FURTHER RECOLLECTIONS
OF JAMES JOYCE

Joyce was born on 2 February, Candlemas, of the year 1882, and I on 1 March, St. David's Day of the same year, so that he was my senior by twenty-six days. My book, James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses', appeared in 1934 when Joyce was still with us and, as some may remember, that book contained, among other matters, some personal recollections of the author of Ulysses designed to give the reader an idea of the man as well as of his work. Here I set forth a few more such recollections with the same end in view. They follow no plan, unless there is a concealed plan in the seemingly haphazard operations of memory. Should any of them appear trivial I entrench myself in advance behind Joyce's own doctrine, which was that a place where three or four roads meet is a good place to look and listen for talk and happenings that signify much.

As I knew him Joyce liked to talk about his work when he could find an understanding listener, and particularly he liked to talk about that upon which he was actively engaged, and I surmise that this talk served a dual purpose. It kept his mind fixed upon the matter in hand, and it provoked responsive comment which might, and often did, prove useful to him.

Understandably the talk in Zürich turned generally on Ulysses, and I can remember few references in that period to his play, Exiles. But later in Paris, in the autumn of 1933, he referred to Exiles in connection with my book on Ulysses. The reference is important because of the light it throws on the Joycean conception of sexual love (at any rate on the male side) as an irreconcilable conflict between a passion for absolute possession and a categorical imperative of absolute freedom. It occurred during a short stay I made in Paris on my way to Switzerland. I had sent the proofs of my book on in advance, and Joyce and Stuart Gilbert had begun to read them. For my short stay I was the guest of the Joyces.

There is a passage in my book in which I try to explain the
motives for Bloom’s conduct as, seemingly, a mari complaisant. Readers of Ulysses all remember that in the Sirens episode Bloom watches Blazes Boylan’s exit from the Ormond Hotel, well knowing that the organizer of Molly Bloom’s concert tour is bound for 7 Eccles Street, and that in all probability an act of adultery will there take place. What was to be explained was Bloom’s inactivity when, seeing that the drift of events is towards his wife’s infidelity and his own cuckoldry, he makes no effort to stem the drift. Rather he contemplates in advance the fait accompli with a sort of cool, detached fatalism.

Joyce said: ‘You see an undercurrent of homosexuality in Bloom as well as his loneliness as a Jew who finds no warmth of fellowship among either Jews or Gentiles, and no doubt you are right. But there is another aspect of the matter you seem to have missed.’

‘And that is?’

‘Have you ever read or seen Le Cucu magnifique?’

I told him I hadn’t and waited for the sequel.

‘You ought to read it,’ he said. ‘Do you remember I wrote to you soon after I came to Paris that Exiles was to be put on by Lugné Poë, and that in the end nothing came of it? You do? Well, it was Le Cucu magnifique that took the wind out of the sails of Exiles. The jealousy motive is the same in kind in both cases. The only difference is that in my play the people act with a certain reserve, whereas in Le Cucu the hero, to mention only one, acts like a madman. Make all the necessary allowances, and you’ll see that Bloom is of the same family.’

It was not difficult to see the family likeness in Leopold Bloom and Richard Rowan as soon as it was pointed out. In due course a copy of Le Cucu magnifique was forwarded to me in Switzerland, and sure enough there was the same theme—only heavily scored for the brass. Richard and Leopold provoke and let happen, whereas the magnificent cuckold stands by with his shotgun and his ‘Malheur à celui qui ne vient pas.’ Unfortunately it was then too late for me to make the desirable addition to my own text.

Apropos the said galley proofs: as they were read aloud by Gilbert or myself they were placed one after the other on Joyce’s knees, from which insecure position they slithered, as is their way, a few at a time on to the floor. As soon as Joyce stooped to pick up the fallen ones others slipped off to take their place. Joyce’s comment was:
'Galley proofs remind me of the persons of the Trinity. Get firm hold of one of them and you lose grip on the others.'

