

James Joyce, 1914, Trieste

When James Joyce's short story collection *Dubliners* was published on June 15th 1914 it was the end of a long and tortuous struggle for the writer who had finished the last story in the collection, *The Dead*, seven years previously. In the end the choice of date, the eve of what came to be known as Bloomsday, was accidental. Joyce, for whom dates were significant, had hoped that it be published in May which he considered a lucky month. But it was another publication earlier in the year by *The Egoist* magazine - the first extract of his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (on his birthday February 2nd - as he was to remind the editor later¹) - that was the significant breakthrough. It heralded a remarkable period of creativity for the Irish writer. During that year of 1914, Joyce, as well as correcting *Dubliners*, finished and revised *Portrait*, wrote his only published play *Exiles*, also wrote poetry and the series of sketches later published as *Giacomo Joyce* and planning and began the writing of *Ulysses*. He did this in a city, Trieste, at the very edge of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, as a World War was beginning and surrounded by the tensions and disruptions that came with it. He was 32.

The final phase in the publication story of *Dubliners* began in November 1913 when Joyce wrote to the English publisher Grant Richards with whom he had had a long and ultimately fruitless correspondence about publishing *Dubliners* in 1906. This time he used the Home Rule political crisis as a topical peg to get Richards to reconsider and publish: "In view of the very strange history of the book - its acceptance and refusal by two houses, my letter to the present King, his reply, my letter to the press, my negotiations with the second publisher - negotiations which ended in malicious burning of the whole first edition - and furthermore in view of the fact that Dublin, of which the book deals with so uncompromisingly, is at present the centre of general interest. I think the time has come for my luck-less book to appear."²

Before he had heard from Richards he received an unsolicited letter from the American poet Ezra Pound. Having been encouraged to contact Joyce by W B Yeats, Pound said he would look at anything Joyce might send and possibly assist publication in England or the US with magazines with which he was associated. Some of these might pay, others - including a new periodical called *The Egoist* - were 'impecunious'. In any event it was an open invitation: "I am bonae voluntatis - don't in the least know that I can be of any use to you - or you to me. From what W. B. Y. says I imagine we have a hate or two in common: but that is a problematical bond or introduction."³

Even before Joyce replied Pound followed up with a direct request to use the poem "*I hear an Army*" in an anthology he was compiling and for which he would pay. (Yeats again had shown the poem to Pound). Joyce, encouraged by this interest, gave permission, sent Pound *Dubliners* and included his proposed preface. The preface was an updated version of his letters to the press detailing the publication difficulties of *Dubliners* called *A Curious History*.⁴ He also prepared a revised version of the opening chapter of *Portrait* and sent this as well.

Pound responded by publishing *A Curious History* in his own column in the second edition of *The Egoist*, January 15th 1913. He introduced it as having been received from an author of "known and notable talents" (<http://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1303822323812504.pdf>). *A Curious History* details the dealings with publishers Grant Richards in London and Maunsels in Dublin and their acceptance and then rejection of the work. It lists the various objections raised to elements of the stories and Joyce's efforts to compromise and his appeal to King George V in order to overcome one of those objections. It ends with his final fatal visit to Ireland to negotiate publication and the destruction by the printers. (If anything the account underplays the drama of Joyce's last days in Dublin; his pleas for assistance to Arthur Griffith and Tom Kettle; the action of the printers; the angry departure of Joyce from Ireland, never to return with his broadside *Gas from a Burner* written

¹ James Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver 12 July 1915, *Letters of James Joyce*, Volume 1, edited by Stuart Gilbert, New York, 1957, 1966. p 83.

² JJ to Grant Richards, 23rd November, 1913, *Letters of James Joyce* Volume 2, edited by Richard Ellman, New York, 1966 p 324

³ Ezra Pound to JJ, 15th December 1913, *Letters* V 2 p 326.

⁴ *A Curious History* in *The Egoist* No. 2. Vol. 1, January 15th, 1914 p 26

on the back of the now redundant publisher's contract as his parting riposte "and sign crisscross with reverent thumb Memento homo on my bum" (James Joyce, *Gas from a Burner*)⁵).

