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Desacralizing Death: James Joyce's Vision of Dublin's Communal Stage

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Resumen

James Joyce recicla el mito y la religión, y al hacerlo, desmitifica al primero y desacraliza al segundo. La muerte es sacada del entorno religioso y privada de toda significación sublime para quedar relegada al aquí y ahora. Este artículo se ocupa del tratamiento que de la muerte hace Joyce en *Ulysses* y en *Dubliners* e incursiona en la relación paradójica que el autor irlandés mantuvo con el catolicismo, cuya resistencia reafirma la relación conflictiva con su religión materna.

Palabras clave: James Joyce, catolicismo, la muerte, transformación.

Abstract

James Joyce recycles myth and religion, demystifying one and desacralizing the other. In so doing, he brings the Catholic investments in salvation and the afterlife to the level of everyday life. Death is stripped of its religious associations, deprived of any higher signification that would attach it to eternity and salvation. Instead, death is suspended in the here and now. This article examines Joyce's treatment of death in *Ulysses* and *Dubliners* which unveils his paradoxical relationship to Catholicism and shows how his resistance to Catholicism reaffirms his conflicting relation to it.

Key words: James Joyce, Catholicism, death, transformation

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Art has to reveal to us ideas, formless spiritual essences. The supreme question about a work of art is out of how deep a life does it spring. The painting of Gustave Moreau is the painting of ideas. The deepest poetry of Shelly, the word of Hamlet brings our minds into contact with the eternal wisdom.

—Joyce, Portrait of an Artist, p.152

INTRODUCCIÓN

James Joyce brings early nineteenth century Dublin to life. The city, a promised land[1] and a "valley of tears",[2] hosts both love and sin, life and death. In *Dubliners* (1914), the construction of the town begins with snap-shots and individual somber stories; in *Ulysses* (1922), by contrast, the city becomes an integrated picture—not one of the enclosures of the home, school, or funeral room at the house of mourning, but of the city as the stage whereon the human tragi-comedy takes place. The lives of the characters are no longer confined but displayed upon the communal stage. While in *Dubliners* private matters are kept private, such as Eveline's intention to escape with the sailor, in *Ulysses* they become public (as in the case of Molly's affair), spread by rumors and gossip. *Ulysses* is stocked with inhabitants who act not in isolation but as individuals integrated in a social mesh, one often riven by conflict. Thus is it with Leopold Bloom, one of the main characters, who in the pub feels the acerbic attitude of "the citizen", in part due to his Jewish background. Nevertheless, Bloom asserts himself and defends his ancestry: "I was born here. Ireland. ...And I belong to a race too, that was hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant" (pp. 331-332).

Through Bloom's reflections, Joyce acknowledges an Ireland that is religiously and ethnically diverse. He accomplishes this in part by representing Catholic rituals and other signifiers in ways that, once desacralized, show both his own ambivalence toward them as well as their relevance to everyday *Dubliners*. Joyce turns the urban space into the earthly scenario, the Promised Land and valley of death where the communion of sinners takes place. Here, the word "communion" is understood in both a secular and religious sense. Holy Communion, known as the sacrament of the Eucharist, commemorates Jesus's Last Supper, an eschatological banquet recorded in the New Testament Gospels which symbolizes the communion of humanity with Christ. The Last Supper, a preemptive action followed by his death, set forth an act of remembrance when he told his disciples: "Do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19).[3] Throughout *Ulysses*, Joyce flippantly exhibits Catholic rituals including the Eucharist, the Mass, and the Way of the Cross. In his reflections on the novel, Dennis Michael Shanahan shows a close parallel between The Passion of the Cross and the individual crosses carried by Joyce's characters:

> The images of this religious myth are not for Joyce the details of ultimate truth but metaphors for human realities... Without the Christian otherworldliness, in the course of the day, in *Ulysses*, Stephen seeks to free himself of spiritual encumbrances to his personal and artistic growth, Bloom achieves moral victory over his own weaknesses and over the sins of a life-denying society, and father and son are figuratively reconciled. (1-2)

Furthermore, *Ulysses* brings Catholic investments in salvation and the afterlife to the level of everyday life. Death is stripped of its religious constraints, deprived of any higher signification that would attach it to eternity and salvation. Instead, death is suspended in the here and now. This essay will focus on the use of the death motif in Joyce's *Ulysses* and in *Dubliners* as well as the emphasis on the present time, the terrestrial time of every human. The purpose is to examine Joyce's treatment of death, which unveils his paradoxical relationship to Catholicism. In his constant effort to pull away from a religion he abandoned, Joyce is continually drawn into it—not by appeal to an otherworldly existence, but through the mediation of present experience.

