

# Joyce Meets Mentor

Owen Dudley Edwards

– Mr Joyce he said solemnly, I can tell that you have been out of touch with things for a long time. The book *Ulysses* was published in Paris in 1922, with your name on the title page. And it was considered a great book.

– God forgive you. Are you fooling me? I am getting on in years. Remember that.

Flann O'Brien, *The Dalkey Archive* (1964)

Even if we set aside the thesis that James Joyce was the innocent victim of a practical joke and wrote none of the books bearing his name, we still must contend with what divides *Ulysses* from us. It is the Dotty Book. It is the Dirty Book. It is the Difficult Book. It is the Dedalus Book. It is the Doomed Book.

And yet it may also be the Divine Book. And this may restore it to us, or restore us to it.

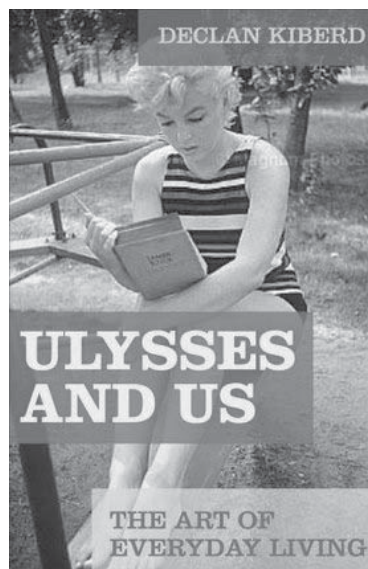
Professor Declan Kiberd's *Ulysses and Us* is one great book about another, and its publishers, Faber & Faber, have given it one of the greatest covers in publishing history. It shows Marilyn Monroe, clearly in her time as Mrs Arthur Miller, reading the final (Penelope) section of *Ulysses*. She is very beautiful, and appropriately underdressed. She is not a sex object but a reader interested and surprised by what she is reading. She does not quite know how to take it, and how much of it to take seriously. And she is you.

She is also me.

Your most obvious and possibly mendacious mock-modest denials (as to yourself) and dirty jokes (as to me) may have something to do with the case (once you get into *Ulysses* illuminated by Kiberd you find more or less everything has something to do with the case) but are among the disbeliefs to which we are

the suspenders. 'To' not 'of'. Androgyny is implicit in *Ulysses*, which links it rather neatly to John Buchan, whose daughter used to keep *Ulysses* in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* covers for fear her father would encounter the united horror of Catholic Irishry and pornography, two of the blackest bêtes in his nightmare's nest – and if he had, he might have personified Wilde's insistence that the lowest as well as the highest form of criticism is a mode of autobiography – about half-a-dozen more Richard Hannays and Mary Hannays and Sandy Arbuthnots, and Buchan would have been walking a Dirty Nine Steps – and as Kiberd shows, Joyce in *Ulysses* is 'appropriately citing

John Bunyan's notion of an allegory which personifies something other than just the author himself' (p.217). If we kept his eyes from the mirror of androgyny, Buchan might agree with Kiberd. *Pilgrim* also resembles *Ulysses* in being an allegory for you, the reader, if more crude than Kiberd shows *Ulysses*. Marilyn Monroe, of course, was insufficiently androgynous for Buchan. I like to think she would have charmed Bunyan. She certainly charmed his gay namesake, Mark Bunyan, whose *Yesterday's Blonde* triumphantly liberated her from sex-object status.



Kiberd's subtitle is 'The Art of Everyday Living' and that, Mark Bunyan rightly proclaimed, was what she sought in what need not have been in vain. Certainly her expression sitting in her bathing-suit (against a background looking creepily like the Edinburgh Meadows) seems to be startled at *Ulysses*'s relevance for her. Kiberd doesn't cite George Orwell's 'Inside the Whale' (it means more to my generation than to his, wise children that they are) but Orwell mysteriously anticipated part of his thesis, however vaguely:

