How the Vicociclometer Works: The Fiction of James Joyce

Georges Borach, Joyce’s language pupil in Zurich, records in his journal on 1 August 1917 that Joyce had said to him the evening before in the Pfauen Café: “The most beautiful, all-embracing theme is that of the Odyssey. It is greater, more human than that of Hamlet, Don Quixote, Dante, Faust.” One is, in fact, hard put to find references to Cervantes’ work in either Ulysses or Finnegans Wake. In Ulysses Don Quixote is mentioned twice, in the “Scylla and Carybdis” episode where Stephen sees himself as Don Quixote as he looks down “on a wide headless caubeen, hung on his ashplanthandle over his knee. My casque and sword,” and later, on the same page, where George Moore and Edward Martyn are compared to Don Quixote and Sancho, Moore described as “A knight of the rueful countenance here in Dublin. With a saffron kilt?” In Finnegans Wake the references to Cervantes’ novel are equally rare. In book two, chapter one, Shem “had his tristiest cabaleer on” and is “donkey shot at? or a peso besant to join the armada?” And Shaun becomes “Sin Showpanza” with Isabel, of course, cast in the role of “dulsy nayer.” Another reference in book three, chapter three, designates John MacDougal of County Mayo (Saint John of the fourth Gospel) as “Johnny my donkeyschott.” It is perhaps a clue to Joyce’s reaction to Cervantes’ novel that he casts Stephen, George Moore, Shem, and Saint John as Don Quixotes. Shem is the Penman; in the words of Anthony Burgess, he is “the man who can make the dead speak but is totally incapable of coming to terms with the living.” And even though James Joyce (Shem = James) often sees himself in this role, his heroes, Odysseus-Bloom and HCE, are Everyman, not simply one spokesman in “a sort of tragicomic dialectic.”
It is clear, therefore, that we must look elsewhere for direct influences on the architecture of Joyce's fiction. As heir of fictional techniques since the time of Cervantes, Joyce, like Mann, of course, is indirectly in debt to his sixteenth-century predecessor; for Joyce it was Flaubert, in particular, who acted as intermediary. Scholes and Kain mention Joyce's debt to Flaubert's "realism," and David Hayman notes that Flaubert was one of several predecessors to furnish Joyce with "theories, images, points of style and an occasional sequence of sense." Both Hugh Kenner and Richard Cross have devoted book-length studies to relationships between the works of Flaubert and Joyce. Cross's fifth chapter deals with similarities in the spatial form of Madame Bovary and the "Nausicaa" episode in Ulysses, and Cross notes that Madame Bovary "takes its place in the great tradition of parodic fiction stemming from Cervantes."

The importance of structure was paramount for an artist of Joyce's temperament and mental capacities. Some pattern had to be found to contain the multitude of allusions, facts, and fancies that crowded Joyce's mind. A tightly structured work like Madame Bovary, described once by Proust as even "lacking in air," was doubtless one of the prototypes Joyce observed with interest in planning his own work. There is no question about Joyce's admiration for Flaubert; Ellmann mentions it time and again in his biography, although Joyce was said to prefer Madame Bovary to other works by Flaubert.

The particular pattern to which Joyce turned for the purposes of structure was, of course, that of the Ages of Man as described by Giambattista Vico in Scienza nuova (1725), a powerful source and influence throughout Joyce's career. Despite the work of the "new criticism," of various deterministic schools of thought, of psychological criticism, of studies of craftsmanship or of social or psychological development, without source study one must ignore revealing literary relationships such as those between Crime and Punishment and The Trial, between Don Quixote and
Joseph Andrews or Madame Bovary, between Tristram Shandy and some of the novels of Virginia Woolf. A good source study provides one with material for understanding both the work influenced and the source. It enables one to place the work influenced in a literary context, to define it and its goals through such context, and to decide thereby how it succeeds and how it may fail. In addition, Jorge Luis Borges has shown how awareness of source may enlarge understanding of the source itself: "Every writer," Borges claims, "creates his own precursors." In "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," Borges points out that Menard, in "composing" the Quixote, has enriched "the halting and rudimentary art of reading" through deliberate anachronism and that attributing Imitatio Christi to Céline or James Joyce is "sufficient renovation of its tenuous spiritual indications." Thus he would argue that in attributing the Scienza nuova to James Joyce, one may gain insights into the writings of Vico as well as into Joyce's own work. Norman O. Brown has recently demonstrated this point with concreteness in his Closing Time, in which he juxtaposes passages from Vico and Finnegans Wake, creating a three-way dialogue with himself as moderator and chorus.

Intriguing critical possibilities for reinterpretation of both source and counterpart exist if one can introduce Borges's
theory of mutual interaction of literary works into the field of criticism.

Studies of Vico and Joyce have, however, been largely limited to *Finnegans Wake*. One may consult my own extended treatment of this subject in *Time and Reality*. It has also been my contention that Joyce used Vico in his work much earlier than has usually been acknowledged, and the examination of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait* in the larger context of a gradually unfolding Viconian pattern, traceable in Joyce's entire canon, will demonstrate Joyce's significant debt to Vico as well as Vico's significant debt to Joyce.

II

James Joyce stated that in *Dubliners* he tried to present Dublin "to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life. The stories are arranged in this order." In examining *Dubliners* under these four categories, one can plainly see the patterns and strategies of Joyce's later four Viconian cycles emerging. Seen in this light, *Dubliners* may be viewed as evidence of Joyce's quadrilateral frame of mind as early as 1903, a frame leading to a ready acceptance of Vico's philosophy in his later works.

Croce's restatement of Vico, "Man creates the human world, creates it by transforming himself into the facts of society," has a deep relevance for *Dubliners*. Although one can only speculate as to the exact date when Joyce became aware of Vico, it would seem that this date may perhaps be earlier than 1911 rather than later, even though Ellmann does not mention Vico until describing Joyce's conversations with Paolo Cuzzi from 1911 to 1913. At least by the time "The Dead" was written in 1906 and 1907, Joyce had had opportunity as "an exile" in Rome to discover Vico. He may perhaps have added it as the final story in *Dubliners* to act as a *ricorso* for the collection. At least we can state with some certainty that Vico's philosophy, whenever Joyce did discover it, reinforced rather
than altered his patterns of thought. It is possible to construct, as the discussion that follows shows, a Viconian pattern for *Dubliners*.

The first three stories may be seen to portray not only childhood but a foreshadowing of Vico's first age, the Divine Age or the Age of the Parents. It is viewed from many perspectives, among them the religious, the psychological, and the mythical. The gods in Joyce's Divine Age are our parents and elders, all singularly warped and all incapable of providing in any meaningful way the guidance or solace demanded of our gods. Especially paralyzed is Father Flynn in "The Sisters," haunted by guilt of simony. About him hangs an aura of evil; his face, even in death, is "truculent" and his nostrils black and cavernous passages to the underworld. The "education" he gives the boy turns the child in his uncle's words into a Rosicrucian, the pedantic and esoteric taking precedence over the vital and free. The boy experiences a sense of freedom once Father Flynn is gone; he has been rapt into a foreign world "where the customs were strange."

