

“Virtual Joyce: The Geography of Ulysses”

Proposing a web-based literary cartography of the Epic of Modernism

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Background: Over the past five years, I have constructed an elaborate web portal for Irish Literary and Cultural Studies. This portal, part of which has been generously supported by an ACS-Mellon Technology Fellowship in the spring of 2002, consists of numerous interactive web-based educational and scholarly “learning objects” for the study of Irish culture. At its heart is the **searchable database**, consisting of nearly 4,000 original images of Ireland, searchable by category and by keyword. These images range from the prehistoric burial tombs of the pre-Celtic peoples to the murals and graffiti art of present-day Belfast. I have crafted from these images a number of interactive learning modules, such as the **Irish History Web Text**, which introduces students to the history of Ireland through text, image, sound, interactive quizzes, and more. I also have constructed a section dedicated to **Irish Authors and the Irish Landscape**, in which I contextualize the writings of an Irish author with the very land out of which that author emerges, and about which he or she writes. (Please see <http://ireland.wlu.edu>) These resources have already been of use to me in my teaching of Irish literature, and also to scholars and teachers at other institutions.¹ Now, I hope to expand upon these resources, by creating a web-based interactive mapping of James Joyce’s landmark novel, Ulysses.

Description: The use that Joyce makes of the cityscape of Dublin in his modernist epic, Ulysses, is without parallel in world literature. Joyce boasted that 100 years after his novel appeared, historians would be able to recreate the city of Dublin from his book alone, so accurate is his rendering of its houses, churches, pubs, shops—what he famously termed the “street furniture” of its world. Today, 82 years after Ulysses appeared (and 100 years after it is set), much of Joyce’s world is lost, but much still remains. Joyce was meticulous in getting right every detail of 1904 Dublin: how long it would take a character to walk from Trinity College to the Ormond Hotel; how the interior of the Holles Maternity Hospital could accommodate both drunken medical students and women in labor; and where Georgian Dublin (the heart of British imperial control of the city) existed in relation to the slums and tenements of the north side (where Joyce himself lived). Today we can reconstruct the essential movements of Joyce’s characters throughout Dublin, still marking the buildings and monuments that remain, crossing the same streets and walkways, and realizing the cultural, political, and artistic significance of geography, architecture, and landscape in this intricately crafted novel.

I propose to photograph in a detailed and copious manner the full range of sites employed in Ulysses, using digital camera technology, as well as quicktime VR technology for panoramic and viewer-interactive shots. I will then employ GPS technology to note the actual physical location of these sites and of characters’ progression from one site to another in the course of the book. I will then prepare an **annotated visual web guide to Ulysses**, with images corresponding to the important events in each of the book’s 18 chapters, and clear annotations explaining the significance of the site in relation to the actions, themes, and structures of the novel. The images will be linked to a detailed series of maps that lay out the overarching topography of the novel, as well as many of the embedded journeys that characters undergo throughout the book. The result

¹ I presented the site at the American Conference of Irish Studies last October at the University of Maryland, College Park. This conference, titled “Virtual Ireland,” focused on the uses of digital technology to enhance the teaching of Irish literature. The site was greeted with great enthusiasm by other teacher-scholars, many of whom are incorporating the material into their classrooms.

will be a unique resource to aid in the teaching and reading of this book, in which readers of all levels will be able to see and interact with the actual geography of Joyce's epic, and get a sense of how the characters move through and respond to his densely realized world.

Timeline and Technology: I have led a study abroad program to Dublin twice, in 2000 and 2002, and will do so again in the spring of 2005. On my program to Ireland this coming spring, I will gather all the remaining media that I need for this project. I have already shot 519 images of Joyce's Dublin in prior trips to Ireland, and will seek in 2005 to capture all remaining shots that I still need to complete the cartography. (I use a Nikon Coolpix 5000 digital camera, purchased through an internal grant in 2001.) I will also produce several VR files, offering 180- and 360-degree vistas of important landscapes that will be interactive and manipulable by the viewer. Upon my return, I will combine GPS technology and both digital and manual map-making to generate a number of web-maps that will be directly linked to the images. Working with our geology faculty and computing staff, I am preparing a series of map interfaces that will allow for links between geographic points and digital images. (For a working model, please see: <http://ireland.wlu.edu/map/map9.htm>.) I have developed a process for cataloging the images as I take them, which allows me to enter the images into the database easily and efficiently. Washington & Lee already has the GPS recording device (Garmin eTrex GPS receiver) available for my use. My knowledge of *Ulysses* and its textual geography is quite detailed, having taught the book many times, presented conference papers on it (most recently at the International James Joyce Symposium in Dublin this past June), and researched these aspects of it thoroughly. Consequently I hope to have all of these images annotated and linked to the maps soon after my return from Dublin in June of 2005. All necessary technology and capability are in place. The preliminary planning and map-drafting phase will be in the early spring, from March 1 through April 14; the data gathering period will run from April 15 through June 1; the composition of the final series of maps and digital images will run from June 1 through June 30, 2005.