. . . now and again there appears a novel which opens up a new world not by revealing what is strange, but



by revealing what is familiar. The truly remarkable thing about *Ulysses*, for instance, is the commonplaceness of its material. Of course there is much more in *Ulysses* than this, because Joyce is a kind of poet and also an elephantine pedant, but his real achievement has been to get the familiar onto paper. He dared – for it is a matter of *daring* just as much as it is of technique – to expose the imbecilities of the inner mind, and in doing so he discovered an America which was under everybody's nose. Here is a whole world of stuff which you have lived with since childhood, stuff which you supposed to be of its nature incommunicable, and somebody has managed to communicate it. The effect is to break down, at any rate momentarily, the solitude in which the human being lives. When you read certain passages in *Ulysses* you feel Joyce's mind and your own mind are one, that he knows all about you though he has never heard your name, that there exists some world outside time and space in which you and he are together (11 March 1940, Orwell, *A Patriot After All 1940-41, Complete Works*, XII. Ed. Peter Davison (1998), 87–88)

Orwell's perception was partly the public service of telling British readers to whom *Ulysses* had only been available since 1936 that it was a book for them. (Ireland, magnificently, never banned it all, on the same principle that Irish hanging was performed by the British hangman). War paper shortage cut sales savagely downward. Paperback texts awaited the 1960s. In the interval, Joyce became an academic preserve, and then a theme to park tourists. Kiberd (who towers Redwood-size amid the groves of Academe) demands that we rescue *Ulysses* from the specialists and the salesmen and shows how and where it can be ours. If we cannot save Marilyn Monroe, we can at least save ourselves from the commodification which imprisons us almost as fatally as it imprisoned her: she was a giver, trivialised, we are receivers, trivialised, but the dehumanisation is ultimately the same. And to Kiberd as to his master, Joyce's supreme biographer, Richard Ellman, *Ulysses* realises our humanity. Ellman's love of the book (I'm speaking from memories of our conversation now) owed much to his being a Jew, and

appreciating Joyce's making the redemptive figure of Bloom a Jew, an embodiment of reconciliation, of love, of affirmation of humanity. Essentially, Kiberd takes it from there. With the difference that he ( and I) come from the Stephen Dedalus tradition, Irish Catholicism, grimly aware of the accuracy of his self-baptism as Dedalus, artifice, deviance, a sense of unique salvation however modified in modernity. The Blooms that flower have everything to do with our case, if our case is not to become painful.

## II

Have we forgotten how to read? Adults use the charge to indict children, ignoring the astronomical totals of heptobibliophile hierophants of Harry Potter. The charge seems more appropriately directed at the couch-potato in middle age, brains suitably rotted by TV and tabloids. At least in *Ulysses* the characters pursue their banalities across considerable tracts of Dublin, in which their unity is one of experience rather than of entrapment.

If Kiberd is to enchant us back to *Ulysses*, he has excellent credentials as magician, among them the master-critical volumes on Irish literature, *Inventing Ireland* and *Irish Classics*, besides earlier now indispensable works such as *Synge and the Irish Language* and *Men and Feminism in Modern Literature*. There are minor masterpieces such as his chapter on Irish literary History in Roy Foster's *Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland*. *Ulysses* was a masterpiece born out of another, Homer's *Odyssey*: Kiberd's is a masterpiece born out of *Ulysses*. Each of the three boasts a hard integrity, taking few hostages, Homer's at times the hardest of the three (the bitter end of Alcinous's hospitality after landing Odysseus home, the excruciating protracted deaths Odysseus decrees on the maidservant lovers of his wife's suitors, the finale whereby the King's return to his people produces civil war so unrelenting as to necessitate divine intervention). Perhaps Kiberd might have made more of Joyce's other imitations of Homer, notably to Virgil's *Aeneid* whose chauvinistic pin-pricks against the *Odyssey* it plundered are the malice of a mercenary prostituting his art in servility to Augustus by investing a national myth for the usurper state. Joyce could have made something of this: Malachi Mulligan aka Oliver St John Gogarty would have made much more, had he been artistically capable of it, having



become obsessed with hatred of de Valera in his old age, so much so as to emigrate to the USA where he was dogged by industrious American students 'Are you Dr Gogarty? Are you the original of Buck Mulligan in Ulysses?'