This theological image occurs again in a letter to me dictated to his daughter Lucia and sent to me shortly after I left Paris for Switzerland. Joyce was very interested in my working something about the Altkatholische Kirche into my record of life in Zürich. He felt that a picture of that noble city would be incomplete without such a reference. The relevant part of the letter reads:

The old catholics Augustiner Kirche are a good example of a Mooks gone Gripes. They separated from Rome in 71 when the infallibility of the Pope was proclaimed a Dogma but they have since gone much more apart. They have abolished auricular confession they have the eucharist under two species but the faithful received the cup only at Whitsun. I see no prayers to the BVM or the saints in their prayer book and no images of her or them around the church. But most important of all they have abolished the Filioque clause in the creed concerning which there has been a schism between western and eastern christendom for over a thousand years, Rome saying that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Greece and Russia and the East Orthodox churches that the procession is from the father alone, ex patre without Filioque. Of course the dogmas subsequently proclaimed by Rome after the split are not recognized by the east church, such as the Immaculate conception. See the Mooks and the Gripes [Note: This is of course in Finnegans Wake. F.B.] that is West and east, paragraph beginning when that Mooksius and ending Philioquus. All the grotesque words in this are in russian or greek for the three principal dogmas which separate Shem from Shaun. When he gets A and B on to his lap C slips off and when he has C and A he looses hold of B. . . .

Joyce alluded to the split of 1871 in the course of a conversation with me in Zürich, but all that I can remember of it (perhaps the question interested me little at the time) is his final word: 'What I can't understand', he said, 'is, why do they boggle at the infallibility of the Pope if they can swallow all the rest.' The Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church in its Irish form was a net he had flown by, but having won the freedom he needed, he could admire the Church as an institution going on its own way unperturbed in obedience to the law of its own being. 'Look, Budgen,' he said. 'In the nineteenth century, in the full tide of rationalist positivism and equal
democratic rights for everybody, it proclaims the dogma of the infallibility of the head of the Church and also that of the Immaculate Conception.’

Joyce’s attitude toward the Christian religion was twofold. When he remembered his own youthful conflict with it in its Irish-Roman form he could be bitterly hostile, but in general, viewing it as a whole as an objective reality and as epitomized human experience, and from a position well out of reach of any church’s authority and sanctions it was for him a rich mine of material for the construction of his own myth. Then he was a collector displaying all a collector’s ardour, as in the case of the Altkatholische Kirche referred to above.

Little as I suppose the Anglican via media would have appealed to his cast of mind, he must on one occasion in Zürich have attended an Anglican service, for I remember him telling me how well a certain consular official read the lessons. Only once did I see a Catholic priest in the Joyces’ lodgings in Zürich. When I called I found Joyce patiently trying to get a little Belgian priest to talk about church music, whilst the priest himself insisted on discoursing on the theme of ‘une mort très édifiante’ he had just witnessed. I felt that Joyce was not amused.

August Suter told me that Joyce accompanied him once to a High Mass at the church of Saint-Sulpice, and that Joyce explained to him (a Protestant) the meaning of each action as the Mass proceeded. When asked by August Suter what he regarded as his principal gain from his Jesuit upbringing, Joyce replied: ‘How to gather, how to order, and how to present a given material.’ A discipline worth possessing whoever the drill sergeant.

The cosmology, hagiology, and the sacraments of the Christian religion are built into the façade of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake for all to see, but it might perhaps one day profitably interest a theologian to inquire how far the rejected doctrines of the Churches pervade the inner structure of those works. For example: Is there a Manichaean leaning in Joyce’s ‘spirit and nature’ duality? Does he in his treatment of the mystery of fatherhood affirm or deny the consubstantiality of father and son? And what of the major theme of Finnegans Wake—the Resurrection?

For himself, as I say, religion was no longer a problem, but as a father (and Joyce was a good father) the problem must have cropped
up again in another form. In his later Paris period he told me that he had been reproached for not causing his children to be brought up in the practice of religion. ‘But what do they expect me to do?’ he said. ‘There are a hundred and twenty religions in the world. They can take their choice. I should never try to hinder or dissuade them.’ This was certainly true, for Joyce would never have denied to others the freedom he claimed for himself. But perhaps there are some situations where no completely satisfactory action is possible.

Very sceptical at first when I wrote him from London that I intended writing a book about *Ulysses* and the days we spent in Zürich, Joyce warmed to the project as it took shape, and when the book got to the stage of reading the galley proofs, he was positively enthusiastic. In a taxi driving up the Champs Elysées after a sitting of proofreading, he kept quoting bits of it from memory. And then: ‘I never knew you could write so well. It must be due to your association with me.’ While I was in Switzerland, in Ascona and Zürich, he dictated to his friend and *homme d’affaires*, Paul Léon, a number of suggestions which he urged me to work into the proofs. Some of these I used, others I failed to make use of, partly no doubt on account of my dilatoriness, but partly also because they were concerned with music or some other subject I feared to touch because of my ignorance of it. However, used or unused, I appreciated to the full the generosity that prompted so much proffered assistance.