SACRAMENTAL STAGE: ABSOLUTION AND SALVATION

Death and resurrection, falling and rising, have a central place within Catholicism, and are also part of Joyce's scaffolding literary mechanism. For Christians, due to Adam and Eve's fall, humanity is born at odds with God. Jesus's death and resurrection re-established the balance. However, humans are, in a way, still defective, often committing sinful acts and falling into a spiritual death that separates them from God. In Catholicism, the sacrament of Reconciliation, also known as Confession, delivers humans from the death of sin and reconciles them with God. Within the fictional world of Joyce, the religious aspects are distorted when "Catholicism [is presented] as halfway between truth and parody" (Beryl Schlossman, p. xiv). For example, in his ruminations on Catholic Confession, Bloom understands that "everyone wants [it]". Moreover, he believes that the sacrament of Confession is "[a] great weapon [of the Church]. More than doctor or solicitor" (*Ulysses*, p. 83). Confession unburdens the spirit. In *Ulysses*, the tribulations and internal life of the triad involving the main characters, Leopold Bloom, his wife Molly, and Stephen Dedalus, is openly revealed to the readers. The readers, having access to their thoughts and deep yearnings, are put in the role of a confessor. Joyce guides his readers to adopt the non-judgmental position of the confessor, whose function is not to judge but to listen and to absolve; for after learning of the weaknesses of his defective characters, readers come to sympathize with them. The author shows love and kindness to his characters; he understands that their perpetual falling and rising is common to all humanity.

While Joyce was often critical of Catholicism, not only seeking to disentangle himself from his religious background but even adopting an often blasphemous and sacrilegious tone particularly in both *Ulysses* and later in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), he remains attached to the sacred. He criticizes the Church, mocks its rules, and debunks its dogmatic precepts, but what remains is the essence of Jesus's universal teachings. During the first century, explains Luke T. Johnson, Christianity was not concerned with theological or doctrinarian aspects but with social harmony. When Jesus, rejecting Judaism's purist laws, approached the untouchables, he encouraged

a philosophy of life that affirmed the dignity and value of every human. Through Bloom, the converted Jew, Joyce sifts Christian dogma, recalling it to everyday experience. Bloom carries a message of tolerance, love, and forgiveness: "it is no use [...] Force, hatred, history, all that. That's no life for men and women, insult and hatred" (*Ulysses*, p. 333). He has learned to forgive others and in so doing is forgiving himself.[4] For salvation, Catholic dogma requires Confession, or if this is impossible, Extreme Unction as the final act of contrition.[5]

As noted previously, Joyce plays with Catholic theology. In *Ulysses*, while Mr. Power and the others are concerned about the suddenness of Mr. Dignam's death, because they worry about his salvation and the possibility of his not having had time to repent, Bloom is happy because his friend did not suffer: "He had a sudden death, poor fellow" said Mr. Power to which Bloom replies "The best death [...] A moment and all is over. Like dying in sleep" (p. 94). Bloom does not wait until death to make peace with life. Also, in his relation with others, Bloom carries forward some of the ideals that are at the heart of Catholic teachings: he is thoughtful, forgiving, and generous. After the funeral, on his way to lunch, Bloom sympathizes with a malnourished child, "Good Lord, that poor child's dress is in flitters. Underfed she looks too. Potatoes and marge, marge and potatoes (p. 152). On occasion, he gives money to a needy old woman. He also shows his compassion by feeding "those poor birds" (p.153). In his kindness to the poor and the sea birds, Bloom clearly recalls not only Jesus's message to be kind to everyone, "Do to others as you would have them do to you... Be merciful" (Luke 6: 31, 36); but also the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who through his life demonstrated respect for all creatures, "a sense of brotherhood" (Fortini, p. 541). Interestingly, Fortini's extensive study particularly notes Francis's like of birds (p. 517). For Francis, doves as well as crows deserve a place in the choir of life. The same is true of Bloom, who embraces the world that surrounds him as it is. His mind is an open field, unrestricted by dogma, but with an attitude that is infused by Catholic belief.[6] Stephen, on the other hand, is tortured by his guilty conscience. His mind is saturated with dogmatic precepts. In "Oxen of the Sun", he questions the goodness of a God that he calls an "omnivorous being", who devours its creatures by subjecting them to "multifarious ailments" and so much pain. Unlike Stephen's God, Joyce is a benevolent creator (p. 420). He is a critical skeptic, not a cynic.