Or there is Burns, whose verse shoots into view all over *Ulysses* but who has his own obligations to Homer's *Odyssey*, notably in *Tam O Shanter*, whose landlady grew gracious wi' Tam (Calypso), whose weather conditions rework those of the bag of the winds from Aeolus when the sleeping Odysseus's crew open them, whose unearthly bewitchments at Kirk Alloway begin, like Homer's high horror point 'The Oxen of the Sun', which continues with direct transposition of the court of Hades to the Devil's rule by music, confronts the temptation from witchy beauty with Nannie as a faster Circe, and of course maintains the Penelope principle.

Burns and Joyce make the same claim on the reader, in essence that noted by Orwell, you feel Burns's mind and yours are one, he knows all about you though has never heard your name, there exists some world outside time and space in which you and he are together. Whitman may have that claim, also Fitzgerald. Among Irish writers, Shaw and Wilde, perhaps. Kiberd has probably made more sense of the Irishness of Wilde than anyone living. He is never fully at ease with Shaw, particularly with the hard-hitting autopsy on rural Ireland *John Bull's other Island* (1904), and his unease leads him into a mis-label for the Englishman Tom Broadbent, whom Kiberd calls 'a liberal English unionist': Broadbent is of course a Home Ruler, by which official doctrine alone could he hope for the nomination ratified by the Parish Priest Father Dempsey which will ensure he becomes MP for Roscullen. Yet was Kiberd so wrong? From the viewpoint of the Sinn Fein abstentionists who would displace the Home Rulers in 1918, Broadbent was a Unionist, all the more when his real life counterparts extolled service in the UK armed forces in World War I. Joyce had known too many Home Rulers to believe them Unionists. But what of us where we are? The SNP calls its Holyrood opponents Unionists (who even more vehemently demand the term for themselves). Yet Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Tories are Home Rulers to every man of them, the most pathetic case being the Tories, intransigent enemies of Home Rule for Scotland until 1997, quivering votaries of the



Scottish Parliament where alone they can get Scottish votes today. Their bent, so to say, must be broad – if need be to the point of bursting.

Kiberd shows conclusively how hard Joyce leaned on Shaw's brothel-keeper in *Mrs Warren's Profession* to assert the economic respectability of Bell's Cohen in the 'Circe' chapter (really dream play, demonstrates Kiberd). The relationship of *John Bull's other Island* and *Ulysses* seems very close, on Kiberd's own evidence. Broadbent has been put in his mind by the English visitor inaugurating *Ulysses*' Haines, whose fatuities are as patronising and as polished as Broadbent); 'we feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame.' It anticipates Tony Blair in the pseudo-magnanimous meaningless concession. But if another Broadbent, Haines must have Irish counterparts like Shaw's Larry Doyle (Stephen Dedalus?) or his ex-priest Keegan (Bloom?). The two works stand in need of juxtaposing by Kiberd, all the more when Joyce seems to have leant on John Bull to such effect. Because Joyce kept *Ulysses* so Dublin, with so little allowance for its inhabitants often being rural-born Irish immigrant, we forget his own Cork antecedents. Just as Shaw's perfect touch holding rural Ireland paralyses our memories of his own Dublin limits (and self-imposed exile even from there for a quarter of a century). Kiberd excels on Leopold Bloom, whose intrinsic dignity may never have been so fully affirmed, except by Joyce yet it would be splendid to see what this Irish Catholic scholar would make of the lapsed Jew Bloom as literary descendant from an unfrocked mystical priest. The contrasts are as instructive as the kinships. Stephen, through the passionate and priestlike self-dedication to art climaxing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, might seem an altruistic figure of spirituality all the stronger for being deflected from religion. Yet as Kiberd stresses, for all the sympathy he may gain by conflict with Haines and Buck Mulligan, the famous dedication in real terms bred a selfishness greater in its betrayal than theirs (as when confronted by a starving sister). Kiberd, with an insight given to few, can see in Joyce's anti-clericalism the anger born of conviction that priests do not take their calling seriously enough. Conan Doyle would be a similar case, becoming a kind of spiritualist priest himself in the end. Wilde, the nephew of several Anglican