Pound responded enthusiastically about the other works. He wrote to Joyce that the novel was "damn fine stuff" and that he would send it at once to *The Egoist* for publication although "it seems a crime not to get you paid for it but you recognise the difficulties and the rows any publisher would make." ⁶. He would also send three of the stories to New York for consideration by H.L. Mencken's *The Smart Set* magazine

The Egoist, subtitled 'an individualist review', was edited by Dora Marsden and had just been relaunched with a name change from *The New Freewoman*. Pound had taken over responsibilities for the literary content from Rebecca West and the business manager who was later to succeed Marsden as editor - Harriet Shaw Weaver. (TS Eliot was later an assistant editor). These connections, first with Pound, then with Weaver, who was to become in future years his major benefactor and advisor, were to have a profound impact on Joyce's future as a writer.

The first extract of *A Portrait* was in the next edition of *The Egoist*, No. 3 dated February 2nd and the serial publication was to continue (with some disruptions) in 25 instalments until September 1st 1915.

Perhaps encouraged by this success, Joyce persisted in his attempts to get Grant Richards to reconsider *Dubliners*. Having sent Richards *A Curious History*, at his manager's request, he pointed out that it had now been published in *The Egoist*. Richards finally replied himself on 24th January.⁷ He asked about the status of the text and other detailed questions including whether the original proposal for Joyce to buy 120 copies stood. (He also suggested dropping *A Curious History* as the preface). Following a further exchange, Joyce agreed to terms on 3rd February. After another interval, the contract was issued by Richards. Joyce returned the signed contract on 26th March with some pages that had gone missing and the hope that the book would be published in May. Joyce corrected proofs of the stories during April but these amendments didn't make it into the final text. *Dubliners* was finally published by Grant Richards in London on June 15th in an edition of 1250 copies.

Given the trepidation surrounding its publication there was little controversy once *Dubliners* was out with most reviews admiring the writing if not the subject material of the stories. The *TLS* for example said that: "Dubliners may be recommended to the large class of readers to whom the drab makes an appeal, for it is admirably written."⁸. In *The New Statesman* the reviewer Gerald Gould, while considering Joyce a man of genius, also had misgivings: "Frankly, we think it a pity (perhaps we betray a narrow Puritanism for so thinking) that a man who can write like this should insist as constantly as Mr. Joyce insists on aspects of life which are ordinarily not mentioned."⁹. However it was Pound in *The Egoist*, not surprisingly, who was the most emphatic:

'Freedom from sloppiness is so rare in contemporary English prose that one might say simply "Mr Joyce's book of short stories is prose free from sloppiness" and leave the intelligent reader ready to run from his study immediately to spend three and sixpence on this volume.....It is surprising that Mr Joyce is Irish. One is so tired of the Irish or 'Celtic' imagination (or phantasy as I think they now call it) flopping about. Mr Joyce does not flop about. He defines. He is not an institution for the promotion of Irish peasant industries. He accepts an international standard of prose writing and lives up to it. He gives us Dublin as it presumably is. He does not rely on Dickensian caricature. He gives us things as they are, not only for Dublin but for every city. Erase the local names and a few specifically local allusions, and a few historic events of the past, and substitute a few different local

⁵ James Joyce, *Gas from a Burner* in *Collected Poems*, New York 1968, Manuscript in *James Joyce Archive* poetry volume edited by A Walton Litz, Garland, 1978. New material on Dublin efforts to publish *Dubliners* in Terence Killeen's article *James Joyce down and out in Dublin*, *Irish Times*, 7 June, 2014.

⁶ Ezra Pound to JJ 17/19 January 1914, *Letters* V2 p 327

⁷ Sequence of letters in *Letters* V 2 pp 327 to 334.

⁸ *TLS* 18th June 1914, reprinted in *James Joyce, The Critical Heritage* Volume One, edited by Robert H Denning, 1970.

