James Joyce

A Portrait of the Man Who is, 
At Present, One of the More Significat Figures in Literature 

By DIJNA BARNES

THERE are men in Dublin who will tell you that the sweet voice has gone; and there are a few women, lost to youth, who will add: "One night he was singing and the next he wasn't, and there's been none since the like of it!" For the singing voice of James Joyce, author of The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and of Ulysses is said to have been second to none. 

The man who is Joyce, we once sing, may not come as a revelation to the casual reader of his books; one must perhaps have spent one of those strangely aloof evenings when, with the world at our feet, we listen to Joyce's songs, as it appeared in The Little Review to have realized the singing quality of his words. For tradition has it that a singer must have a touch of bard, a joyous putting forth of first the right leg and then the left, and a sigh or two this side of the clodger, and Joyce has none of these. 

I had read Dublineser over my coffee during the war, I had been on one or two theatrical committees just long enough to suggest the production of Exiles, his one play. The Portrait had been consuming, turning from one to the other, but it was not until I came upon his last work that I sensed the singer. Lines like: "'So stood they both awhile in wan hope harnessed to the groundless roar of those extremly large wains bring faction of the fields, spherical potatoes and iridescent kale and onions, pearls of the earth, and red, green, yellow, brown, russet, sweet, big bitter ripe pulpotised apples and peppers, fit for princes and raspberries from their canes," or still better the singing humour in that delicious execution scene in which the "learned prelate kneel in a most Christian spirit in a pool of rain-water." 

Yes, then I realized Joyce must indeed have been a singer, an extremely tender singer, and, regardless no voice can hold out over the brutalities of life without breaking—he turned to quill and paper, for so he could arrange, in the chaos of the universe, the abundant inequalities of life, as a laying out of jewels—jewels with a will to decay. 

Joyce, the Man 

YET of Joyce, the man, one has heard very little. I had seen a photograph of him, the collar up about the narrow throat, the beard, heavier in those days, descending into the hollow of the jaw to lose its root. I had been told that he was going blind, and we in America learned from Ezra Pound that "Joyce is the only man on the continent who continues to produce, in spite of poverty and sickness, working from eight to sixteen hours a day." 

I had heard that for a number of years Joyce taught English in a school in Trieste, and this is almost all of his habits, of his likes and his dislikes, nothing, unless one dared come to some conclusion about them from the number of facts hidden under an equal number of improprieties in his hearing Ulysses. 

And then, one day, I came to Paris. Sitting in the café of the Deux Magots, that faces the little church of St. Germain des Prés, I saw appallingly in the mirror of the window the tall man, with head slightly lifted and slightly
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turned, giving to the wind an orderly disatter of red and black hair, which descended sharp-
ly into a yellow-tinted neckerchief. He wore a blue grey coat, too young it seemed, partly because he had thrust his gather behind his belt, and partly because he had notice-
cd it, lay two full inches above the hips.
At the moment of seeing him, a remark made to me by a mystic flashed through my mind "A man who has been more crucified on his sensi-
tibilities than any writer of our age," and I said to myself—"this is a strange way to recognize a man I never held my eye on."

Because he had heard of the suppression of The Little Review on account of Ulysses and of the subsequent trial, he sat down opposite me, who was familiar with the whole story, ordering a white wine. He began to talk at once.

"The pity is," he said, seeming to choose his words for their age rather than their apt-
ness, "that I have done, sinlessly, in my book—or worse they may take it in some more serious way, and on the honour of a gentleman, there is not one single line in it."

For a moment there was silence. His hands, peculiarly limp in the introductory shake and peculiarly puffy, running into a thickness that the base gave no hint of, lay, one on the stem of the glass, the other, forgotten, palm out, on the most delightful :aliment it has ever been my happiness to see. Purple with alternate doe and dog heads. The does, tiny scarlet tongues hanging out over blood lower lips, drowned in a light wool, and the dogs so more ferocious and vivid, and the whole animal who adheres to his master through the seven cycles of the moon.

He saw my admiration and he smiled. "Made by the hand of my grandmother for the first hunt of the season" and there was an-
other silence in which he arranged and lit a cigar.

"All great talkers," he said softly, "have spoken in the language of Sterne, Swift or the Restoration, and the Chatsworth Beatrice White. He studied the Restoration through a microscope in the morning, repeated it through a telescope in the evening."

"And in Ulysses? I asked."

"They are not great talkers," he answered, "they and the things they forget. In Ulysses are all the things that is written, what a man says, sons, thinks, and what such testing, thinking, saying does, to what you Freudians call the unconscious."