Attending the priest are "the sisters," Nannie and Eliza, spinster women who have devoted their lives as nurse and mother figures to Father Flynn. Nannie is the generic for nurse; Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist, and ironically the name *Elizabeth* means "consecrated to God." The consecration and service of these "sisters" (both in the religious and secular sense) is betrayed by their brother's sale of their birthright. These representatives of the divine—Father Flynn and "the sisters"—in Joyce's Divine Age must serve as earthly gods for the young boy; that Joyce attaches importance to the religious overtones of the story is clear in his title.

The psychological overtones of the title are perhaps even more telling. As well as a story of holy father and sisters, this is a tale of a father surrogate and of brother and sisters. It is Father Flynn who takes from the uncle the role of earthly father for the boy, encouraged by the aunt who sends High Toast to Father Flynn. It is Father Flynn who
turns the boy's mind from the physical to the spiritual arena. But the parent figures in this instance are both flawed ones. Although the uncle's point of view can be seen as pedestrian, unimaginative, and mundane, the priest's can be seen as guilt-ridden and distorted by a powerful superego. The chalice he has sold, although in his sister's words "it contained nothing," is symbolic of his role as a priest and consequently of his relation to both religion and life. The cup that traditionally holds the Blood of Christ, the grail of the quester legend, stands for the virtues that are the essence of Christian perfection. Having bartered his birthright and his role in society, Father Flynn withdraws into a life of infantile security watched over by mother and nurse figures. It is to this paralytic that the boy turns for guidance and for companionship.

The story may be seen on the mythological level as the myth of the quester hero in reverse. The irony directed against the priest turns the story into an "anti-myth." Rather than a knight in search of the grail, Father Flynn has sold and lied about the grail with which he was entrusted. Rather than moving toward discovery and insight, Father Flynn travels away from these goals, shutting himself up in the dark in his confession box and then retiring to a childlike dependency in the home. Joyce's ironic Divine Age is well served by Father Flynn.

The second "divinity" in Joyce's Dubliners is the pederast of "An Encounter." Like a god he appears out of nowhere and becomes the center of interest for the truant boys. This god is a seductive god, full of salacious talk. The leadership and guidance of the teachers whom the boys have deserted for the day is parodied by this man as are the virtues of the gods.

On the psychological level, this mock father figure represents a narcissism that uses even children for its own ends. The boys meet a series of frustrations. First, Leo (Lion) Dillon, associated in their minds with the Wild West, chickens out of the adventure, and the siege at Smoothing Iron fails to materialize as a result of Leo's ab-
ence. After crossing the Liffey, they are again frustrated, this time by the escape of the cat. The man, on the contrary, moves not away from them but in their direction. Instead of the hunters the boys become the hunted. The father figure, rather than protector, is seen as ravager. Faced with this threat, the "I" must reluctantly turn for protection to his contemporary, Mahoney. The father figure would use the young for his own selfish ends.

Mythologically, "An Encounter" is yet another inversion of the quester tale. Seeking adventure and "wild sensations" of explorers of the West, the boys move step by step away from real adventure and into an underworld of perverted desire. Crossing the Liffey is symbolic of a journey into the dark regions. The legend on the stern of the Norwegian vessel is undecipherable, for the boys are in a strange and foreign land like the one introduced by Father Flynn to the boy in "The Sisters." Dublin's Divine Age, the Age of the Parents, is once more viewed by Joyce as a dark age.

The same mock-religious figures (the priest, who leaves his money to institutions and his furniture to his sister; the indifferent and sadistic uncle-father) appear in "Araby." Psychologically, the story revolves again around a boy with a desire for adventure and for the exotic, a boy who is thwarted and frustrated by the adult world. The legend is that of another search, unfulfilled. Added to this pattern is for the first time an idealized romantic interest in the opposite sex. Neither the stimulus of adventure nor of love is able to overcome the deadening weight of the parent and of the divinity, who hover near the child. Joyce's Divine Age is filled with divinities who gainsay, mislead, and try to pervert their would-be idolators. The boy in "The Sisters" is perhaps least aware of this failure in leadership. The other boys face it and are either frightened by it as in "An Encounter" or filled with self-reproach as in "Araby."

Disillusionment with the divine leads into the next age, the Heroic Age, or Age of the Sons, sons fostered by the kind of parents seen in the first three stories. But these
sons are not Christ figures, nor are they heroes in their own right; anything but this. A daughter and seven sons are viewed in the next eight stories covering Joyce's two categories of adolescence and maturity, which coalesce in the Viconian plan into one category or cycle, the Age of the Sons.

It is appropriate that the cycle starts with a name that suggests Eve. Eve is both offspring and wife of Adam. She stands then as a suitable transition figure between the Age of the Parents and the Age of the Sons, having a share, so to speak, in each age. Eveline, in Joyce's story, is a wife surrogate for the man who is her father, but the relation in the story is both suppressed and destructive. The story also serves as an excellent example of the effect of the Age of the Parents on the Age of the Sons and thus as a logical transition between the two parts.

On the religious level, the sons in the Heroic Age are anything except Christ figures or Christian knights. Jimmy Doyle in "After the Race" sells his birthright in a way different from that which Father Flynn has chosen. He gambles it away to two Frenchmen on an American yacht, that is, to foreigners. Lenehan and Corley are hardly the "two gallants" suggested by the title. The word gallant connotes chivalry, especially toward one's lady. Joyce's gallants exploit instead of serve their "lady." On the other hand, Mr. Doran of "The Boarding House" rather than exploiting is the object of exploitation by "the Virgin Mary" (Polly) and her mother, Mrs. Mooney. Joyce's Dublin has sullied and defiled the Christian values to which it gives lip service.

Young adults fare no better than adolescents in this Heroic Age. Little Chandler is unable to play the role of parent or earthly father. Still seeking for a strong father substitute himself, he readily accepts the leadership of both his wife, Annie (grace), and the false god, Ignatius Gallaher (Galahad). Gallaher's superficiality and self-centeredness are not apparent to Little Chandler, who is blinded by his idolatrous devotion to what he thinks
Gallaher represents. Nor is Farrington in "Counterparts" able to assume a responsible role in either his business or personal worlds. Rather than ministering to those who need his support, he drinks away the family income while his son is forced to minister to him, to cook his evening meal, and to receive blows complementary to those inflicted on Farrington by the outside world. Equally helpless to save others, another anti-Christ, is Joe Donnelly in "Clay." Manipulated by his wife, he can only shed impotent tears at the realization of Maria's (Mary's) plight at the hands of Mrs. Donnelly. The younger generation now fails the older generation as the older had once failed the younger. And finally Mr. Duffy in "A Painful Case" is a far cry from Tristram, associated with Chapelizod, Mr. Duffy's home. He seeks in Mrs. Sinico a mother figure and like Joe Donnelly is incapable of saving the one he loves. All these persons in the Age of the Sons may be seen as antitheses of the Christ of the New Testament. Rather than preaching and spreading the word of God, these "sons" sell and deny their predecessors. "Love thy Neighbor" becomes "Exploit thy Neighbor." Unable to minister to others, these figures seek to be ministered to. Engrossed in their own petty concerns, they are impotent to become saviors of this world.

