chapter two

The fourth chapter of *Ulysses* is the first of the group of three chapters devoted to introducing Leopold Bloom. Not only are the two trios of chapters structurally parallel, but the first, second, and third chapters of each, respectively, have similar thematic patterns. For example, the present chapter and Stephen's first chapter are chronologically simultaneous, and embody parallel rather than continuous actions—the respective situations "at home" of Stephen and Bloom. But the correspondence goes further. Like Stephen, Bloom is a servant; and like the poet, the husband has been dispossessed.

The chapter begins with the unique, dramatic fact of Bloom's servitude:

he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray.

Another slice of bread and butter: three, four: right. She didn't like her plate full. Right. (55)

And that he is not merely granting his wife a unique privilege is made quite clear during its course:

—Poldy!
—What?
—Scald the teapot (62)
Everything on it? Bread and butter, four, sugar, spoon, her cream. Yes.

—What a time you were, she said. (63)

As in the first chapter, a key figures in this chapter, and a similar significance must be attached to it. On his way to the pork butcher's, Bloom realizes that his latchkey is "In the trousers I left off" (56), but decides not to "disturb" Molly and hopes that his house will not be entered while his wife is in bed if the door remains unlocked (57). In symbolic terms: he would have to disturb Molly in order to secure the proprietary key; the fault is his because he has "left off" the "trousers" with which it belongs; the consequence on the morning of the novel is that he must feebly hope that his unlocked house, with his wife in bed, will not be entered.

A number of other facts are revealed in the chapter: Bloom is a newspaper-advertising salesman; his wife is a concert soprano; the day is Thursday, June 16; the midwife who had delivered the Blooms' son eleven years before "knew from the first poor little Rudy wouldn't live"; the surviving child, Millicent, who was fifteen the previous day, works away from home; the morning's mail includes a letter to Bloom and a postcard to Molly from Milly, and a letter to Molly from the manager of her impending concert 'tour,' Hugh ('Blazes') Boylan (actually, only one concert is scheduled, for June 25 in Belfast). From its first words the chapter also provides, through Bloom's "interior monologue," an introduction to his singular values, intelligence, and sensibility.

When he reads in Milly's letter of the attentions of a young student, Alec Bannon, Bloom feels the inevitable consternation of the father of a pretty, adolescent girl; but he promptly resigns himself:

And the transition with “Will happen too” from “Girl’s sweet light lips” to “woman’s lips” is wholly understandable. Milly is a younger and slimmer version of her mother, “Molly” with the difference of the vowels: “Marionette we called her” (440). Similarly, Bannon is of the order of Boylan. Thoughts of Milly and Bannon inevitably associate with thoughts of Molly and Boylan, who present a much more pressing problem.

Molly’s secretiveness about Boylan’s letter would have aroused Bloom’s suspicions if that were necessary. But the “Bold hand” of the address is sufficient. Bloom remembers too well how Molly’s first sight of Boylan at “the bazaar dance” had affected her (69), and knows Boylan’s reputation. His fear is confirmed when Molly tells him that Boylan is bringing her the program of her concert and that she is to sing “Love’s Old Sweet Song” and “La ci darem” from Don Giovanni. He does not dwell on the first selection’s obvious irony, but thinks instead:

\textit{Voglio e non vorrei.} Wonder if she pronounces that right: \textit{voglio}. (63)

The line sung by Zerlina is “Vorrei e non vorrei.” Bloom unconsciously substitutes the indicative “I will” for the conditional because he knows the attitude his wife (who is to sing the part of the peasant girl equivocating about succumbing to Don Giovanni because of a desire to be faithful to her betrothed, Masetto) will take toward the blandishments of her own Don. He corrects himself when he repeats the line in the sixth chapter (92), so his error is not the result of ignorance; yet in every instance after that he persists in the substitution.

It is significant that, although Bloom is made to serve Molly and is betrayed by her, he has no resentment for his wife. His attitude is in direct contrast to that of Stephen in the corresponding situation. He is a willing servant, is repeatedly concerned throughout the novel with pleasing Molly. Thus, before going for his kidney in the present chapter:
She might like something tasty. Thin bread and butter she likes in the morning. Still perhaps: once in a way (56)

and en route:

Boland's breadvan delivering with trays our daily but she prefers yesterday's. . . . (57)

The chapter makes it apparent that he loves her, even dotes on her. For example, he recalls remarks of hers he had scribbled on his cuff—remarks that the unprejudiced reader finds very ordinary—and his thoughts about writing a "sketch" include sharing the author's credit with her (69).