"All psychoanalysts" he broke off, "it's neither more nor less psychoanalysis."

He raised his eyes. There is something un-
focused in them, the same paean seen in plants long hidden from the sun,—and some-
times a little leer that goes with a lift and rounding of the upper lip.

His Appearance.

PEOPLE say of him that he looks both sad and staid. He does look sad and he does look tired. He is the size of a tall thin man who has procured some medieval permission to sorrow out of time and is no place; the weak-
ness of one self-subjected to the creation of an over all shadow is his.

If I were asked what seemed to be the most characteristic pose of James Joyce I should say that he ate bread; turned further away than dignit and not so far as death, for the turn of displeasure, or as it is called, yet the only thing that all at like it, is the coat of a stricken animal. And this I should add—think of him as a heavy man yet this, drink-
ing a thin cool wine with lips almost hidden in his high narrow face, or, when drinking the eter-
nal cigar, held slightly above shoulder level, and never moved until consumed, the mouth brought to and taken away from it to the erect the sharp jets of yellow smoke.

Because he does not let you question him one must know him. It has been my pleasure to talk to him many times during my four months in Paris. He was often on the banks of rivers and of re-
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ligion, of the instinctive genius of the church which chose, for the singing of its hymns, the voice without "overswing"—the voice of the enucleus. We have talked of women, about women he seems a bit disinterested. Were I vain I should say he is after them; but I am certain he is only a little skeptical of their existence. We have talked of Ibsen, of Strindberg, of Shakespeare. "Hamlet is a great play, written in Ibsen's way," declared the young Mr. Ibsen, and of Strindberg, "No drama behind the hysterical ravings."

We have talked of death, of rats, of horses, of the sea; languages, climates and offerings. Of artists and of Ireland.

"The Irish are people who will never have leaders, for at the great moment they always desert them." They have produced one skeleton—Parnell—never a man.

Sometimes his wife, Nora, and his two children have been with him. Large children, almost as tall as he is himself, and Nora walks under fine red hair, speaking with a brogue that carries the dread of Ireland in it; Ireland as a place where poverty has become the art of scarcity. A brogue a little more "defiant than Joyce's which is tainted by preoccupation.

Joyce has few friends, yet he is always willing to leave his writing table and his white coat of an evening, to go to some quiet near-by cafe, there to discuss anything that is not "artistic" or "stylish." Caliban, he has often found him writing into the night, or drinking in a corner. Now I myself once came upon him as he lay full length on his stomach poring over a valve full of notes in his yacht for a project—"for," as Nora says, "it's the great fana
ticism on him, and it is coming to no end." Once he was reading out of the book of saints (he is never without it) and muttering to himself that this particular day's saint was "A devil of a fellow for bringing on the rain, and we want it."

However he is, will he come away for the evening, for he is simple, a scholar, and sees nothing objectionable in human beings if they will only remain in place.

Yet he has been called eccentric, mad, incoherent, unintelligible, yes and future-

istic. One wonders why, thinking what a fine lyric beginning that great Kael-
laison has given me in his imperfect addenda for foliage,—the thin sweet lyricism of Chamber Music; the casual inevitability of Dubliners, the passion and prayer of Stephen Dedalus, who said that he would go alone through the world.

"Ah, not only separate from all others, but to have not even one friend," and he, if we admit Joyce to be Stephen Dedalus' Satan, we would do.

"I will not serve that which I no longer believe where I no longer live—my home, my fatherland, or my church; and I will try to express myself in my art as freely as I can; and, if you can, as I can, under my defense the only arms I allow myself to use, silence, exile and cunning."

This is somehow Joyce, and one won-
ders if, at last Ireland has created her man.
A sketch made by Miss Loy in Paris of Joyce, who, in exile from his native Ireland, has continued, in spite of his many trials and reverses, to maintain his will. In A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Ulysses, there is no permanent significance there can be little doubt. "Cham-
ber Music," his first volume of verse, contains Joyce, sublimely in tone, but of irreproachable loveliness. "Dub-
liners," his volume of short sketches, was compared with the best of de Maupassant. "The Portrait of the Artist
as a Young Man," on whose perfecting he laboured ten
years, brought to the novel an interest in form, selection
and style, more French than English. "Ulysses," which
bears the posthumous designation of "Episode of the
Leaving of America," contains the same element of
poetry, and so has been the subject of a commission for
causing its suppression, is about to be published in
Paris. It represents, in form, a following and elabora-
tion of that method which Joyce first made apparent in
the "Portrait." It is a question in many minds whether
Joyce, in this new volume, has not pursued his theory
too far for coherence and common understanding.