Psychologically and mythically, the Age of the Sons is the age of the Oedipus and Electra complexes. Eveline is as incapable of leaving her father as Mr. Duffy at the end of the section is of abandoning the interpretation he holds of Mrs. Sinico as a mother figure. The two gallants seek support, monetarily, from a female figure. Little Chandler, like them, is unable to identify with the father. Lost in his poetry, he allows his child to cry helplessly. Arrested at the same infantile level, Farrington is also unable to identify with benevolent authority and rebels against it (his employer) while at the same time exercising a childish and brutal authority in his home. Others, like Joe Donnelly, do not outwardly resist the aggression they despise, but cower before it and weep in their impotence.
The support and guidance denied the children in the Divine Age, the Age of the Parents, produces in turn young persons unable to assume their roles as parents and leaders in the Heroic Age. An angry and bitter irony runs through all eight stories in this section: Joyce is telling us that our Christs have become anti-Christs, that our sons have remained infants, and that our Galahads and Tristrams retain no traces of their heroic prototypes.

In Vico's Human Age (the Age of the People) the councils of this society are equally inept. Individuals, like those impotent and weak persons in the Age of the Sons, make up the three committees that appear in the three stories in this section. Parnell, like God, is dead. Hynes once celebrated his death in a poem that now he does not want to remember. On the religious level, the committees represent an ironic version of the disciples of Christ after His death. The politicians in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" engage in idle and vain talk; their candidate is "Tricky Dicky Tierney." And Hynes, whose poem on Parnell arouses a reaction of sincere emotion, is suspected of being a spy, a Judas to the cause. None of the other members of the committee engage in anything but futile and inconsequential political activity, being more interested in the stout that they consume, ironically parallel to the communion wine.

The committee, Eire Abu, in "A Mother," ostensibly formed for the encouragement of the Celtic Revival, is a shadow committee composed apparently only of secretary and assistant secretary. It lacks both funds and good taste. Such a committee can foster only a false culture based on empty promises and mediocre art. Even Mr. Holohan's name has an empty ring.

Furthermore, the self-appointed committee in "Grace" is incapable, unlike the Apostles, of producing grace for the sinner. Lacking the "power" to save (despite the name of its leader), it falls back on a meaningless religiosity based on form and propriety. The qualities of Mr. Cunningham and Mr. M'Coy are clear from their names. Mr. Kernan becomes "the victim of a plot."
Without leadership the committees may be seen on a psychological level as representing the nadir of group activity. Unable to identify with each other because they have no central figure with whom to identify, twentieth-century Dubliners pull away from one another in many directions. Even the priest, Father Purdon (*perdu*), betrays the "good" intention of the committee in "Grace" by preaching allegiance to Mammon, and Hynes is suspected of having betrayed the cause of his committee. Without real leadership for their society, the venture of Mr. Holohan and Mr. Fitzpatrick in "A Mother" turns into slapstick comedy.

Dublin collectively in the Age of the People is singularly lacking in direction. As in the other ages, Joyce has shown us that failure lies in the inability of modern man to assume fatherhood, either in image or in person. The committees viewed here are united by no Round Table nor do they have a sense of the discipleship found in the Apostles. Parnell, unlike Christ, cannot rise from the dead because his followers have let his spirit die. Politically and culturally Ireland is betrayed, and even religious grace is denied Joyce's Dubliner.

The *ricorso* is introduced by a modern Gabriel, reminder of the angel of the annunciation, who arrives late at his aunts' social affair. Unlike his predecessor's, Gabriel Conroy's speech "takes up the wrong tone." At the end Gabriel's entire world collapses as he recognizes the pettiness and futility of his existence, the superficiality of Miss Ivors and her kind who trumpeted the Celtic Revival, and the untruth of his marriage to a woman who has for years harbored a secret love. But Michael Furey lies dead, and all Ireland, indeed the universe, lies dead under the "faintly falling" snow. The bang of the *ricorso* is a whimper born of Gabriel's frustration.

Nevertheless, Joyce's employment of the Viconian pattern is even in *Dubliners* far more complex than the discussion thus far has indicated. Wheels move within wheels, gears mesh, and series of concentric circles emerge. Enlarging on Vico, Joyce believed that the four cycles existed
within each other and concurrently and that complexities of movement characterized every instant. One might live psychologically in the Age of the Parents as one lived socially in the Age of the Sons. Thus "Clay," which tells us through Joe Donnelly and his wife of the Age of the Sons, of the Heroic Age, at the same time deals with the Divine Age in the Central figure, Maria, a parent figure who is now manipulated by the younger generation. Having repressed her own desire for motherhood, she has nursed her nephews and has, like Father Flynn, betrayed her chalice. This parent figure is seen as a witch by those on whom she now depends, and she can offer them only a dozen mixed pennycakes, having symbolically left her "wedding cake" on the tram.

Similarly in "A Mother," although the central issue is the Age of the People, public life, and the Eire Abu, the Divine Age, the Age of the Parents, is also present in the figure of Mrs. Kearney, just as Mrs. Mooney and the Age of the Parents had been present in "The Boarding House," representative of the Age of the Sons. These mothers both exemplify the grasping, greedy, and destructive parental attitude discovered earlier in the pederast of "An Encounter." Both mothers are willing and ready to sacrifice their own daughters to expediency, greed, and false pride. The parent cycle is imposed as well on "A Little Cloud" by means of Gallaher, an indifferent and self-centered "parent," similar to the uncle of "Araby." Thus the types whom we meet in one age are often repeated and superimposed on other ages and act as commentaries upon one another as Mrs. Mooney and Mrs. Kearney are vilified by the implied comparison with the pederast of "An Encounter."

In "The Dead" many of the figures we have met are reassembled at the Misses Morkan's annual dance, dance with its connotations of circular movement, of ricorso. We meet in different guises and circumstances Joe and Maria (in Gabriel and the Misses Kate and Julia); the Eire Abu (in Miss Ivors); the boy of "Araby" (in Michael Furey). All are
drawn together in this final scene of life in Dublin, like the planets redrawn into the sun. This sun, formed by the dancers, will once more explode to shape a new Divine Age, a new Age of the Parents.

