Preface

All of Joyce's books, like Thomas Mann's, fit into the broadening dialectical pattern of Künstler *versus* Bürger. Harry Levin

This book began as a series of intercollegiate lectures given at Birkbeck College, University of London, in 1963, and, although little of the original material remains unchanged, some of the book's general characteristics derive from its origin. The lecture audience consisted for the most part of interested readers rather than specialists; the book is primarily addressed to a similar audience, and, although I hope it has new emphases, views and interpretations of interest to the specialist, I have not left out materials or steps in the argument merely because he would already know them. The existence of the dialectical pattern referred to by Professor Levin is beyond dispute; but it seemed to me that its complexities and ramifications, shaping not only Joyce's themes but every aspect of his work, had not been fully explored, and that such an exploration would throw light on much that was supposedly obscure or the product of irresponsible virtuosity. I have, therefore, stressed the developing continuity of Joyce's methods as well as of his vision, and have considered most thoroughly those parts of his writings (such as the later chapters of *Ulysses*) which have caused most difficulty for new readers and most controversy among critics. The lectures were not planned to treat of *Finnegans Wake*, and to discuss that book in detail would require more space and more assurance of full understanding than I possess; yet, certainly, the best approach to it is by way of the earlier works, and I have therefore outlined, in the concluding chapter, some of the ways in which *Finnegans Wake* relates to, develops and modifies, in content and manner, the central citizen/artist polarity.

I am well aware of the need to trust the tale not the teller, but, wherever possible, I have used Joyce's own comments, theorizings and schemes as approaches to his writing and as means of ordering my discussions, because I found nothing else that showed as sure a sense of the nature and fundamental structure of the books. For all their imperfections, inaccuracies, limitations, obscurities and vaguenesses, they have provided the basic vocabulary of Joyce commentary and criticism, although, in some of their more speculative and dubious aspects, they may have encouraged the critical tendency to concentrate on surface intricacies regardless of their

function, to devise improbable ingenuities, and to provide symbolic systems supposedly necessary to decode the works and reveal their true significance and beauty. There are notable exceptions among the critics, but 'symbolic' and far-fetched criticism continues to dominate, and to flourish on Joyce's works as on the works of no other writer, familiarizing readers with kinds of evidence and argument that would not be accepted in other contexts and establishing an eccentric orthodoxy: many unlikely and wild interpretations of particular stories or passages are now treated as recognized truths, and repeated unchallenged in book after book, article after article. For all their intricacies, Joyc's writings survive and will continue to survive because they possess the traditional literary values, articulating a profound, extensive and coherent vision of life by methods adapted and developed from the traditional methods of the novelist.

When I have consciously taken a suggestion from another critic, or where a point, similar to one I have made, has been made elsewhere, I have acknowledged the debt or the coincidence of opinion in the notes. But unconscious debts are always more numerous and substantial than conscious ones. Ideas that originated in other men's minds enter one's own and are modified and given different applications, until one forgets that they did not spring up unaided. There is no way of recognizing and acknowledging this kind of influence. I can only make a general acknowledgement to those critics and scholars whose work has contributed to my understanding and enjoyment of Joyce's books – especially to Robert M. Adams, Chester G. Anderson, J. S. Atherton, Warren Beck, Frank Budgen, Anthony Burgess, Richard Ellmann, Stuart Gilbert, S. L. Goldberg, Clive Hart, David Hayman, Phillip F. Herring, Stanislaus Joyce, Richard M. Kain, Hugh Kenner, Harry Levin, A. Walton Litz, Ellsworth Mason, Michael Mason, Father W. T. Moon, Joseph Prescott, Robert Scholes, William B. Schutte, W. B. Stanford, Erwin R. Steinberg, Stanley Sultan, and, although I distrust the mode of symbolic interpretation of which they are the most distinguished exponents, to Marvin Magalaner and William York Tindall.

I have not supplied a bibliography. A list of the works most frequently referred to is given under 'Abbreviations'; a fuller list would repeat what is already available in Robert H. Deming's *A Bibliography of James Joyce* (Kansas University Press 1964) and, more selectively, in *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, Volume 4: *1900–1950*, edited by I. R. Willison (Cambridge University Press 1972). These lists go up to the end of 1961 and the end of 1969 respectively, and are supplemented by the annual bibliographies in the *James Joyce Quarterly*.