

EXTRACTS from PRESS NOTICES

OF

ULYSSES

By JAMES JOYCE

MR. VALERY LARBAUD in **LA NOUVELLE REVUE FRANCAISE**: Depuis deux ou trois ans James Joyce a obtenu, parmi les gens de lettres de sa génération, une notoriété extraordinaire . . . il n'y a pas d'exagération à dire que, parmi les gens du métier son nom est aussi connu et ses ouvrages aussi discutés que peuvent l'être, parmi les scientifiques, les noms et les théories de Freud et de Einstein. . . Je crois que l'audace et la dureté avec lesquelles Joyce décrit et met en scène les instincts réputés les plus bas de la nature humaine lui viennent de l'exemple que lui ont donné les grands casuistes de la Compagnie. . . De ces grands casuistes, Joyce a la froideur intrépide, et à l'égard des faiblesses de la chair la même absence de tout respect humain. . . Quand on songe à la discipline à laquelle l'auteur s'est soumis, on se demande comment a pu sortir, de ce formidable travail d'angencement, une œuvre aussi vivante, aussi émouvante, aussi humaine. . . L'auteur n'a jamais perdu de vue l'humanité de ses personnages, tout ce mélange de qualités et de défauts, de bassesse et de grandeur dont il sont faites; l'homme, la créature de chair, parcourant sa petite journée. . .

MR. EDMOND JALOUX in the **REVUE DE PARIS**: La surprise que l'on éprouve en lisant *Ulysses* provient de ce que les œuvres littéraires, depuis trois siècles, ont en quelque sorte divisé l'esprit humain pour mieux régner sur lui. Ces compartiments logiques établis dans le domaine de la vie mentale ont, en effet, aidé puissamment à la diffusion de la littérature. Mais James Joyce remonte directement à l'origine de tout, c'est-à-dire à l'homme. Son œuvre, qui ouvre si brusquement quelques-unes des portes de l'avenir, semble provenir directement du seizième siècle; on y trouve l'aspect encyclopédique des grandes œuvres de cette époque, leur souci de connaître la vérité, leur volonté de pénétrer la vie tout entière et ses sciences au moyen d'un truchement spirituel, cette horreur de la dissimulation, de l'escamotage qui sont si sensibles chez un Montaigne, chez un Rabelais. C'est surtout à celui-ci que James Joyce fait penser—autant qu'un Irlandais de la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, à la fois réaliste et symboliste peut ressembler à un Tourangeau de la Renaissance—et alors les audaces, les excès, les bizarreries apparentes cessent d'en cacher la vaste et véritable beauté.

MR. EZRA POUND in the **MERCURE DE FRANCE**: *Ulysse* a certains points de vue, peut être considéré comme le premier qui, en héritant de Flaubert, continue le développement de l'art flaubertien, tel qu'il l'a laissé dans son dernier livre inachevé. . . Ce roman appartient à la grande classe de romans en forme de sonate. . . Il suit la grande ligne de *l'Odyssee*, et présente force correspondances plus ou moins exactes avec les incidents du poème d'Homère. . . C'est un moyen de régler la forme. Le livre a plus de forme que n'en ont les livres de Flaubert. . . Pas une ligne, une demi-ligne qui ne reçoive une intensité intellectuelle incomparable dans un livre de si longue haleine. . . C'est un roman réaliste par excellence, chaque caractère parle à sa guise, et correspond à une réalité extérieure. . . un livre que tout écrivain sérieux a besoin de lire.