III

The years 1911 to 1914, when Joyce was working on the final text of *A Portrait*, were years when, according to his pupil, Paolo Cuzzi, "Joyce was also passionately interested in this Neapolitan Philosopher," Vico. Cuzzi at this time talked to Joyce about Freud as well, but Joyce, although he listened carefully, said "that Freud had been anticipated by Vico."23

Of all the structural and mechanical systems that Joyce employed in his works, Vico's was perhaps the most comforting and germane to the Joycean temperament. Formal orders, and as many as possible, encompass and control everything he wrote. As A. Walton Litz points out, "these neutral but controlling designs" were Joyce's means of ordering his diverse materials.24 A number of structures have been found in *A Portrait*, and most of them are ones Joyce may have consciously employed. They coexist, suggesting human development on various levels. Basically the structural studies divide into three categories: (1) the studies of scholars like Grant Redford25 and Thomas E. Connolly,26 who see the structure of *A Portrait* as governed by the aesthetic principles developed in the final chapter of the novel; (2) the studies of Robert Andreach27 or Thomas Van Laan,28 who propose a structure determined by the spiritual stages through which Stephen moves; and (3) the argument of Richard Ellmann29 and Sidney Feshback30 for the process of physical gestation as an organizing principle in *A Portrait*. Other more general studies stress imagery31 or motif32 as a major means of producing unity in the book.

As I have shown with *Dubliners*, the Viconian pattern is one that fits in with the natural framework of Joyce's think-
ing. Appropriately, the term “vicociclometer,” used in *Finnegans Wake*, suggests not only Vico but also the instrument to measure arcs of circles and revolutions of wheels. As William York Tindall asserts, to replace Christianity, Joyce needed a system that would give him a sense of order; according to Tindall cyclical recurrence became Joyce’s substitute for metaphysics. Furthermore, the Viconian system—with its parallels in the natural cycle of the four seasons of the year and in the cycle of the development of man through childhood, adolescence, and maturity to death—is one that appealed to Joyce as universal. The possibility of cycles existing within cycles at different levels of interpretation allowed for the complexities and ambiguities that teased and attracted the subtle Joycean mentality. This section will examine, then, the Viconian structure that perhaps enables us to view *A Portrait* in a new light, especially in its relation to *Ulysses* (which Ellmann tells us Joyce had been preparing himself to write since 1907 and which, according to Ellmann, “extends the method of *A Portrait*”; and in relation to the theories of Kenner, Tindall, Robert Ryf, and others concerning the continuity to be found in the Joycean canon. As it is in *Dubliners*, the Viconian pattern in *A Portrait* is worked out on the religious, psychological, and mythical levels.

Vico’s Divine Age (Joyce’s Age of the Parents) may be seen as the basis of chapter one as it was the basis for the first three stories in *Dubliners*. The key to the Viconian structural pattern appears as early as page 13 where we read, “That night at Dalkey the train has roared,” “roaring and then stopping; roaring again, stopping.” Vico Road is, of course, located in Dalkey as we learn in the “Nestor” episode in *Ulysses*. Furthermore, the cyclical pattern of the roaring and stopping of the noise is suggestive of Vico. The gods of Joyce’s Divine Age are again, as in *Dubliners*, threatening figures, figures like Stephen’s father with his hairy face, the older boys at Clongowes, the quarreling elders at Christmas dinner, and Father Dolan.
On the religious level, God the Father and the priests at the school are warped and angry gods, demanding cruel payment from the consciences of their young charges. Father Arnall and the prefect of studies, Father Dolan, with his pandybat, combine to inflict unjustly shame, agony, and fear on Stephen. And Father Conmee, who at the end of chapter one is viewed by Stephen and the other boys as a savior and protector, sees, we later learn, the whole incident of Stephen’s beating as amusing. These are the figures of spiritual authority who dominate Stephen’s life at school in this Divine Age.

In his psychological relation to the adults at home and to the older boys at school, Stephen fares scarcely better. In his infancy he fears his father and in his childhood is left “terror-stricken” by the violence of the argument over Parnell at Christmas dinner. Dante refers to Parnell as “a bad man” (p. 16), and yet Mr. Casey sees him as “My dead King!” (p. 39). For the boy, therefore, this national figure is an ambiguous leader. The older boys at school provide even less real leadership. Their names, Rody Kickham, Nasty Roche, and Cecil Thunder, connote violence and filth. And Wells, another older boy, shoulders him into the slimy ditch, causing him to become ill. Both physical and mental torture are inflicted by these “gods,” even though Rody Kickham keeps a pair of greaves in his locker (reminiscent of knightly armor in a heroic age). Meanwhile, stalking the halls of the castle is the ghost of an earlier and nobler time, a real leader, a marshal in a white cloak, who had received his death wound on a battlefield near Prague and who seems to say “drive away from it [the castle] all” injustices (p. 19). Such leaders exist, however, only in Stephen’s fantasies.

The movement into the Age of the Sons, Vico’s Heroic Age, is heralded in the last sentence of chapter one by the “pick, pack, pock, puck” of the cricket bats “like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl” (p. 59). This sound has been a punctuation device throughout the entire latter section of this chapter, indicating that time
is about to overflow into a new age of human development. The pock of the corks in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" likewise has punctuated the movement toward the climax when time overflows and Hynes recites his poem on Parnell. In the same way the "Sirens" episode in Ulysses is filled with clacks, taps, claps, pops, suggesting a falling apart or breaking up of continuity in the movement of the episode toward the new Age of the Fathers, the "Cyclops." As Joyce uses this sound at the end of chapter one of A Portrait of the Artist, it may be seen as a Viconian sign of the coming of a new age of adolescence, and of the "heroic."

The decline of the Age of the Parents is clearly apparent on the first page of chapter two where Uncle Charles is relegated to the outhouse to smoke his villainous black twist. Furthermore, we discover the key to cyclical recurrence on the next page in Stephen's run around the park (a familiar image in Finnegans Wake) as Mike Flynn stands timing him near the railway station (reminiscent of the train that roars and stops in chapter one). Trains recirculate and, therefore, are often Viconian images for Joyce. The Age of the Sons in A Portrait is at first one of sentimental idealisms and Bovaristic daydreams (unlike that in Dubliners where the heroic is mocked by the crassness of Lenehan and Corley and the innocence and stupidity of Jimmy Doyle and Bob Doran), for this is the adolescence of "the artist." Stephen reads about, and identifies with, the Count of Monte Cristo and dreams of a Mercedes of his own. He founds a gang of adventurers and imitates Napoleon's dress. He sees himself as a kind of "Childe Stephen" (connoting both heroism and immaturity). When the family moves, he circles the square timidly for a time, but soon regains momentum. The myth and the romance are closely related in this chapter to Stephen's psychological development, and the religious element is pushed temporarily into the background. His Mercedes materializes in E. C., the girl he is with on the tram (the symbol of recirculation), and
even his school bears a romantic-sounding name, Belvedere. At his school Stephen takes the chief part in a play, a farcical role like that of Quixote himself; yet all the actions of Stephen as hero are ineffectual and unproductive, and the play leaves him with a sense of wounded pride and fallen hope.