Bloom almost abjectly serves Molly, and with solicitude rather than resentment. If she appears to be analogous to Calypso, the Homeric correspondence is a significant contrast, for Odysseus resented strongly his years of subjection in the cave of the nymph. Loving her, he is upset about her imminent adultery, would like to win her back; the title of the "prize titbit" he reads in the outhouse, "Matcham's Masterstroke," and its opening words, "Matcham often thinks of the masterstroke by which he won the laughing witch who now," recur in his thought throughout the day. Yet even here he shows no resentment. Can his doting on her be sufficient reason for his failure to resent either servitude or betrayal? To complicate matters, there is a suggestion that solicitude is his response not only to Molly's exploitation of him but, subconsciously, to her betrayal of him as well—that he has a propensity for bawdry. After the neighbors' servant girl has disappeared outside the pork-butcher's:

The sting of disregard glowed to weak pleasure within his breast. For another: a constable off duty cuddled her in Eccles Lane. (59)

When his "weak pleasure" at being spurned for another is coupled to his enthusiasm for his servitude, one is led to suspect Bloom of masochism. The chapter introduces a character who is frustrated father and husband, on the one hand,
and enthusiastic servant and perhaps even co-operative cuckold, on the other.

5 the post office

The action of this chapter takes place in and around the branch post office on Westland Row to which Bloom goes for the letter sent to "Henry Flower, Esq." by a probably equally pseudonymous "Martha Clifford." He secures the letter at the Westland Row Postal Annex, but as he leaves he meets M'Coy, an acquaintance, who inquires about Molly's forthcoming concert tour, tells how he learned about Paddy Dignam's death, and asks Bloom to have his name placed on the list of mourners at the funeral. He escapes from M'Coy, turns the north corner (onto Brunswick, now Pearse, Street), and around the block (onto Cumberland Street), to the deserted rear of the Westland railroad station, where with continued caution (ludicrous throughout the chapter, while Molly's caution with Boylan's letter was understandable) he reads the letter. He tears the envelope into tiny bits under the elevated tracks of the railroad, enters the back door of All Hallow's Church (which, like the railroad station and the postal annex, fronts on Westland Row), and witnesses part of a communion service. He leaves the church by its front door, thus describing roughly a full circle, and goes to an apothecary shop on Lincoln Place, which is the junction of the block-long Westland Row and the street just south of it (Leinster Street), where he orders a skin lotion for Molly. He decides to have a bath before the funeral and buys a cake of lemon-scented soap. But again as he reaches the street he has an unpleasant encounter. He meets a racing tout, Bantam Lyons, seeking the betting odds on the day's principal race, the Ascot Gold Cup; he offers Lyons his newspaper:
—I was just going to throw it away, Mr. Bloom said. Bantam Lyons raised his eyes suddenly and leered weakly.

—What's that? his sharp voice said.

—I say you can keep it, Mr. Bloom answered. I was going to throw it away that moment.

Bantam Lyons doubted an instant, leering; then thrust the outspread sheets back on Mr. Bloom's arm.

—I'll risk it, he said. Here, thanks.

He sped off towards Conway's corner. (84)

The chapter ends with Bloom walking "round the corner" to the "mosque of the baths," imagining himself extended in his bath.

As this detailed account of Bloom's itinerary suggests, the designation of the chapter's locale might properly be "Westland Row"—were it not for the central role of Martha Clifford's letter. The prodigious enterprise Bloom makes of getting and reading the letter, and his subsequent thoughts about it and the woman who wrote it, span the chapter. Furthermore, the "flower" motif running through the chapter, a major element of the Homeric correspondence, is associated directly with the letter.

The chapter corresponds, of course, to the episode of the lotus-eaters in the Odyssey. Both the pseudonymous Anglicized and the original forms of Bloom's name are "flower," and so is the last word in the chapter. Familiar phrases using the word or the names of flowers occur throughout, and the chapter contains an extensive catalogue of types of flowers. The effect of Homer's lotus on those who ate it is invoked by the repetition of such phrases as "flowers of idleness" and by reference to many types of chemical and institutional narcotics. The details of this correspondence have been fully delineated; what remains to be considered is its possible function.