priests, bristles with anti-clerical reproaches, self-dedicating to Art (if with more humour than Stephen), and ultimately wins the redemptive crown of priestly martyrdom. In their ascetic life-styles Shaw, Yeats, O'Casey and Beckett are all comparable clerical candidates. The supreme hero in Shaw is not the antagonist of social convention (Jack Tanner in *Man and Superman*, Larry Doyle in *John Bull's Other Island*, Andrew Undershaft in *Major Barbara*) nor the woman who traps the men (Gloria in *You Never Can Tell*, Ann in *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara* in her eponymous play), but the spiritual force devastating in exposure of their sophisticated materialism and unanswerable even when comprehensible in their own faiths (Keegan, St Joan).

Joyce produces such a spiritual slant in the utterly unassuming and apparently firmly anti-spiritual figure of Bloom, and Kiberd establishes it magnificently. The call of the spiritual naturally produces startling theophanies – Wilde achieves it with the dandy Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband*, having previously endowed with it a status of a prince, a rose, a small child, an infant peasant and a young king – and O'Casey seems to have sensed what later Kiberd saw in finding spirituality in the absurd (Bessie at the very end of *The Plough and the Stars*). But Bloom is the supreme improbably saint, all the more because we know far more of his mind than of anyone else's – more than of Stephen's, for by now the officially consecrated Stephen's mind is forever on artistic parade, regardless of his earthy or physical self-betrays. Kiberd builds a strong house, unshakeably founded, and he needs all of its strength, for in so many minds Bloom is the pattern of human weakness, folly, mundanity. Orwell, for instance, typified Bloom in saluting the great, universally cherished dualities – Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Johnson and Boswell, Holmes and Watson, Stephen Dedalus and Bloom, Jeeves and Wooster (you might argue that Beckett thought about it in Vladimir and Estragon but

Joyce, being his Mentor, exiled Beckett's creations from Joyce country).

Orwell's diagnosis of Sancho/Boswell/Watson/Bloom/Wooster expressed itself in his famous essay on vulgar picture-postcards, 'the Art of Donald McGill';



There is one part of you that wishes to be a hero or a saint, but another part of you that is a little fat man who sees very clearly the advantages of staying alive with a whole skin. He is your unofficial self, the voice of the belly protesting against the soul. His tastes lie towards safety, soft beds, no work, pots of beer and women with voluptuous figures. He it is

who punctures your fine attitudes and urges you to look after Number One, to be unfaithful to your wife, to bilk your debts, and so on and so forth.

Orwell himself acknowledged that Holmes and Watson, while almost perfectly balanced, somewhat reverse the roles (especially in the early stories, Watson being the spiritual, altruistic, chivalric, even Quixotic protagonist at many times – to which we can add that Watson was in any case conceived as the kind of doctor whose patient's life is first with him at all costs, with Holmes the doctor whose research achievement may make the case a success even if the patient dies). There is the complication that the Sancho Panza figure is frequently in some sense a narrator and thus inventing himself, (Boswell, Watson, Bertie Wooster). Kiberd with his perpetually sparkling profundity is invaluablely infectious on self-invention, Stephen's by definition, Bloom's in his and thus our discovery.

As Kiberd envisions, in macroscope and miniature, *Ulysses* tells of journeying. So do the allied books: the *Odyssey* in the process of



inventing its genre, the *Aeneid* in its ungrateful emulation, Don Quixote's quests, Boswell and Johnson going through Scotland (for Boswell's and Johnson's separate accounts of that journey are part of the greatest biography in our language). Holmes's adventures (and as Edmund Wilson insisted, those stories are not puzzles or challenges to the reader but adventures in whose following the reader is enlisted). Wooster's and Jeeves's (where a country house produces as problematic a voyage among monsters and monstrosities as the Mediterranean). And that, surely, answers the question of how to read, and whether we can learn again. Think of these books as journeys – even if, Kiberd reminds us, 'The Wandering Rocks' episode in *Ulysses* holds a place of pride among its surgical instruments.

