

COLM TÓIBÍN

I. The Music of the Future

When Henry James came to Dublin in March 1895, he wrote to his brother William that “the whole landlord and ‘nobility and gentry’ class” was boycotting social events in Dublin Castle. James stayed for some of the time with the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Houghton. “He means well,” he wrote, “but he doesn’t matter; and the sense of lavish extravagance of the castle, with the beggary and squalor of Ireland at the very gates, was a most depressing, haunting discomfort.” Houghton was reduced to entertaining “a very dull and second-rate, though large, house party from England.”¹

At the time of James’s visit, Ireland was undergoing a slow revolution. A series of Land Acts, beginning in 1870 and culminating in the Wyndham Land Act of 1903, the year before James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is set, meant that many tenants became landowning farmers, while many landlords were

paid compensation by the government to divide their estates among their tenants. The power of the gentry in Ireland was greatly reduced.

Half of the Irish land surface, at the time of *Ulysses*, was used for the raising of livestock. The largest weekly livestock sale in Europe took place in Dublin. Cattle were brought to market in the area around the North Circular Road, Hanlon’s Corner, Prussia Street, Aughrim Street, and Stoneybatter, where the Misses Morkan and their niece in Joyce’s story “The Dead” had lived, as the story tells us, before they moved to Usher’s Island. Well-to-do traders stayed at the City Arms Hotel in Prussia Street, where Leopold Bloom and his wife live early in their marriage. Mrs Riordan, who has strong anti-Parnellite views in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is also a guest at the hotel. In the “Ithaca” episode of *Ulysses*, when it is asked if Leopold Bloom

and Stephen Dedalus can find another connecting link between them, the reply reads:

Mrs Riordan (Dante), a widow of independent means, had resided in the house of Stephen's parents from 1 September 1888 to 29 December 1891 and had also resided during the years 1892, 1893 and 1894 in the City Arms Hotel owned by Elizabeth O'Dowd of 54 Prussia street where, during parts of the years 1893 and 1894, she had been a constant informant of Bloom who resided also in the same hotel, being at that time a clerk in the employment of Joseph Cuffe of 5 Smithfield for the superintendence of sales in the adjacent Dublin Cattle market on the North Circular road.²

In the "Hades" episode, as Bloom and Simon Dedalus and others make their way to Paddy Dignam's funeral, they are forced to stop when a "divided drove of branded cattle passed the windows, lowing, slouching by on padded hoofs, whisking their tails slowly on their clotted bony croups. . . . Emigrants, Mr Power said."³ Bloom speculates about alternative methods that the cross-city transportation of cattle could use, favoring the creation of a tramline from the cattle market to the Dublin quays paid for by the more affluent cattle farmers. Stephen Dedalus, who worries that he will be known as "the bullockbefriending bard,"⁴ also has a concern with livestock in the novel, since Mr Deasy, his employer as a teacher, has strong views on how to deal with an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. He wants Stephen to use his influence to have a letter on the question published in the press.

The image of cattle in the novel, like much else, must be treated ambiguously. As a result of the Land Acts, many of the farms on which cattle were raised

were run by Irish farmers, but the cattle, when we see them in Dublin, are on their way to the English market that controlled the prices and ran the abattoirs and processing factories. When Bloom and his companions see the cattle, the novel reads: "For Liverpool probably. Roastbeef for old England. They buy up all the juicy ones."⁵ The cattle are caught between what seems like benign reform and an age-old economic dependence that Joyce would deplore in his essay "Ireland: Isle of Saints and Sages."

If the line of cattle—the cattlecade—in the book represents an uncertain sort of stability, there is a cavalcade in the "Wandering Rocks" episode that shows, perhaps by default, by a lack of eventfulness, another form of uncertain stability. In that episode, the Lord Lieutenant and his entourage make their way by carriage from Phoenix Park to Ballsbridge, passing through the city center.

William Humble Ward, the second Earl of Dudley, was Lord Lieutenant in Dublin from 1902 to 1905. His wife appears first in the "Aeolus" episode, where it is reported that "Lady Dudley was walking home through the park to see all the trees that were blown down by that cyclone last year and thought she'd buy a view of Dublin. And it turned out to be a commemoration postcard of Joe Brady or Number One or Skin-the-Goat. Right outside the viceregal lodge, imagine!"⁶

Skin-the-Goat, a name used for the cabman James Fitzharris, who was implicated in the Phoenix Park Murders, haunts *Ulysses*. He was part of a group known as the Invincibles who in May 1882 stabbed to death the new Chief Secretary and an Under-Secretary in Phoenix Park. The assassins were betrayed by James Carey, one of their colleagues, who is mentioned first in *Ulysses* when Bloom, thinking about Catholic rituals, notes that Carey received "communion every morning."⁷

Soon, it is reported that Skin-the-Goat, who was released from prison in 1899 and toured America before returning to Ireland the following year, “has that cabman’s shelter, they say, down there at Butt bridge.”⁸ Toward the end of *Ulysses*, in the “Eumaeus” episode, Bloom and Stephen will visit the shelter: “Mr Bloom and Stephen entered the cabman’s shelter, an unpretentious wooden structure, where, prior to then, he had rarely if ever been before, the former having previously whispered to the latter a few hints anent the keeper of it said to be the once famous Skin-the-Goat, Fitzharris, the invincible, though he could not vouch for the actual facts which quite possibly there was not one vestige of truth in.”⁹

Ulysses lives in the shadow of Irish rebellions, especially the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford, Robert Emmet’s Rebellion in Dublin in 1803, the Fenian movement, and the Phoenix Park Murders by the Invincibles. The image of the hapless Lady Dudley, so concerned about trees, wanting to buy “a view of Dublin”—only to find that the postcards on sale outside her very own house commemorate the knife-wielding men who murdered two representatives of the Crown in Dublin—has a bitter humor that would be appreciated by most of the characters in *Ulysses* but would make no sense to Lady Dudley herself.

The Lord Lieutenant makes a brief appearance at the end of the “Lestrygonians” episode, when Bloom sees a placard advertising a bazaar in Ballsbridge in aid of Mercer’s Hospital to be opened by His Excellency. Two episodes later, the journey of Lord Dudley and his entourage is dramatized. In this episode, “Wandering Rocks,” the action, such as it is, takes place in the center of Dublin. Nineteen different scenes show what various characters, some of them new to the narrative, are doing at three

o’clock in the afternoon. The chapter opens with an image of undisputed, ordinary power as Father Conmee, a Jesuit, wearing a silk hat, meets Mrs David Sheehy, the wife of a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster. They greet each other effusively, Father Conmee noting that Mr Sheehy himself is “still in London. The house was still sitting, to be sure it was.”¹⁰ While Joyce allows the “ee” sound in Conmee to reverberate comically against the name “Mr David Sheehy M.P.,” whose name is spelled out in full three times, this is a mild play on sounds rather than an effective mockery of the easy, friendly encounter between these two pillars of power.

When Father Conmee hands a schoolboy a letter to post, it is noted that the boy does so in a “red pillarbox,” and later “a bright red letterbox,” red being the color of postboxes in the British Isles.¹¹ The redness of the postbox is not a subject for dispute. Father Conmee does not see it as a symbol of foreign dominance. In his thoughts during his walk, he accepts what he finds. Since he represents authority, he has no reason to argue with its manifestations. If he has problems with the administration, they are minor ones, such as his view that there should be a tramline on the North Circular Road.

The episode uses a system of spliced narrative, with some characters appearing a number of times in the chapter, and others only once. There are moments when one scene clearly happens after another, such as when Stephen meets his sisters, who have just been with his father. But some scenes stand alone. What is most notable about the chapter is its ordinariness. Nobody says anything especially interesting. Nothing dramatic occurs. The drama arises from the way that time and city space are handled, how experience is edited, chopped up, and put back together again as an image of a peaceful city.