It is well known that *Ulysses* is not only supported by the frame of Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*, but also by Catholic motifs and liturgical elements. Some of its religious references are overt, others are less conspicuous. Critics such as Paul L. Briand, Frederick Lang, and Patrick McCarthy have discussed the use of the Catholic Mass in Joyce's narrative frame, and Dennis Michael Shanahan of the Stations of the Cross. While those readings are plausible, other critics, Michael O'Shea among them, accept comparisons with the Catholic liturgy but disagree that the Mass is the main supporting frame. Undoubtedly, both structural frames, the epic and the religious, are present in *Ulysses*. They offer stories of life, death, and rebirth. Odysseus disappeared, was believed to be dead, and finally returned to reclaim his place as king of Ithaca. Jesus's death is accompanied by his resurrection; his journey reaffirms his divine origin and also revitalizes man's life through his promise of salvation. The ritual of the Stations of the Cross commemorates the human suffering endured by Jesus during the last hours of his life until his death and the placement of his body in the tomb. The focus of the ritual is on the human suffering that Jesus underwent as man, including the moment of doubt when he asks God why he had forsaken him,

and his final acceptance commending his spirit to the Father.[7] The Via Crucis can be compared to humanity's tribulations. In *Ulysses*, the approximately eighteen hours in that unholy Thursday is a quasi-parody of the Stations of the Cross. As for the Mass, this ritual commemorates the Last Supper and reaffirms Christ's sacred journey. Moreover, during the Eucharistic sacrament the believer accepts the body of Christ. This act implies more than remembrance, since by the power of transubstantiation it affirms the belief that Christ is fully present both in spirit and flesh.[8] Various critics have pointed out Joyce's use of the Eucharistic motif in parodic or humorous ways, for example in the first story of *Dubliners* and throughout various chapters of *Ulysses*. But beyond this fact, the Eucharist is a symbol of reconciliation and sharing, of giving and accepting, and foremost of transformation. Similarly, the artist's work is a transformative event in which he reveals a truth that transcends the individual self.

In Joyce's cyclical works, the sacred is ridiculed, and the ridicule is turned into men's reality. In this way, the sacred becomes part of the mundane. Biblical words are recycled, and the Bible's literal meaning is mocked. Genesis and Revelation are not only biblical events but also everyday occurrences; they are not mystical experiences but earthly metamorphoses. Stephen and Bloom partake of their own via crucis, falling and trying to stand up at each step. Like Jesus, who suffered on the cross, Joyce's characters confront the daily challenges of their weaknesses and limitations. In his comedic novel, "Joyce rejects theology…but he accepts a humanization of Christian ethics and values" (Polhemus, p. 298). In *Adam Buenosayres* (1948), Leopoldo Marechal's renowned novel, the protagonist wonders if the drama of life should not be lived as a comedy played by children, the world being the stage of God's play. With *Ulysses*, James Joyce seems to have taken on that challenge, affirming a universal principle of humor that escapes most mortals except Bloom, whose candor and curious mind are like those of a child. For Bloom, the idea of resurrection of bodies is unthinkable:

> One fine day it gets bunged up: and there you are. Lots of them lying around here: lungs, hearts, livers. Old rusty pumps: damn the thing else. The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead. That last day idea. Knocking them all up out of their graves. Come forth Lazarus! And he came fifth and lost the job. Get up! Last day! Then every fellow mousing around for his liver and his lights and the rest of his traps… (*Ulysses*,p. 105)

Schlossman remarks that "Joyce gives voice to a religious discourse that itself impels him to speak—as a writer" (xiii-xix). Art is, after all, part of everyday life and thus of the sacred, for the artist imitates its own Creator: "Every artist is an imitator of the Divine Word which created the universe", says Marechal's hero (*Adam Buenosayres*, p. 252). Cloto, another of his characters, who unlike Adam is very religious, describes the Bible as a sort of epic text, where she would read "tales of love and hate, praiseworthy virtue and appalling vice, patriarchal joys of love and gnashing of teeth, earthquakes and floods, plagues and massacres. All this streamed before her eyes, just like the moving pictures she'd once seen" (p. 86). For Joyce, the Bible is also a fountain of artistic inspiration. In *Ulysses*, the sanctity of life and artistic creativity prevail over the sacred value of death.