When a number of us, headed by the student who is now the illustrious theatre director Colin Teevan, put on a non-stop dramatised reading of *Ulysses* in Edinburgh's Bedlam Theatre, we found about half an hour before we were supposed to stage 'The Wandering Rocks' that it had slipped or splashed through the waters of forgetfulness and nobody had a game-plan for that book. A top hat, inexplicably lying in the wings, rescued us: each of the three of us around at that moment seized the top hat in turn, trotting while we read each time another character commenced its peregrinations, from the Jesuit Father Conmee with his soft banalities to the Irish Viceroy or Lord Lieutenant William Humble Earl of Dudley and Lady Dudley as they were driven in pointless splendour through the alien city. (The Hegelian synthesis achieved after Irish Liberation is a story of His Grace Most Reverend Dr John Charles McQuaid the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin being driven around the periphery of his archdiocese accompanied by a wretched curate whose breaking-in he was commencing. The silence was lethal, CO<sup>2</sup> if not indeed CO. Eventually, as the car reached the suburb of Goatstown, duly road-signed, the wretched curate proved unable to restrain a horribly embarrassed giggle. His Grace raised his eyebrows: 'You seem amused, Father?' 'It was only' gasped the unfortunate, 'that it was such

a funny name.' 'Goats are also God's creatures, Father.')

### III

Parody and pastiche (*Ulysses* is both) need more work as Art-forms, and just as *Ulysses* was pigeon-holed or prosecuted out of sight as blasphemy or pornography or parochialism, parody and pastiche are relegated to something

beneath the threshold of Awful Seriousness for the well-dressed reader. (Yes, I know the two words are debated lexicographically with scant regard for the absurdity of the debaters in classifying the absurdity of the genres. Let us agree that parody imitates a single author, pastiche implies a pot-pourri, so that 'Oxen of the Sun' chapter in *Ulysses* begins as pastiche, to create a general effect of modern English being born in Saxon literature, and advanced through certain other mangle-mangled authors in medieval and Renaissance

English, while parodies of Mandeville and Malory assert themselves: but even in mayhem among the moderns Joyce sometimes returns to pastiche in what seems originally individual parody, so that one passage makes bedfellows of Dr Johnson and his dishonoured patron Chesterfield. It isn't just an Academe preserve forbidding Trespassers: pursue your favourite author whom Joyce might have read and your chance of making an identification is as good as most aspirant Ph.D.s, better if your eyes gleam with the fun of the pursuit, beats fox-hunting anyway.)

Kiberd might be accused of overcalling his crafty hand if you refuse to Rejoyce, but on 'the Oxen of the Sun' he seems temporarily winded (rather than wounded) by the press of academic pedantry and concedes far too readily that the imitations are not up to Scratch so instinctive to the Academician. A heavy parade of the literary critical, including Some of My Best Friends, have raspberried the parodies (pastiche is bogs too Serbonian for standing). Kiberd evades their argument (admittedly often too general to confront) by a sidestep into other doubtful land:



The forbidden slaughter of the sacred cows is punished in the *Odyssey* by the thunderbolts sent by Zeus leading to shipwreck. Only Odysseus is saved, because of his pious refusal to eat forbidden food, much as Bloom pours away the unnecessary drink (otherwise consumed self-destructively by Stephen, Mulligan and entourage in the ante-room of the maternity ward where Mrs Purefoy is painfully producing her next). In *Ulysses* that shipwreck is telescoped with the slaughtering, for it is the traditional styles of written English which are both slaughtered and wrecked in Joyce's treatment.

of Shakespeare (and one assuming a good working knowledge of *Macbeth* as well as *Hamlet*) in the 'Scylla and Charybdis' chapter, on which Kiberd is justly eloquent, and invaluable to students of either Shakespeare or *Ulysses* (save that his reference to Wilde subverting his own thesis should not be the essay-collection *Intentions* but the essay-story on the sonnets of *The Portrait of Mr W.H.*). I have a particular kindness for that 'Scylla and Charybdis' chapter, the only part of *Ulysses* with a character I saw, and heard, the great Celtic scholar-librarian Richard Irvine Best, and can vouch for what Joyce somewhat tactlessly described as his piping voice. (And my father would retell Best's irritable 'that fella Joyce in his *Ulysses* has me saying "don't you know". I don't say "don't you know", don't you know'.)