Learning Outcomes and Curriculum: This web-based resource will be of tremendous use to any teacher of *Ulysses*. The heart of Joyce's epic is the city of Dublin, and my project will enable the reader to see in great detail as much of that city as remains today. The architecture, the avenues, the spatial relations, the landmarks, and the entire cityscape of the novel will be available for exploration, keyed to the specific passages and moments in the novel when they are most alive in Joyce's language. The site will be vivid, interactive, and easy to manipulate and navigate, and will offer a unique perspective into the world of *Ulysses*. I will employ this material in my annual teaching of *Ulysses* in my Modern Irish Literature course, as a resource students will use while they work through the text and see the relation of the word to the world. To date there are a number of print works that try to give a sense of the actual topography of *Ulysses* and Joyce's other writings; and most guides to *Ulysses* contain maps of some sort to give readers a rough sense of the general geography of the book.² But nothing would match the detail and breadth I propose, nor the extent of accurate mapping, nor is there anything to render the interactive elements that web technology makes possible. In addition, my other courses on Irish modernism, such as my seminar on Yeats and the Irish Renaissance, and my Semester Abroad in Ireland program, will draw upon this resource as an immersion in the cityscape of early 20th-century Dublin. (Another advantage of this resource will be its adaptability: because it can be broken up into separate modules, the pieces can be used to explore other Irish authors and other

² See, for example, Pearl, *Dublin in Bloomtime* (Viking, 1969); Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* (Columbia UP, 1956, 1987); Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses* (U of California P, 1988); McCabe, *James Joyce: Reflections of Ireland* (Little, Brown, and Co., 1993); Igoe, *James Joyce's Dublin Houses* (Dublin, 1997), and McCarthy, *Joyce's Dublin: A Walking Guide to Ulysses* (St. Martin's, 1986).

facets of Dublin.) But far more than its multiple applications for my own classes, this resource will be available to every teacher of Joyce in the world. Any course on Ulysses can utilize this resource, and (as with my Introduction to Irish History Web Text: please see <http://ireland.wlu.edu/history>) will be able to direct its students to it to enrich their experience of this most challenging of novels. Over time, I hope to add additional images from the collections of other Joyce scholars, particularly images taken from earlier in the 20th century, to give a sense of how Joyce's Dublin has evolved in the century since he lived in the city. (I am in contact with Professor Jolanta Wawrzycka of Radford, who has an Ireland section on her "European Literary Trails" web site, which is just one of many possible crossings between my project and other ACS institutions.) The potential for collaborative teaching through and with this project is vast.

Assessment and Dissemination: I have set up an assessment system for my uses of web technology resources in my Irish literature courses, which I will enhance for this project. I use web-based course evaluations that gather both objective and subjective responses to the uses of web technology in the course pedagogy. This allows me to measure and compare the uses of web technology in the course, and also to gather the students' individual responses to the course. My assessment of this particular project within my own courses will continue in this way. Even more important, however, is the effort I will make to encourage Joyce scholars to examine and respond to my Ulysses cartography, combining my dissemination of the resource with its assessment. Towards that end, I plan the following actions:

- Announce the resource by publishing a description in the James Joyce Literary Supplement, the major organ for developments in Joyce scholarship
- Solicit evaluative responses from leading Joyce scholars, with whom I am already in contact, such as Sebastian Knowles at Ohio State and Terence Brown at Trinity College, Dublin.
- Submit the resource to the MERLOT web-based teaching resource repository, which will allow peer evaluation of the resource, as well as publicize its availability.
- Publish a description in the newsletter for the American Conference of Irish Studies.
- Present the web resource at the next International James Joyce Symposium, in 2006.
- To the ACS institutions, develop an e-letter informing the chairs of each English department about the new resource, and asking them to share it with those faculty who teach in these areas.
- Develop a web-based evaluation form, in which scholars and veteran teachers of Ulysses can evaluate the resource. This form will be accessible from the web site, so that over a period of 6-12 months I hope to have dozens of informed evaluations of the material (which will also increase the awareness in the Joyce community of this resource).

Other support: My travel to and within Ireland is largely covered by Washington & Lee as part of my semester abroad program, though there will be significant additional expenses incurred as part of the data-gathering work. I hope also to receive some funding from our summer Glenn Grant program to help with the production of the resources, though again I will need additional funding to cover the costs of the map-production, in particular.

Conclusion: Though I have already done extensive work with digital technology in the teaching and study of Irish culture, this project would stand as the signal achievement in this field for me. It would be a substantial contribution to the teaching of perhaps the greatest novel ever written, and would represent a model for the possibilities of combining web-based resources with literary study. With an ACS Teaching with Technology Fellowship, I would be able to complete this project and bring it into the academic world. I hope the ACS can support this endeavor. Thank you.