⁹ *The New Statesman*, 27th June 1914 reprinted in Denning, 1970

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names, allusions, and events, and these stories could be retold of any town.He writes as a contemporary of continental writers.... He is classic in that he deals with normal things and with normal people. A committee room, Little Chandler, a nonentity, a boarding house full of clerks - these are his subjects and he treats them all in such a manner that they are worthy subjects of art. At any rate these stories and the novel now appearing in serial form are such as to win for Mr Joyce a very definite place among English contemporary prose writers." ¹⁰

However, the reaction from James Joyce's homeland was not as positive. When Joyce received the clippings of the reviews from his publisher later in the year he asked whether they had mislaid those from *The Freeman's Journal* or *Sinn Féin* to be told that there were none.¹¹ *Dubliners* was not to be a big seller. In May 1915, Joyce had received his first six months sales report, 379 copies had been sold in the United Kingdom. He had bought 120 copies himself. ¹²

Paralleling the activity around publication, for Joyce, was a remarkable period of creativity. When the opportunity came to publish *Portrait*, Joyce returned to the novel with a renewed vigour, revising and completing it. The composition of the final phase of *Portrait* was interwoven with the proper beginnings of *Ulysses* and the completion of his play *Exiles*. Much work has been done by scholars in trying to put an exact sequence on the composition history of Joyce's major works. For *Portrait*, Hans Walter Gabler examined the fair copy of *The Portrait* manuscript in the National Library of Ireland for clues as to its stages of composition and Rodney Wilson Owen in his *James Joyce and the Beginnings of Ulysses* used this work and a careful reading of other sources, letters, manuscripts and texts to unravel the order.¹³ Whatever about the exact sequence, it is clear that once asked by Pound for material Joyce had now a real deadline to complete the novel. The serial publication put its own deadline on completion and Joyce both tidied up existing drafts and wrote major new material - particularly for the novel's final chapter.

There is also convincing evidence that he changed the focus of the ending of the novel. He did this by leaving out material he had written relating to Gogarty and the Tower and also an exchange between Stephen and his mother about loss of faith. The decision he now made was to end *Portrait*, not in 1904 as originally planned, but with his first trip to Paris in 1902. This left the rest of his route to exile for *Ulysses* which he now began to shape. The first episode set in the Tower with Gogarty and with Stephen recalling this row with his mother and his return from Paris to her deathbed. (One remarkable manuscript, first discovered by Walton Litz, contains sketches of this material, written as scenes much like *Giacomo Joyce* or the early *Proteus* draft in the NLI.)¹⁴ (Appendix B in A. Walton Litz, *The Art of James Joyce*, London, 1961)) . This decision having been made the final Chapter of *A Portrait* could be finished. Its final pages written in diary form are almost rushing impatiently to the end. But they are packed with a new creative energy blending the external and internal and ending:

"Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

27 April: Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead." ¹⁵

During 1914 Joyce also returned to his play *Exiles* which he had begun in 1913. The play set in Dublin of 1912 involving a returned writer Richard, his common law wife Bertha and her would be

¹⁰ Ezra Pound, *Dubliners and Mr Joyce*, *The Egoist*, 1, No. 14, 15 July 1914

¹¹ JJ to Grant Richards, 2 February 1915 and 19 April 1915, reply 14 April Letters V 2 p 326 and 339.

¹² JJ to Grant Richards 7 May 1915, Letters V 2 p 340 see note 2 and Richards statement of account 31 December 1914.

¹³ Hans Walter Gabler, *The Seven Lost Years of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in *Approaches to Joyce's Portrait: Ten Essays*. Edited by Thomas F. Staley and Bernard Benstock, Pittsburgh, 1976. Rodney Wilson Owen, *James Joyce and the Beginnings of Ulysses*, Michigan, 1983.

¹⁴ Appendix B in A. Walton Litz, *The Art of James Joyce*, London, 1961. Also Part 1, Section 7 of *The Workshops of Daedalus*, collected and edited by Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain, Illinois, 1965.

¹⁵ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, London, 1916. p 299.