The relationship between son and father continues to deteriorate, for on the trip to Cork, Simon declares, "I'm a better man than he is any day of the week" (p. 95); and Stephen is "wearied and dejected by his father's voice" (p. 92). This is what Joyce meant when he told Paolo Cuzzi that Vico anticipates Freud, for in Vico's Heroic Age the younger generation and the older reenact the rivalry inherent in the oepidal dilemma. At the end of chapter two, Stephen's mock-heroic attempt to usurp the role of the father in the home with thirty-three pounds, his prize money, and to rescue the family, also fails. And his dreams of his Mercedes are, in the last pages, actualized in the arms of a prostitute. Ironically, the heroic age of the artist is finally embodied in Stephen's iniquitous cry of abandonment, "a cry which was but the echo of an obscene scrawl which he had read on the oozing wall of a urinal" (p. 100).

The Age of the People (the Human Age) is seen in chapter three of A Portrait (as it had been in Dubliners, in the story "Grace") in terms of "religious" communion with one's fellowmen. The new age is introduced by the December dusk that tumbles "clownishly after its dull day" (p. 102). Like Mr. Kernan, Stephen is enjoined to a retreat and to confession. The torments ensuing on disobedience are made clear to him. Alone he moves toward religious community, attempts to reach outside himself and to attach himself to a larger social segment. An old woman with a "reeking withered right hand" (p. 141) directs him to his confessional as the warped characters in "Grace" had directed Mr. Kernan. Stephen feels that he has entered into another life, the body of our Lord and the community of saints. And yet the dreams of religious community found
in chapter three turn out to be no more conclusive than the sentimental daydreams that had haunted Stephen in his Heroic Age.

For a short time, however, Stephen finds communion and symmetry in the church until he recognizes, in chapter four, in a revelation paralleling Vico's *ricorso*, that his destiny is to learn apart from others. "He would fall. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently falling, falling but not yet fallen, still unfallen, but about to fall" (p. 162). Then he crosses the bridge over the stream of the Tulka. The imagery recalls "The Dead," the *ricorso* of *Dubliners*, with its sense of falling and the falling snow. Stephen's sudden and stark recognition is one of death, emptiness, and restriction (symbolized by the window cord) in the life of the priesthood. Like Gabriel Conroy's, this life now seemed "grave and ordered and passionless" (p. 160). The emphasis in the first part of the chapter is upon sundering ties, first with his mother as he moves toward the university and "a new adventure," then in the crossing of bridges (two times in six pages, pp. 162–67), indicating his entry into new worlds and the changing direction of his existence. The final epiphany, his name Dedalus as prophecy, prefigures a new father figure in the mythical Daedalus, a replacement for Simon, and a new direction in the turning tide and the crane-like girl who will replace Mercedes. This new Daedalus symbolizes the artist as does the crane, which is capable of flight. The tide begins to flow in, and Stephen feels "the vast cyclic movement of the earth" (p. 172) revolving toward a new Divine Age or Age of the Fathers attendant upon this *ricorso*. Joyce's material quite naturally falls into the Viconian pattern partly because Vico's plan is primordial and archetypal of a lived life. In "To live, to err, to fall, to triumph" (p. 172), Vico's entire schema is submerged.

Perhaps one reason that critics have overlooked Vico in *A Portrait* is that it contains five chapters, rather than four. But in a book about a young man in search of a father, two
rounds of the Age of the Fathers are appropriate. Never­theless, the second Divine Age, despite the high hopes of the artificer in the preceding ricorso, is as sterile and restric­tive in its own way as the priesthood toward which the first cycle had moved. The new cycle begins with the gods of the university, the fathers who teach literature, art, and philosophy and under whose authority Stephen now finds himself. Hugh Kenner suggests that this fifth chapter is perhaps "a suspended chord," and it may indeed be a cord linking A Portrait with the "Telemachia," the first three episodes of Ulysses. This may be the Age of the Fathers to the new Age of the Sons found in the "Telemachus" episode. The Divine Age of the university leads, however, to a Heroic Age of abstraction, theory, and teleological systems. Viewing Joyce's entire canon, then, in the light of Vico, we can see close parallels between Dubliners and A Portrait as well as the final chapter of A Portrait as a background for the opening of Ulysses. The middle section of Ulysses may also be modeled on a Viconian pattern, and the "Nostos," then, leads into the giant ricorso of Finnegans Wake, just as the fifth chapter of A Portrait leads into Ulysses.

The new gods in chapter five are figures like the Dean and other professors, Stephen's literary models, Aristotle and Aquinas. And yet the Dean teaches without joy and his literal and matter-of-fact mind serves the marketplace rather than the creative arts. The fires that he lights are made from coals and twisted papers. Stephen mocks these gods of the marketplace as he imagines them "ambling and stumbling, tumbling and capering, kilting their gowns for leap frog" (p. 192). They exhibit a stupid and dogged fail­ure to understand the meaning and purpose of the arts. Nor can Stephen countenance the false gods of the other students like the Tsar in whose name the petition for peace is being circulated. Furthermore, the gods of aesthetics, Aristotle and Aquinas, lead Stephen into complex and abstract theory that is easily drowned out by even a dray loaded with old iron. Rhythm, Stephen finds, "is the first
formal esthetic relation of part to part in any esthetic whole” (p. 205), reminding us of the rhythm of part to part imposed by Joyce’s reliance on Vico. The rhythm of structure is also implied in Aquinas's *Consonantia*, which Stephen apprehends in theory. Yet in this world of abstraction, the artist is eventually, in Stephen’s own words, “refined out of existence” (p. 215).

Toward the end of chapter five, we are again moving toward a new Heroic Age, the Age of Telemachus. The bird imagery once again suggests the possibility of escape, not only from the fathering principles of nationality, religion, and language, but also from the whole elaborate ideology of the fathering university as is implied in Stephen’s thoughts of Swedenborg, who sees that birds have not perverted the order of times and seasons by intellect (p. 224). The cyclical pattern of Vico is subsequently suggested by reference to birds going and coming and building unlasting homes (p. 225). The conclusion to this Age of the Fathers becomes, then, *Non serviam* and flight as Stephen listens to the call of ships and appeals once more to the mythical artificer, Daedalus. However, the gods of the university have been abandoned in no real sense, for the knife blade of Stephen’s intellect is the basis for his new nickname Kinch in *Ulysses*, and the “ineluctable modality of the visible” and other metaphysical concerns are the main subjects of Stephen’s thoughts and conversation throughout the “Telemachia.” Whereas the first cycle had led to a spiritual stasis, this second cycle leads to an intellectual stasis, “anesthetic emotion raised above desire and loathing” (p. 205), as Stephen had defined it earlier. Even with the girl at the end he turns on his “Spiritual heroic refrigerating apparatus” (p. 252).

We leave Stephen, then, in the last pages of *A Portrait* as “a young man” on the verge of departing from his second Age of the Fathers. Joyce has promised us no more. He is a young man lacking the understanding and compassion to refrain from quarreling with his mother on the score of religion, lacking insight into his own motivations (Cranly
tells him, "Your mind is supersaturated with the religion in which you say you disbelieve" [p. 240]), and dependent on the empty forms of an aesthetic and metaphysical system. And yet he does not fear his exile and goes into it with high hope, perhaps recognizing in his diary that in hoofs hurrying in the night one hears the eternal patterns of all journeys through the ages of the divine, the heroic, and the human.