DEATH AND TRANSFORMATION

Along with life and resurrection, death is a recurrent theme in Joyce's major works, as it is in Catholicism. In the first chapter of *Ulysses*, we learn about Stephen's mother and his guilty sentiment. In subsequent chapters, Bloom recalls the deaths of his father, his son, and of his friend Dignam. Also, there are references to death in the maternity scene, in "Oxen of the Sun", which expresses Joyce's critique of the Catholic Church for its advice on whom to save in case of complications in childbirth. In addition, though in a more subtle way, that scene also communicates the author's discontent with the Church's position on contraception. Lack of contraception increased the number of "cancrenous females emaciated by parturition" (p. 420). The issue is also brought up by Bloom's interior voice, much earlier, in "Lestrygonians", when he reflects: "Home always breaks up when the mother goes. Fifteen children he had. Birth every year almost. That's in their theology or the priest won't give the poor woman the confession, the absolution" (p. 151). The high pregnancy rate not only exacerbated the number of mouths to feed in a city that in 1904 was beset by poverty, but also put in danger the lives of the mother and the child when women were likely to become pregnant more frequently.

While for Catholicism death is bound to the afterlife, for Bloom, life and death belong to the physical realm of the present. For him, there is nothing beyond death, except that the decomposition of matter leads to the possibility for fertilization and thus regeneration. In a way, death has the power to revitalize life. This aspect parallels Catholicism, in that the value of Christ's death rests on the promise of new life (by redeeming the sins of the world). Death also permeates *Dubliners*, a collection of stories that begins and ends with death. The last story in *Dubliners*, "The Dead", the most complex of the collection, is open to various interpretations. The more traditional one has to do with the sense of paralysis, a trait that persists throughout the whole collection and which constitutes Joyce's rendition of Ireland in the early twentieth century. Some critics interpret the snow falling in the last scene as the epitome of immobility. But the snow, which has been falling all over Ireland, is also a great equalizer covering everything and everybody; even when at the party inside the house, social differences persist. At the end, through Michael's eyes, the reader sees the cadaverous city that is being covered by the white veil. Death becomes the great unifier: "faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead" (p. 194). From a lively party we go to nothingness. The end of the story, which is also the end of the collection, leaves Gabriel standing in front of the invisible city and the readers facing the blank page while the snow eases them out of the narrative.

Furthermore, the snow in that last scene of *Dubliners* has a function that supersedes the simplified association of cold and inactivity. It has the potential to become water, a source of life and purification. While it signals cold and death, it also signifies purity and redemption. Let's recall that "white is the liturgical color of vestments worn from Holy Sunday until the feast of Pentecost. It is the color of joyous celebrations of Christmas, Easter, and the feast of Ascension, as well as for services related to the Eucharist" (Steffler, p. 133). Without denying the possibilities of the "multifaceted" symbol, "the story is one of maturation and the snow vision is a rebirth experience" (Walzl p.17). Thus, in "The Dead", the metaphorical death of the city is a regenerative event. In addition, Michael Furey's death is in a dialectic relation to Gabriel's final reaction, and it only acquires signification in terms of Gabriel's life; otherwise, Michael's death would have no

consequences, and Gabriel's life would remain empty. By accepting the body of Michael (who died for Gretta, as Christ for the world), Gabriel enters into communion with humanity. Even when Joyce refused to be an instrument of the Catholic Church, Morse notes that "he asserted the godlike element in man: the free will, the personality, the individual self" (p. 1148). In addition, implied in the names of Michael and Gabriel there is darkness and light, death and life. Their names, Walzl notices, are also the names of the angels of the Last Judgement and of the Annunciation respectively (p. 27). The resolution remains ambivalent though. We can only suspect that Gabriel has transformed himself.