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lover Robert, Richards friend. Joyce described it as 'three cat and mouse acts'¹⁶ but the relationships it examines and the themes of exile and belonging it explores position it well as a transition piece from the final chapter of *Portrait* to the fuller vision of *Ulysses*. In that summer of 1914 as well as writing some poems, he finished and compiled the series of sketches about the infatuation between a teacher and his student posthumously published as *Giacomo Joyce*. Scholars have seen the form and content of these too as contributing to his approach to his next great work. The transition between the books is also seen in the text of *Giacomo* itself. with the girl having been given the first book to read: "She says that, had *The Portrait of the Artist* been frank only for frankness' sake, she would have ask why had I given it to her to read. O you would, would you? A lady of letters." And then later: "Gogarty came yesterday to be introduced. *Ulysses* is the reason. Symbol of the intellectual conscience...Ireland."¹⁷

Once *Portrait* was completed, he immediately focussed on *Ulysses* so as to be able to report to his brother Stanislaus on Bloomsday 1915 in a postcard written in German: "the first episode of my new novel *Ulysses* is written. The first part, the Telemachiad, consists of four episodes, the second of fifteen, that is *Ulysses* wanderings and the third, *Ulysses*' return home, of three more episodes."¹⁸

This postcard was sent to Stanislaus who was in an internment camp where he had been since January 1915 jailed while on holiday for his irredentist connections. So right through this period of remarkable creativity, Joyce was surrounded by the chaos of the beginnings of War. Trieste was situated at the edge of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, on the border of Italy and Slovenia, with its own dialect Triestine spoken, with German as its official language but with a large Italian speaking population and a significant Slovene speaking minority. The cultural mix was obvious as were the ethnic tensions even prior to the War. John McCourt has shown in *The Years of Bloom* that Joyce was, during this period, often confronted directly with the impact of these tensions.¹⁹

Joyce, although he took some private students, was mainly employed at the language school Scoula Revoltella. Throughout 1914 there were growing tensions between the Italian and Slav populations in the city. In March of 1914 the school at which Joyce taught was closed following a fracas where a student was hit with a revolver. After Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo on June 28th his body and that of his wife were returned to Vienna through Trieste. In Trieste they were received at the harbour and moved in solemn procession through the streets for a religious ceremony, the pageant filmed for an early newsreel.²⁰ It is not known whether Joyce went out to view the spectacle. If he had, it would have had echoes of similar ritual processions at home or the cavalcade of Queen Victoria that he had witnessed in 1901. (He recalled the Queen, frail and hunched, moving "in the midst of a silent people" in a 1907 Triestine lecture called *Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages*²¹).

At the end of July, Austria announced the breakdown of diplomacy with the Serbs and the move to military command. On 28th July war was declared. Joyce went to the British consulate with his son Giorgio and was assured that there was no reason for concern on the part of British subjects. However, according to Richard Ellman's biography, he then witnessed a clash between protesters and soldiers at the Italian consulate which alarmed him.²² On 8th August the wider conflict with the Germans, French, Russians and British began.

In early September Joyce was informed that he was suspended without pay from his school. His contract could not now be renewed, because he was not a citizen, until there was approval from Vienna. He was not re-instated until the following March (after a protest by his students). As a foreign national he was now subject to curfew. Although he had managed to get a part time job

¹⁶ James Joyce's notes for *Exiles* written in November 1913 and published in James Joyce, *Exiles*, New York, 1951 p 123

¹⁷ James Joyce, *Giacomo Joyce*, edited by Richard Ellman, New York, 1968. p 15

¹⁸ JJ to SJ, 15 June 1915 in *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, edited by Richard Ellman, London 1975, p 209.

¹⁹ Detail which follows mainly from John McCourt, *The Years of Bloom*, Dublin 2000. See also Renzo S. Crivelli, *James Joyce: Trestine Itineraries*, trs., John McCourt, Trieste, 1996.

²⁰ (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/europeana/record/08622/IWM_1046b)

²¹ James Joyce, *Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages* in *James Joyce Occasional, Critical and Political Writing*, edited by Kevin Barry, oxford, 2000, p 118.