MR. ARNOLD BENNETT in **THE OUTLOOK**: James Joyce is a very astonishing phenomenon in letters. He is sometimes dazingly original. If he does not see life whole he sees it piercingly. His ingenuity is marvellous. He has wit. He has a prodigious humour. He is afraid of naught. And had heaven in its wisdom thought fit not to deprive him of that basic sagacity and that moral self-dominion which alone enable an artist to assemble and control and fully utilise his powers, he would have stood a chance of being one of the greatest novelists that ever lived. The best portions of the novel (unfortunately they constitute only a fraction of the whole) are superb. I single out the long orgiastic scene, and the long unspoken monologue of Mrs. Bloom which closes the book. The former will easily bear comparison with Rabelais at his fantastical finest; it leaves Petronius out of sight. It has plenary inspiration. It is the richest stuff, handled with a virtuosity to match the quality of the material. The latter (forty difficult pages, some twenty-five thousand words without any punctuation at all) might in its utterly convincing realism be an actual document, the magical record of inmost thoughts thought by a woman that existed. Talk about understanding "feminine psychology" . . . I have never read anything to surpass it, and I doubt if I have ever read anything to equal it. My blame may have seemed extravagant, and my praise may seem extravagant, but that is how I feel about James Joyce. The book is not pornographic, but it is more indecent, obscene, scatological, and licentious than the majority of professedly pornographical books. . . For myself I think that in the main it is not justified by results obtained; but I must plainly add, at the risk of opprobrium, that in the finest passages it is in my opinion justified.

MR. J. MIDDLETON MURRY in **THE NATION**: Unlike any other book that has been written, extraordinarily interesting to those who have patience (and they need it), the work of an intensely serious man . . . indisputably the mind of an artist, abnormally sensitive to the secret individuality of emotions and things, abnormally sensitive also to spiritual beauty. . . In what seems to us the most masterly part of the book, a manifestation of a really rare creativeness, Mr. Joyce stages a kind of *Walpurgisnacht* of his chief characters. . . In this part of "Ulysses"—let us say it plainly, in order that we may have our share of the contempt or the glory a hundred years hence—a genius of the very highest order, strictly comparable to Goethe's or Dostoevsky's, is evident. This transcendental buffoonery, this sudden uprush of the *vis comica* into a world wherein the tragic incompatibility of the practical and the instinctive is embodied, is a very great achievement.

MR. FORD MADOX HUEFFER in **THE ENGLISH REVIEW**: One feels admiration that is almost reverence for the incredible labours of this incredible genius . . . No writer after to-day will be able to neglect *Ulysses* . . . an "adult," a European work . . . austere and composed . . . a book of profound knowledge and of profound renderings of humanity.

MR. SISLEY HUDDLESTON in the **OBSERVER**: A man of genius . . . the sincerity of an artist . . . phrases in which the words are packed tightly, as trim, as taut, as perfect as these things can be . . . fine ellipses in which a great sweep of meaning is concentrated into a single just-right sentence . . . a spot of colour, which sets the page aglow . . . erudition transfigured by imagination . . . infinite humour and extraordinary precision. Gross animality and subtle spirituality intermingle . . . its very obscenity is somehow beautiful and wrings the soul to pity. Is that not high art?

MR. SHANE LESLIE in **THE QUARTERLY**: As a whole the book must remain impossible to read and undesirable to quote . . . an assault upon Divine Decency as well as on human intelligence . . . literary Bolshevism . . . experimental, anti-conventional, anti-Christian, chaotic, totally unmoral . . . an abandonment of form and a mad Shelleyan effort to extend the known confines of the English language In the matter of psychology or realism Balzac is beggared and Zola bankrupted. . . . A striking literary genius who has since yoked himself to the steeds of Comedy and Blasphemy and taken headlong flight into a choking sea of impropriety spares nobody if he can help it. . . . Such pictures as can be rescued from the *cloaca* are distinct and sometimes unforgettable. When the style is lucid and restrained, literature is the result in patches. . . . The Shakespearian discussion, a brilliant chapter of Dublin causerie and criticism, might well be reprinted apart from the rest of the book. . . . The huge bulk of the book rushes sewerward, but in the great Rabelaisian way. . . . We come back to our complaint that without form there cannot be art. . . . Our own opinion is that a gigantic effort has been made to fool the world of readers and even the Pretorian guard of critics . . . deliberate bamboozlement of the reader. . . . For the well-meaning but open-mouthed critics in France who have seriously accepted *Ulysses* as a pendant to Shakespeare and as Ireland's contribution to the modern world's reading we can only feel sympathy. . . . The French and many of the English have taken it seriously. From Dublin as yet we have heard only jocular contempt. . . . Time will show what place and influence *Ulysses* will take in the thought and script of men.