Both Gabriel ("The Dead") and Mr. Duffy ("A Painful Case") become aware that their posing and rectitude had "outcast [them] from life's feast" (*Dubliners*, p. 98). It is by discovering Mrs. Sinico's secret after her death that Mr. Duffy arrives at the realization of the meaning of life. In a sense, death's function is to remind us to live life. As in some of the stories from *Dubliners*, in *Ulysses*, death seems inconsequential and vulgar, and points to its own futility. Death however, is part of the routine of life, and it is there to remind us of our mortality. Eventually, we all will be a shade: "One by one they were all becoming shades" (p.194). Furthermore, the somber tone that characterizes *Dubliners* becomes comic in *Ulysses* and completely irreverent in *Finnegans Wake*. The narrative moves from one that is critical of the Catholic Church to one that becomes a complete parody of the religious institution. According to Robert M. Polhemus, Joyce's works fit the nineteenth-century tendencies of British comic fiction:

> To criticize and undermine the dogma and institutions of religion and to put faith in the very existence of comic perspective itself. Comedy, for Joyce, becomes a new gospel [...] To him, the sacred is ridiculous, the ridiculous is sacred, and both are inseparable [...] Joyce wants his comic art to be a new Catholicism, one that gets rid of the supernatural, hierarchical, and solemn claptrap of the Church. (p. 294)

Bloom, in all his simplicity, is the epitome of the hedonistic citizen. For him, if there is something after death, it can wait: "Plenty to see and hear and feel yet. Feel live warm beings near you. Let them sleep in their maggoty beds. They are not going to get me this innings. Warm beds: warm fullblooded life" (*Ulysses*, p. 115).

Although Joyce does not mock death per se, by depriving it of its sacred meaning, death becomes mundane: "a corpse is meat gone bad" says Bloom (*Ulysses*, p. 114). Stephen quotes Mulligan saying "O, it's only Dedalus whose mother is beastly dead" (p. 8). For Mulligan there is no event in death:

> And what is death, he asked, your mother's or yours or my own? You saw only your mother die, I see them pop off every day in the Mater and Richmond and cut up into tripes in the dissecting room. It's a beastly thing and nothing else. It simply doesn't matter. (p. 8)

What is holy is not death but life; Bloom reflects: "once you are dead you are dead" (p. 87). What matters is being nice to others, loving one another—which is after all, Jesus's message. In "Cyclops", at the tavern, Bloom speaks of the hatred, persecution, and injustice that have characterized the history of the world. What is needed is "love [Not ...] force, hatred, history, all that [...] And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life" (p. 333). Bloom, like Jesus, practices non-violence and encourages love: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Although Bloom recognizes the hell that men create for other men by their intolerance and hate, he is not the voice of the existentialist pronouncement that "L'enfer c'est les autres".[9]

Meanwhile, Joyce's language of death and descent into the underworld carries biblical resonances but also suggests patterns of reincarnation. The association of bodies, decay, and the earth is common within the Christian tradition. Psalm 44:25 says: "We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground." In "Hades", Bloom interprets the decomposition of the bodies in the cemetery as potential fertilizer: dead matter changing into living humus develops into a kind of reincarnation. He says:

> It's the blood sinking in the earth gives new life. . . .I daresay the soil would be quite fat with corpsemanure, bones, flesh, nails [...] Rot quick in damp earth [...] Then begin to get black, black treacle oozing out of them. Then dried up. Deathmoths. Of course the cells or whatever they are go on living. Changing about. Live for ever practically. (*Ulysses*, pp. 108-109) .

On the one hand, Bloom seems obsessed with death, particularly its materiality, which leads to the disintegration of the flesh. After death, nothing remains as it was, not even a memory of the deceased. For when the matter disappears, nothing remains to remind the living of the dead unless by the rich power of rituals. On the other hand, the final words of this passage would seem to affirm the possibility of eternal life; death somehow opens up the possibility of "practically" living forever. Thus, Bloom does not assert Christian teachings without transforming and reimagining them.