For Joyce is saying in *A Portrait*, through Vico, that the Divine Age, the Age of the Fathers, may influence the development of the entire cycle so that in the end (the fifth chapter) new gods must be sought to replace the meaningless, empty, or shoddy ones who produce only barren repetition of experience. Repetition of experience must lead to mastery of experience, not to return for the sake of return. Freud has made the same point. It is to this end that Stephen has sought in chapter five for the original father, "the old artificer," the Daedalus who had fashioned both labyrinth and wings, both nets and the means of freedom from those nets. But the tragedy represented in *A Portrait* is that Stephen has found fatherhood neither in the sacred font of the church nor in the ivory tower of the university.38

Joyce's concept of the epiphany and its use in *Dubliners* is closely akin to his concept of the Viconian *ricorso*, a moment—a period—when old things fall apart, disintegrate, and when with eyes burning "with anguish and anger" one sees the vain illusions of one's life laid bare and there is nowhere to go, except phoenix-like to be reborn. The "shaft of shivery" and "cloudclap" in *Finnegans Wake* metaphorically serve the same purpose as do "time's livid final flame, the shattered glass and toppling masonry" of *Ulysses*. In writing in *A Portrait* about Stephen's studies of Aristotle and Aquinas, Joyce says: "His thinking was a dusk of doubt and selfmistrust lit up at moments by the lightnings of intuition, but lightnings of so clear a splendour that in those moments the world perished about his
feet as if it had been fireconsumed” (p. 177). The concept of the creative power of lightning, or fire from heaven, lies deep in our mythic roots, for example, in the belief in the first Egyptian dynasty that the sacred Apis had been born of a cow impregnated by lightning, as depicted on the walls of the Serapeum at Memphis.

Even more interesting is the way that Joyce integrates his Viconian schemes of organization into the substructures of his books; I would like briefly in this section to examine the function of the *ricorso*, the flash of lightning, in the substructure of *A Portrait*.

Joyce manipulates the Viconian Ages in complex ways so that, as in the telephone circuits of a large city, impulses, patterns, may run independently and counter to one another at the same time as they run parallel, providing both continuity and radical discontinuity on the heels of each *ricorso*. The *ricorso* provides a kind of electrical shock to process, shattering it and provoking at the same time new process. For example, in chapter one of *A Portrait* the glint of Eileen’s “fair hair” streaming out behind her like gold in the sun leads to Stephen’s insight: “By thinking of things you could understand them” (p. 43); the crack of Father Dolan’s pandybat leads to an epiphany in which Stephen (like the boy in “Araby”) burns with “shame and agony and fear”; the “pick, pack, pock, puck” of the cricket bats (a parallel and yet polar image to the pandybat) leads to the overflowing of the brimming bowl in chapter two.

In chapter two it is imagery, such as the kiss he gives E. C. or the kiss of the prostitute, which was “too much for him” (p. 101), or Heron’s cane cutting at Stephen’s legs, which acts like a flash of lightning forking into a truck, splitting the substance of oak or ash so that new shoots may spring from the devastation.

Chapter three, in which Stephen considers joining the community of saints, is sharply punctuated by utterances of hellfire and damnation by the preacher. Stephen emerges from the chapel “his legs shaking and the scalp of
his head trembling” (p. 124). Hell torment follows hell torment in this chapter until Stephen vomits after his dream and is remade: “Another life! A life of grace and virtue and happiness!” (p. 146).

The flash of insight in chapter four when Stephen sees the crane girl is, of course, the culminating one for the book thus far and in this chapter of ricorso—and too well known to bear further describing.

It is the burgeoning disconnections of chapter five, in crescendo, the fragments and flashes of which it is composed, which—in a new Age of the Fathers (with the fathers of the university now replacing those of the church and home), of indoctrination into a new mode for Stephen—show us Joyce’s increasing stylistic reliance as he approaches Ulysses on the pattern of discontinuity, of ricorso, of breaking up and reorganization and reestablishment. The style of chapter five, like the style of much of Ulysses, is full of interruptions, of interjections. In fact, the discussion between Stephen and Lynch is actually a resumption of an interrupted conversation begun a few nights earlier. The earsplitting whistle of Simon Dedalus opens the chapter, interrupting the washing scene between mother and son; on the way to the university, Stephen hears a mad nun screeching “Jesus! O Jesus! Jesus!” and he shakes the sound out of his ears and hurries on. Eleven strokes of a clock make him think of MacCann, then that he is late for the lecture. The word ivory shone in his brain, and sparks and fire abound as the Dean lights the fire or as Stephen sees in his eyes the spark of Ignatius’ enthusiasm. Later a long dray loaded with iron drowns out Stephen’s words “with the harsh roar of jangled and rattling metal” (p. 209). One could go on and on with such examples of sharp blows to the senses, of streaks of lightning, of thunderclaps of sound, and they are all closely related to the Viconian ricorso, to the epiphany, even obliquely to the radiance of Aquinas—the apprehension of quidditas, or the whatness of a thing. Richard Pearce, of Wheaton College, suggests to me in a letter that in chapter five “what we get
is a greater quantity of detail, much apparently irrelevant, coming in fragments and flashes and with a sense of speed."

I should like to suggest then that in maturing as an artist Joyce began to see radical discontinuity as a creative stylistic device to produce not only the insights of his characters but to stimulate those of his readers and himself. The ricorso, opening as it does new possibilities of development, is at the same time a product of situations in a previous cycle of experience. It thus serves as a symbol of both the continuity and discontinuity of process. The montage, the film-clip quality of chapter five, leads toward a new stylistic mode for Joyce, a period in which ricorso began to function as the very fabric of his craft, which was at the same time enunciating the credo that only when the old order has been reduced to ashes or when the sea falls "below the line of seawrack" (p. 170) can new life arise and can the tide begin to turn "flowing in fast to the land with the low whisper of her waves" (p. 173). The epiphany of Dubliners stresses the disintegration of old patterns, the radiance of Aquinas stresses the whatness of a moment or thing, but the ricorso of Vico is oriented toward the reconstruction of patterns and toward the future.

IV

The comparison between The Magic Mountain and Ulysses is a fascinating one, for both novels use the thunderbolt as conclusion to process, as the inductor to the still center. And like Mann, Joyce puts the emphasis on process itself, not on the attainment of stillness. Joyce's interpretation of Vico lies, of course, at the heart of his work; and again through Vico, we may trace in Ulysses, my exemplar here, a spiral process somewhat similar to Mann's as elaborated in The Magic Mountain. The difference lies in that Joyce's pattern rests on Vico's notion of the rise and fall of empires—a pattern visible throughout human history—whereas Mann's spiraling reality rests more upon a
Jungian concept of the collective unconscious, of the repetition inherent in myth and, before that, in nature itself.