For about two years during our stay in Switzerland, I met Joyce almost every day. Later, during his stay in Trieste and during the early part of his stay in Paris, he kept me informed by letter of the progress of *Ulysses*. For about five years after its publication, I lost touch with Joyce altogether. Then, hearing through Miss Sylvia Beach that I was in Paris, he wrote asking me to call. He was living *dans ses meubles* in the rue de Grenelle. From that time on I saw him whenever work or some other occasion took me to Paris and also on several occasions when he came to London.

I found the Joyce of Paris and *Finnegans Wake* different in many ways from the Joyce of Zürich and *Ulysses*. The resounding success of *Ulysses* had given him an air of established authority, and the task of composing *Finnegans Wake*, often amid weighty family cares, had taken some of the spontaneous naturalness out of his manner. But observers change together with things observed, and the flight of
time shows different aspects of all of us, though never what isn’t there.

It was some time in the early or middle thirties, I think (I can never remember dates: only occasions) that on one of our strolls somewhere near the Étoile Joyce surprised me by starting to talk bitterly about women in general. I was surprised only because I had never heard him talk that way before, for lives there a man who has never let himself go on the subject of womankind at some time or other? The interesting thing is always the how and the why and the how much. On the first of the two occasions I have in mind, he began with a bitter comment on woman’s invasiveness and in general her perpetual urge to usurp all the functions of the male—all save that one which is biologically pre-empted, and even on that they cast jealous threatening eyes. So far nothing unusual. But then he stopped suddenly in his tracks as peasants and country people habitually do when they have something especially weighty to communicate.

‘Women write books and paint pictures and compose and perform music. You know that.’

‘Yes, I do,’ I said. ‘And there are others who have attained eminence in the field of scientific research. But where does that get us?’

‘It brings me to this point. You have never heard of a woman who was the author of a complete philosophic system. No, and I don’t think you ever will.’

So that was it. The creator of Molly Bloom and Anna Livia Plurabelle could never of course be a misogynist. No doubt a recent sojourn among women who were laying down the law about God and the universe, or, still worse, attempting to put him right on the matter of scholastic philosophy, was responsible for the outburst. But what for me makes the incident particularly worth recording is Joyce’s designation of the demesne of philosophic inquiry as the one impregnable province of the mind reserved exclusively for the male. On the occasion of the second blast of the trumpet, I listened to a similar tirade on the same subject: woman and her urge to rivalize with menfolk in the things of the mind as well as to dominate them socially.

‘But’, I said, ‘as I remember you in other days you always fell back
upon the fact that the woman’s body was desirable and provoking, whatever else was objectionable about her.’

This produced an impatient ‘Ma che!’ and the further comment: ‘Perhaps I did. But now I don’t care a damn about their bodies. I am only interested in their clothes.’

Thus Stephen’s interest in the ‘handful of dyed rags’ survives his interest in the ‘squaw’ they were pinned round. And when Joyce said clothes I took it for granted, knowing his bent, that he did not mean those wondrous garments devised by Dior, Fath, and others for the social adornment of the female form. I understood him rather to mean those garments visible only on the clothesline or on privileged private occasions. Throughout his life Joyce remained faithful to the underclothing of ladies of the Victorian era. Readers of Ulysses will remember the important part these articles played in that composition whether gleaming in the gloaming under the navy blue skirt of Gerty MacDowell or ‘redolent of Apoponax’ in Molly Bloom’s bedroom. They flutter also through the nightworld pages of Finnegans Wake. They were to Joyce feminine attributes of even greater value than the curves and volumes of the female body itself and certainly, as appears from the foregoing, of more abiding interest. Indeed he used, in the Zürich period, to carry a miniature pair in his trousers pocket until one sad day, as he sadly informed me, he lost them. A great number of Joyce’s readers and admirers I am told inhabit the United States of America, and no doubt had he visited that hospitable country he would have been right royally entertained; and yet I cannot imagine his ever being wholly at his ease in a country where the word ‘drawers’ is applied to those cumbersome and uninteresting male garments called ‘pants’ by most of the inhabitants of the British Isles. For the word was for Joyce a word of power, and in it lay all the magic of the thing designated by it. To witness I call one of the pieces of advice he sent to me dictated to Paul Léon:

‘As regards the Nausicaa chapter you will receive a ponderous volume of some six hundred large pages on the origin and history of what he chooses to call “Le Manteau de Tanit”. He believes that this subject should be treated by you with immense seriousness, respect, circumspection, historical sense, critical acumen, documentary accuracy, citational erudition and sweet reasonableness. . . .’
And on the same subject in a further dictated letter: 'St Bernard wrote, "qui me amat amat et canem meum", but the love philter of Isolde is alluded to somewhere by her in W i P [Note: Work in Progress] with this free translation "Love me, love my drugs" verbam sap.'

It has often been said of Joyce that he was greatly influenced by psychoanalysis in the composition of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. If by that is meant that he made use of the jargon of that science when it suited the purpose of his fiction, or made use of its practical analytical devices as when Bloom commits the *Fehlleistung* of talking about 'the wife's admirers' when he meant 'the wife's advisers', the point holds good. But if it is meant that he adopted the theory and followed the practice of psychoanalysis in his work as did the Dadaists and the Surrealists, nothing could be farther from the truth. The Joycean method of composition and the passively automatic method are two opposite and opposed poles. If psychoanalysis cured sick people, well and good. Who could quarrel with that? But Joyce was always impatient or contemptuously silent when it was talked about as both an all-sufficient *Weltanschauung* and a source and law for artistic production.

'Why all this fuss and bother about the mystery of the unconscious?' he said to me one evening at the Pfauen restaurant. 'What about the mystery of the conscious? What do they know about that?'

One might say that both as man and artist Joyce was exceedingly conscious. Great artificers have to be. As I saw him working on *Ulysses* I can testify that no line ever left his workshop without having been the object of a hundredfold scrutiny. And I remember my old friend August Suter telling me that in the early days of the composition of *Finnegans Wake* Joyce said to him, 'I feel like an engineer boring into a mountain from two sides. If my calculations are correct we shall meet in the middle. If not...'. Whatever philosophy of composition that indicates, it is certainly neither automatic nor convulsive.

On one occasion I stayed the night in the Joyces' flat in Paris. Joyce was ill and looked it, and Mrs. Joyce thought that an extra man in the house might come in handy in case of emergency. The emergency arose at about eight the next morning. I went into
Joyce's room and found him short of breath, looking very pale with a cold damp forehead, and evidently holding on to himself very tightly in a state of intense anxiety. If I had known then what I learned later in Civil Defence during the war, I should have felt obliged to suggest first aid treatment for shock. Mrs. Joyce sent me for a doctor. Lunching with them later in the day I asked Joyce, then somewhat recovered, what the doctor had said, and Joyce replied that the doctor had asked him what he was afraid of.

'I told him', said Joyce, 'that I was afraid of losing consciousness, and he said that from all the signs and symptoms, pulse, temperature, etc., I had nothing to fear on that score.'

Unlike most natives of the British Isles, Joyce disliked and feared dogs, perhaps on account of his poor sight and the dog's unpredictable temper. He would never go in for his evening treatment in the eye clinic in the rue du Cherche-Midi until Madame had doubly assured him that the dog was on the chain. But he had a considerable sympathy for the cat with its persuasive manners and its compact self-sufficiencies. One of the waiters at (I think) Fouquets gave the Joyces a black cat and on my first visit to them after this acquisition I found Joyce in the middle of the living room putting on an act of homeless despair.

'Look,' he said, pointing to his chair on which François lay curled up and fast asleep. 'Since this animal came to live with us I haven't a chair to sit on.' I heard, alas, that François had to go. Unlike the London cat with his countless back gardens, the Paris cat has few free spaces where he can pursue his loves and wars and practise at leisure his fastidious sanitary engineering.

Once as we were walking up the Champs Elysées together, I pointed to a beautiful white goat harnessed to a children's cart and said how much I admired these courageous and inquisitive creatures. Joyce fully agreed and, stopping to contemplate the stately little animal, said he couldn't see why the goat had been selected as a satanic symbol. 'Hircus Civis Eblanensis.' There was a good deal of the surefootedness and toughness of the mountain goat in Joyce's own composition and more than a little of the relaxed vigilance of the cat.