After Bloom secures Martha's letter:

He strolled out of the postoffice and turned to the right. Talk: as if that would mend matters. His hand went into his pocket and a forefinger felt its way under the flap of the envelope, ripping it open in jerks. Women will pay a lot of heed, I don't think. His fingers drew forth the letter and crumpled the envelope in his pocket. (72)
At the same time that he is consummating one stage of his epistolary romance, he is thinking of the impending adultery of his wife. Deciding that he cannot deter Molly from her affair, he draws Martha's letter from its envelope. This paragraph, so near the beginning of the chapter, makes unavoidable the conclusion that Bloom associates his own behavior with Molly's. Directly he meets M'Coy; and while he is fingering the letter in his pocket, trying to determine what is pinned to it, he tells M'Coy of Molly's concert tour. M'Coy's "—That so? . . . Who's getting it up?" (74) makes him think of Molly lying in bed, of the "Torn strip of envelope" from Boylan's letter under her pillow, and of a snatch of the significant "Love's Old Sweet Song." He avoids answering and starts to leave. From this point, so near the beginning of the chapter, to its end, Bloom does not think once about the impending rendezvous of Molly and Boylan.

Taken together, the Homeric correspondence, the central place of Martha Clifford's letter in the action, Bloom's association of the letter and his activities related to it with Molly's impending adultery, and Bloom's subsequent avoidance of any thoughts about the adultery reveal the subject and theme of the chapter. The lotus-eaters had eaten of the flower of oblivion and had, as a consequence, become passive, content, forgetful of their responsibilities and of their homes and families. A yellow flower is pinned to Martha's letter. The letter represents the lotus; and Bloom's retrieving, reading, and thinking about it, the chief matter of the chapter, represents his particular kind of lotus-eating. The Homeric correspondence is Joyce's device for indicating the nature and significance of what Bloom is doing: he is using the letter to help him forget his home and the acute problem it presents, to help him forget his responsibility to try to solve that problem.

Martha's letter is not by itself the whole delineation of Bloom's lotus-eating. It is rather the principal and unifying element in a pattern that runs through the chapter. Bloom thinks of gelded horses, "Might be happy all the same that way" (76); of cab drivers, "no will of their own" (76); and of castrati in church choirs, "Suppose they wouldn't feel anything after. Kind of a placid. No worry. Fall into flesh don't they? . . . Eunuch. One way out of it" (81). With
comic impatience he awaits a sight of the ankles of a woman about to mount a carriage, and he thinks of a number of other inaccessible women. He walks about almost in circles and idles away the time. Again and again it is he who is relaxed, “lolling,” floating, in his mental images of dolce far niente. All these thoughts and images are expressions of his desire to escape from his marital problem, which is clearly shown to be his responsibility as a man, into passivity. Thus, despite Martha’s importunities he avoids meeting her: “Thank you: not having any” (77). And when her name reminds him of a picture of Christ preaching to the two sisters, Martha and Mary of Bethany, in their home, he associates himself and his Martha with the persons in the mixed but celibate group:

Nice kind of evening feeling. No more wandering about. Just loll there: quiet dusk: let everything rip. Forget. Tell about places you have been, strange customs. The other one, jar on her head, was getting the supper. . . . She listens with big dark soft eyes. Tell her: more and more: all. Then a sigh: silence. Long long long rest. (78)

“The other one” is, of course, Martha, who complained to Jesus that her sister only sat and listened to Him while she worked. Jesus praised Mary for doing so. Bloom would just as soon have his Martha busy herself, for the woman who in his fancy “listens with big dark soft eyes” is his Mary-Marion—it is to Molly that Bloom wishes to tell all, and with her to rest. He exchanges titillating letters with the likes of Martha because Molly, from all appearances, would have none of that sort of thing.

 Almost all Bloom’s thoughts in the chapter, then, whether about flowers, narcotics, floating, castration, religion (the lulling comfort of faith, the passivity of the Buddha), women, or Martha Clifford, reflect a single theme: his endeavor to forget his marital problem and the responsibility to try to solve it. Directly paralleling Stephen in the second of the three chapters presenting him (school), Bloom here in his second chapter attempts to avoid the consequences of his situation. In contrast to Stephen, he succeeds so well
that as he is about to read the letter he is metamorphosed
to the poor betrothed of the peasant girl into the bold and seductive Don:

\textit{Là ci darem la mano}

\textit{La la lala la la. (76)}

For a different Zerlina now occupies his thoughts.