DR. JOSEPH COLLINS in the **NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW**: An egocentric genius, whose chief diversion and keenest pleasure is self-analysis and whose lifelong important occupation has been keeping a notebook in which has been recorded incident encountered and speech heard with photographic accuracy and Boswellian fidelity. Moreover, he is determined to tell it in a new way . . . in parodies of classic prose and current slang, in perversions of sacred literature, in carefully metered prose with studied incoherence, in symbols so occult and mystic that only the initiated and profoundly versed can understand—in short, by means of every trick and illusion that a master artificer, or even magician, can play with the English language. . . . It will immortalise its author with the same certainty that Gargantua and Pantagruel immortalised Rabelais, and *The Brothers Karamazov* Dostoyevsky . . . comes nearer to being the perfect revelation of a personality than any book in existence. . . . I have learned more psychology and psychiatry from it than I did in ten years at the Neurological Institute.

MR. EDMUND WILSON in **THE NEW REPUBLIC** (New York): A work of severe and solid architecture. . . . Though exercising a rigorous selection which makes the book a technical triumph, Mr. Joyce manages to give the effect of unedited human minds, drifting aimlessly along from one triviality to another, confused and diverted by memory, by sensation and by inhibition . . . perhaps the most faithful X-ray ever taken of the ordinary human consciousness . . . as it shifts and shivers behind the front we present to the world . . . Extraordinary poetic faculty for investing particular incidents with universal significance . . . a work of high genius . . . has the effect of making everything else look brassy. . . . I cannot agree that Mr. Joyce has represented the human mind as more disintegrated or more debased than it actually is . . . one sees the gross ill-drained body of humanity itself touched divinely by cloudly visions of its creative splendours yet profoundly shaken and bound by its labouring flesh. . . . In the last pages of the book, when his duty has been sternly discharged by the prosaic, the base and the absurd, this austere, almost pedantic writer soars to such rapsodies of beauty as have probably never been equalled in English prose fiction.

MR. FORD MADOX HUEFFER in **THE YALE REVIEW**: I fancy Mr. Joyce is the only artist we have to-day who, with an utter composure, regards processes of reproduction, of nourishment, and of physical renewal. But then, Mr. Joyce, the supreme artist, regards with an equal composure—all things. That is why the United States has persecuted his publishers. . . . A writer of very beautiful, composed English . . . measures his effects by things immense and lasting. . . . *Ulysses* contains the undiscovered mind of man, it is human consciousness analysed as it has never before been analysed.

MR. GILBERT SELDES in **THE NATION** (New York): Possibly the most interesting and the most formidable writer of our time. . . . Among the very great writers only two can be named with him for the long devotion to their work and for the triumphant conclusion—Flaubert and Henry James. . . . The galvanic fury in which the Walpurgisnacht episode is played is, one feels certain, not equalled in literature . . . The parodies I find brilliant . . . they create with rapidity and as rapidly destroy the whole series of noble aspirations, hopes and illusions of which the centuries have left their record in prose. . . . The innovations in method and the development in structure, used with a skill approaching perfection, are going to have an incalculable effect upon the writers of the future. The book has literally hundreds of points of interest . . . not a scamped page nor a moment of weakness . . . whole chapters are monuments to the power and glory of the written word . . . a victory of the creative intelligence over the chaos of uncreated things and a triumph of devotion, to my mind one of the most significant and beautiful of our time.

MR. SILVIO BENCO in **IL SECOLO** (Milan): Un uomo d'ingegno che possiede una immensa coltura . . . un analitico, anzi un superanalitico e sa molto bene che il tempo non si misura a minuti, ma a frazioni di minuti secondi, e che strane prospettive di avvenimenti interiori si scoprono nell'uomo da chi ne voglia vigilare lo spirito su questa scala dei minimi . . . questa molteplicità salva l'autore dall'accusa di pornografo che gli è scagliata. . . . In un certo senso il libro è

molto serio ancorche per il suo tono appartenga alla letteratura umoristica. . . . In Inghilterra fanno merito al Joyce di aver esteso il dominio della lingua inglese fino a possibilità non mai prima supposte. . . . Strano autore di uno strano libro, dove tutto è metamorfosi e svalutazione, e ogni rigore diventa elastica. Ginnastica intellettuale, ad ogni modo, enorme.