The front that Joyce presented to the world was anything but that of the extrovert broth-of-a-boy Irishman of stage and screen, but in
Zürich he did occasionally exhibit a certain impishness said to be an Irish characteristic. In Paris I saw none of this. I have known him, for example, to tell stories about me to third persons (certainly not to my discredit: indeed they were designed to make me out a bigger man than I am) and then he would tell me what he had told them and laugh gleeefully, expecting me to join in the merriment. One of these stories was that I was a painter well known in court circles and that I had received an important commission from King George V himself. If I shared his merriment in any degree it was not without a mild fear that the story might get round, and then I should have to suffer the embarrassment that always lies in wait for the pretender.

Somewhat in the same vein, though quite harmlessly, he always spoke to me and about me as if I were a Cornishman, and that for the 50-per-cent insufficient reason that my mother was a Cornishwoman. I told him often enough that my father was a native of County Surrey and that I was born and brought up in that county, and further that I had spent only a few months of my life in the delectable Duchy. But it made no difference. I was still a Cornishman. He would begin sentences with such openings as, ‘Your countryman, King Mark . . .’ Or, ‘As a Cornishman you’ll . . .’ It was as if he wanted to rope me in to some select Celtic confederacy in which I certainly did not belong to be—as a Cornishman might say. But as Joyce himself said in one of his dictations to Léon, ‘We did not sing either “The Wearing of the Green” or “And Shall Trelawney Die?” in honour of our respective Irish and Cornish forbears.’ True, we didn’t. But that may be explicable in the words of Calverly:

We never sing the old songs now.
It is not that we think them low,
But because we don’t remember how
They go.

Joyce always held that the English never really hated the Germans even in wartime, but looked on them as belonging to the same family, cousins perhaps, who were doing pretty well for themselves, maybe a bit too well, on the mainland of Europe.

Joyce associated a good deal with such Greeks as were available in wartime Zürich, for he thought they all had a streak of Ulysses in
them. Although he knew some Greek he was not a Greek scholar by high academic standards. By chance one day I stumbled on the fact that this was a sore point with him. I told him that I left school and went to work in my thirteenth year, but that the only thing I regretted about my lack of schooling was that I was never able to learn Greek. He thereupon regretted his insufficient knowledge of that language but, as if to underline the difference in our two cases (or so I interpreted it), he said with sudden vehemence: ‘But just think: isn’t that a world I am peculiarly fitted to enter?’ As a work of reference for his *Ulysses* he used the Butcher–Lang translation of the *Odyssey*.

He joined Pearse’s Irish class in Dublin, but said of Pearse that ‘in a classroom he was a bore.’ He told me that he couldn’t stand Pearse’s continual mockery of the English language, instancing in particular Pearse’s ridiculing of the English word ‘thunder’. This was probably the limit, for as all readers of *Finnegans Wake* can testify thunder was for Joyce a word laden with very big magic. He soon abandoned Irish in favour of Norwegian which he studied to such purpose that later he was able to translate James Stephens’s poem, ‘The Wind on Stephen’s Green’, into Norwegian (as well as into Latin, Italian, German, and French). In any case Norwegian was for him an obvious choice as an alternative, for he regarded his native Dublin as fundamentally a Scandinavian city.

I have commented elsewhere on Joyce’s reactions to the criticisms of Clutton Brock and H. G. Wells, but his remark when I mentioned Wyndham Lewis’s criticism of *Ulysses* is worth recording: ‘Allowing that the whole of what Lewis says about my book is true, is it more than ten per cent of the truth?’

Joyce rarely referred to the work of his contemporaries. There is, however, a comment on Proust in a letter written to me in 1920. It reads: ‘I observe a furtive attempt to run a certain Mr. Marcel Proust of here against the signatory of this letter. I have read some pages of his. I cannot see any special talent but I am a bad critic.’ Joyce’s first and, as far as I am aware, only meeting with Marcel Proust took place shortly after the end of the First World War at an evening party given by a wealthy Parisian lady in honour of the Russian ballet, then all the rage in Paris as elsewhere. The evening wore on and Joyce, having had a few drinks, was thinking of going
home when in walked Marcel Proust dressed to the nines. Their hostess introduced them, and some of the guests gathered round to listen to what they thought might be brilliant conversation. ‘Our talk’, said Joyce, ‘consisted solely of the word “No”.’ Proust asked me if I knew the duc de so-and-so. I said, “No”. Our hostess asked Proust if he had read such and such a piece of Ulysses. Proust said, “No”. And so on. Of course the situation was impossible. Proust’s day was just beginning. Mine was at an end.’ Poor visibility for stargazers.

