NEWS

MORE JOYCE FROM THE CENSUS

IN HIS RECENT CONTRIBUTION to the regular 'Short Cuts' feature in the *London Review of Books* (28 April 2012), Andrew O'Hagan, the Scottish novelist, reports on his negative responses on this year's census form: 'I didn't have a wife and ten children and I didn't believe in the resurrected Christ.' Since, remarkably, O'Hagan has in his loo a framed copy of the return for the 1901 census made by John Stanislaus Joyce, he is able to observe that he was outclassed by Joyce's father, the 'head of family', on both scores, 'as well as one or two others'. The return shows that John, his wife Mary and their ten children were all Roman Catholic, could all 'read and write' and were aged between 51 (John) and eight (Mabel). Only James (19) and his younger brother, John, were listed as speaking 'Irish and English'. Incidentally, O'Hagan assumes that Joyce, like Stephen Dedalus, takes the bus. His conclusion extends this reference to *Ulysses*: 'Censuses may not give you the heart and soul of the country, that's literature's job, but they tell you the circumstances of the population on a given day, which might also be literature's job, if you stick with Joyce.'

READING WIVES

IN REPORTS ON THE DEATH in November 2012 of Valerie Eliot, it was regularly noted that she had from her youth been a devoted reader of the great modernist poet whom she even then intended to marry. As T. S. Eliot's widow, she presided over his literary estate and spent years editing his work, first the facsimile and drafts of *The Waste Land* and then the first volume of the letters. It is fascinating to contrast such loyal and passionate commitment to reading with that of another famous wife of a mighty modernist in the context of a new book by Belinda Jack. *The Woman Reader* (Yale University Press, 2012) argues that male readers conjure up images of power and knowledge whereas women as readers are seen as subversive of, or threatening to, established order. As Francis Wilson notes in her review of this study in the *TLS* (19 October 2012), Jack's many illustrations are generally, for sound reasons, of less ordinary woman readers, and highlights an occasion on which one of the more common readers is discussed. 'Nora Barnacle is singled out . . . not for what she read but for the subversion of "refusing" to read the fiction written by her husband James Joyce'. This is apparent confirmation that 'women have always resisted reading material they have not wanted to read, and have withstood being persuaded by it.' Wilson appears to doubt, as well she might, Jack's assumption that Nora disliked receiving Joyce's erotic letters and felt 'obliged' to read them 'for the practical information they contained'.

A.S.

JOYCEAN TYPES?

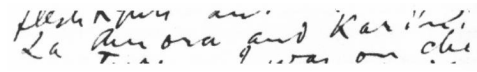
IN A LIVELY ACCOUNT of 'What George Eliot teaches us', the subtitle to *Middlemarch and Me* by Rebecca Mead (*The New Yorker*, 14 & 21 February , 2011), we find a perplexing image of Joyceans when they congregate. In the essay, Mead is at one point reporting on her experiences when invited to address a spring gathering of 'Eliot aficionados' celebrating the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of *The Mill on the Floss* at Bedworth's Civic Hall. There she encountered an exception to Eliot's tribute to the humanising experience of 'living a great deal among people more or less commonplace and vulgar', as she puts it in *Adam Bede*. 'A tall woman, no longer young but still striking' turns out to be the most unusual Brenda McKay, author of *George Eliot and Victorian Attitudes to Racial Diversity, Colonialism, Darwinism, Class, Gender, and Jewish Culture and Prophesy*. This connoisseur of literary gatherings announced: '"There's the Dickens Society, the Trollope Society"', adding somewhat surprisingly, '"James Joyce, of course. They're all kind of hippie types, with long beards. They seem like heavy drinkers, pot smokers."' She was on her way to the Brontë Society, which was, if anything, to be even more controversially characterised. '"They have very contentious meetings", she said with some satisfaction. "There are always fists flying."' Should our Joycean societies abandon those flower-power courtesies of yore and get up-to-date and down-and-dirty like those brawling Brontëans?

A.S.

LA AMORA AND KARINI

JOYCE REFERS ONCE in *Ulysses* to 'The nifty shimmy dancers, La Aurora and Karini, musical act, the hit of the century' (*U* 15.3246-7). Until now no information about this act has been available.

Circe Notesheet 18, compiled in mid 1920, cites 'La Aurora and Karini' in Herring's transcription (p. 353, ll. 27-8). In fact, Joyce wrote 'La Amora and Karini' and the misreading (easily perpetrated) was introduced by his typist after the writer had integrated the phrase from the notesheet into the fair copy of *Ulysses*. It seems likely that Joyce simply overlooked the typographical error (see the Rosenbach version below) when approving the typescript and later the proofs.



La Amora and Karini appeared at the Tivoli Theatre in Dublin for a week in July 1920:

TIVOLI 6.45—8.45 TEL. 4125. TIVOLI

WILL H. FOX,

Peerless at the Piano.

Shields & Barry. Rose & Wold. Sisters Montague,
Gay Claytons. Billy Rogers. Bros. Lowell.

LA AMORA & KARINI,

In a Spanish Speciality.