²² Richard Ellman, *James Joyce*, Oxford, 1982 p 380

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writing correspondence for a ship varnishing company, these were times of extra financial difficulty for Joyce. McCourt says "Joyce genuinely suffered financially during these months and was qualified to tell De Tuoni at the end of December 1914 that "Whoever has the last sack of flour will win the war."²³

The war also interrupted his ability to send the Portrait extracts to the Egoist and there was suspension for a time from September as Joyce tried to find a new method of delivery. He notified, Harriet Shaw Weaver, the new editor, in November that the final two chapters were on their way to her through an intermediary in Switzerland. Unknown at the time to Joyce, Weaver was battling with printers to avoid censorship of his text and she would soon set out herself to try and get it published as a book.²⁴ Thus begins a professional relationship that would last for him the rest of his life and for her right up until her own death in 1961.

In January 1915, his brother Stanislaus who had been an outspoken irredentist was arrested and interned in Schloss Kirchburg in Austria, where he remained for the duration of the war. James Joyce took over some of his private pupils but this source of income was also dwindling as many had left for military service. Joyce's sister Eileen, who was married in Trieste in May 1915, left soon after as her Czech husband was called up for military service in Prague. Italy entered the war later that month leading to chaos in Trieste. Borders were closed and anti-Italian demonstrations began throughout the city. The offices of the Italian newspaper *Il Piccolo*, for whom Joyce had written, were destroyed during rioting and a statue of Verdi demolished.

His first biographer Herbert Gorman whose work was partly overseen by Joyce describes this period:

"Joyce, isolated, viewed by the Triestines with the mob suspicion that accompanies all wars and deprived of a great part of his livelihood, was completely disorientated. The war had nothing to do with him; he was an Irishman, not an Englishman; he was fond of the Triestines and old ramshackle Austro-Hungarian Empire; all his mind was concerned in his art: yet the war had plunged ruthlessly into his private life and destroyed that tranquility of mind that was so necessary to him. Silvio Benco, writing of him in this period, declares: 'One would meet him on the street walking, with his hasty step, but lost in meditation, his lips tight together in a hard horizontal line. He would bow and look at one fixedly, and avoided stopping or exchanging a few words. The official position of the Irishman at war with England was now that of a British citizen at war with Austria. It was not easy to accept and less easy to deny.' "²⁵

The introduction of conscription by the Austrian government led to the closure of Joyce's language school as both teachers and students were now headed for the front. Ellman quotes Joyce at this time as relayed by Francino Bruni:

"My political faith can be expressed in a word: Monarchies, constitutional or unconstitutional, disgust me. Kings are mountebanks. Republics are slippers for everyone's feet. Temporal power is gone and good riddance. What else is left? Can we hope for monarchy by divine right? Do you believe in the Sun of the Future? (i.e. socialism as in the Italian socialist anthem)." Ellman continues: "He was supremely indifferent to the result and, so long as gunfire could not be heard, to the conflict itself. But there was daily cannonading, and the city underwent four aeroplane raids. It was becoming apparent that he could no longer remain where he was."²⁶

A partial evacuation of Trieste had been ordered and Joyce made preparations to leave. He went to the American consul who was in charge of British interests in Trieste to get a passport. Then he needed an exit permit and got one with the help of two former students and his pledge not to take part in any belligerent activity against the Emperor. On 27th June Joyce, Nora and their two

²³ McCourt, 2000, p 243

²⁴ Detailed in Jane Lidderdale and Mary Nicholson, *Dear Miss Weaver*, New York, 1970.

²⁵ Herbert Gorman, *James Joyce: A Definitive Biography*, London, 1941, p 228

²⁶ Ellman, 1982 p 383.

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children left Trieste for Switzerland leaving behind his furniture, books and some notebooks and papers. (including the complete fair copy manuscript of *A Portrait* later given by Harriet Shaw Weaver to the National Library of Ireland) There was some concern when the train was delayed at Innsbruck but it was only to allow the Emperor's train to pass.