Fig. 1.2. Hely's Limited, Viceroy's Entrance into Dublin.
Postcard. Courtesy of Aida Yared.

The account of the quotidian is interrupted by a single sentence about a third of the way into the episode: “The gates of the drive opened wide to give egress to the viceregal cavalcade.”¹² The gates are those from which Lady Dudley had earlier ventured to look at the trees and buy a “view of Dublin.” This is the cavalcade on its way to the bazaar in Ballsbridge, earlier noted by Bloom. Six pages later, we meet the cavalcade again: “The viceregal cavalcade passed, greeted by obsequious policemen, out of Parkgate.”¹³ Two pages later, in another brief section, we see the cavalcade once more. Soon, a “clatter of horse-hoofs sounded from the air,”¹⁴ a number of Dubliners witness it, and one asks what the sound was: “The lord lieutenant-general and general governor of Ireland, John Wyse Nolan answered

from the stairfoot.”¹⁵ Immediately, the narrative cuts away from this scene.

What is significant here is that, in a novel filled with quips and sour remarks, John Wyse Nolan has nothing smart or funny or disrespectful to say about the cavalcade. Unlike other events in *Ulysses*, such as the Ascot Gold Cup, this cavalcade did not, in fact, take place on 16 June 1904. Joyce chose to invent it and place it there. It was needed not as the dramatization of a display of power but as the dramatization of a display of weakness. No one in the novel feels anything much at the sight of the king’s representatives in Ireland. It is as though their day has passed.

While the most humble citizen is allowed to speak in this episode, the novel does not enter the carriage itself. The English people being transported

across the city are silent. The Dudleys are not described. It is as though a ghost wandered by carriage through a busy city on an ordinary afternoon.

At the end of the episode, Joyce finally depicts the response to the procession in some detail, showing how citizens, many of whom appear elsewhere in the novel, either miss it, ignore it, or pay quiet homage to it. The ones who pay homage include Tom Kernan, from the story “Grace” in *Dubliners*, and Simon Dedalus, who “stood still in midstreet and brought his hat low.” Dedalus’s homage is not presented simply, however. He is “steering his way from the greenhouse” at the time, the “greenhouse” being a public urinal. His standing “in midstreet” echoes his being in midstream not long before.¹⁶

It is interesting that neither Bloom nor Stephen witnesses the cavalcade. Excluding Bloom and Stephen from having to respond to it frees them both from taking a position on these pale representatives of British power in Ireland. If they were to bow or doff their caps, we would see them as subservient, or nonchalant about British power in Ireland. If they were, on the other hand, to have bitter thoughts about the cavalcade, or if Bloom were to ruminate about its meaning, then they would be pinned down: they would represent some Irish faction, and their fate would be dictated by how they reacted to the carriages.

It might have been tempting to make this scene into one of high drama, in which nationalist tempers flared at the sight of the cavalcade. Soon, in the “Cyclops” episode, we will see the Citizen and his nationalist friends, but for the most part, they are absent from the streets as Lord Dudley and his entourage pass. Their presence would ruin the air of quietness and aftermath that the scene evokes. Yet the lack of patriotic response to the cavalcade in the

novel is not sociological; it is not a way of telling the reader how passive Dubliners were in 1904. Rather, it is a way of freeing the novel and its characters from the constraints of fixed response.

Joyce had watched parades in Dublin. He could easily have created different images had they been required. As an eighteen-year-old, he had witnessed a visit by Queen Victoria that he recalled in a lecture he gave in Italian in 1907:

The queen’s carriage passed by, tightly protected on all sides by an impressive bodyguard with bared sabres, while inside a little woman, almost a dwarf could be seen, hunched and swaying in movement with the carriage, funereally dressed with horn-rimmed glasses on her ashen vacuous face . . . the crowd watched the sumptuous procession and its sad central figure with eyes of curiosity, almost pity. When the carriage passed by, they followed its wake with ambiguous glances . . . the queen of England entered the capital of Ireland in the midst of a silent people.¹⁷

While Joyce in “Wandering Rocks” was careful to make no political drama and portray those who saw the cavalcade as quiescent rather than silent, nothing comes simply in *Ulysses*. Clearly, the spectators in the episode do not express any objection to the cavalcade, but there is one sentence that represents another perspective as the party goes by: “From its sluice in Wood quay wall under Tom Devan’s office Poddle river hung out in fealty a tongue of liquid sewage.”¹⁸ Thus, while the citizens have been loyal, the river, using its “tongue,” gets to speak. It expresses its disloyalty in a way that could not have been mistaken. It could not have been lost on Joyce how close “fealty” is to “filthy.” As Michael Rubenstein has written, “The river gives a raspberry to the cavalcade, announcing its subversive ‘fealty.’”¹⁹

The image is all the more subversive and powerful for its isolation. But there is another image hidden in the text that also adds to the ambiguity of the episode: “On the steps of the City hall Councillor Nannetti, descending, hailed Alderman Cowley and Councillor Abraham Lyon ascending.”²⁰ Nannetti was an M.P. and a member of the City Council, becoming Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1906. While there is no record of any Cowley on the City Council, Abraham Lyon was a member for Clontarf West. Around these figures are others, including John Howard Parnell, Long John Fanning, and Tom Devan, who were involved in local government at a time when the power and reach of local government were radically expanding.

The Local Government Act of 1898 was as important as the Wyndham Land Act in changing power structures in Ireland. The Act expanded the franchise, allowing women to vote for the first time and abolishing property qualifications for candidates, which meant that politicians from poorer backgrounds could run for office. In Dublin, the number of eligible voters rose from almost eight thousand to almost thirty-eight thousand, including many from the city’s poor. Matthew Potter has written about the effect of these reforms: “The rising Catholic bourgeoisie gained control of a significant aspect of the administrative machine for the first time. . . . The result was the overthrow of Protestant ascendancy, and by 1900 the Catholic/nationalist propertied classes were firmly in command of boroughs, town councils and Poor Law unions all over the country.”²¹

As James Fairhall has pointed out, Joyce was in Dublin for the 1902 and 1903 municipal elections.²² Joyce’s story “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” takes place during elections in 1902. At the time, the possibility of a labor movement coming into politics

posed a genuine threat to the old opposition between nationalist and unionist. Since Joyce himself, as we know from his brother’s writings, had socialist sympathies, this would have interested him. The Joyce family was also close to one of the main players in this enhanced game of local politics, Timothy Harrington, who was Lord Mayor of Dublin from 1901 to 1904. Before he left Ireland, Joyce got a character reference from Harrington that he carried with him in both 1902 and 1904.

These changes in local government and the novel’s interest in cattle culminate in the “Circe” episode when Bloom, in a phantasmagoria, is elected Lord Mayor of Dublin and makes a speech to his electors, saying, “better run a tramline, I say, from the cattlemarket to the river. That’s the music of the future. That’s my programme.” The former Lord Mayor Timothy Harrington seems to support the bullockbefriendingbloom, demanding that “alderman sir Leo Bloom’s speech be printed at the expense of the ratepayers. That the house in which he was born be ornamented with a commemorative tablet and that the thoroughfare hitherto known as Cow Parlour off Cork Street be henceforth designated Boulevard Bloom.”²³

Dublin was a city without a large manufacturing base. The two biggest employers were Guinness’s Brewery and Jacob’s Biscuits. Out of a male labor force of around forty thousand, as Fairhall writes, “only a quarter or so earned relatively adequate wages in skilled trades. . . . Unemployment among unskilled male workers may have been as high as twenty per cent.”²⁴ F. S. L. Lyons has written, “About thirty per cent (87,000) of the people in Dublin lived in the slums which were for the most part the worn-out shells of Georgian mansions. Over 2,000 families lived in single-room tenements which were without light or heat or water (save for a tap in a



Fig. 1.3. Philip Phillips, Guinness barrels. Dublin, Ireland, 1950. Gift of Sayre P. Sheldon and Lady Richard Davies. The Rosenbach, Philadelphia (2006.0004.0139).

passage or backyard) or adequate sanitation. Inevitably, the death-rate was the highest in the country, while the infant mortality rate was the worst, not just in Ireland but in the British Isles.²⁵ Lord Dudley, he of the cavalcade, said that “he had seen the misery of Irish peasants in the West, but nothing compared to what existed at their own doors in Dublin.”²⁶

Ulysses, however, does not explore social misery in Dublin in any great detail, although it is there in the background, especially in the “Circe” episode. Nor is the novel set among the city’s middle classes. None of its people are doctors, bankers, or accountants. Nor are they clerks in offices, people who go to work every morning and stay at their desks all day and receive a regular wage. They are in-between people, often, like Simon Dedalus, down on their luck, or, like Leopold Bloom, in search of the next

chance. Even the ones who have actual jobs seem to have plenty of spare time. They are literate; they are good company; they have original minds.