(*Freeman's Journal, 19 July, p. 4, col. 1*)

There are advertisements and notices for the act in the Dublin papers between 17 and 23 July 1920. It is described, in the *Sunday Independent* of 18th July, as 'a Spanish gymnastic and dancing act'. La Amora and Karini appear on a variety bill, alongside acts such as Will H. Fox and his trick piano-playing; Rose and Wold, the 'eccentric marvels on the [high-]wire'; and the Sisters Montague, duettists and dancers.

John Karini had been performing gymnastic exercises, including a trapeze act, in the Dutch circus since at least 1904 (*Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 19 September). For this and other Dutch references see Koninklijke Bibliotheek: Historische Kranten, at http://kranten.kb.nl/. By 1908 he seems to have teamed up with 'La Amora' at the Rembrandt Theatre in Amsterdam, where 'La Amore et son Matador' appear on the bill (*Het Nieuws Van Den Dag*, 1 April).

In 1910 'La Amora e Karini' are appearing together as a gymnastic act at the Variété Flora in Amsterdam (*Het Nieuws Van Den Dag*, 1 June). As time passed, they developed the act to incorporate a mixture of dance and gymnastics – a 'mélange act', with a Spanish flavour. This was what they were offering in Utrecht and Rotterdam from at least 1916 onwards (see *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 29 September 1916; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 24 April 1917, etc.). This was the act that came to Dublin's Tivoli Theatre in July 1920.

John Simpson

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HEANEY'S JOYCE

On 27 January this year Seamus Heaney and Simon Armitage were on stage together at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn to contribute to *Inspirations*, a fund-raising event organised by the English PEN. The poets were invited to choose ten pieces of writing which had personal significance for them or had inspired them. Nine of the pieces chosen by each poet were read by the actors, Charles Dance and Jenny Jules, with the poets themselves reading just one work. Armitage read from his version of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, while Heaney read his poem 'Two Lorries' from *The Spirit Level* (1996). One reviewer, Sameer Rahim writing in *The Daily Telegraph* (29 January), astutely detected a possible echo in Heaney's poem of the passage he had chosen from the opening of *Ulysses* evoking Stephen Dedalus's dream of his dead mother, with its 'faint odour of wetted ashes'. The poem begins with 'It's raining on black coal and warm wet ashes' and the iterated ashes are potently associated with this 'vision of my mother'. 'Was this a felicitous coincidence or did Heaney want us to spot the borrowing? Whichever, it felt like a glimpse into the poet's creative method.'

STRICK'S BLOOM DIES

MILO O'SHEA, the fiercely-eyebrowed Irish character actor whom Joseph Strick cast as an outstanding Leopold Bloom in his pioneering film version of *Ulysses* (1967), died at the age of 86 in New York on 2 April this year. He began his distinguished career as a stage actor in Dublin, playing in revivals of Synge and O'Casey. He went on to establish himself as a regular performer on British television, most memorably as one of the duo of silent sybaritic monks in *Silent Song* (1966) and as the mother-dominated protagonist of BBC sitcom *Mammy and Me* (1969-71). He adopted American citizenship in the 1970s, for he had been increasingly active on stage and screen in the United States once his film career had taken off after his fine performance in the *succès de scandale* of *Ulysses* (banned in Ireland until 2000 for the use of the f-word) and his scene-stealing role as Durand Durand in Roger Vadim's *Barbarella* (1968). Before making his mark in Strick's movie O'Shea played Bloom in the BBC production *Bloomsday* (1964), an attempt to visualise Joyce's novel for the BBC Festival strand.

UNDERGROUND COMMUNICATION

ONE OF THE ITEMS included in *Death: A Self-Portrait*, the latest brilliant exhibition at the Wellcome Collection in London (15 November 2012 to 24 February 2013), has a Joycean resonance. The exhibition represents the life-long fascination of the Chicago-based American print collector Richard Harris with that sombre topic through the display of a huge variety of artefacts, art works and curiosities. *Calavera*, the item in question, is one of the most striking and has been covered widely in the British press but without reference to Joyce. *Calavera* is Spanish for skull, the most insistent motif in the show and in Mexican celebrations of The Day of the Dead; it also refers to the practice of composing rhyming mock obituaries. This work is the powerful creation of Mondongo, an Argentine art collective consisting of three challenging female artists. They often assemble such everyday materials as food stuffs into bizarre and irreverent three-dimensional collages. (Mondongo is the name of an Argentine tripe stew.) *Calavera* is a vast plasticine death's head moulded with satirical intent. It denounces the economic and cultural dominance of the United States and Europe over the poor of South America by setting images of the traditions of neoclassical architecture and literary classics of the West against the shanty towns that huddle close to the largest cities. At the centre of the eclectic range of celebrated texts that represent Western literary culture is *Ulysses* (the title of the tiny plasticine volume is easy to read). It is located on the cheekbone beneath the right eye-socket of the skull which is turned slightly sideways on to the viewer. It might seem unfair to have Joyce's masterpiece lined up with the oppressors but its centrality here might be earned through its own great irreverent meditation on mortality in 'Hades'. Perhaps the methods of Mondongo are not far from the way of Joyce's 'good Irish stew'.

A.S.

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'The Just Man Seeks the Root . . .' and annotations on it from the *Explanation on the Analects* by Liu Baochan.