Thus Kiberd on pg 212. But this cannot be called the whole Kiberd (or, given its exceptional deference to Critical Convention, nothing but Kiberd), since Kiberd magnificently refutes himself on the next page:

It's notable that neither Chaucer nor Shakespeare is given this derisive treatment, and that the parody of John Henry Newman is so straight-faced in tone and content as to be a form of homage.

As to Chaucer, Kiberd does his own genius less than justice: the authors imitated have to be in prose. *Whatever* Joyce was trying to do, he had no intention of wrecking *Ulysses* and the intended effect of this accumulation of styles must fall to bits if the ship becomes a flying-boat, not simply shipwreck but utter disintegration. Poetry flies. Prose doesn't. So no cod-Chaucer. As for Shakespeare, ditto, ditto, all the more since Shakespeare prose probably started out as parody or pastiche itself, in its finer moments. Also, Kiberd's whole thesis asserts that Joyce was quite exceptionally solicitous of the reader, up to but never over the limits of integrity. And Joyce had landed the reader with a thoroughly interesting discussion

any cod-Shakespeare in 'The Oxen of the Sun' would weaken 'Scylla and Charybdis', nobody more aware of that than the reader-conscious author.

But the giveaway is Newman, whose parody by Joyce is:

There are sins or (let us call them as the world calls them) evil memories which are hidden away by man in the darkest places of his heart but they abide there and wait. He may suffer their memory to grow dim, let them be as though they had not been at all but persuade himself that they were not or at least were otherwise. Yet a chance word will call them forth suddenly and they will rise up to confront him in the most various circumstances, a vision or a dream, or while the timbrel and harp soothe his senses or amid the cool silver tranquillity of the evening or at the feast at midnight when he is now filled with wine. Not to insult over him will the vision come as over one that lies under her wrath, not for vengeance to cut off from the living but shrouded in the piteous vesture





of the past, silent,  
remote, reproachful.

Kiberd with characteristic accuracy and clarity describes this as 'so straight-faced in tone and content as to be a form of homage'. Exactly so: never was Joyce more the product of the ghost of Newman's University, never did he testify more inescapably to the priest within him. Put the sentence in a sermon and not another word is needed. Yet its moral force, and its psychological accuracy, are matched by its clothing in Newman's prose, and Newman's atmosphere. We are there, at Newman's feet understanding at last how his real hearers must have felt. All this is subsumed in Kiberd's recognition.

But for all this unexpected piety in Joyce the exceptionalism is only relative. Joyce got Newman better than anyone else, and came from the college where the infection was most certain, but it asks too much to assume that such perfection happened in one case only and that Joyce handed all his other imitations with contempt. And Joyce was not going to lose sight of his strategy amid these tactical parodies: the parody had work to do in advancing the book. Carlyle chronologically precedes Thomas Henry Huxley by thirty years, but has to come a parody or two after him in *Ulysses* since Carlyle is above all else the man for speed (Joyce, pioneer cinema-maker, may even have recognised in *The French Revolution* the ideal film script) and at that point, with the Purefoy child now born, the gang of toppers must be got out hell-mell:

Burkes! Outflings my lord Stephen, giving the cry, and a tag and bobtail of them all after, cockerel, jackanapes, welsher, pill-doctor, punctual Bloom at heels with a universal grabbing at headgear, ashplants, bilbos, Panama hats and scabbards, Zermatt alpenstocks and what not. A dedale of lusty youth, noble every student there.

Joyce has Scotched the snake, not killed it. That's wur Tam. It's founded on exceedingly

judicious DNA from *Sartor Resartus* and from *Past and Present* but with the spirit, tempo and management of *The French Revolution* in ironic-triumphal procession and in dances we know to eventuate on the guillotine. And for the blazing ironies of doomed celebration Tam's the man, a thing Joyce would know only from returns to a beloved text. It makes perfect sense. Carlyle seems to have fascinated adolescent Catholics from Charles Gavan Duffy to Hilaire Belloc, perhaps by the force of his denial of so many conventions and the search for a more profound authority. And while we're there, d'ye notice the collective noun, born of Dedalus to pluralise the Stephanic train? Carlyle is your true master of neologisms.