While they are idle much of the time, this serves to sharpen their wit. While they are ostensibly powerless, they live in a time when power is quickly shifting in their direction. While they live in a city that is maimed by poverty, their response to life is not constrained by the mortality rate. While they make references to British rule and Irish rebellion, they are easily distracted by other, more mundane concerns.

They live in a web of small conspiracies, easy gossip, old associations. Many of them are connected to one another by an interest in music and song.

In an essay on *Ulysses* first published in 1966, Anthony Cronin wrote about the importance of music in the novel.

But a common misconception about *Ulysses* is that its characters are a cross-section of middle or lower-middle class Dublin. They are in fact splendidly typical of a certain kind of Dubliner, but not even in a city so small as Dublin could they all, or nearly all, be so well acquainted with each other unless they had a bond or activity in common. That activity is song. With the exception of Stephen’s medical friends practically every character is connected with that world of semi-professional, semi-amateur concert and operatic singing which flourished in Dublin. . . . Joyce and his parents belonged to this and, apart from the students, Father Conmee and the company in the library, it furnishes the cast of the book.²⁷

It might be easy to see the references to song and the use of singing in *Ulysses* as a side show, or a way, as Cronin suggests, of connecting the characters into a

sort of inner world, one that can, in certain moments, soar above class or circumstances, allowing characters to transform a room. But song in the work of Joyce also has a more powerful purpose.

This is explored first in “The Dead,” in the description of Aunt Julia’s song: “Her voice, strong and clear in tone, attacked with great spirit the runs which embellish the air and though she sang very rapidly she did not miss even the smallest of the grace notes. To follow the voice, without looking at the singer’s face, was to feel and share the excitement of swift and secure flight.”²⁸ So, too, Aunt Kate, in her evocation of the singer Parkinson, who had “the purest tenor voice that ever was put into a man’s throat,”²⁹ suggests the power of song to live in the mind over time more powerfully than other memories. The idea that song can carry a shivering power is given greater depth by the singing “in the old Irish tonality”³⁰ of Bartell D’Arcy toward the end of the story.

Most of the characters in the story are connected through music. It is song that propels the plot of the story and gives “The Dead” its haunted atmosphere.

In these years of change and ferment in Dublin, song took on a special intensity. In a city that partly saw itself as the capital of a nation that was not a state, there were absences and silences. The power of the Anglo-Irish may have waned as the influence of local politicians increased, but there was still no national parliament, no sense that the city was the site for solid government. Mr David Sheehy M.P. went to London to make his speeches, reported by journalists there. Public rhetoric in Dublin was easier to parody than to practice.

The Local Government Act of 1898 and the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 consolidated and destroyed systems of rule, but they also opened a window. Instead of satisfying political needs, these

changes allowed some to dream of further change. In these years, the dreams became even dreamier and thus harder to defeat. In the early years of the twentieth century in Ireland, various forms of utterance—a poem, a translation, a play, a story, a novel, a speech over a grave, a song—carried an authority that was all the more powerful because it was often fragile, delicate, melancholy, or had a heightened rhetorical tone.

In his 1922 essay “Ireland After Parnell,” W. B. Yeats noted that he had predicted the rise of “an intellectual movement at the first lull in politics.” Thus, by 1891, once Parnell was out of the way, Yeats believed that “Ireland was to be like soft wax for years to come.”³¹ The life of the imagination, he saw, was to replace arguments about politics.

It would be too much to suggest that song replaces politics in the world of the characters in *Ulysses*, yet singing in the novel evokes a high sort of yearning. It is worth looking at the way in which song affected the life of other cities like Dublin, places that believed themselves to be nations but did not have a national parliament or the apparatus of a state.

It is easy to imagine Joyce’s story “The Dead,” for example, taking place in other cities where two languages, or two cultures, seemed to clash, cities such as Barcelona, Edinburgh, and Calcutta that were, like Dublin, capitals of an emerging nation and not of a solid state, cities in which traditional song or opera or oratorio seemed to lift the argument away from the minutiae of politics or the terms of trade toward some larger exploration of human striving. In these cities, there were dreams of sacred places in the countryside in which the soul of the citizens could be purified. In Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) exalted the village over the city, using folktale and folksong to nourish his own compositions. His compatriots in British Calcutta were, in his view,



Fig. 1.4. James Joyce with Nora Joyce, John Sullivan, and Mrs. Sullivan at the piano. The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

caught between a dull, deadly provinciality and the even duller possibility of cosmopolitanism.

In Dublin in the early years of the twentieth century, musical life was conducted with a peculiar concentration; songs and singers were handed the forceful, ghostly power that Parkinson had for Aunt Kate. In Barcelona, it was not traditional song that became part of the city's culture, but art song and opera. There was a particular reverence for the music of Wagner and, strangely, it was believed that this music had a special place in Catalan culture. In Scotland and in Bengal, the revival of traditional melodies, the efforts to energize a tradition, had much in common with the work of the Literary Revival in Ireland. In *Ulysses*, it is art song and opera but also music hall songs, ballads, and sentimental songs.

In "The Dead," when they discuss singers during the meal, the ones they name and revere are opera singers. But this is not a sign of high cosmopolitan company. The interest in opera and singers is natural here, native. It is a Dublin thing.

Feeling about lost love in a song could become feeling about other things that have been lost, such as an imagined country, or an imagined sense of autonomy. Songs and other forms of music, including opera and traditional music, were, before anything else, an ordinary part of social life in these cities, and all the more powerful for that. But a soaring voice, the hitting of a high note, the use of a grace note moved the mind into the realm of aspiration, pure soul, longing transforming itself to include large and unnamable things such as an

imagined country that was unbroken, even free. Or the singer's enduring spirit on transcendent display.

Song connects Molly Bloom with Blazes Boylan, and a possible concert gives him an excuse to visit her. Song also connects Simon Dedalus to the company he keeps and becomes an essential tool for Joyce as he seeks to put his father into the novel without concentrating on his father's drunkenness and improvidence, without using *Ulysses* to work out the set of filial resentments harbored by his brother Stanislaus.

John Stanislaus Joyce, the father of James Joyce, was perhaps unlucky that he lost his job as a rate collector early in his life, and unlucky too that he did not know how to manage his finances, and unfortunate also that he had so many children to feed. But his worst piece of luck throughout his fall from grace may have been the brooding presence in his household of his second living son, Stanislaus, who charted what happened to the family with bitterness and in some detail in two books, both published after his death: *My Brother's Keeper* in 1958 and *The Complete Dublin Diary of Stanislaus Joyce* in 1971. There is a remarkable difference between how John Stanislaus Joyce is treated in the work of Stanislaus and in the novel *Ulysses*, where he appears as Simon Dedalus. Stanislaus's memoir has a raw sense of grievance, at times against both his brother and his father.