The end of the chapter is the consummate statement of this theme of escape and dereliction of responsibility, and the consummate exploitation of the Homeric correspondence as well. When he decides upon taking a bath, Bloom detects a "curious longing," apparently the result of Martha's letter, and resolves to masturbate in the bath, "Combine business and pleasure" (83). Although he ultimately does not do so ("Damned glad I didn't do it in the bath this morning over her silly I will punish you letter," 362), the anticipation is presented, for it is a fitting consummation to his shabby epistolary affair. It is also a fitting climax to the chapter, to his whole attempt to evade his responsibility—escape his problem—as Molly's husband; the reader can have no delusions about the significance of what the eager servant, possibly eager cuckold, and reluctant mate, is doing. And the final paragraph of the chapter explores its implications, and so completes the chapter thematically and structurally:

He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth. . . . He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained . . . and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating . . . around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower. (85)

What Bloom's mind "saw" is a symbol of the consequence of his attempt to escape into passivity and forgetfulness. To renge on his duty as Molly's husband is to renge on his function as a man; it is to make "limp," to make "a languid floating flower"—a lotus, the very emblem of that reneging—what should be the emblem of the husband and father.
The sixth chapter begins, as Joyce might have said, epi-phaneically:

MARTIN CUNNINGHAM, FIRST, POKE H IS SILKHATTED HEAD into the creaking carriage and, entering deftly, seated himself. Mr Power stepped in after him, curving his height with care.
—Come on, Simon.
—After you, Mr Bloom said.
Mr Dedalus covered himself quickly and got in, saying:
—Yes, yes.
—Are we all here now? Martin Cunningham asked.
Come along, Bloom.
Mr Bloom entered and sat in the vacant place. (86)

Bloom’s relationship to his group, to those he thinks of as social equals and as friends (the closest thing to a community in a modern city), is fully characterized. After they are “all here,” Bloom is invited to occupy the vacant place. His “after you” to Simon Dedalus is quixotic politeness, because Dedalus has already been specifically prompted to enter the carriage next. The “we all” distinguished from the occupant of a “vacant” place focusses the relationship sharply.

There is nothing in the chapter to contradict this picture of Bloom in company. Until one specific occurrence, he is not addressed spontaneously by any of his companions, and their conversation rather ignores than pointedly excludes him (“O draw him out, Martin, Mr Power said eagerly. Wait till you hear him, Simon, on Ben Dollard’s singing of The Croppy Boy,” 89). When he offers an observation there is some response, but the give-and-take of the conversation of the three others is absent.

The specific occurrence which changes their behavior follows by seconds Bloom’s thought, “He’s coming in the
afternoon” (91). The text mentions only “the white disc of a straw hat,” but the phrase is a metonymic figure, and subsequent more elaborate descriptions of Boylan seem almost superfluous. Bloom’s thoughts show that he has already given up his attempt of the last chapter to ignore his problem; but the appearance of Boylan, and the eagerness with which his companions seize the opportunity, show how foolish the “lotus-eating” was. Boylan passes, Bloom assiduously examines his fingernails, and Power suddenly becomes interested in Molly’s concert tour. He even specifically asks Bloom “—Are you going yourself?”

The cuckold-baiting has no more than begun when it is interrupted by Cunningham’s sight of the Shylock-like moneylender, Reuben J. Dodd. After Power and Dedalus have expressed their small affection for Dodd, Cunningham says “—We have all been there,” then looks at Bloom and amends his statement: “—Well, nearly all of us” (93). Bloom’s reaction to this first hint of Jew-baiting is appeasement: he tries to tell the anecdote “about Reuben J. and the son.” The scheme to escape the baiting by joining the baiters does not succeed, however. Dedalus keeps interrupting him until “Martin Cunningham thwarted his speech rudely,” and the story is taken bodily from him by Cunningham. When Cunningham has finished, he is still trying: “—Isn’t it awfully good? Mr Bloom said eagerly,” but Dedalus replies “drily,” and Power laughs.

There is no suggestion that Bloom’s companions are vicious. As they do M’Coy and Kernan, they consider him a second-class friend, mildly contemptible, and so deserving of their condescension and casual malice. He is not despised, however, or hated. When Power begins to condemn suicide, Cunningham does his best to change the subject and to qualify the condemnation. And Power himself, when he later learns of Bloom’s father’s suicide, is genuinely sorry.

