

GENETIC INROADS INTO THE ART OF JAMES JOYCE

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Ulysses 1922 and the Golden Mean: Shaping His Text Into Book

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a twentieth-century modernist novel published in book form on 2 February 1922. Produced from the printing-house of Maurice Darantieri in Dijon, France, the book is the product of high professional skill and workshop procedure. The house of Darantieri specialised in *deluxe* editions. Remarkably, in the early twentieth century, they still practiced typesetting by hand. The *Ulysses* printers-copy typescripts identify no less than twenty-six typesetters at work. Darantieri's practice, in evidence for *Ulysses*, too, was to set not in lengthy galleys to be cast off at a later stage into numbered pages, but to format the typesetting at once into page size, though with the pages as yet unnumbered. These unnumbered page-size text units were proof-printed consecutively in groups of eight, four over four, on one side of sheets named 'placards', to be submitted to the author for first proof-reading. Returned with autograph changes and additions in the margins, the changes from them were worked into the standing type and the placard texts were freshly adjusted into pages and now numbered. The numbered pages were bundled, sixteen by sixteen, into gatherings. The gatherings were, successively singly or in groups, multiply re-submitted to the author for proofing. In, at times, up to twelve rounds of proof-reading, each round carries a fresh set of author corrections and frequently significant text additions. Joyce wrote about one third of *Ulysses* in the process of proof-reading—indeed, the text originally submitted in typescript he augmented by about one third in proofs. This made high demands on the typesetters nimbly and correctly to shift stretches of text forward through the accumulating pages in and across gatherings. On last proofs that commonly carry the '*bon à tirer*' approval of James Joyce (author) and Sylvia Beach (publisher), the final

control of the printing house is in evidence with its last touches to text and typography. Both in placard and in page, the Darantiere proofs are virtually all preserved. The final state of the text and the ultimately valid pagination beyond placards and page proofs shows first and only in the first-edition printing. The author, typists, printing-house workmen, and author again and again thus interacted over some nine months (midsummer 1921 to 1 February 1922) on transposing the *Ulysses* text composition, revision and augmentation into the artefact of the 2 February 1922 first-edition-*Ulysses* book.

The 1922 book is a product of the book trade. As that product, it accommodates the first text instantiation of James Joyce's novel, *Ulysses*. The two perspectives, book and text, need to be kept distinct. The book, as the product of the book trade, is singular. The text contained in the book bodies forth materially, as it so happens, the first public appearance of a text representing a work and is therefore, as is any first edition, popularly much revered. Yet it is but one instantiation in transmission of its author's text after all pre-publication exertions of composition and revision, and before the material text's subsequent passage through multi-faceted re-publication. As presented in the first edition—being therein in reality 'neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series', as Leopold Bloom would have it (*U* 17, 2130)—it offers a text as contingent as is any, and are all, of its antecedents and successors. The relation of the book artefact and the first-edition text instantiation that it happens to carry deserves a closer look.

In this respect, James Joyce's *Ulysses* presents a very special case. Joyce did not 'just' provide the text content for the book entrusted to Darantiere for production. He also actively shaped the material body of that text content. For *Ulysses* in its first edition, Joyce saw the text extension of his writing inscribed as a text body into the first-edition book. This text body he arranged in a book-space-encompassing design articulated in proportions of culturally inherited significance. He thus gave the book's material content extension a singular structure. This extension structure of the text body coexists with, yet is still autonomously distinct from, the literary text composed as art in language. The text matter that instantiates the literary work *Ulysses* is thereby no longer solely to be seen, as by convention, technically contained between book covers. It becomes an element of the book, genuinely integrated in the book as

cultural artefact. Text body and book are fused to mutually and jointly express the singularity of the first-edition *Ulysses*.