MR. HOLBROOK JACKSON in **TO-DAY**: An affront and an achievement. It is not indecent. There is not a salacious line in it. It is simply naked: naked and unconscious of shame . . . neither moral nor immoral. . . . He simply records like Homer . . . If it will not amuse the idle novel reader, or even attract the lewd by its unsavoury franknesses, it must claim the attention of those who look upon fiction as something more than confectionery. With all its faults it is the biggest event in the history of the English novel since *Jude*.

MRS. MARY COLUM in the **FREEMAN** (New York): A most sincere and cunningly-wrought autobiographical book . . . one of the most racial books ever written, and one of the most Catholic books ever written . . . the book presupposes a knowledge of many literatures . . . almost an encyclopedia of odd bits and forms of knowledge . . . humour that is all-embracing, and yet never approaching the extravagant . . . where Rousseau romanticises, Joyce de-romanticises . . . obscene, bawdy, and corrupt. But it is doubtful that obscenity in literature ever really corrupted anybody.

MR. ERNEST BOYD in the **NEW YORK TRIBUNE**: An imagination which is at once romantic and realistic, brilliant and petty, full of powerful fantasy, yet preserving an almost incredible faculty of detailed material observation . . . rarely in literature has criticism appeared in such harsh and disillusioned guise . . . oscillates between contemptuous Rabelaisian ribaldry and the crude horror and fascination of the body as seen by the great Catholic ascetics . . . wonderful fantastic imagination . . . also has the defects and qualities of naturalism.

MR. CECIL MAITLAND in **THE NEW WITNESS**: . . . In absolute control of his medium . . . elicits the subtlest processes of the mind . . . an attempt to give a complete account of the nature of the man. It is apparently almost miraculously successful . . . enough fun to make the reputation of a dozen humorous writers, but no hint of a conception of the human body as anything but dirty, of any pride of life, or of any nobility but that of a pride of intellect . . . has outdone the psycho-analysts, who admit "sublimation," and returned to the ecclesiastical view of man . . . reinforced by the profound perception and consequent disgust of a great imaginative writer.

MR. CHARLES LE VERRIER in **L'EUROPE NOUVELLE**: Accompli, en littérature, quelque chose de comparable à ce que firent, en philosophe, William James et Bergson. On ne le classera ni avec les naturalistes ni avec les romanciers d'analyse psychologique, bien qu'il participe des deux catégories. Libéré de toutes les habitudes, de toutes les conventions, il découvre une forme d'art qui lui appartient en propre.

MME. MARTHE DUPROIX in **LA SEMAINE LITTERAIRE** (Geneva): . . . tout le fourmillement, la prodigieuse minutie, l'évidence du réel, que jamais satire, jamais drame Shakespearien, jamais impressionisme pictural, futurisme littéraire, psychanalyse ne se sont combinés, n'ont mêlés la laideur et la beauté, les bassesses de la matière et les subtilités délicates du rêve, à de telles fins d'art.

LA REVUE DE BOURGOGNE: Un livre dont l'importance constitue un événement humain . . . un monument littéraire contemporain. . . . Le vocabulaire est riche, souple, neuf . . . l'art subtil du père casuiste . . . froid glacial d'un impitoyable esprit scrutateur, curiosité inquiète d'un esprit de connaissance. . . . Nulle trace de sympathie ou d'aversion. Simple impartialité de procès-verbal. L'homme total se montre.

LES NOUVELLES LITTERAIRES: Art subtil, tout intuitif, qu'on a rapproché de l'impressionnisme, voir du pointillisme, et que seul un extrême talent peut sauver de l'incompréhensible—cet extrême talent, James Joyce le possède: son *Ulysse* marque une date.