It is important to keep in mind that these four men know each other fairly well, are social compeers, and are associated in this chapter under ordinary circumstances. That is to say, there is no reason to feel that the coolness of the others toward Bloom, the baiting of him, or his subsequent attempt at appeasement is other than completely normal.
Once the group has left the carriage, the focus of the narrative shifts to Bloom's thoughts as he follows the corpse of Dignam and sees it interred. However, at the very end of the chapter the focus shifts again. John Henry Menton, the solicitor, is the most distinguished mourner in the company. Bloom had beaten him in a game of bowls seventeen years before, in the presence of Molly, then unmarried, and another girl, and knows that Menton dislikes him for it. Nevertheless, he tells Menton of the dent in his hat and is soundly rebuffed for his kindness.

Menton is representative of the best in Ireland. Catholic, distinguished, kind enough to attend the funeral of a former employee cashiered for drunkenness and to contribute handsomely to his family's support, he is also one of Dublin's (i.e., Ireland's) important public officials. He is comparable with the dead Parnell, for whom Bloom had done a similar service, and been thanked graciously in the midst of a riot; Bloom himself later mentions the analogy and the historical significance of their differing behavior (634 and 639).

As it began with an epiphany of Bloom's normal relation to his "friends," the chapter ends with an epiphany of that which Bloom's second-class status represents—the unjust rejection of him by Catholic Ireland, of which he supposes himself a part.

The action of the chapter, which involves its other principal characters and depicts Bloom's relations with them, is less prominent than the thoughts Bloom himself has throughout. Almost at the very beginning, he sees Stephen walking (toward Sandymount strand) and points him out to his father. The elder Dedalus guesses that he is going "Down with his aunt Sally" (87), derides Stephen's uncle, and then strongly denounces Mulligan. Bloom thinks:

Noisy selfwilled man. Full of his son. He is right. Something to hand on. If little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes. (87-88)
This second thought of Rudy in the novel, prompted at least indirectly by his sight of Stephen, reveals that Bloom is actually strongly affected by the loss of his infant son. In keeping with the revelation, Bloom begins to show his unusual concern with families and maternity in the present chapter. He thinks about Dignam’s wife and family and extensively about the wife and family of Mr. O’Connell, the cemetery caretaker. He will comment in the eighth chapter on the large families of Theodore Purefoy, Dedalus, and Queen Victoria.

The relevance of Bloom’s concern about children to his own condition is hinted at in the passage quoted above. The expressions “Something to hand on” and “Me in his eyes” are echoes of the concept evolved by Stephen in the third chapter—actually being evolved at about the same time—of the umbilical chain of ancestry, which reflects Stephen’s sense of isolation and loneliness. Vital to Bloom, this concept is more fully presented later in the chapter, when the hearse with a child’s coffin passes the carriage with the four men. Bloom thinks of the child as Rudy in his “white-lined deal box,” then thinks “Rattle his bones. Over the stones. Only a pauper. Nobody owns.” The others begin to discuss the dead child, and Power brings up suicides. Bloom thinks about the cruelty of society toward suicides, about Martin Cunningham, whose attempt to divert Power’s conversation he appreciates, and then, in a separate paragraph, about the inquest after his father’s suicide, and about his father’s corpse. This separate paragraph is preceded by “Rattle his bones,” and is followed by “No more pain. Wake no more. Nobody owns.” The phrases were applied a few lines earlier to the child he had identified with his son, but now it is his father who lies dead (“Rattle his bones”), and he himself who is the son, he whom “Nobody owns.” Again Bloom has thought in terms of a chain of ancestry, of a continuous relationship of father and son who is in turn father. And following this development of the concept he has come to see that he is in isolation, cut off before and behind. He owns nobody and nobody owns him, for he has neither father nor son, neither root nor branch.

The reason for his having failed to have a son after Rudy’s death is not revealed in the chapter, although he does say
"If it’s healthy it’s from the mother. If not the man. Better luck next time" (94). That he is cut off from his heritage is abundantly clear, however. He reveals (89) that his legacy from his father was the latter’s dog Athos (a-theos—“dog” is the opposite of “god”). Later in the novel (477), he will reel off the first four letters of the Hebrew alphabet plus a dozen words denoting Jewish holidays, ceremonial objects, and religious and popular expressions—the sum of his Judaism. In his first chapter he had reveries about traveling to the East (57), and the “Agendath Netaim” advertisement focussed his attention on Palestine; but he was too aware there that he had just bought a pork kidney, which had been wrapped in one of the circulars by a pork-butcher who may be a Jew, and he even quashed his enthusiasm for the project, whose headquarters are located on “Bleibtreustrasse” in Berlin, with a reappraisal of the “land of promise,” a devastating conception of sterility and decay (61). He habitually associates the East with some earlier happy condition (the reason why it was so prominent in his “lotus-eating” reveries); but he recognized in the early morning that, in terms of his ethnic origin, his roots, any return is impossible. He is the son of neither man nor tradition.