There is something radiant and oddly magnificent, however, in James Joyce's deciding that he had other onions to fry besides the onions of grievance. After his father's death, Joyce wrote to his benefactor Harriet Shaw Weaver, "I was very fond of him always, being a sinner myself, and even liked his faults. Hundreds of pages and scores of characters in my books came from him . . . I got from him his portraits, a waistcoat, a good tenor voice, and an

extravagant licentious disposition (out of which, however, the greater part of any talent I may have springs) but, apart from these, something else I cannot define."³² He told his friend Louis Gillet in Paris, "The humour of 'Ulysses' is his; its people are his friends. The book is his spittin' image."³³

Since we have so much evidence about John Stanislaus Joyce as a father, it is fascinating to watch his son set about making art from the threadbare and often miserable business of what he knew. Simon Dedalus appears or is mentioned in seven of the eighteen episodes of *Ulysses*. In Stanislaus's account of him, he is ostracized by his family, but when we meet him first in the "Hades" episode of *Ulysses*, he is fully socialized. In a carriage with other men on his way to Paddy Dignam's funeral, he is presented in complex ways. Bloom calls him a "noisy selfwilled man" and then says, "Full of his son. He is right."³⁴ Simon is included in the conversation as one of the company. Twice, when he speaks, he is given a good sharp line of dialogue, establishing him as a man who is witty or has a way with words.

The next time we see Simon Dedalus he is in the offices of the *Freeman's Journal*, and once more he is in company where he feels comfortable, comfortable enough to exclaim, "Agonising Christ, wouldn't it give you a heartburn on your arse" when he is read a piece of overblown writing on the subject of Ireland.³⁵ Soon he is quoting Byron. And not long after that he is giving "vent to a hopeless groan" and crying "Shite and onions!" before putting on his hat and announcing: "I must get a drink after that."³⁶

Soon, however, the real world, or the world of Simon Dedalus's unfortunate family, makes itself felt in "Wandering Rocks," as two of his daughters talk in the kitchen of his house, one of them remarking, "Crickey, is there nothing for us to eat?"



Fig. 1.5. Patrick Tuohy, portrait of John Stanislaus Joyce, ca. 1924.
Oil on canvas. The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries,
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

Soon, the other sister asks where their sibling Dilly is. “Gone to meet father,” she is told. The other sister replies, “Our father who art not in heaven.”³⁷ And then, close to an auctioneer’s house, the afflicted Dilly meets her afflicted father and asks him for money. Eventually, he gives her money and says that he will be home soon. He has been placed in the position of a man whose children do not have enough money for food as he himself moves easily in the city, a man more at home with his companions and acquaintances than with his family.

Up to this point, Simon has been merely part of the day, another figure who wanders in the book, but in the next episode, “Sirens,” which takes place at four o’clock in the bar and restaurant of the Ormond Hotel on Ormond Quay, Simon moves toward the center. When his friend Lenehan puts his head around the door, he says, “Greetings from the famous son of a famous father.” And when asked who this is, he replies, “Stephen, the youthful bard.”³⁸ Simon’s response to news about his son, who is clearly avoiding him, is subdued, almost thoughtful. Joyce wishes to create in Simon a figure of moods, an unsettled rather than a solid presence in the book, a man who often controls himself rather than a figure of easy rages.

As well as possessing a talent for not having money, Simon has, as Joyce’s father did, a rich tenor voice. It is courtesy of song that he redeems himself in the book as he sings “M’appari” from Flotow’s *Martha*: “Through the hush of air a voice sang to them, low, not rain, not leaves in murmur, like no voice of strings or reeds or whatdoyoucallthem dulcimers touching their still ears with words, still hearts of their each his remembered lives. Good, good to hear: sorrow from them each seemed to from both depart when first they heard.”³⁹ As Bloom listens, “the voice rose, sighing, changed:

loud, full, shining, proud.”⁴⁰ This is Simon Dedalus at his most exalted. His voice “soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene, speeding, sustained, to come, don’t spin it out too long long breath he breath long life, soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolic, high, of the etherial bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessnessness.”⁴¹ Bloom notes the “glorious tone he has still. Cork air softer also their brogue.”⁴² Joyce, in this portrait of his father as an artist, has made him Simon Hero among his friends.

But Joyce will never let anything happen for long. As Bloom watches Simon, he muses, “Silly man! Could have made oceans of money.” And then in one pithy phrase, he returns the soaring singer to earth: “Wore out his wife: now sings.”⁴³

Simon Dedalus, after his moment of apotheosis in the book, also remembers, for his friend Ben Dollard, Italians singing in Cork: “He heard them as a boy in Ringabella, Crosshaven, Ringabella, singing their barcaroles. Queenstown harbour full of Italian ships. Walking, you know, Ben, in the moonlight with those earthquake hats. Blending their voices. God, such music, Ben. Heard as a boy. Cross Ringabella haven mooncarole.”⁴⁴ In the “Eumaeus” episode, Simon Dedalus’s voice comes into Bloom’s mind as he and Stephen walk toward Eccles Street, where Bloom lives. Bloom remembers Simon singing the aria from *Martha* earlier in the day (or the day before, as it now is). It was, he lets Stephen know, “sung to perfection, a study of the number, in fact, which made all the others take a back seat.”⁴⁵

In the final episode in the book, known as Molly Bloom’s soliloquy, when Molly mentions living in Ontario Terrace, where John Stanislaus

Joyce and his wife first lived after they were married, it is as though she and her husband have all along, throughout the book, been pursuing Stephen—whose mother has died, whose father has been cast aside—to become shadow versions of what his parents might have been, Bloom having taken on some of John Stanislaus’s preferences, such as his relishing “the inner organs of beasts and fowls,”⁴⁶ and some of his characteristics, such as his interest in reading magazines like *Titbits*. Stephen, in turn, becomes a shadow version of the Blooms’ son, Rudy, who died as a baby, just as Stephen’s older brother, John Augustine, the first boy in the family, born in Ontario Terrace, had died as a baby. In the soliloquy, Simon Dedalus is remembered by Molly, singing a duet with her:

Simon Dedalus too he was always turning up half
screwed singing the second verse first the old love is
the new was one of his so sweetly sang the maiden on
the hawthorn bough he was always on for flirtyfying
too when I sang Maritana with him with him at
Freddy Mayers private opera he had a delicious
glorious voice Phoebe dearest goodbye sweetheart
sweetheart he always sang it not like Bartell D’Arcy
sweet *tart* goodbye of course he had the gift of the
voice so there was no art in it all over you like a warm
showerbath O Maritana wildwood flower we sang
splendidly though it was a bit too high for my register
even transposed and he was married at the time to
May Goulding but then hed say or do something to
knock the good out of it hes a widower now I wonder
what sort is his son he says hes an author and going to
be a university professor of Italian⁴⁷

Simon is redeemed by a voice that allows him to soar above his own circumstances. If his character is bad, then his voice is his personality and it is

capable of exquisite moments. This sense of the voice as soul, or of some element in the self that erases dull circumstance, takes on a special importance when it emerges on the walk to Eccles Street that Stephen has inherited his father’s singing voice: “A phenomenally beautiful tenor voice like that, the rarest of boons, which Bloom appreciated at the very first note he got out, could easily, if properly handled . . . command its own price where baritones were ten a penny and procure for its fortunate possessor in the near future an *entrée* into fashionable houses in the best residential quarters.”⁴⁸

Once more, it is song that has narrowed the distance between Simon and Stephen; it is song that connects them, just as, in Bloom’s mind, as they approach his house, it is song that will make Molly become interested in Stephen. His wife, Bloom says, “would have the greatest of pleasure in making your acquaintance as she is passionately attached to music of any kind.”⁴⁹

Like movements in a sonata or a symphony, the episodes in *Ulysses* often respond to one another or, indeed, repudiate one another. Each style adopted or narrative texture explored sets out to exhaust itself; the novel is reenergized as each new episode begins. Yet the novel has characters and events that run from episode to episode. For much of it, for example, there is a bar of soap in Leopold Bloom’s pocket that has to be credibly registered. The novelist has to remind us regularly that this is the day of the Ascot Gold Cup, and much depends on the outcome for several of the characters, not least Bloom, whom some believe has money on the winning horse.