It is not only in the minutiae, sentences and words, but in the larger structure of *Ulysses* that Vico may be seen. Joyce wrote in a letter to Harriet Weaver that the circumstances of his own life were what forced him to accept the theories of Vico. More than a historical theory, Joyce sees in Vico a psychological progression, the circumstances of human lives. As Richard Ellmann points out, Joyce sees Vico’s divisions not as chronological divisions of ideal history but as psychological ingredients that combine and recombine. “I use his cycles as a trellis,” Joyce said. As such, Vico’s influence does not lead to an abstract pattern, but is closely connected with character development, the vine that grows on the trellis.

Vico’s three ages were a cycle of decline, somewhat different from Joyce’s cycles. Furthermore, Joyce’s names for the three ages varied slightly from Vico’s to underline his own special interpretation of them. As we have noted, Joyce’s “Age of the Sons” and “Age of the People” stress psychological and social significance rather than historical theory. But for both Vico and Joyce, spiral succeeded spiral in the development of process, and for both the emphasis lay on the spiraling pattern itself rather than on a realm beyond it at the end of process.

In *Ulysses* the spiraling ages outlined above may be clearly seen in the structure of the book. In part three of this chapter I have suggested that the first three parts of *Ulysses*, often called the “Telemachia,” may represent the completion of a cycle begun in the last chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* where the “gods” (faculty) of the university become Stephen’s new parents, after he has cast off his early life at home. The first episode in the “Telemachia” would represent, then, the Age of the Sons, the second—the “Nestor” episode—the Age of the People, and the third—“Proteus”—the *ricorso*. It would be logical to see *Ulysses* as continuing the story of Stephen at the point where it is broken off in *A Portrait*, following Stephen as he
continues on this second cycle of his life. The Age of the Sons, the heroes, unfolds in his stay at the Martello Tower with Buck Mulligan and Haines; the Age of the People (men, women, and children), in his experiences at Mr. Deasy's school; the ricorso in the circulation and recirculation represented symbolically in the swirling waters and, metaphysically, in Stephen's swirling thoughts in the "Proteus" episode (Proteus being a sea god of shifting forms).

The middle section of *Ulysses* (episodes 4–15) replaces Stephen as central character with the figure of Leopold Bloom because, I believe, Joyce saw that Stephen himself was incapable of relating to others, of ever assuming a real role in the complex social milieu of the book. In this central section of *Ulysses*, we find further evidence of the cyclical and spiraling development of the novel. It is necessary, at the beginning, to note Joyce's preoccupation with the con-substantiality of Father and Son, suggesting that the ages, as I will outline them here, are actually not so neatly distinguishable as they will often appear to be.

Nevertheless, in the opening episode, "Calypso," Bloom is seen initially as husband and father, a kind of mock *pater familias*, in his home at 7 Eccles Street, as he feeds the cat and prepares Molly's breakfast. We see him next in the "Lotus Eaters" episode, the Age of the Sons, as Mr. Henry Flower, engaged in narcissistic and titillating adolescent behavior in his secret correspondence with Martha Clifford, and later in his scented bath as he views his own navel. In "Hades," the Age of the People, we find Bloom relating to the community, both to the *Umwelt* and the *Mitwelt*, as he and his friends proceed through the streets of Dublin in the funeral cortege of Paddy Dignam. And finally in the ricorso to this first cycle, Bloom appears in the newspaper offices where Aeolus (the printing press) disperses, separates, and destroys lives and where circulation and recirculation run rampant. Although Vico's cycles, as I have already maintained, were cycles of decline, the character of Joyce's cycles was more ambiguous.
Whereas Leopold Bloom may appear outwardly less heroic than his prototype, Ulysses, he has at the same time inner qualities of compassion, of understanding, and of forebearance that give him stature in a moral sense. Joyce continually mocks his hero, as in the newspaper office, where Bloom's only invitation is to kiss the editor's arse; but Bloom's self-restraint, his patience in the face of persistent frustrations he meets in every encounter during his day, raises him ethically above his archetype, the wily and brawny Ulysses. Joyce seems to say, therefore, that the cycles may spiral either upward or downward depending on one's perspective. Arbitration, understanding, concern for others, even one's enemies, characterize the modern hero, Leopold Bloom.

The next four episodes trace still another Viconian cycle. We find Bloom first, in the "Lestrygonians" episode, as provider, feeding the gulls, as in "Calypso" he had fed the cat and Molly, but the theme of this section centers around brutish father figures. The Lestrygonians were cannibals, and their descendants in Burton restaurant, where Bloom first goes for his luncheon, do not, like Bloom, feed others, but concentrate on "swilling, wolfing gobfuls of sloppy food, their eyes bulging." As he leaves, Bloom remarks: "Eat or be eaten." Fleeing to Davy Byrne's pub, Bloom joins still other fathers, Nosey Flynn, Paddy Leonard, Bantam Lyons, and Tom Rocheford, in this Age of the Fathers. In the Age of the Sons that follows, we turn from Bloom to Stephen, as he holds forth in the library on another famous son, Hamlet. The Lestrygonians have been replaced by stone and whirlpool, Scylla and Charybdis, the latter a spiral within the larger spiral movement. Next in the Age of the People, the "Wandering Rocks," we follow persons and groups of persons, the populace of Dublin, as they circulate and recirculate through the streets. And finally in the ricorso at the Ormond restaurant, the reader is besieged with clacks, taps, pops, crackling, and the breaking of wind, suggesting that the world of this second cycle is falling apart. One
of the last images is that of the tram, a favorite Joycean device to suggest circularity, for the progress of the tram describes a circle, ending where it began. Often the tram was turned at the end of the line by a round table for its journey back along the streets.

A third group of episodes in this middle section of *Ulysses* opens with Cyclops, a cannibalistic giant, like the Lestrygonians in the Age of the Fathers in cycle two. It is clear that Cyclops and the Citizen are one, an ironic comment on the character of Dublin fathers in general. By contrast we see Bloom in this episode as he turns the other cheek to the Citizen’s wrath and to the hostility of the group of barflies at Barney Kierrnan’s tavern. “Nausicaa” describes a new Age of the Sons (or Daughters, in this episode), developing once again, as in the “Lotus Eaters,” adolescent patterns (i.e., voyeurism and masturbation). Linking the two episodes is Bloom’s letter to Martha Clifford, which he remembers as he watches Gerty. The Age of the People follows at the laying-in hospital, where we see that all men are connected by means of the umbilical cord to where we join, instead of Mina Purefoy, a party of medical students and their friends, “all off for a buster, armstrong, hollering down the street.”43 The grand ricorso is, of course, the “Circe” episode, a potpourri of all previous sections, concluding with its thunderclap, the shattering of the chandelier, and the celebration of a Black Mass. One great concussion here replaces the slighter but more numerous sound effects of the ricorso of the “Sirens” episode and that of “Aeolus.” As the thunderclap of war had caused Hans to change his direction in *The Magic Mountain*, so in *Ulysses*, the thunderclap will cause Stephen and Bloom to seek new cycles of development.