It is perhaps apparent that the present chapter has not two principal themes, but one: both the action at the beginning and the very end and the interior monologue that occupies most of the chapter are concerned with Bloom’s isolation. It is a compound isolation, both contiguous and continuous. He is cut off from those around him and he is cut off from his family line.

Which kind of isolation is more significant for Bloom is almost revealed in the fact that he is a Jew. For not only is he therefore automatically set apart from those about him, he is also under certain obligations. The code of Jewish law (Shulhan Aruch) declares that a man must “fulfil the precept of propagation” by begetting a son and a daughter capable of having children. Bloom is far from being a devout Jew, and yet his distress over the death of Rudy is linked in the present chapter to that over the death of his father, with the ultimate source of distress, his sense
that he is isolated in what should be a chain of descent; and it is not such a chain because of his failure to fulfil the precept of propagation. Joyce has been quoted as saying that Jews "are better husbands than we are, better fathers, and better sons." He has made Bloom a Jew at least partly because as a Jew his main character is motivated to become a good husband, father, and son.

The central business of the chapter—the funeral; all the conversation about dying, murder, and suicide; and Bloom's increasingly morbid thoughts about these subjects and about age, animal slaughter, corpses, burial alive, the activity of graveyard rats, and his own graveplot—conforms to, and supplies the background for, the chapter's basic theme. Furthermore, Bloom's isolation is extending to Milly and, because of Boylan, to Molly. In the chapter he decides that Milly is Molly "watered down" (88), and that to pay her a surprise visit would be unwise: "Catch them once with their pants down. Never forgive you after" (99). With regard to Molly herself, he thinks: "Could I go to see Leah tonight, I wonder. I said I" (90-91); and he associates Molly with the widow Dignam, "She would marry another. Him? No," and himself with the deceased: "alone under the ground: and lie no more in her warm bed" (101). His isolation portends a fruitless, lonely existence, a death in life that will end in death.

As with the two previous chapters, this third chapter in the group that presents Bloom has a thematic similarity to the third chapter in the group that presents Stephen. In both chapters the character is concerned with his situation and what it signifies for his future. In both, isolation and mockery (Stephen of himself) cause the same despairing conclusion. The use of Homeric correspondence is also parallel; in both cases the analogue in the Odyssey is, appropriately, a quest for information—from Proteus and Tiresias respectively.

The analogy between this chapter and the descent to Hades episode (Book XI) of the Odyssey is an inexact one, for that involves a prophecy of success. Still, before his rebuff from Menton, as he is leaving the cemetery at the end of the chapter, Bloom does decide to leave his morbid
thoughts with it: “Enough of this place. . . . They are not going to get me this innings. Warm beds: warm full-blooded life” (113). Whether his decision signifies a resumption of escapism or something more in keeping with the episode in the *Odyssey* remains to be seen.

*Mr. Leopold Paula Bloom*

There may be a sense in which Bloom is the Everyman ("Bloom or mankind," "Bloom, or Everyman") which so many critics see—the sense in which all powerfully individual literary figures become archetypes upon reflection. But this is not a primary sense, and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s stricture, “Begin with an individual and you will end with a type. Begin with a type and you will end with nothing,” may be applied to the reader as well as to the writer.

Certain aspects of Bloom’s character tend to reinforce the Everyman conception. When the description of him emerges, detail by detail, Bloom is seen to be not so much undistinguished in history and appearance as indistinguishable. The only child of an Irish Protestant mother and a Hungarian Jewish father who was converted to his wife’s religion after his arrival in Ireland, Bloom was born a Jew, was baptized in his mother’s church, and then converted because of his marriage (much as did his father), to his bride’s religion. He became unfaithful to both the adopted faiths as he had been to the inherited one, and so his religious history roughly parallels that of Western civilization itself. Unlike the thin young man with the deacon’s hat and the ash stick, he attracts no public notice. He is of average height (5 feet 9½ inches) and weight (162 pounds) for his time, and has an olive complexion and a prominent nose and eyes. He has a mustache, is moderately handsome, and wears
a derby. And, reinforcing his indistinguishable qualities, his attitudes bear the stamp of the world in which he lives. He is the citizen who follows his leaders along the path of materialist atheism, science, and debased culture.