But while objects and events anchor the book, there is great emphasis on style itself—and often with parody of style. In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver in 1919, Joyce referred to his method of

changing styles: “The word *scorching* . . . has a peculiar significance for my superstitious mind not so much because of any quality of merit in the writing itself as for the fact that the progress of the book is in fact like the progress of some sandblast . . . each successive episode, dealing with some province of artistic culture (rhetoric or music or dialectic) leaves behind it a burnt up field.”⁵⁰

“Oxen of the Sun,” for example, is written as a set of parodies of systems of English prose, leaving a “burnt up field” as the episode moves from pastiche and parody of one author to another. The episode takes its inspiration from a schoolbook or an anthology, such as Saintsbury’s *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, used by Irish students as much as English ones, since both share the same language. Jennifer Levine has written that “Oxen of the Sun” is “clearly a bravura performance of some kind,” adding that it is “a moment of exhilaration and power on the part of the author.” She quotes the novelist Anthony Burgess on this episode, “the one he would have most like to have written”: “It is an author’s chapter, a dazzling and authoritative display of what English can do. Moreover, it is a fulfilment of every author’s egotistical desire not merely to *add* to English literature but to *enclose* what is actually there. But it is a pity that Stephen and Bloom have to get lost in the process of glorifying an art that is supposed to be their servant.”⁵¹

For an Irish reader, the term “servant” as used by Burgess is not stable. The word appears a number of times in the opening pages of *Ulysses*. For example, Stephen says, “It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant.”⁵² In the same episode, Haines the Englishman tells Stephen, “You are your own master, it seems to me.” And Stephen replies, “I am a servant of two masters . . . an English and an Italian.”⁵³ The word “master” also appears in

Portrait, when Stephen responds to the English Jesuit: “The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.”⁵⁴

While the English and Italian masters mentioned by Stephen are the British Empire and the Roman Catholic Church, the real master here is irony. Stephen’s argumentative tone and his easy contempt have to be examined carefully. He enjoys announcing that he is a servant, but he doesn’t mean it. No words, not least the words that signify power, can be taken here at their face value.

In “Oxen of the Sun,” Joyce puts on a virtuoso performance to show what the English language can do with him as its master. He displays what he himself can “enclose,” as Burgess would have it, and seeks to be playful with prose history, to make a game out of it, to lighten its load. Taking Stephen’s feeling about language, so filled with anxiety, Joyce removes the anxiety and undermines the feeling.

The question, then, is if “Oxen of the Sun,” in its mastery of prose history, represents an Irish response to the history of English writing, or if Joyce, by displaying his command of the language, is, in fact, arguing with the Irish Literary Revival’s insistence on a Hiberno-English vernacular as the natural tone for Irish writers. His mastery of something whose servant he once was can be read as itself an ironic form of reconquest, if a term such as “reconquest” is not too heavy-handed. If Joyce’s “own work is itself part of the history of Ireland’s complicated linguistic condition,” as Seamus Deane has written,⁵⁵ then using the history of English

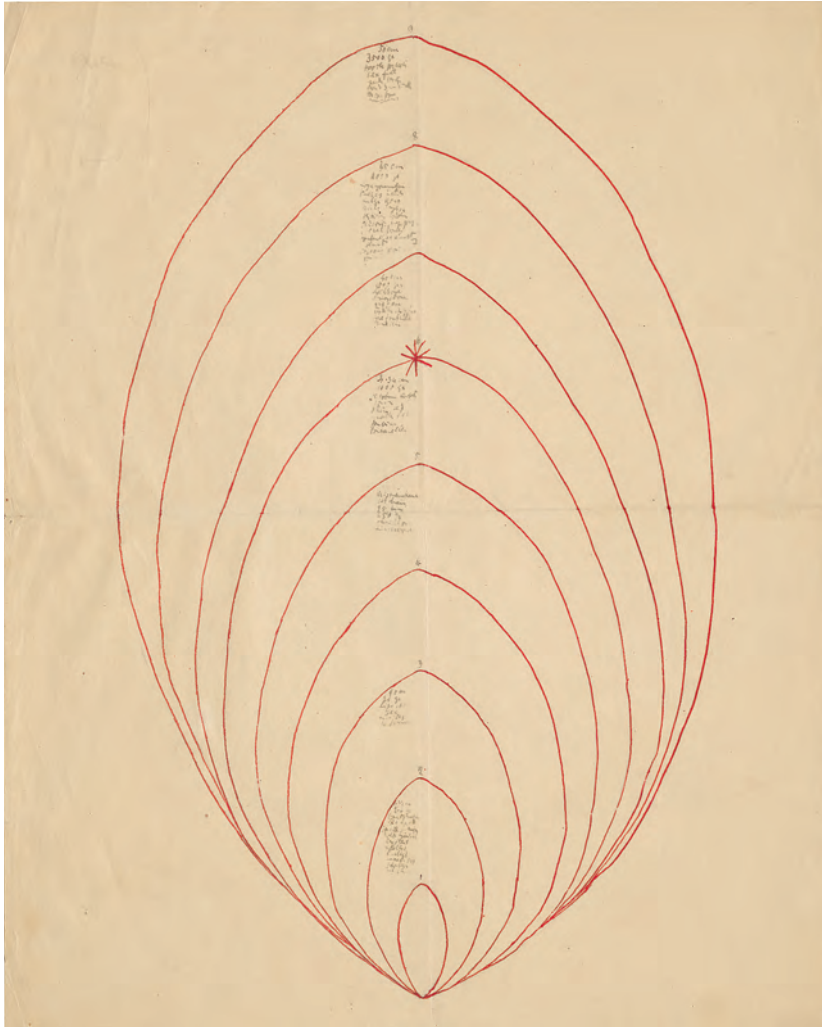


Fig. 1.6. James Joyce, embryological chart for the “Oxen of the Sun” episode, 1920. Autograph manuscript. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. © The Estate of James Joyce.

prose to further his narrative, to move it from twilight into darkness, taking the novel from Sandymount strand to Nighttown, is a way for Joyce to treat the history of English prose as a linguistic circus, of which he is emphatically the ringmaster. At the very end of the episode, in what Terence Killeen calls a “breakdown of style into a babel of conflicting voices,”⁵⁶ Joyce moves out from the shadow of Caliban into the realm where words, as

Eliot would have it, “strain / Crack and sometimes break.” From the breakdown at the end of “Oxen of the Sun,” he moves into further narrative fragmentation in the “Circe” episode.

As with “Wandering Rocks,” it is difficult to read “Oxen of the Sun” without considering Joyce’s intense relationship both with Ireland and with Dublin. Nonetheless, critics from Ezra Pound to Terry Eagleton have suggested that *Ulysses* could

easily be set in any city. Pound wrote, “Erase the local names and a few specifically local allusions, and a few historic events of the past, and substitute a few different local names, allusions and events, and these stories could be retold of any town.”⁵⁷ Eagleton wrote, “Joyce’s compliment to Ireland, in inscribing it on the cosmopolitan map, is . . . distinctly backhanded. The novel . . . deploy[s] the full battery of cosmopolitan modernist techniques to recreate it while suggesting with its every breath just how easily it could have done the same for Bradford or the Bronx.”⁵⁸

Joyce is writing about a city that is on the cusp of change, a place where many battles are being fought, not least between insularity and cosmopolitanism, religion and the secular, restriction and the carnal, the nation and the empire, the nation and the parish, reality and mythology, earnestness and humor. It is hard to imagine these battles being fought with the same intensity in Bradford or the Bronx, or in any other city much.