But comparable cases can be made for most, possibly even all, of the major parodies in 'Oxen'. Its Macauley, based on the opening of the trial of Warren Hastings, is unbelievably near the mark, again relishing the prose, with repetition of Macauley's use of 'voluptuous' itself hallmarking the nature of that style, which Macauley's greatest biographer, John Clive, would in 1973 single out as the adjective to define it. The use of Thomas Henry Huxley (which eludes most Joycean commentators, casualties of the two-cultures gap) admirably demonstrates (above all for this Darwinian year) how Darwin's leading publicist combined exactly the proportion of scientific

vocabulary to keep the common reader in possession of his argument. And Joyce, like all streetwise Dublin jackeens, was fearful of being called soft, and so greatly limited his admission of literary likings, while emphasising dislikes. He made much of disliking Addison as a man, but the Addison (or Addison-and-Steele) parody is far too skilled to be dismissed as dislike. If there was dislike, it at least showed its liking for its mastery of the dislikeable: 'Our worthy acquaintance, Mr Malachi Mulligan, now appeared in the doorway' sets the teeth perfectly on edge with the threadbare concealment of condescension. In the Macauley parody 'the primrose elegance and townbred manners of Malachi Roland St John Mulligan' arises from an irony as caustic in the original 'Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing',



written by Macauley for an audience in 1841 who would remember that Prince, enthroned as George IV, conspicuous by his gross belly and greasy gentility. Once again, Joyce was putting his own intentions into hands he well knew for the skill of their service.

What brought Kiberd to follow the pack, for once, in undervaluing *Ulysses*, was his devotion to the late Edward Said, a personal friend and benefactor to him (as blurb-quotes for Kiberd's earlier works will show). The devotion is admirable but should not be allowed to impede the disciple's work. Here, then, is Kiberd's excess of Saidism, ever ready to burn everything English except their boats:

The anthology on which he based many of his parodies was made by William Peacock. Designed to illustrate Darwinian notions of evolution, it was a smug collection of the best that had been thought and said over the centuries in which English developed as a modern literary language. Such anthologies were often brought to places like colonial India or colonial Ireland, to be studied there by native elites who might learn by imitating English masters how to assimilate themselves to the project of the British Empire. Like readers of this episode, students were asked in exams to identify the author of an 'unseen' passage, or to make an educated guess based on the period style of the sample. Versions of these anthologies, first tested in the colonies, would in time be brought home to Britain, for use in classrooms to initiate scholarship boys and girls from the lower orders in the classics of civilisation.

Joyce's aim was to escape being 'captured' by such systems and to produce a subversive reverse anthology of his own. . . . If anthologies of both British and native art were used by the imperial powers on the periphery of their global holdings, what Joyce attempts here is a radical inversion of the whole process. One of the objects right through *Ulysses* was to make his book unassimilable to such an anthology by refusing to settle into a single 'hallmark' style. (pp212–23)

Well, it did, therefore, prove assimilable into twenty pages of Dwight Macdonald's anthology *Parodies* (1960), the better to clench the

imperial hand of the *New Yorker* on the US cultural domain. And while Joyce may have congratulated himself on the improbability of *Ulysses* being anthologised by respectable English publishers, he would have known all too well that Peacock's publisher was most unlikely to have been trying his anthology out on the Empire before letting it loose on John Bull's proletariat, since the publisher was his own, Grant Richards, who after long and bitter controversy finally brought out *Dubliners* in 1914. Kiberd is absolutely right about the imperial project, as Macauley's career shows (although few Victorians would have agreed with Macauley's insistence that the imperial aim must be a racial equality with ultimate meritocratic succession). But where does this get us? The main effect of Joyce's parodies of *Masters of English Literature* (a title used for a best-selling university textbook by an Irish nationalist and Home Rule MP, Stephen Gwynn, whose grandfather had been transported for High Treason) would have been to send readers into paroxysms of laughter if they knew the original and to whet their appetites for discovery if they did not. A really good parody is a work of love. When G. K. Chesterton rewrote Old King Cole in the style of the young Yeats, his effect was to make readers think how clever Chesterton was, and how entrancing Yeats could be.