However, a closer look shows the superficial nature of Bloom's "Everyman" characteristics. For example, the interlocutor in the next-to-last chapter of the novel says euphemistically: "his tendency was towards applied, rather than towards pure, science" (667); in plainer terms, he is principally a gadgeteer whose understanding of science is so limited that he cannot comprehend Archimedes' law (71), and whose interest is the collection of legends, simple facts, and mechanical devices of popular scientism. But Bloom's scientism is unlike that of the average man—is marked by a singular intensity and sincerity. He experiments often during the course of the day in a pure exercise of intellectus. At one point, speculating on synesthesia of touch and sight, he tries to feel the color of his arm, but decides that the hairs ruin the experiment. He considers the problem of creating a valid experimental situation, and concludes that his belly would be the most favorable area of research. Immediately, although walking in the street, he separates his clothing and proceeds with the experiment (179).

In the quality of his culture, too, Bloom is only apparently typical. He had read in Shakespeare for "moral guidance" (661). He cites as his musical favorites: in "the severe classical school"—Mendelssohn; in "light opera"—Martha and Don Giovanni (!) (645). He thinks often of the "modern art of advertisement" (667), conceiving advertisements and devices for displaying them and judging with a critical eye all those he sees. But that "literary" criticism itself shows his bourgeois cultural conceptions to be a disguise for purer stuff. Examples of his witty word-play abound in his opening chapters (of a watering cart, in the fourth chapter: "Watering cart. To provoke the rain. On earth as it is in heaven," 60). In the eighth chapter he thinks of an advertisement he saw in the morning paper: "What is home without / Plumtree's potted meat? / Incomplete. / With it an abode of bliss"; and remarks "What a stupid ad!" (169). Joyce is being ironic, for both literally (659) and figuratively Bloom has Plumtree's potted meat
at home. But in addition he is showing Bloom to be perceptive; Bloom's response is not primarily to the quality of the verse, nor even to the claim that the jar of Plumtree's in his pantry has made his home "an abode of bliss," but to the placement of the advertisement under the obituary notices.

Joyce shows Bloom favor in other ways. His politics—pacifist, internationalist, mildly socialist—are the same as Joyce's, he is the age Joyce would have been had he finished *Ulysses* when he expected to (thirty-eight), and Joyce even enriches his inner monologue with a figure of his own:

Chamber music. Could make a kind of pun on that. It is a kind of music I often thought when she. Acoustics that is. Tinkling. (278)

Bloom's inner language—unlike that he speaks to others—is occasionally gifted, and his wit reveals itself constantly. His good sense has fewer opportunities to reveal itself, but it is persistent. One example of it is his rejection of the "Agendath Netaim" pseudo-Zionism of the Italianate Moses whose name contains yet another cognate to Bloom's own (Moses Montefiore). Another example is his ultimate response to the ballad of the "Croppy Boy," who reveals his complicity in an uprising to a British "yeoman captain," thinking the soldier a confessor. Ben Dollard's moving rendition of the song is mentioned in the funeral car. When he sings it in the eleventh chapter (Ormond), Bloom emotes along with the other auditors, but then has a second thought: "Breathe a prayer, drop a tear. All the same he must have been a bit of a natural not to see it was a yeoman cap" (285).

Bloom is capable of disgusting acts, and has many petty faults; for example, he frustrates M'Coy's attempt to permanently borrow a valise in the fifth chapter (post office), yet he had planned to beg a train pass of M'Coy, and is constantly planning, preparing, or trying to get something for nothing from an acquaintance. But he has intelligence, wit, perceptiveness, compassion ("They used to drive a stake of wood through [a suicide's] heart in the grave. As if it weren't broken already," 95), good sense, and an appreci-
ation of the value of life and love (the pork kidney, example of the organic meats he "relishes," is both associated with Molly and an index of his sanguine humor). He is a unique spirit disguised even from himself within a common, an indistinguishable, externality. It is as though he were a living example of the tension between natural endowment and environmental influence. To the extent that a culture and a set of attitudes and values can impose themselves on a man, modern bourgeois industrial civilization has molded Bloom. But his claim upon our interest and sympathy comes from his showing again and again an innate superiority to the Everyman his environment would have him be.