One way to differentiate Dublin from Bradford or the Bronx is to look at the shadow figures in *Ulysses*, the ghostly presences that operate as an undercurrent in the text, offering it a powerful energy. These figures include Robert Emmet and Charles Stewart Parnell but also W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Oscar Wilde. Bloom and Stephen circle a city that is haunted by their presence, by the signs they have made, as it is by the signs made by Sinn Féin and the Irish Catholic Church. It would be hard to summon up such presences in Bradford or the Bronx.

The last words of *Ulysses* are “Trieste – Zurich – Paris, 1914–1921.” These seven years include years of European conflagration as well as the 1916 Rebellion in Ireland. *Ulysses* is not a diary of these years; its chapters are not ways of responding to public

events. Yet, as Enda Duffy has written, “By setting his book in a relatively uneventful earlier year, while writing it amid violent, revolutionary and transformative time, *Ulysses* can know the future without admitting to such knowledge.”⁵⁹

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, as violence and fanaticism increased in Ireland, as Ireland began to question its relationship to England more intensely and to interrogate and recalibrate its own sense of tradition and its relationship to myth, as Ireland began to summon up in its own imagination a new political reality, Irish writers, including James Joyce, dramatized the relationship between community, including an imagined community, and violence. Poems and novels and plays were not only arguments that the writers were having with themselves but also serious and deliberate interventions in a debate about history, tradition, nationhood, violence, and politics. In Ireland, poems and novels and plays sought to capture, encapsulate, and indeed influence and formulate what the future might be, not merely the future of the imagination or the life of the mind or the spirit but life itself, politics, public memory, the nation, the state.

Thus, placing a novel in a city that seemed detached much of the time from the nation—with a Jewish man of great independence of mind, a born noticer, whose response to life is original and sensuous and intelligent, at its center—is a political act. Creating an Irish hero who is not insular but tolerant, open to life and to modernity in a book to be published in 1922, offers a blueprint for a state-in-the-making about how private life, and perhaps even public life, should be conducted. But the blueprint is subtle and exalts doubleness, contradiction. In *Joyce’s Politics*, Dominic Manganiello writes, “In *Ulysses* there is constantly at work a double motive which Joyce is not at pains to make

single or crystal clear. The desire to bring Ireland to a new self-awareness is matched by the equally urgent need of preventing its acceptance of any rigid control by Church and State.”⁶⁰

While Joyce wrote *Ulysses* in exile, he had deep roots in a changing Dublin. He would have viewed the 1916 Rebellion not as a remote event in a city he had abandoned but as led by people with whom he had associations, some close, including Patrick Pearse, the president of the Republic, as declared in Easter Week 1916. Joyce attended a few Irish-language classes given by Pearse at University College Dublin in the spring of 1899. Joyce gave them up because he found Pearse a bore and objected to his efforts to denigrate English in favor of Irish. Joyce decided to study Norwegian instead so that he could read Ibsen in the original.

The clash between the two young men over ideas of language and cultural identity would make its way into the encounter between Gabriel Conroy and Miss Ivors in Joyce’s story “The Dead.” When Gabriel tells Miss Ivors that he goes to France and Belgium “partly to keep in touch with the languages,” she replies, “And haven’t you your own language to keep in touch with—Irish?” To which Gabriel replies, “Well, if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language.”⁶¹

In Joyce’s *Stephen Hero*, a figure whose ideology is close to that of Pearse roundly denounces Stephen Daedalus when he delivers a paper on “Drama and Life” to the University College Literary and Historical Society: “Mr Daedalus was himself a renegade from the Nationalist ranks: he professed cosmopolitanism. But a man that was of all countries was of no country—you must first have a nation before you have art.”⁶²

Both Pearse and Joyce wrote for the theatre and wrote poetry and fiction, Joyce rather more success-

fully than Pearse. Both, as the soft wax hardened around them, needed to throw stones at the Irish Literary Revival, which was led by Yeats and Lady Gregory.

In the front hall of St Enda’s, the school that Pearse founded, were written up the words ascribed to the legendary hero Cuchulainn: “I care not though I were to live but one day and one night provided my fame and my deeds live after me.”⁶³ This idea of living a heroic rather than a domestic or an ordinary life is alluded to at the end of Joyce’s story “The Dead,” when Gabriel is pondering death. The sentence “One by one they were all becoming shades” is followed by: “Better pass boldly into that other world, in all the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dimly with age.”⁶⁴ It was this same idea, which for Gabriel was merely a passing thought, that would animate Pearse and inspire some of his followers in the years leading up to the 1916 Rebellion.

During the Rebellion, one of Joyce’s oldest friends in Dublin, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, was shot dead by firing squad on the orders of an officer who was later declared guilty but insane. Sheehy Skeffington and Joyce had published a pamphlet together, and Sheehy Skeffington inspired the character of McCann in *Portrait*.

The 1916 Rebellion came as a shock not only to the British authorities but to many in Ireland. Yeats’s poem “Easter 1916” is filled with questions and uncertainties. Like Joyce, who has Leopold Bloom invoke “love” in the “Cyclops” episode, Yeats uses the word in a question about the level of emotion in the politics of the leaders of the Rebellion: “And what if excess of love / Bewildered them till they died?”⁶⁵ The playwright Sean O’Casey, whose play *The Plough and the Stars* is set during Easter Week, found himself outside the nationalist fold by the

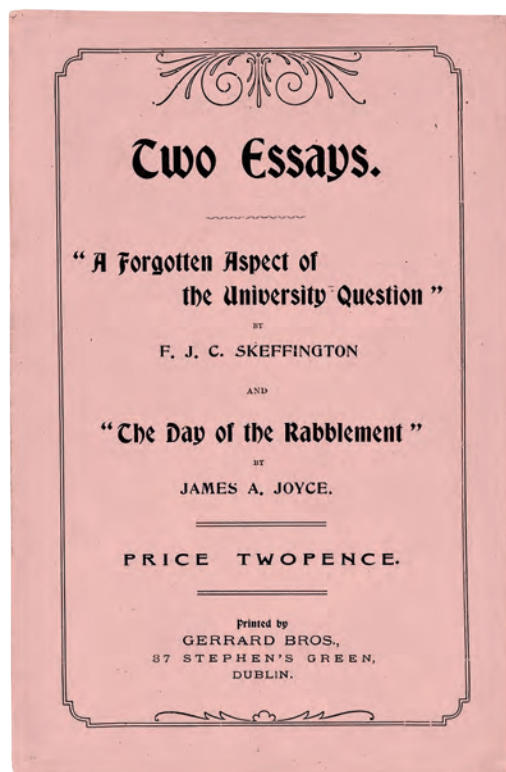


Fig. 1.7. F. J. C. Skeffington and James Joyce, *Two Essays*, 1901. The Morgan Library & Museum, New York. Gift of Sean and Mary Kelly, 2018.