Very soon after I had made his acquaintance in Zürich, Joyce and I were taking an evening stroll on the Bahnhofstrasse when the conversation turned upon the variants of the comic sense possessed by different nations. Joyce retold me a funny story told him by my friend and colleague, Horace Taylor, at that time in Zürich, and as Taylor was an Englishman Joyce supposed that it was a typically English funny story. Joyce didn’t think it was funny at all, nor did I, another Englishman, for that matter, though I forget what it was—something about a man falling out of a window, I think. Then Joyce went on to tell me the story of how Buckley shot the Russian general in its original spit and sawdust taproom Irish idiom, a story which he regarded as exemplifying the exclusively Irish sense of the comic. He retells the story with baroque exuberance in the dream idiom of Finnegans Wake, following its manifold implications in the Taff-Shem Butt-Shaun dialogue, and the metamorphosis the story undergoes furnishes as good an example as any of the treatment the common stuff of life receives at Joyce’s hands in that composition. Here is the story, in substance, in ordinary language and in parentheses some relevant passages from the Taff-Butt rendering of it.

Buckley on duty in the trenches before Sevastopol sights a high-ranking Russian officer coming into the open (‘With all his cannonball wappents. In his raglanrock and his malakoiffed bulbsbyg and his varnashed roscians and his cardigans blousejagged and his scarlett manchkuffs and his treecoloured camiflag and his perikopedolous gaelstorms’), a general at least, and Buckley notes that he is about to obey a call of nature. (‘Foinn duhans! I grandthanked after his obras after another time about the itch in his egondoom he was legging boldylugged from some pulversporochs and lyoking for a stool-eazy for to nemesisplotsch allafranka and for to salubrate himself
with an ultradungs heavenly mass at his base by a suprime pom-pship...') Now was the time for Buckley to do his duty as a soldier. There's the enemy. Whatever he's doing fire at him. But one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and Buckley hasn't the heart to shoot a man in just that hour of need. ('But, meac Coolp, Arram of Eirzerum, as I love our Deer Dirouchy, I confesses withould pride-jealice when I looked upon the Saur of all the Haurousians with the weight of his arge fullin upon him from the travailings of his tom-muck and rueckenaesed the fates of a bossre there was fear on me the sons of Nuad for him and it was heavy he was for me then the way I immingle my Irmenial hairmaierians ammongled his Gospolis fomiliours till, achaura moucreas, I adn't the arts to. . . .') So far, out of sympathy with a fellow mortal, Buckley has just looked on and has done nothing. But when he sees the Russian general claw up a piece of turf to make his parts clean his Irish temper boils up. He goes mad and ups with his gun and shoots the Russian general, presumably where Frankie shoots Johnnie in the well-known ballad. ('For when meseemim, and tosfoklokken rolland allover ourlourd's lande, beheaving up that sob of tunf for to claimhis, for to wollpim-solff, puddywhuck. Ay, and untuoning his culothone in an exitous erseroyal Deo Jupto. At that instullt to Igorladns! Prronto! I gave one dobblenotch and I ups with my crozzier. Mirrdo! With my how on armer and hits leg an arrow cockshock rockrogn. Sparro! . . .')

With regard to the language used by Joyce, particularly in Finnegans Wake, it is sometimes forgotten that in his early years in Dublin Joyce lived among the believers and adepts in magic gathered round the poet Yeats. Yeats held that the borders of our minds are always shifting, tending to become part of the universal mind, and that the borders of our memory also shift and form part of the universal memory. This universal mind and memory could be evoked by symbols. When telling me this Joyce added that in his own work he never used the recognized symbols, preferring instead to use trivial and quadrivial words and local geographical allusions. The intention of magical evocation, however, remained the same.