* * *

Books and the art and craft of book making look back on an autonomous history. How the art and craft impinge on text contained in, and presented and made public through books is of high cultural complexity. In book making history, the transmedialising of text into book has correspondingly strong traditions of aesthetic signification. Book aesthetics are established through numbers and proportion. What measurements should a book be given? How should its height and its width be proportioned to one another? How should the type-page height and width relate to that of the book? An ingrained tradition survives in the proportioning of book-size and type-page dimensions to the ratio of the golden mean. As has been asserted and demonstrated before,¹ the material stretch of pages in the first-edition-*Ulysses* book fulfils that ratio. This has, to this day, not been appreciated in its full significance as a fact, and even less as a dimension of Joyce's art, his intellectual and artistic range and achievement.

Of the novel-text's eighteen episodes, a first sequence of eleven episodes runs to 279 pages, the end of Sirens. Seven episodes still lie ahead. The eleven to seven ratio is correlatable in terms of Joyce's chapter ground-plan for *Ulysses*. The ratio of the number of chapters remaining to those already typeset works out as $(18:11)=1.61....$ This is the ratio of the golden mean (1,6180339887, an irrational number). For the text body of the book *Ulysses* in production, the ratio needs to be translated into page extensions. With the writing of the novel essentially realised in the autumn of 1921, it is clear that the text sequence of eleven episodes ending at page 279 closes the shorter stretch of text for the book in the making. The remaining seven episodes will constitute its longer stretch. They are, at most, in proof, in some parts not yet even fully written. But what can be calculated, on the strength of the '279' page count for the shorter stretch in the golden mean ratio, is that the book text yet ahead would need to fill 451 pages. The seven post-Sirens episodes, Cyclops

1 Susan Sutliff Brown, 'The Geometry of Joyce's *Ulysses*: from Pythagoras to Poincare: Joyce's Use of Geometry for Structure, Metaphor, and Theme', PhD dissertation, University of South Florida (Tampa, FL, 1987).

through to Penelope, would constitute the text body's longer stretch and bring the page total for the book up to 730 pages. The 451 pages of the longer stretch would stand in a $(451:279)=1.61...$ relation to the shorter stretch from Telemachus through to Sirens. In actual fact, the book text ends on page 732. While the ratio of the whole to the actual longer stretch $(732:453)$ thereby still remains at $1.61...$, that of the longer to the shorter stretch (now: $453:279$), rises to $1.62...$ —an overreach yet to be attended to.

The material text of the 1922 edition as book content is hence manifestly laid out in ratios of the golden mean. Given the book-making art expended on the book, this goes essentially to strengthen the singular iconicity of the first-edition volume of *Ulysses*. I posit that this proportioning of the material text content was conceived and realised by James Joyce, the author, not by Maurice Darantieri and his printing house. The book they produced displays superior crafting, yet as an artefact it shows no distinct trace of implementing the book-making tradition of golden-mean dispositioning in its formats of book size, page size or type-page size. Darantieri, in fact, may even have been oblivious of—or have been left in the dark about—the golden mean aesthetic disposition of the material text content of the book he was producing. He certainly does not uphold the aesthetics of the first-edition text layout when re-setting *Ulysses* for the second edition of 1926. This circumstance plays further into the author's court the assumption that the proportioning of text extensions according to the golden mean in the 1922 *Ulysses* was indeed Joyce's. It was, for him, the ultimate authorial measure to frame specifically and exclusively the first-edition text instantiation into the singular iconicity of the first edition as book.

Joyce's decision to choose this shaping would have been taken with the control of the final proofs having gone into print, resulting in the page count for the printed book up to the end of Sirens. Printing at Darantieri's proceeded successively episode by episode, upon which the type was immediately broken up and distributed for re-use. Consequently, the page number '279' would stand firm. From here, a page count to the end of the text body in terms of the golden mean ratio was safely calculable. As for reaching it: a touch of familiarity with the progress of composition of *Ulysses* helps us to remember that astonishingly expansive late additions to Cyclops and Circe accrued while the book production was