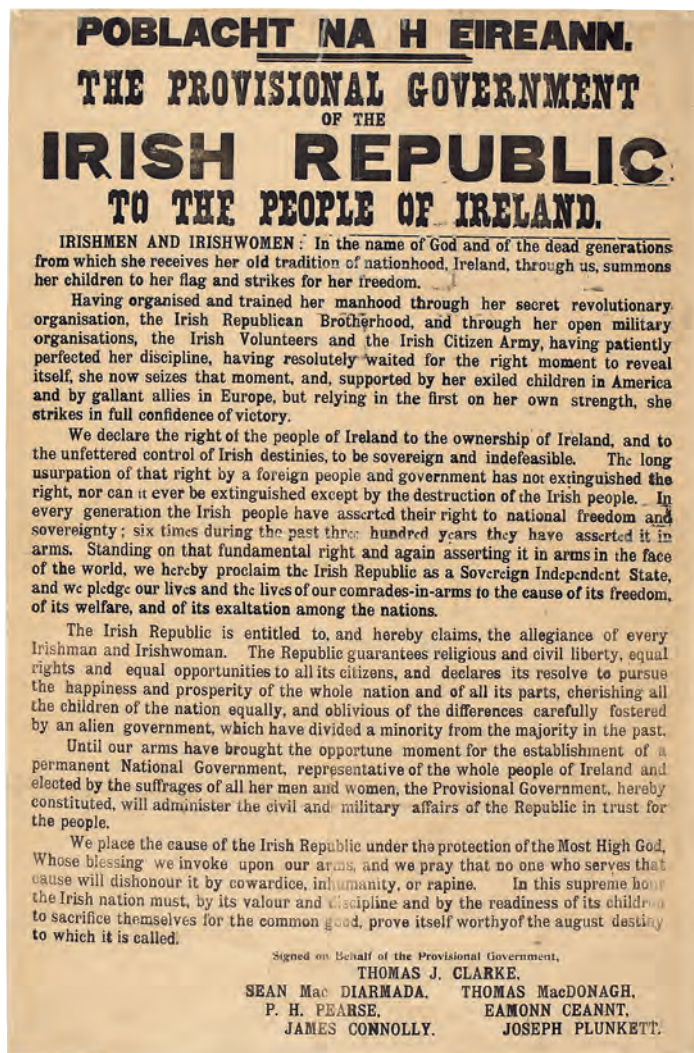


Fig. 1.8. *Poblacht na hÉireann. The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the People of Ireland*, 1916. Courtesy of the American Irish Historical Society.

time of the Rebellion. Early in 1914, however, he had written the constitution for the Irish Citizen Army, one of whose main principles made its way, using some of the same language, into the Proclamation of Easter 1916 read by Patrick Pearse on the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin.

The Proclamation's opening phrase would have interested Joyce. It began: "In the name of God and of the dead generations. . . ." As he worked on "Cyclops," the episode that deals most intensely with politics, the idea of the dead generations gave him considerable ammunition for parody.

The "Cyclops" episode takes place in Barney Kiernan's pub; it is narrated by a nameless man. Although the narrative in "Wandering Rocks" cuts between scenes and characters, the tone of each scene is relatively stable. It is written, as it were, by the same person in the same place. On the other hand, the narrative in "Cyclops" comes in two guises. The first is pub talk, pub argument, some of it parody, some serious; the second is parody of types of discourse, much of it current in 1904.

At the heart of the pub talk is a set of speeches and rants by the Citizen, who has strong nationalist views. He is more fluent and sure of himself than Bloom, whose voice is hesitant and whose interventions have a tentative sound. Bloom is like a man attempting to say something true in the company of quick-witted men who want to win an argument using tones that are filled with cliché.

Many critics have insisted that "Cyclops" allows us to read Joyce's politics clearly. Some parts do allow this, but not all. But even when his politics emerge, Joyce seems to belong to the disruptive party rather than any more widely followed political factions in Ireland. In this, he has much in common with Yeats and O'Casey, who got energy from disrupting an evolving consensus in Ireland; their

work was nourished by an impulse to provoke. It is unlikely that Yeats's Crazy Jane, O'Casey's Rosie Redmond, or Joyce's Cunt Kate was created to console the authorities in Ireland or win friends for the authors among the faithful.

In sections of "Cyclops," Joyce sought to disrupt his very own opinions, or at least unsettle them. For example, if we are invited to take the Citizen's speeches as the sounds made by a diehard nationalist talking in a pub, then we have to look at the connection between his views on Irish industry and those of Joyce himself, expressed in the 1907 essay "Ireland: Isle of Saints and Sages." In the essay, Joyce writes, "Ireland is poor because English laws ruined the country's industries, especially the wool industry, because the neglect of English governments in the years of the potato famine allowed the best of the population to die from hunger."⁶⁶ In "Cyclops," the Citizen says, "Where are our missing twenty millions of Irish should be here today instead of four, our lost tribes? And our potteries and textiles, the finest in the whole world! And our wool that was sold in Rome."⁶⁷

One possibility is that Joyce is parodying himself, finding good use for the opinions he expressed in Trieste to an irredentist audience that supported Triestine withdrawal from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Joyce gives the Citizen lines to speak that have been heard many times, including in his own iteration. Bloom's tone, on the other hand, is simpler, with shorter, starker sentences. He uses words that have their source in the personal rather than the communal. And there are no verbal flourishes in Bloom's statement: "Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations." It feels almost as though Bloom is speaking to himself, or thinking aloud. All around him there are jokes and quips, but

h. Johnston

The last farewell was affecting in the extreme. From the belfries far and near the funereal deathbell tolled ~~in~~ unceasingly, while all around the gloomy precincts rolled the ominous warning of a hundred muffled drums punctuated by the hollow booming of pieces of ordnance. The deafening claps of thunder and the dazzling flashes of lightning which lit up the ghastly scene testified that the artillery of heaven had lent its supernatural pomp to the already gruesome spectacle. A torrential rain poured down from the floodgates of the angry heavens ~~on~~ the bared heads of the assembled multitude which numbered at the lowest computation five hundred thousand persons. The learned prelate who administered the last comforts of holy religion to the hero martyr knelt in a most christian spirit in a pool of rain water, his cassock above his hoary head, and offered up to the throne of grace fervent prayers of supplication. Hard by the block stood the grim figure of the executioner, his visage being concealed in a ten gallon pot with two circular perforated apertures through which his eyes glowered furiously. As he awaited the fatal signal he tested the edge of his horrible weapon by honing it upon his brown forearm or decapitated in rapid succession a flock of sheep which had been provided by the admirers of his fell but necessary office. On a handsome mahogany table near him were neatly arranged the quartering knife, the various finely tempered disembowelling appliances, a terracotta saucepan for the reception of the duodenum, colon, blind ~~intx~~ intestine and appendix etc, when successfully extricated and two commodious milkjugs destined to receive the most precious blood of the most precious victim. The housesteward of the amalgamated cats and dogs' home was in attendance to convey these vessels when replenished to that beneficent institution. Quite an excellent repast consisting of rashers and eggs, fried steak and onions, delicious hot breakfast rolls and invigorating tea had been considerably provided by the authorities for the consumption of the central figure of the tragedy, but he expressed the dying wish (immediately acceded to) that the meal should be divided in aliquot parts among the members of the sick and indigent roomkeepers association as a token of his regard and esteem. The non plus ultra of emotion was reached when the blushing bride elect burst her way through the serried ranks of the bystanders and flung herself upon the muscular bosom of him who was about to die for her sake. The hero folded her willow form in a loving embrace murmuring fondly "Sheila, my own". Encouraged by this use of her christian name she kissed passionately all the various suitable areas of his person which the decencies of prison garb permitted her ardour to reach. She swore to him as they mingled the salt streams of their tears that she would cherish his memory, that she would never forget her hero boy. She brought back to his recollection the happy days of blissful childhood together on the banks of Anna Liffey when they had indulged in the innocent pastimes of the young, and, oblivious of the dreadful present, they both laughed heartily, all the spectators, including the venerable pastor, joining in the general merriment.

(Specially supplied by the world famous firm of cutlers, Messrs. John Barber, Sheffield)

A, done to a nicety,

M, with an abnegation rare in these our times rose nobly to the occasion and

12)

I see and

That monster audience simply rocked with delight, who was in capital spirits and evinced the keenest interest in the proceedings to be launched into eternity

Fig. 1.9. James Joyce, "Cyclops" typescript, fol. 12, ca. 1919-21. While this episode was being proofed, Joyce wrote the text in fig. 1.10 and had it inserted here after the sentence ending "five hundred thousand persons." See also fig. 5.10. The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York. © The Estate of James Joyce.