In spite of his more than semi-blindness, Joyce had a natural feeling for the visual arts. He once asked me to paint for him a salmon (an avatar of H.C.E.) and I promised him that I would, but, alas, I
never managed to fulfil my promise. My only excuse is that a whole salmon is a very big lump of fish and costs a lot of money. Besides, my family seeing me come home with one would be looking forward to salmon steaks, and in all likelihood by the time I had finished getting the noble fish on to canvas I should have had to bury it in the garden. But of one thing I am sure: Joyce would never have been satisfied with a picture of a disintegrated and synthetically reconstructed salmon. He loved and admired the natural appearance of the fish. ‘A salmon is a wonderful thing,’ he said to me, ‘so full and smooth and silvery.’ August Suter told me that when Tuohy was painting Joyce’s portrait he started talking about the poet’s soul. ‘Get the poet’s soul out of your mind,’ said Joyce, ‘and see that you paint my cravat properly.’

But, as is well known, the art that made the greatest appeal to him, apart from his own art of words, was the art of singing—singing with any voice, but particularly with the tenor voice, as all his work bears witness. He could admire in a certain measure and some aspects the art of Count MacCormack, ‘the tuning fork among tenors’ as he called him in one piece he wrote and ‘the prince of drawing room singers’ once in talking to me. But his overwhelming enthusiasm was reserved for another countryman of his, Mr. Sullivan, for many years singer of leading tenor roles at the Paris Opera. This enthusiasm has already been alluded to by myself and others who have written about Joyce, but to what lengths it led him may be seen from the following description of a certain evening at the Paris Opera when Sullivan was singing the part of Arnold in Rossini’s William Tell. In one of his letters to me dictated to Paul Léon, Joyce said: ‘Perhaps Léon who is typing this will shoot you off a pen-picture describing my antics in the stalls of the Paris Opera for the scandal of the blasé-abonné, and the ensuing story in the press.’ Here is the pen-picture duly shot off by Léon and no doubt checked by Joyce:

Late spring three years ago [Note: That would be 1930. F.B.] J. J. coming back from Z’ch after a second visit to Vogt [Note: Dr. Vogt, the famous eye specialist. F. B.]—sight maybe a little better.

Concert of Volpi heard. Also much talk about a performance of William Tell with Volpi in the part of Arnold. Conversations with
Sullivan establish that Volpi had the entire score cut by some half of it and the key lowered by a half note. This Volpi performance is narrated with all sorts of compliments in the N. Y. Herald (Paris edition) by their official musical critic (M. Louis Schneider). Immediately a letter is written to him containing a wager by Sullivan to let him and Volpi sing both the part of Arnold in the original score in any concert hall—the arbiter to be Mr. Schneider—and the stakes to be a copy of the original full score, nicely bound. Naturally no reply from either Schneider or Volpi (considering Schneider had written that nobody at present could sing the part of Arnold as had been done by Volpi).

A week later—performance of Guillaume Tell with Sullivan. Sitting in the fifth row right aisle next to the passage your obedient servant next to him J. J. next to him, Mrs. Léon and next to her Mrs. J.—somewhere in the stalls an Irish Miss correspondent of some paper, and a gentleman correspondent of the Neue Züricher Zeitung.

First and second act pass with great applause, J. J. being greatly enthused. Third act where there is no Sullivan on the stage spent in the buffet.

Fourth Act after the aria ‘Asile héréditaire’ sung with great brio and real feeling by S. applause interminable. J. J. excited to the extreme shouts, ‘Bravo Sullivan—Merde pour Lauri Volpi’. The abonnés (this being I believe a Friday) rather astonished, one of them saying: Il va un peu fort celui-là.

Half an hour later: at the Café de la Paix. Great conversation in which S. joins after he has changed clothes. At the moment of parting the Neue Züricher Zeitung correspondent having been talked to all the evening about music approaches J. J. with the following words:

The Correspondent: Thank you so much for the delightful evening. I have some pull with my paper and should you wish I could arrange for an article or two by you to appear there about your Paris impressions:

J. J.: Many thanks but I never write for the newspapers.

The Correspondent: Oh! I see you are simply a musical critic.

Next day an article in the press. M. J. J. returned from Z’ch after a successful operation goes with friends to the Opera to hear his compatriot S. sing William Tell. Sitting in a box. After the fourth act aria he takes off his spectacles and is heard saying: ‘Thank God I have recovered my eyesight.’