already in full swing. For Cyclops, the so-called 'Metropolitan Police' Section (*U* 12, 534-608) stands out, composed as a fresh narrative sequence close to three years after the chapter's original completion. Joyce correction-marked for Darantieri's workmen where to insert it in the Cyclops chapter. Sirens was, at the time, in the last rounds of page-proofing and Cyclops in third placards.² To all appearances, thus, the 'Metropolitan Police' section was a practical response to the need to fill pages towards ultimately reaching the page-number goal. For Circe, the print production, ultimately long drawn out until late January 1920, actually began on 20 October 1921—amazingly only a day after the final proofs for Cyclops were returned to Darantieri to go into print, and so with the 'Metropolitan Police' section incorporated. The first placard typesetting for Circe in its turn was done on that 20 October out of order of the chapter text for precisely the stretch of the 'Messianic Scene' addition. Joyce only subsequently, weeks later, instructed the typesetters where to insert the scene in the consecutive text of the Circe episode. Eventually, the 'Messianic Scene' in the 1922 first edition extends to eighteen pages (around sixteen pages in *U* 15, 1398-1958). In the first edition it begins a third down on page 453—a circumstance and a page number to which we shall return. Ithaka, finally, underwent an ultimate craze of augmentation to become the novel's second-longest chapter after Circe. Though the novel's penultimate episode, it was not only the last to be finalised in composition. It was also typeset and proofread under last-minute pressure throughout the very final weeks of readying *Ulysses* for publication. Its extensive late accretions to the novel's text body helped significantly to reach the page-count goal for the book.

At the end of the novel's thirteenth episode, Nausikaa, we find positive proof that Joyce himself engaged in the proportioning of the book's text body: this chapter, closing as it does the day-time half of *Ulysses*, ends on page 365. To set the novel-text's midpoint at '365' (i.e., half of '730') makes sense only if the text-extension end point is already pre-calculated from here—regardless of the fact that considerable

2 All detail of the advance in the printing process through placards and proofs is listed in tabular form on pages 1914-1915 in volume 3 of James Joyce, *A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, edited by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York, Garland Publishing, 1984; 21986). The tables permit follow-up research in volumes [12] to [27] of *The James Joyce Archive*, ed. by Michael Groden, et al., 63 vols. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977-79).

stretches of the novel-text's second half were not yet typeset, or printed, and the penultimate episode, Ithaca, was not yet even fully written. At the moment of production when Nausikaa was printed and the chapter type distributed, only the author can have known that the middle of the book was reached and, thus, which end-page-number was thence pre-calculated.

* * *

Joyce had something of a fetish for the numbers eleven and twenty-two. In the *Ulysses* fiction, Bloom's and Molly's son Rudy lives for just eleven days. Stephen, in the fiction, is twenty-two years old (which in the fiction's reality mirror-year 1904 was James Joyce's age). To top the making of the work, Joyce was determined to see *Ulysses* published on 2.2.22 (his fortieth birthday). In terms of the novel's overall web of significances, we may thus safely posit that it would have appeared to him a meaningful starting-point to bracket eleven episodes as one unit towards a comprehensive proportioning of the novel's text extensions according to the golden mean ratio. He was given firm ground to work from with the page count for the novel's first eleven chapters. The signposts in the body of the seven episodes to come, Cyclops to Penelope, are sufficiently discernible to authenticate the assumption that, between 27 October 1921 and the end of January 1922, Joyce actively reached out for page '730' to end the novel. His stretching the goal out finally to '732' is, as we shall see, the result of an increase of complexity through overlapping calculations.

It is possible to establish a timeline for the book's production from the end of Sirens onwards. The final page proofs for Sirens are dateable to 25-26 October. At this point, as mentioned, the page end '279' stood fixed. Cyclops, which followed, had two rounds of page proofs still to go: typesetting work and proof corrections on the chapter were completed on around 15 November. The succeeding episodes, Nausikaa and Oxen of the Sun, were in the works in parallel from the last week of October. The last proof date for Nausikaa is 23 November. The chapter ends, in proof as in book, on page '365', which marks, as already mentioned (albeit only virtually so far), the mid-point of *Ulysses*. The textual

moment suggests that the mid-pointing is indeed intended.³ The novel's midpoint by content confirms the post-Sirens calculation by proportion. Doubling the page count from page 365, the end of Nausikaa, reaches out again to the novel's estimated end page 730. This confirms the numeric disposition we are assuming for the aesthetic contouring of the book's text body according to the ratio of the golden mean.