As Herbert Gorman relates: "It was a welcome release for Joyce. Though he was forced to leave his furniture behind him and though the future before him in Switzerland was nebulous and uncertain it was better than remaining a free prisoner in enemy territory and within the sound of guns. He had reached that point in *Ulysses* that reads 'A choir gives back menace and echo, assisting about the altar's horns, the snorted Latin of jackpriests moving burly in their albs, tonsured and oiled and gelded, fat with the fat of kidneys of wheat'. In Switzerland he could go on from there".²⁷ If Gorman is correct and Joyce now had Stephen walking on Sandymount Strand he was wrong about the wording. We know from the draft of that episode dated 1917, now in the National Library of Ireland, that it read as "a choir echoes words and incense, the loud Latin of priests, moving burly in their albs, tonsured and oiled and gelded, fat with the fat of kidneys of wheat."²⁸ He most likely though had already had Stephen reflecting in the previous episode that "History.. is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake."

Away from the nightmare that surrounded them the Joyce family arrived in neutral Switzerland on the 30th June. They spent the first week at the Gasthaus Hoffnung where James and Nora had first stayed on their elopement journey of 1904. Once settled, Joyce immediately wrote to both Harriet Shaw Weaver and Ezra Pound. He asked Weaver about progress on her attempts to get *Portrait* published and wondered if his novel was now gone.²⁹ To Pound he gave the news of his new work. He had completed two episodes and "It is a continuation of *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* after three years' interval blended with many of the persons of *Dubliners*."³⁰

Zurich was to be his home for the next four years and later his final resting place when he would arrive there fleeing another war in the winter of 1940/41. But Trieste and this time would always be important for him. It was thus immortalised on the last page of his next two major published works, in which he signed off with the cities of composition:

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:

Dublin 1904

Trieste 1914

Ulysses :

Trieste-Zurich-Paris 1914-1922

²⁷ Gorman, 1941 p 229.

²⁸ Early partial draft of *Proteus* is MS 36,639/07 A in the National Library of Ireland manuscript collection. For discussion of the draft see Luca Crisipi, *A first foray into the National Library of Ireland's Joyce Manuscripts*, *Genetic Joyce Studies*, Issue 11 (Spring 2011) and also Daniel Ferrer, *What Song the Sirens sang*, *James Joyce Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 1 (Fall 2001), Sam Slote, *Epiphanic 'Proteus'*, *Genetic Joyce Studies* Issue 5 (Spring 2005) and Michael Groden, *Ulysses in Focus*, Florida 2010.

²⁹ JJ to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 30 June 1915 in *Letters* V 1 p 82

³⁰ Ellman, 1982, p 383.

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Further Reading:

1. For Joyce in Trieste: John McCourt, *The Years of Bloom, James Joyce in Trieste 1904-1920*, Dublin, 2000. Richard Ellman, *James Joyce*, New York, 1959, 1982. Roger Norburn, *A James Joyce Chronology*, New York 2004 and the letters collections of James Joyce by Stuart Gilbert, 1957 and Richard Ellman 1966 and 1975.
2. For Weaver and Pound: Jane Lidderdale and Mary Nicholson, *Dear Miss Weaver*, New York, 1970, Forrest Read editor, *Pound-Joyce*, New York, 1970.
3. For the manuscript analysis : Rodney Wilson Owen, *James Joyce and the Beginnings of Ulysses*, Essex, 1983, A Walton Litz, *The Art of James Joyce*, New York, 1961, Michael Groden, *Ulysses in Focus*, Florida, 2010. Hans Walter Gabler in *Norton Critical Edition of A Portrait*, 2007 and essays by Luca Crispi Daniel Ferrer and Sam Slote in *Genetic Joyce Studies*:
<http://www.antwerpjamesjoycecenter.com/>
4. And James Joyce: the final chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916, the first three episodes of *Ulysses*, 1922, *Exiles* 1918, *Giacomo Joyce*, London 1968 and *Dubliners* 1914.