One of these is begun in the *Nostos* portion of *Ulysses*, composed of the final three sections of the book. Here we start again with a new Age of the Fathers as we read about Bloom in “Eumaeus,” as father to a new son, as protector and guide for Stephen. In keeping with Joyce’s theme of consubstantiality, the next section, “Ithaca,” portrays
father and son as equal and interchangeable, Blephen and Stoom, predecessors of Shem and Shaun. Both are sons and lovers of Molly, who in the final section, the Age of the People, becomes the earth goddess, Gaea Tellus, where all men meet. Bloom through his relation to Molly is seen in this Age of the People in his relation to all men, as he himself says in "Ithaca": "neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity.""\(^4^4\) "Riverrun" and Anna Livia derive from Molly, who circulates and recirculates, leading to the giant ricorso (Finnegans Wake) that Joyce provides for the cycle begun in the Nostos of Ulysses.

Let us examine briefly the different emphases placed on cyclical return by Mann and by Joyce. With Joyce (despite his concern with the historical theories of Vico), the stress is ultimately on individual development, whereas Mann stresses the collective experience. Mann himself often worried about the individuality of his characters, fearing that they were more archetypes than persons.\(^4^5\) In the same way, Vico’s philosophy of the recurrence of the three ages suggested to Joyce (born in Catholic Ireland) a new social resurrection, a view of history, reborn phoenix-like, from the ashes of the past, a Lazarus risen, although it was used to outline the individual development of his hero, Leopold Bloom. The spiraling reality, the repetition of event, provided a rich source of imagery for Joyce. Thus Bloom’s own gentle fathering of others could be contrasted to advantage with the cannibalism of the Cyclops and Lestrygonians, with tyrants of earlier Ages of the Fathers. In the Age of the Sons, Bloom’s adolescent preoccupations seem relatively harmless when contrasted with the delusions and stupor of Homer’s lotus eaters. And Scylla and Charybdis offer far more danger to life and limb than the perils experienced by Stephen, as he holds forth in the library "between the Saxon smile and Yankee yawp."\(^4^6\) The earlier Ages of the People, as symbolized by "Hades," the "Wandering Rocks," and "Oxen of the Sun," are fraught with physical danger by comparison with life in Dublin.
On another level we see the world of Leopold Bloom as a diminished and impoverished world when compared with the epic grandeur of the golden court of Menelaus, the splendid horses of Nestor, or the enchanted isle of Calypso. But the heroic age of the epic gives way finally in *Ulysses* to the Age of the People and yields honor at the end not to an ideal past but to an unassuming Leopold Bloom for his wisdom and ethical maturity. Bloom, rather then the wily Ulysses, is crowned compassionate father, as well as consubstantial, a compassionate Christ. Thus the emphasis turns inward from the outward glory of things past to the inner triumphs of Joyce’s twentieth-century hero. As Hans Castorp sheds Settembrini and Naphta, the gods of his early stay at the sanatorium, so Bloom sheds the problems and preoccupations of the earlier part of his day as he reaches a calm resolution in “Ithaca.” Both Joyce and Mann see, in other words, that development of civilization as well as that of individuals within it moves from focus on exterior reality to awareness of inner worlds. (As Berdyaev suggests, Renaissance man, having discovered that the earth was not at the center of the universe and that the universe extended apparently to infinity, that the earth was not even the center of its own planetary system, turned from scrutiny of impossible space to scrutiny of self. In ancient Greece, Psyche was the last of the gods to be created.)

Joyce’s use of Viconian cycles, then, is in the interest of depicting the psychological (“cycle-logical”) maturity of his hero, Bloom. Rather than slaughtering the suitors to Penelope’s hand, Bloom becomes reconciled at the end to the fact of mathematical sequence. Rather than hurling insults back at Cyclops (another cycle within a cycle), Bloom departs from the Citizen’s wrath without retaliation as “ben Bloom Elijah,” “having raiment as of the sun.” Finally, instead of encouraging Stephen to take the place of his lost son, Rudy, Bloom gives Stephen freedom. The spiral development is given closure in *Ulysses* by the *ricorso*, whereby one cycle cracks, collapses, or explodes...
only to be reformed and recycled. We recall that it is in similar fashion through the thunderbolt, the title of Mann's final chapter in *The Magic Mountain*, that Hans Castorp is freed from his life-denying enchantment—the thunderbolt that is seen as a hellhound, "a huge explosive shell, a disgusting sugar-loaf from the infernal regions." Neither Joyce nor Mann sees fulfillment in the still center. Death is the enemy come from the infernal region. Death is part of process, but not in itself fulfilling for the individual. Joyce and Mann may be seen, then, to complement one another (Joyce more Freudian, Mann more Jungian), to fulfill the same ultimate aim, essentially humanistic and Greek in character.

Furthermore all metafiction, from *Don Quixote* down to its numerous descendants, rests on a view of fiction that is basically concentric in character, incorporating books within books in an infinite regress. Cervantes himself employs a far more complex circular reality than Mann's relatively simple progression of cycles and Joyce's slightly more complicated one. It is a circular reality particularly well suited to mirroring the meshing of countless wheels that, in the view of Cervantes, characterizes life. Behind the appearance of linear progression, in this understanding of life, lies repetition; no line is straight except in the abstract, for there is always a perspective to prove it curved.

It is an observation of a circular reality, made with the help of fiction and basic to many points of view, which, in my opinion, strengthens and substantiates the philosophical metaphors of time as *circular, spiral, cyclic,* or simply *round,* not unlike watches, clocks, sundials, and perhaps even space itself.

4. Ibid., p. 482.

6. Ibid.


12. Ellmann, p. 78.


16. Ibid., p. 44.

17. *Closing Time*, p. 25.


22. Ibid., p. 157.

23. Ellmann, p. 351.


27. *Studies in Structure: The Stages of Spiritual Life in Four Modern Authors*.


32. Lee T. Lemon, “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.”
34. Ellmann, p. 361.
35. A New Approach to Joyce: "A Portrait of the Artist" as a Guidebook. Ryf sees A Portrait as a guidebook to Joyce's later work.
37. Dublin's Joyce, p. 121.
38. Maurice Beebe, whose book Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts: The Artist as Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce I have in mind here, first suggested to me the possibility of Vico's influence on A Portrait.
40. Ellmann, p. 565.
42. The eighteen episodes in "Wandering Rocks" form a kind of Ulysses in miniature, redivided into Viconian cycles, like the subdivisions of "Aeolus," "Cyclops," and "Oxen of the Sun." Joyce amused himself by superimposing cycles upon cycles and inserting cycles within cycles.
43. Ulysses, p. 424.
44. Ibid., p. 731.
45. See Harry Slochower, Thomas Mann's Joseph Story, p. 13. Slochower discusses Mann's concern for balancing the individual and the typical in his novels.