#### IV

Yet my divergence from Kiberd here is relative. His Saidism has validity in the longer perspective. It is too much to ask of us to believe that a roaring egoist like Joyce would deliberately write what he intended to be a masterpiece badly for 60 out of its 950 pages, as though he was selling it with 6% off, cheesemonger style, the cheese being off as much as the price. Your man Joyce was hard cheese.

That Joyce closed up shop in Ireland and sealed up the premises firmly marked '1904' does not lessen his Irish nationalism, which brings Kiberd into his element. There is some faint yearning in Kiberd for Joyce to acknowledge affinity with the leaders of the Easter Week Rising of 1916, though not with the Rising itself, which Joyce clearly repudiated as he repudiated its hideous parent, the First World War. Kiberd might have taken it further: Joyce was after all the product of the same Irishness from the same time as they, his flickering sympathy with Fenians as failures haunts the occasional



passages in *Ulysses* whence we might grant him a touch of kinship with Tom Clarke as a memorialist of imprisonment, though never as a dynamitard or obsessive Anglophobe; Joyce shared conviction of the necessity of Socialism with Connolly but rejected his violent revolution as he would personally reject Lenin's. He would have liked Pearse's martyr-search on behalf of Gaelic art though he would never have joined it; he would probably have been interested in Thomas McDonagh's anxiety to make poetic translation catch rhyming vowels: he would have known what Plunkett meant with his apparent worship of the crucified Christ in pantheistic epiphanies (the poem 'I See his Blood upon the Rose'). Whatever their differences, they were, like him, seekers for a new Ireland rather than a remade old one, but he was not fool enough to have his dreams born in bloodshed. He had far less basis for sympathy with the Ireland that emerged in 1922 led by the anti-Jewish Arthur Griffith, with Oliver St John Gogarty evolved from the Malachi (Regency Buck/Oliver for Roland) Mulligan of *Ulysses* into a cultural (but likewise anti-Jewish) Tammany Boss, decreeing a Senate seat for Yeats as though he were Prime Minister the Marquis of Salisbury making a Poet Laureate of Alfred Austin, which Yeats would pay off with seventeen Gogarty poems in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936). Maybe Kiberd has something in his dislike of anthologies after all Peacock's is more justifiably smug alongside Yeats's.

Whatever happens, Kiberd's success in liberating *Ulysses* seems certain, if we will but make him our Mentor to accompany our next resort to it. It is hard to resist a call insisting that Joyce 'wished only to capture the poetry

of everyday life' and confident that the reader fo *Ulysses* does not need more education 'to understand Stephen's references, but Stephen who needs to be less learned (pp. 348, 349.)

Joyce's project was indeed to rejoin the sacred to the everyday.

Whenever he heard intellectuals using pretentious phrases, he said: 'Don't you just wish they'd talk about turnips?' The official churches have made the same terrible error as the writers of modern literature: they had removed their special activities from the practice of everyday life. (p. 351.)



Mentor. Mentor in the *Odyssey* is a male disguise for the goddess Athena (or Minerva as Joyce Latin-locked, would have known

her). She/he does not seem to have a part in *Ulysses*, unless Joyce's old milkwoman, already saddled with personifying Ireland be further recruited. Athena (except when getting down to bloodshed with the boys) is the most likeable deity in the *Odyssey*. Both there and elsewhere she seems the only case of a god making a real friendship with a mortal, not for sexual or political or vain payoff. And Odysseus is almost the one Greek hero devoid of divine ancestry, his resource being entirely human in genealogical origin. Bloom, so to say, is his own man, proud of his Irishness and his Jewishness, but claiming no unearned bonus from either.

But I think he – and even the Joyce who created him to rescue that creator in his Dedalus epiphany – would be dutifully and even devoutly grateful to the Mentor who has come to rescue them.

