instance, Picasso believed he was directly responsible for the creation of camouflage (New Ways).

The subversive, low end commonality, and radical juxtaposition of fine and unrefined materials of Cubist art pieces and their display in museums and collections throughout Europe and America set an entirely new standard against which to judge every object of art and design, be it a building, an armored tank, a shirt, or a quilt.

The increasing mechanization also opened opportunities for a wider range of people who could produce a drawing and have it printed or silk-screened, thus further breaking down the notion of authenticity. Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” is one of the first essays to address this concern. How would real art be distinguished from reproductions? Who would be the artist, the drawer or the man who pushes the button on a machine that reproduced 1000 copies of a piece? How could distinctions be made? This problem still perplexes many in the art world today, but most people have expanded their definitions of art. A poster is a work of art. Graffiti painted on a subway wall is a work of art. A toaster from 1980 is a work of art. A sign for a fast food joint is a work of art. These pieces may reside on a different value scale per individual; however, varying perspectives make possible cases for each of these pieces to be labeled works of art. This is a legacy of Cubism.
Ulysses, too, challenged similar ideas in society. Initially, the book was pirated and sold throughout the United States as a work of pornography by Samuel Roth (Acquavia 3). Any student of Victorianism has been exposed to the extensive underground, x-rated world of English and American societies, a fact which makes it arguable that this world was bound to break through at some point. However, Joyce’s Ulysses, which is hardly pornographic, did push the envelope of morality and sexuality. The bawdy “Circe” and lascivious “Penelope” episodes brought words and thoughts into literature that many people had probably never read or imagined. The free sexual proclivities of Molly Bloom and the acknowledgment that she read smut novels for sexual arousal set the stage for the proliferation of Harlequin mass markets we have today. Ideas about sexuality began spilling on the pages of novels after Joyce. Some may argue that Lawrence was doing this concurrently, but Lawrence was in Joyce’s words “beating around the bush” (qtd. in Ellmann, James 233). He wrote Lady Chatterley’s Lover but there is not any part of the storyline that closely resembles Molly Bloom’s soliloquy. Lawrence, in the tradition of a romance novelist left many fill-in-the-blanks. There is intense longing and desire for consummation, but the resolution is never fulfilled on the pages; it is skipped. Whether some deem this good or bad, Joyce opened this bawdy portal in high literature.

Nabokov’s Lolita or Pale Fire would also most likely not have been accepted, popular works without Ulysses. How, except after Ulysses, could the plot of a middle-aged male protagonist, who was obsessed with a juvenile, be a novel? Lolita addressed the topics of infidelity, obsession, and child molestation that only closed
courtrooms were privy to. *Pale Fire* perhaps more closely connects to *Ulysses* in Nabokov’s persistent reminder of form and character self-referentiality.

The writings of Jack Kerouac also seem impossible without *Ulysses*. Who would have considered publishing the rambling proclivities of a man *On the Road*? Not one publisher. The risk would have been too great, but *Ulysses* created opportunities for almost any work to become literature. Uncommitted Kerouac, who roamed the United States and sought experience, could not have been a character the majority would have wanted to emulate, but he was essentially a more contemporary everyman than Bloom.

The metafictional works of John Fowles hardly seem probable without *Ulysses*. Fowles’ use of a narrator openly questioning form, grammar, and performance in the *French Lieutenant’s Woman* would have had a difficult reception without *Ulysses*. The anti-climatic structure of the piece, interrupted by a doubtful creator, links this work to the style of Joyce.

The amalgamation of style, stream-of-consciousness, anti-hero, concentration on form, and lewd sexual expressiveness of *Ulysses* have radically changed the world of literature. Though the public may not be able to understand a Cubist art piece or read *Ulysses*, they experience the effects through surrounding architecture, clothing designs, and advertisements. These examples, the questions of authenticity, and the referentiality of literary works and art pieces give us the predicament of Post-Modernism, which many believe now dominates Western culture. This culture has vastly changed and the medium of film, which fascinated Picasso and Joyce, currently assumes predominance as the narrator and panacea of life.
One of the most current influences of Joyce and Picasso can be fully seen in the film Goldmember. In the introduction to this movie, multiple, mundane references are made to contemporary society. Interestingly the effectiveness of this opening will be lost in a few years because many of the references are made to specific television commercials that were popular during the time of the movie’s production. For instance, the Brittany Spears Pepsi commercials are alluded to with a mimicking dance and the appearance of Brittany. The twirling umbrellas and street pole dancing of Gene Kelly’s Singin’ in the Rain are emulated but no doubt lost on many of the young viewers who have little knowledge of early movies. Throughout the opening, flash sequences are incorporated to show the actual actors watching the film in which notable movie stars, Tom Cruise and Gwyneth Paltrow, play the actual actors’ roles. Thus time and originality are balanced against the other throughout the film. In this example, it is amazing to see how far the idea of incorporating popular culture and how extensive the attention to form or referentiality has come since the time of Picasso and Joyce.

These two men were able to grasp the essence of their time and give Western society a new language and form of expression. Though New York Times writer, Richard Bernstein, in his millennial column “Visions: Great Hits Headed for the Attic,” declares both Ulysses and Les Demoiselles d’Avignon to be passé, it is doubtful these works will be in the Western attic even at the end of the next millennium. The radical nature of these works pushed the humanities forward onto the stage with science. The conceptual, spatial, and formalistic qualities Joyce and Picasso introduced continue to be experimented with and broadened. The legacy of these aesthetic revolutionaries is unavoidable and will continue to infuse Western society in the twenty-first century.
Works Cited


Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*.


Select Bibliography


James Joyce Resource Center Online. Ohio State University. 8 August 2003 <http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/english/organizations>.


Joy M. Doss  
19 . Arlington Court . Charleston . WV . 25301  
jouissance@charter.net  304 . 347 . 3859

Education

South Charleston, WV.  
MA Humanities  
GPA: 4.0

Jan. 1996 – May 1999  West Virginia State College  
Institute, WV.  
BA English Literature  
GPA: 3.85

Professional Experience

Jan. 2003 – current  West Virginia State College  
English Department Faculty member  
Course taught:  
English 101—Composition  
English 102 – Research Writing  
English 150 – Introduction to Literature

Manager 2000 - 2003  
Currently book purchaser.

Jan. 2002 – May 2003  Graduate research assistant to Dr. Joyce East @ MUGC.

Publications

Photographs in the Kanawha Review. 1999  
Inphallible Vision, 13.  
Another Damn Day, 22.  
Sun Dried Laundry, 27.  
Beowulf’s Triumph, 40.
Languages

French and Norwegian.

Travels/Research


Symposiums/Conferences

- SEBA. Virginia Beach, VA. April 2000.

Honors

- Summa cum laude undergraduate
- highest graduating GPA in undergraduate English program.

Memberships

- Lambda Iota Tau
- Alpha Mu Gamma

Community Service

- Lectured to local girl scouts and undergraduate business students on how the bookstore business works. 1999-2002.
- Participated in Read Aloud program for the local girl scouts. Winter 1997.