ACTION: Plus qu'un roman, c'est une expérience, expérience psychologique et expérience de style. Par la pensée Joyce n'a autre proche que Pascal.

MR. JOHN EGLINTON in **THE DIAL** (New York): The book has been received with enthusiasm by those who provisionally determine literary fame in Ireland. . . . Extremely well done but not, shall I say, very high class. . . . In the philosophic Bloom Mr. Joyce has added to that company of real imaginary personalities whom we know better than our nearest acquaintance, better even than ourselves. . . . His work with its infinite variety is monotonous as the cinema or hippodrome entertainment. . . . I read on with an admiration chiefly of the heroic persistence of the author, of the number of things he knows, notices, remembers, of the unflinching vitality and purity of his phrase, of his superb powers of mimicry and literary impersonation, of the half-kindly and painstaking exactness which mitigates his cruelty. . . . I doubt whether this massive work is of good augury for Irish literature. . . . Mr. Joyce's masterpiece is a violent interruption of what is known as the Irish literary renaissance.

MR. ROSCOE ASHWORTH in **SHADOWLAND** (New York): The intellectual élite of France, America and England have hailed the Joyce opus as the most sensational literary event of the year, of the decade, of any time within living memory. Whatever else has been said of it, competent opinion is agreed that the book is an achievement stupendous in effort, staggering in the detail, and a little baffling in the contents. . . . Unique among books . . . nothing half-way resembling it has been done before in any language.

MR. GEORGE REHM in the **CHICAGO TRIBUNE**: . . . passages that force a murmur of approval from the most thoroughly ordered Christian—passages deep in their understanding, profound in their knowledge, sparkling in their expression. And then there are excerpts to cause the most ultra-modern brain to gasp and question the verity of eyesight. All known borders encircling the hemisphere of literature have been traversed with a cynical grin tossed to worldly criticism.

MR. GEORGE SLOCOMBE in the **DAILY HERALD**: As large as a telephone directory or a family Bible and with many of the literary and social characteristics of each. . . . A staggering feat which, once attempted and more than half achieved, may never be attempted again.

MISS DJUNA BARNES in **VANITY FAIR** (New York): Began life as a singer, but because no voice can hold out over the brutalities of life without breaking, turned to quill and paper, for so he could arrange, in the necessary

silence, the abundant inadequacies of life, as a laying-out of jewels. . . . Has been called eccentric, mad, incoherent, unintelligible, futuristic. One wonders why, thinking what a fine lyric beginning that great Rabelaisian flower *Ulysses* had, with impartial addenda for foliage—the thin sweet lyricism of *Chamber Music*, the casual inevitability of *Dubliners*, the passion and prayer of Stephen Dedalus. . . . One wonders if at last Ireland has created her man.

MR. MATTHEW JOSEPHSON in BROOM (Rome): May be summed up as the work of a man who possesses an amazing sensibility for physical qualities, an extraordinary knowledge of English, and an inferior intellect. . . . There is a madness in him for *the word*: the play of it, the colour, the tempo of a handful of them. . . . Fragments of astonishing poetry. . . . Perhaps the sternest charge against *Ulysses* is its sinful length.

THE TIMES: . . . of the utmost sincerity . . . complete courage.

MRS. EVELYN SCOTT in THE DIAL (New York): A contemporary of the future. . . . His technique has developed unique aspects that indicate a revolution of style for the future. . . . This Irish artist is recreating a portion of the English language. . . . He uses the stuff of the whole world to prove one man.

THE NEW AGE: . . . One of the most interesting literary symptoms in the whole literary world, and its publication is very nearly a public obligation.

MR. LETT-HAINES in the GARGOYLE (Paris): Its significance in Anglo-Saxon letters is unprecedented, its presage Europe-wide. With calm and forceful elegance it deftly intimates the arrestation of the sugary flow of Irish fiction. . . . High pressure condensation of thought and masterly technique . . . thoroughly amusing while deliberately provocative of illuminating thought. The reading gives intense pleasure.