A

A posse of Dublin Metropolitan police superintended by the Chief Commissioner in person maintained order in the vast throng for whom the York street brass band whiled away the intervening time by admirably rendering in their blackdraped instruments the matchless melody endeared to us from the cradle by ~~the~~ Speranza's plaintive muse. Special quick excursion trains and upholstered charabancs had been provided for the comfort of our country cousins of whom there were large contingents. The viceregal houseparty including many well known ladies was chaperoned by their Excellencies to the most favourable position on the grand stand while the picturesque foreign delegation known as the Friends of the Emerald Isle was accommodated on a tribune directly opposite. The delegation, present in full force, consisted of Commendatore Bacibaci Beninobenone (Hoyen of the party who had to be assisted to this seat by the aid of a powerful steam crane), Monsieur Pierre Paul Pittipatant, the Grandjoker, Vladimir Pokethankertscheff, the Archjoker Leopold Rudolph von Schwanzentbad - Hodenthaler, Hiram Y. Bomboost, Count Athanatos Karamelopoulos, Ali Baba Bäcksheech, Rahat Lokum Effendi, Señor Hidalgo Caballero Don Peccadillo y Pasta de la Malora de la Maloria Herr Hushausdirektorpräsident Hans Chuechli - Stenerli, Nationalgymnasiummuseumsanat oriums ordinary private docent general history special professor doctor Kriegfried Heber allgemein.

All the delegates without exception expressed themselves in the strongest possible terms concerning the atrocious barbarity which they had been called upon to witness. The arrival of the world renowned headsman was greeted by a roar of acclamation from the huge concourse, the viceregal ladies waving their handkerchiefs in their excitement while the even more excitable foreign delegates cheering hock, vociferously in a medley of ^{which} ~~which~~ hock, banzai, eljen, vive, Allah, amid the high ringing ~~corra~~ ^{corra} of the delegate of the land of song was easily distinguishable. The signal for prayer was then ~~promptly~~ ^{promptly} given by megaphone and in an instant all heads were bowed, the commendatore's patriarchal sombrero, which has been in the possession of his family since

F the semiparalysed

F heterogeneous

11

2. 2. 2. P. 1

Fig. 1.10. James Joyce, holograph addition to a "Cyclops" placard, September 1921. The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.

© The Estate of James Joyce.

he does not join them. He is the least noisy of men. When asked what his nation is, he answers, "Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland."⁶⁸ It is not possible to read this as parody; it stands apart from the rest of the talk in the pub, as though orchestral sound were suddenly replaced by single piano notes.

This scene might offer evidence that, writing during the First World War and in the aftermath of the Easter Rising in Dublin, Joyce wanted to rehearse the arguments about violence. When he has Bloom say, "But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life," he will be asked what the opposite is, and he will say, "Love."⁶⁹

This is a major argument being made in a minor key. Bloom's refusal to use a higher rhetorical tone means that his interventions stand apart from the conversation rather than become engaged with it. The others can become angry, or make fun of him, but they cannot speak without approaching self-parody. He, on the other hand, speaks in a tone that is lonely, melancholy, modest. Everything they say has been said before. Bloom speaks as though he is saying these words for the first time.

In this scene, when Bloom speaks, what we see is the importance of being earnest; all of Joyce's playfulness has abandoned him while Bloom is actually speaking. But, as though to compensate, or offer alternate systems, in the elaborate parodies of public speech and writing in "Cyclops," Joyce allows his imagination a soaring, trouble-making freedom. Not only do some of these parodies disrupt the talk in the pub but they disrupt a decorum on how to write about the martyred dead; they are full of mischief and they are desperately funny. Emer Nolan, in *James Joyce and Nationalism*, quotes from a letter Joyce wrote to his

brother at the time of *Dubliners*, saying that his pen "seems to me so plainly mischievous."⁷⁰ She also quotes him when, after the 1916 Rebellion, he was asked "whether he would visit an independent Ireland," and he responded, "So I might declare myself its first enemy?"⁷¹

There is one parody in "Cyclops" that would have especially helped Joyce's candidacy for "first enemy." It occurs just when the Citizen is shouting out some tired slogans. It begins: "The last farewell was affecting in the extreme."⁷² It is a parody of a florid description of the execution of Robert Emmet that slowly becomes a parody of the event itself. At the end of the previous episode, Robert Emmet has made a brief appearance when Bloom sees an image of him in a window. The last words of Emmet's famous speech from the dock in 1803 are, "When my country takes its place among the nations of the earth then and not until then, let my epitaph be written. I have done."⁷³ As Bloom sets out to fart, he uses these words, reserving a broken-up version of "I have done," until the fart has been completed.⁷⁴

Now, having connected a famous Irish hero-martyr with the act of farting, Joyce sets about making fun of his execution, an event that has been commemorated in songs written by Thomas Moore as well as by Hector Berlioz. The memory of Robert Emmet was venerated by many.

While Joyce's version of Emmet's execution is not pious, it is, in all its comic flourishes and deliberate irreverence, glorious. Among those who witness the execution in *Ulysses* are such unlikely Joycean inventions as "Bacibaci Beninobenone . . . Ali Baba Backsheesh Rahat Lokum Effendi . . . Hokopoko Harakiri," an "Archjoker" and a "Grand-joker," and a man whose first name is "Goosepond."⁷⁵ The knife to be used on Emmet is tested first on a flock of sheep, and there is a saucepan "to

receive the most precious blood of the most precious victim,”⁷⁶ thus making the passage even more offensive by connecting Emmet to Christ, associating God with the dead generations.

Since this was written after the 1916 Rebellion, whose leaders were shot by the British, becoming martyrs in the same tradition as Emmet, the sheer mischief in the passage is even further emphasized. Nothing was more sacred at the time than the names of those who had died for Ireland. By making one such execution into a hilarious spectacle, Joyce insists that what is sacred has an even more sacred need to be laughed at.

The description of the execution appears in one very long paragraph, lasting almost five pages, that ends with “the stern provostmarshal, lieutenant-colonel” who oversees the execution speaking in a Cockney accent. He is given a background in India: “he who had blown a considerable number of sepoy from the cannonmouth without flinching.”⁷⁷ The name given to him is glossed in *“Ulysses” Annotated*, by Don Gifford with Robert J. Seidman, as a “fictional name that suggests extraordinary pretension to ‘good family’ backgrounds.”⁷⁸

The name is “Tomkin-Maxwell ffrenchmullan Tomlinson.” It is difficult to see why Tomkin or Tomlinson might have been chosen. The name ffrenchmullan could relate to the revolutionary and

labor activist Madeleine ffrench-Mullan, who took part in the 1916 Rebellion, but it is hard to connect her with a man who oversees an execution. The part of the long name that jumps out from the text, for an Irish reader of *Ulysses*, is Maxwell.

Sir John Maxwell, who had served in Egypt and the Sudan, oversaw the execution of the leaders of the 1916 Rebellion, having been sent to Dublin in the week of the Rising as a military governor with plenary powers. He was in sole charge of the trials of the leaders, which were conducted in camera and without any defense. His decision to have so many of the leaders shot was soon questioned by the very British government that had empowered him. In Ireland, his name was associated with the executions.

In evoking his name, Joyce had to be careful. His novel remains set, ostensibly, in 1904. Putting the word Maxwell in the longer name is not an anachronism; rather, it is a sly clue that Joyce is writing “Cyclops” in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising and that his Emmet parody is a sideswipe at Irish martyrology at a time when it had risen to new heights. He does not draw attention to it, but the use of the name “Maxwell” is a small example of Joyce’s engagement with events in his own country as Ireland moved toward independence—and as he set about invoking the music of the future.



Fig. 2.1. Constantine P. Curran, photograph of James Joyce, 1904. The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.