I always felt that originally Joyce was of an open, impulsive nature, but as we all know natures have a way of being modified by experience as well as of being subdued to what they work in, like the
dyer's hand, and therefore I suppose that a spontaneous utterance of
the natural Joyce might easily be checked and stifled by an acquired
defensiveness. This is an attempt to explain in advance something
that occurred during one of my visits to Paris in the early thirties.
Joyce and I were alone in his apartment, and while I was looking at
a book during a lull in the conversation he broke the silence with:
'When you get an idea, have you ever noticed what I can make of
it?' I looked up and waited for him to go on, feeling rather pleased
with myself that I should have any ideas of such a calibre. But
instead of going on he walked back and forth across the room, looked
out of the window and changed the subject. I wish I had asked him
there and then exactly what he meant, for it has cost me a lot of
cogitation since then to arrive at a conclusion as to what the idea
might be. Quite certainly it was an idea having a bearing on Finne-
gans Wake, and an important bearing at that—something funda-
mental. The words, phrases, anecdotes, snatches of song, and such-
like that he picked up every day from somebody or other were so
numerous that he would have considered them hardly worth men-
tioning, and in any case he would not have used the word 'idea' in
connection with them. I come finally to rest on two possibilities.
He may have been thinking of a talk we had in a café near the
Amtshaus in Zürich. I told him on that occasion how much my
dreams interested me, and explained the difficulty I had in making
a written record of them. All the dream quality went out of them as
soon as I turned them into a string of time-bound sentences. This is
one guess. In any case I have always felt that at that session some
seed was sown that later was to blossom into the dream language of
Finnegans Wake. 'That was the prick of the spindle to me that gave
me the keys to dreamland.' It could be. Why not? There must be
germ carriers also in the realm of ideas. Or it may have been a poem
of mine I once showed him in which I tried to express a state of mind
between sleeping and waking. I called the poem 'At the Gates of
Sleep', and it ended with the words 'Sleep is best'. If in the first
guess, the suggestion was for the dream material of Finnegans Wake,
in the case of the second guess the suggestion would be for the time-
place to be inhabited by his '... twin eternities of spirit and nature
expressed in the twin eternities of male and female.' The quotation
is from Stephen Hero. Tracing a work of genius to its source is like
searching for the source of a river. Eventually we come as with Anna Livia Plurabelle to the principle of evaporation and condensation working through the sea and the sky. But in a rough and ready way it is true that the original inspiration for all Joyce’s work is always to be sought in the imaginings of his boyhood and adolescence in Dublin. The idea, of course, may have been in some word or other I let fall and forgot as soon as uttered, for, as he wrote to me during the composition of the Circe episode of Ulysses: ‘A word is enough to set me off.’ However, if both my guesses are wrong then Joyce’s moment of inhibition must take the blame for my vain cogitations.

I talked with Joyce for the last time in the spring of 1939 when, having a little money in hand, and sensing that the outbreak of war was near, I went to Paris to see the city all artists love before enemy bombs should mar her noble skyline. It turned out otherwise, but that is the way some of us foresaw it at the time. Joyce was living in a flat in Passy. When I called on him, a copy of Finnegans Wake fresh from the printers lay on the table. In the course of the afternoon he asked me to read aloud to him Anna Livia’s monologue as she passes out by day to lose her individual identity in the ocean whence she came. No doubt he knew every word of it by heart, and no doubt I blundered in the reading of it, but he let me go on to the end without interruption. It was perhaps the first time he had heard the words spoken by any voice other than his own. The last I saw of Joyce was his wave from a taxi late that afternoon.

I was to write an article on Finnegans Wake when I got back to London, but I found it heavy going with war a practical certainty looming close ahead. Later in 1939 Joyce and his family began that series of moves that were to end in Zürich in 1941. His self-exile in Europe may be said to have begun in ‘noble Turricum abounding in all manner of merchandise’, and there it ended. He wrote me, though not frequently, during 1939 from Etretat, from Berne, and finally (as far as my record goes) from Gérand-le-Puy in the Allier—about literary reactions to Finnegans Wake, about his family anxieties (both his daughter and his daughter-in-law were ill), but never a word about the war, not even the most guarded reference. His entry into Switzerland was referred to in the press. Then came news of his sudden illness. A paragraph in the Evening Standard announcing his death was shown to me in the dugout where I was standing by to
report air-raid damage. When I met Mrs. Joyce in Zürich after the war, she told me that during the day preceding the sudden onset of his fatal seizure Joyce had been to an exhibition of French nineteenth-century painting. Somehow there seems to me to be an affinity there, I mean between French nineteenth-century painters and Joyce, in the sense that all the work of his imagination and intellect was rooted, as was theirs, in a natural sensibility.