FINAL THOUGHT

One could argue that Joyce's hyper-religious background led him to repurpose the Eucharistic motif, as it relates to death and remembrance, or its absence. Like Mr. Duffy ("A Painful Case"), Bloom remarks that the dead are forgotten: "People talk about you a bit: forget you [...] Then they follow: dropping into a hole, one after the other [...] The clay fell softer. Begin to be forgotten. Out of sight, out of mind" (*Ulysses*, p. 111). In "The Dead", Gabriel acknowledges that it is better to live "boldly", while Mr. Duffy concludes that eventually his life "became memory—if anyone remember him" (*Dubliners*, p. 98). The anxiety that they exude may be indicative of Joyce's own anxiety about the life of his work. However, Bloom, for whom everything resumes in a digestive process, recognizes that something persists: "the cells or whatever". For him, death is a biological occurrence that results in substantial transformation; the cadavers are as much food to the earth as a meal is to the esophagus. Therefore, everything succumbs to death but is reborn

as a new entity, transformed and recycled. In this sense, death breathes life, and takes us back to the Christian belief in death as purgation and restoration to eternal life.

The author recycles myth and religion, demystifying one and stripping off the sacred from the other, bringing both down to the level of everyday life, the level of humanity. He "seeks to represent the blending of the particular and the universal, [...] between any individual and the rest of humanity, history, and nature... to mediate and reconcile personal fate and the universal order" (Polhemus, pp. 295-298). In "The Dead, "and in "A Painful Case", Joyce criticizes utilitarian, structured, and normative behaviors that prevent people from fully living, but, like them, the author is constrained by artistic parameters, which he overcomes in his last two novels where language is set free from previous literary forms. With *Ulysses* and later with Finnegans Wake, Joyce decides to live and die as a bold writer: genre is violated in the name of creativity; matter and form are transformed, recycled, and consubstantiated, becoming one. Moreover, in *Ulysses*, the writer's anxieties are exorcised; canalized, on one hand, through the intellectual voice of Stephen, who has internalized many of the feelings of oppression so prominent in *Dubliners*, which is preoccupied with theology and artistic elucubrations; and, on the other hand, through Bloom, a free thinker concerned mostly with practical matters and for whom immortality resides on "the cells [...] Changing about. Live forever practically" (*Ulysses*, p. 89). Bloom is a sort of liberating uninhibited voice.

Through the creative process, the artist's singular experience is transformed to manifest a consciousness that is beyond his or her own. Joyce, as expressed by Stephen in *A Portrait of an Artist*, set to "[go] to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscious of [his] race" (pp. 252-253). In so doing, the individual voice of the creator dies, giving life to something new that transcends the individual self. For the work of art is never an individual voice but the voice of the community, and in a way, the artist unburdens the repressed desires and unspoken transgressions of the collective consciousness. His treatment of death, played out on the communal stage, attests both to Joyce's resistance to Catholicism and his conflicting relation to it.

Notes

1 With the increased urbanization brought by the industrial revolution the cities would become a promised land. Dublin, an important commercial center, being the capital and the second largest city of Ireland, was a promising city. However, 1904's Dublin, although it had grown, remained a provincial city with a high poverty rate. Joyce's discontent and frustration is manifested in the portrayal of its somber citizens in *Dubliners;* while in *Ulysses,* the ocean seems to become very prominent as if to offer a means of escape from the city, and from Ireland itself.

2 Among Catholics, it is common to use this expression when referring to unfortunate situations. The expression appears on *Salve Regina,* one of the four Marian antiphons.

3 Jesus took the bread, he said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." Luke 22:19. All Gospel quotes are extracted from the *New American Bible.*

4 "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you" (Matt. 6:14).

5 "[...] if you do not repent, you will all perish" (Luke 13:5).

6 For Robert M. Polhemus (1980), Joyce's heroes:

> Bloom and Shem come from the same kind of thinking that holds that the first shall be the last, the last shall be the first, the meek shall inherit the earth, and the truth shall make you free. The broadening of human sympathy that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans wake* enact relates directly to Christian belief that deems every soul important. (p. 298)

7 Jesus's last sayings can be summarized in the following seven words: forgiveness, hope in salvation, the relationship between mother and son, despair, distress, acceptance and divine deliverance. He says: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" Luke 23:34; "Amen, I say to you, you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43; "[...] behold your son... behold your mother." Jn. 19:26—27; My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34; "I thirst. " Jn. 19:28; "It is finished" Jn. 19:30; "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" Luke 23:46.

8 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body" Matt. 26:26.

9 In English translated literally as "hell is other people", one of Jean-Paul Sartre's famous lines from his 1944 play *Huis Clos (No Exit).*

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