MISS KATE BUSS in the BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT: . . . A remarkably written human document with its obscurities and its rotten moments just as life has both for each of us . . . a too much suppressed and a too little reflected upon volume.

MR. ALFRED NOYÉS in the SUNDAY CHRONICLE: The foulest book that has ever found its way into print. . . . What concerns us all, and most urgently demands consideration, is the appalling fact that our Metropolitan criticism should have been treating such works as those of Mr. Joyce seriously as works of genius.

DOMINI CANIS in THE DUBLIN REVIEW: . . . A fearful travesty on persons happenings and intimate life of the most morbid and sickening description. . . . We are prepared to do justice to the power and litheness of the style, when intelligible, to the occasional beauty of a paragraph, and to the adventurous headlong experiments in new literary form, but as a whole we regard it as the screed of one possessed. . . . In this work the spiritually offensive and the physically unclean are united . . . in its reading lies not only the description but the commission of sin against the Holy Ghost. Having tasted and rejected the devilish drench, we most earnestly hope that this book be not only placed on the Index Expurgatorius, but that its reading and communication be made a reserved case. . . . A great Jesuit-trained talent has gone over malignantly and mockingly to the powers of evil. . . .

THE SPORTING TIMES (THE "PINK'UN"): The main contents of the book are enough to make a Hottentot sick . . . not alone sordidly pornographic, but it is intensely dull.

MR. JAMES DOUGLAS in THE SUNDAY EXPRESS: I say deliberately that it is the most infamously obscene book in ancient or modern literature. The obscenity of Rabelais is innocent compared with its leprous and scabrous horrors. All the secret sewers of vice are canalised in its flood of unimaginable thoughts, images and pornographic words. And its unclean lunacies are larded with appalling and revolting blasphemies directed against the Christian religion and against the name of Christ. . . . The book is already the bible of beings who are exiles and outcasts in this and in every civilised country. It is also adopted by the Freudians as the supreme glory of their dirty and degraded cult.

MR. S. B. P. MAIS in THE DAILY EXPRESS: . . . From his pages there leap out at us all our most secret and most unsavoury private thoughts. Our first impression is that of sheer disgust, our second of irritability because we never know whether a character is speaking or merely thinking, our third of boredom at the continual harping on obscenities; our fourth, of real interest at watching the vagaries of a mind sensitive to all scents and sounds and colours. But art (if this is art) consists no longer in selection.

THE SPHERE: . . . The maddest, muddiest, most loathsome book issued in our own or any other time—inartistic, incoherent, unquotably nasty—a book that one would have thought could only emanate from a criminal lunatic asylum.

GLASGOW HERALD: Truthful, frank, insparing, and so it is bound to shock most people . . . a work of genius. . . .

DAILY MAIL: . . . Is being much discussed by those interested in the new Irish literature. . . . The book will cause mixed sensations in Dublin. Actual places and living persons are freely introduced into the pages, which are like uncensored photographs of Dubliners' doings and Dubliners' souls.

YORKSHIRE POST: An extremely interesting experiment in technique, large parts of the book being an absolutely candid record of the flow of consciousness and semi-consciousness in one mind. . . . with the last reticence, the last barrier which has hitherto divided Art and Life, burst down. . . . Ireland is the only country we can understand producing a brain so hardly callous in its clarity allied with an imagination so intense as to project *Ulysses*.

NEW YORK HERALD: There is to be found in *Ulysses* some of the finest English that has been written. . . . To Mr. Joyce the inexplicable does not exist. He proves the suppleness, the flexibility of English. . . . The record is monumental, almost staggering and incontestably true to life . . . of an almost diabolic clairvoyance.

SCOTS PICTORIAL: . . . Extraordinary, monstrous essay. . . . Nothing like *Ulysses* has ever met the face of type.

LIVERPOOL DAILY COURIER: A freak production apart from its deliberate indecency, and it represents the newest school at its newest.

TEACHERS' WORLD: . . . Amazing work of madness and scatology which is causing such excitement among the "advanced" critics in London and Paris . . . immense mass of clotted nonsense.

IRISH INDEPENDENT: *Ulysses* has come in for some severe criticisms.