For the novel's second half by material content, a keen eye must have been kept on the progression of typesetting and accommodation of changes and accretions of text from the multiple revisions in page. Since work on the book-in-the-making often progressed on several of the remaining episodes concurrently, page numbering as it clocked up must have been important for orientation. Before work on Oxen of the Sun came to an end, the episode Penelope – the novel's final episode! – went into first placard proof as early as 17-18 October. The placard text was four times proof-revised, but understandably put on hold (on 24-26 November) until print production, and so pagination, of the intervening episodes could catch up with this final chapter. Typesetting in placards on Circe began on 20 October and was kept in placards until the first week of December, understandably again until setting and proofing Oxen of the Sun ended to give the correct pagination to begin Circe.

A sequence of paginated gatherings for Circe was sent to Joyce on 8 December for proof correction. Gathering 29, page 453 shows the beginning of the 'Messianic scene' in place. Through several subsequent further accretions, it eventually extended over eighteen pages to the first-edition page 470. What we cannot retrace from the surviving proofs in detail is how it was directed from the placard typesetting of 20 October to what, seven weeks later in the book, was to be its opening on page 453. Its insertion on this page does not fit with precision into a golden mean proportioning of 279 pages (the final page number of Sirens) + 451 pages (pre-calculated from the end of Sirens) = 730 pages. Page 453, on which the 'Messianic Scene' is inserted, is, however, precisely 279 pages distant from page number '732' on which the *Ulysses* first-edition text in fact ends. That is: if from the end of Sirens (page 279)

3 And numerologically so. John Kidd helped me at this stile. At a time before taking issue with *Ulysses. A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, he suggestively explored aspects of Joyce's awareness of and play with numbers in *Ulysses*. He drew specific, though isolated attention to the calculated mid-novel day-to-night transition.

the final page number '730' was to be attained by the golden mean ratio through another 451 pages to reach the novel's last page as prospectively pre-calculated, then mirroring the ratio from the novel's end page as eventually attained brings us (after subtraction of 279 from 732 pages) back, now, to real page 453.

The manifest back-calculating of the insertion of the 'Messianic Scene' into Circe by 279 pages from end page number '732' to page number '453' focuses essentially, if not with minute precision, that Joyce concurrently with the golden mean proportioning also mid-centred the text body of the first-edition *Ulysses*.⁴ The 'Prrrpfrrppffff. Done.' end of Sirens on page 279 (*U* 11, 1293-1294), and the splicing-in at page 453 of '(Prolonged applause. [etc.])' (*U* 15, 1398) to open the 'Messianic Scene' apotheosis of Leopold Bloom, form a frame to the novel's midpoint that is equidistant from the novel-text's beginning and end. This in turn confirms that halving *Ulysses* at the transition from Nausikaa to Oxen of the Sun is a conscious and significant decision. The text body of *Ulysses* in the Darantiere first-edition book is both proportioned according to the golden mean ratio and mid-centred. At the same time: what has shifted since the original pre-calculation to an end-page-number 730 is that, as seen from the insertion of the 'Messianic Scene' at page 453 in Circe, the day-to-night centre pivot of the text body has shifted from page 365 (end of Nausikaa) to page 366 (opening of Oxen of the Sun). This is linked to an awareness that the mid-novel page numbers indicate days in the calendar year. A regular year has 365 days. Yet every fourth year is a leap-year with 366 days. The real calendar year 1904 in which *Ulysses* the fiction is anchored was such a leap year.⁵

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4 In its mid-point-pivoted chiastic design, *Ulysses* directly succeeds *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. See my argument, first laid out close to half a century ago, and since re-published in 'The Genesis of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*', in *Critical Essays on James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. by Philip Brady and James F. Carens (New York: G. K. Hall, 1998), pp. 83-112; and in the present volume.

