



criticism is more valuable than a technical one because it is more inclusive. In criticism of Joyce a moral judgement is the only judgement because a technical judgement is not only irrelevant, it is misleading. It is misleading because it distracts from an attempt to reply to another, and a very different, moral judgement—D. H. Lawrence's 'My God, what a clumsy *olla putrida* James Joyce is! Nothing but old fags and cabbage-stumps of quotations from the Bible and the rest, stewed in the juice of deliberate, journalistic dirty-mindedness,—what old and hard-worked staleness, masquerading as the all-new!' It distracts from a firm realization that *Finnegan's Wake* is gibberish.

*Finnegan's Wake* fails even in Mr. Eliot's own minimal requirement of literature—'to communicate before it is understood.' The fact is so obvious that it is rarely stated. The function of an 'introducer' of Joyce should not be to refer the reader to *An Exagmination of Work in Progress* but should be to explain to him how the change from the earlier to the later prose took place. Such an explanation is contained in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in a passage which Mr. Eliot includes in his selection. Stephen is replying to Cranly, who has been questioning him why he left the Church: 'Look here, Cranly, he said. You have asked me what I would do and what I would not do. I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use, silence, exile and cunning.'

I would not be misunderstood. It is not my place to comment here on Joyce's loss of faith *as a Catholic*: I am commenting on his loss of faith *as a novelist*. It is his rejection of his place in a social group, of which Catholicism and Irish politics were a part, that is his supreme sacrilege *as a novelist*. The work of most modern novelists suffers because, through no fault of their own, they are *déracinés*. Joyce however deliberately shut himself off from cultural milieu with which he was in sympathetic contact. He refused to suffer the first travails of a novelist, the agony of sensitivity. That he possessed such powers of sensitivity is evident from another passage in *Portrait of the Artist* quoted by Mr. Eliot:

'Dante stared across the table, her cheeks shaking. Mr. Casey struggled up from his chair and bent across the table towards her, scraping the air from before his eyes with one hand as though he were tearing aside a cobweb.

— No God for Ireland! he cried. We have had too much God in Ireland. Away with God!

— Blasphemer! Devil! screamed Dante, starting to her feet and almost spitting in his face.

Uncle Charles and Mr. Dedalus pulled Mr. Casey back into his chair again, talking to him from both sides reasonably. He stared before him out of his dark flaming eyes, repeating:

— Away with God, I say!

Dante shoved her chair violently aside and left the table, upsetting her napkin ring which rolled along the carpet and came to rest against the foot of an easy-chair. Mr. Dedalus rose quickly and followed her towards the door. At the door Dante turned round violently and shouted down the room, her cheeks flushed and quivering with rage:

— Devil out of hell! We won! We crushed him to death! Fiend!

The door slammed behind her.

Mr. Casey, freeing his arms from his holders, suddenly bowed his head on his hands with a sob of pain.

— Poor Parnell! he cried loudly. My dead king!

He sobbed loudly and bitterly.

Stephen, raising his terrorstricken face, saw that his father's eyes were full of tears.'

Joyce is guilty of surrendering the undoubted gifts displayed here for a life of 'silence, exile and cunning,' and contents himself with recording his 'stream of consciousness' and with concocting multi-stratified puns. For with the rejection of the cultural group there goes, in Joyce, a rejection, or subjection, of the moral sense. In the Joyce of *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist* the sense of moral values is very strong: it departs gradually in *Ulysses* as the 'stream of consciousness' overcomes it. (Contrast V. Woolf, who never at any time in her novels rejected standards of value because she never at any time possessed them). One may cite the 'Dance of the Deadly Sins' passage from *Portrait of the Artist* to acquit Joyce of Lawrence's charge of 'deliberate, journalistic dirty-mindedness':

'Creatures were in the field: one, three, six: creatures were moving in the field, hither and thither. Goatish creatures with human faces, hornybrowed, lightly bearded and grey as india-rubber. The malice of evil glittered in their hard eyes, as they moved hither and thither, trailing their long tails behind them. A rictus of cruel malignity lit up greyly their old bony faces.

One was clasping about his ribs a torn flannel waistcoat, another complained monotonously as his beard stuck in the tufted reeds. Soft language issued from their spittleless lips as they swished in slow circles round and round the field, winding hither and thither through the reeds, dragging their long tails amid the rattling canisters. They moved in slow circles, circling closer and closer to enclose, soft language issuing from their lips, their long swishing tails besmeared with stale shite, thrusting upwards their terrific faces.'

As a piece of nervous (in the nineteenth century sense) imaginative writing it is superb, and in its awareness of Evil (with a capital E), in its positive statement of negative values, it most closely resembles the spirit of mediaeval goliardic poetry.

To emphasize more clearly that a loss of faith as a Catholic cannot always be equated with a loss of faith as a novelist, James Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* may be cited. Though Mr. Farrell has left the Church and has become a Communist, he has not cut himself off from sensitive contact with the social group which he describes, nor has his novelist's sense of moral values been impaired, as is clearly shown in the description of the rape at the end of *Young Manhood* and by the deep religious feeling in the whole of the *Judgement Day* section.

To return to Mr. Eliot's introduction of Joyce. In times when critical standards are so uncertain that the critic cannot advance without begging a great many questions (as I have done), when, in such an instance as this, a critic feels bound to state explicitly his general conceptions of what the novel ought to be (or at least ought to have) before he can proceed to a particular, detailed analysis, it is to be deplored that a critic of such standing as Mr. Eliot does not make his critical judgements with more sureness, firmness and precision. His introductory note leaves the unpleasant impression that Joyce it to be considered as another of Mr. Eliot's perverse addictions, and is to be taken together with Marie Lloyd, Nellie Wallace, Little Tich, Camembert and Kipling.

A final note. Might I suggest to Messrs. Faber and Faber that a cheap reprint of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, would be the most satisfactory introduction to James Joyce for the ordinary reader.

ANTHONY BIRRELL.