5 The second chapter in Susan Brown's brilliant and many-faceted dissertation (see above, footnote 1) analyses at length the 'crisis' the composition of Circe underwent. One in a range of outcomes from it was the slight warping of the book's page number calculation.

By 8 December, placard typesetting began, too, on Eumaeus and Ithaka. Through December and until 5 January, these episodes saw two placard proofreadings each. Casting-off into page for Circe had begun in December and been carried forward sufficiently in the first third of January for Eumaeus, in consequence, to go into a third round of proofing and correction, now in pagination for book printing, between 6 and 11 January. With Circe fully in page, the finishing of Eumaeus and Ithaka in page followed between 16 and 20 January. This was also when Darantiere once more picked up the placards of Penelope, left hanging since late November, and now paginated them in follow-up to Ithaka, to send them to Joyce (and Sylvia Beach) for final proofing.

The final-proof pagination for Ithaka ends in gathering 43 on a page '682'. Final proof for Penelope begins in the last stretch of that gathering through its pages 683 to 688, then runs on through gathering 44, pages 689 to 704. These final-proof pages 689 to 704 have a *bon à tirer* approval from Joyce and Sylvia Beach without a Penelope-specific date. The end-of-Ithaka and beginning-of-Penelope proofs came as a bulk consignment that was given the authorial *bon-à-tirer* on 25 January and was received in Dijon on 27 January. The remainder of Penelope, gathering 45 and two-and-a-half pages of gathering 46, bear James Joyce's/Sylvia Beach's *bon-à-tirer* with the date of 31 January 1922. This means, be it noted, that Joyce and Beach sent to Dijon the final corrected proofs of the final stretch of the final episode, and thus of the end of the book, just three days before the date Darantiere had committed himself to deliver the finished book to the author on his fortieth birthday—and did.⁶

The novel's end page in this final proof stage in gathering 45 carries the page number 723. Among the Darantiere page pulls preserved by Sylvia Beach there exists, beyond the corrected proofs ending the novel on page 723, yet a four-page final-final proof run, paginated 729 to 732. As against the final proofs' end page number, these four pages

6 James Joyce himself likely felt his fortieth birthday a mid-life marker. From Christian education, Psalm 90:10 resonates: 'The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow.' [Or, in Martin Luther's life-asserting translation into German: 'Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahre, und wenn's hoch kommt, so sind's achtzig Jahre; und wenn's köstlich gewesen ist, so ist's Mühe und Arbeit gewesen'—as, author of this essay, I recall at the age of eighty-five.] The psalm's leeway of a decade allows Leopold Bloom too a mid-life age at thirty-eight—that his author had out-lived by two years when *Bloomys* came out.

thus ultimately reach the end page number of the first edition of *Ulysses* as published. In other words: the regular final proofs for Penelope, and equally of course for Ithaka, had, upon being submitted, been fully corrected at Darantieri's. All Joyce's additions had been worked in, the page contents shifted forward accordingly and the pagination adjusted to its final sequence. The ultimate page numbering shows in the printed edition only. Ithaka ends in the final proof on page 682. In the first-edition book text, it ends seven pages further on, on page 689. Consequently, Penelope in the final proof begins on page 683 and ends on 723, halfway down the page. In the first-edition book text, it begins on page 690 and ends nine pages on, half-way down page 732.⁷

Our retrospective analysis shows that with the final-proof lengthening of Ithaka by seven pages, the pagination goal as pre-calculated after Sirens would have been perfectly hit. Unaltered, Penelope in its end-of-November typeset shape would have precisely attained the end of the first-edition book text on page 730. Yet, over and above the extensions already worked into the final Ithaka proofs, Joyce, at the very last moment of opportunity—and against Darantieri's urge to stop revising—wrote in yet a page-and-a-half's worth of additions into the final proofs of Penelope that he returned on 31 January. These additions successfully extended the length of the novel's text body to page 732: the final page number aimed for, traceably, since the insertion of the 'Messianic Scene' into Circe on book page 453. Conceivably, the unique survival among Sylvia Beach's papers of actual print pages for the book, a pull of the ultimate pages 729-732, neatly the second half of the book's last gathering, indicates that these pages were expressly requested from Paris when Joyce and Beach returned the addition-augmented final proofs. It suggests the purpose of the assumed request: Joyce wished to be absolutely sure that his last additions had brought the text forward

7 Bibliographically speaking, the last gathering in the set of the last Ithaka/Penelope page proofs from the printing house ends on its eighth and last leaf, paginated 723 (recto)/724 (verso). The Penelope episode, and *Ulysses*, thus ended at that point on a page 723; page 724 remained blank. Darantieri submitted these last page proofs to Joyce on 31 January 1922. By return, Joyce sent Darantieri revisions sufficient to expand the text to the goal of page 732 in the printed book. This required a fresh half-gathering of eight pages. The final pages in the first edition thus accommodate book pages 725-726-727-728[sown in the gutter]729-730-731-732. The surviving pages as preserved by (presumably) Sylvia Beach are hence the second half of the ultimate half-gathering as typeset at the book's end.

to end on page 732. They had. James Joyce saw his aim fulfilled of shaping the text extension of the book *Ulysses* in proportioned iconicity of aesthetic harmony and form.

* * *

‘We are still learning to be James Joyce’s contemporaries...’ This stunning opening to Richard Ellmann’s James Joyce biography of 1959/1982 has not lost its stringency. We have, over generations since the publication of *Ulysses* in its first-edition book, immersed ourselves in the text given us to share and endeavoured to learn how Joyce’s mind and thought and reading, his emotion and writing was all in advance of his own times, to be attained and understood by us in ours. Over these one hundred years, there can be little doubt about it, we have made headway in, as Ellmann closes that opening, ‘understand[ing] our interpreter’. In this, Ellmann’s perspective points forward to our engagement with Joyce’s creative achievement. Just how creative that achievement is in itself, as it richly feeds on Joyce’s innate awareness and sense of his cultural and intellectual background in his time and his past (and ours), is still in need of exploration. The reception history in Joyce studies of his creative deployment of the golden mean ratio is a case in point. The present essay does not perform that exploration. It merely scratches a surface from which Joyce studies may feel encouraged to dig more and deeper, to better encompass contemporaneity with Joyce’s sense, feeling and understanding of his, yet thereby ultimately also our, cultural past. Joyce, in his deep immersion in shaping language into text for a novel, lived, thought and worked concurrently on a significantly distinct level of composition by semantics and meaning of the structure of text matter, of numbers in their dimensions of meaning (that is, by their semantic potential known and practiced and honoured of old), and of the Pythagorean ratios, through millennia understood to order the world and creation, though meanwhile merely modulated into a favoured device of aesthetic proportioning.

An aura of James Joyce’s presence in his time, present undiminished in ours, is integral to the powers from which his creativity sprang. It relies on patterns of living and thinking and feeling, on systems of thought and understanding of the past and their forms and modes of signification and expression in culture and epistemology since antiquity.

Pythagoras' monochord permitted proportioning its one string into lengths sounding tones and scales. Music thus became calculable in terms of mathematics. Proportional measuring was diversely, two- or three-dimensionally, applied for signification to surfaces or bodies. Among surface measurements, the *sectio aurea* or *sectio divina* (the golden mean) was especially revered over the millennia. From the Pythagorean monochord concept ultimately—in the full sense of the word: encompassingly—evolved the model of the nine spheres: concentric to the earth, they sound the world order of divine creation in music. Joyce ensured in the first edition of *Ulysses* that the text which the volume materialised formed in itself a body as singular and unique as was the crafted book that contained it. The 1922 *Ulysses* became, throughout its materiality, a twice-ordered and proportioned creation, in and through itself to embody the cultural icon which we since recognise *Ulysses* 1922 to be. Which is only a beginning, we may take James Joyce's word for it: 'I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries [...] that's the only way of insuring one's immortality.'⁸

8 Quoted by Richard Ellmann in *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 521.