

James Joyce and Caradoc Evans

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“Mr. James Joyce is an Irish edition of Mr. Caradoc Evans”—according to the anonymous reviewer of *A Portrait of the Artist in Everyman* magazine. The comparison with “the best-hated man in Wales”, as Evans had styled himself, did Joyce not much good, for the reviewer, in a piece called “A Study in Garbage”, continued: “These writers [...] have made it their business in life to portray the least estimable features of their respective countrymen, Irish or Welsh”.¹ The type of stories Caradoc Evans (1878-1945) produced had probably more in common with that other defiled Irish writer of strange, and slightly shocking rural tales, Liam O’Flaherty, than with Joyce’s writings about urban paralysis. Yet Evans’ rudimentary style reminds one of *Dubliners*, too, especially if one considers the sort of story that served Joyce as model—George Moore, *The Untilled Field* or the weekly tales in *The Irish Homestead* that AE recommended him to read in 1904. Little surprise, then, given Evans’ reputation and the reviewers’ outburst, that the author of *My People: Tales of the Peasantry of West Wales* (1905), *Capel Sion* (1916), *My Neighbours: Stories of the Welsh People* (1919) and *Taffy: A Play of Welsh Village Life in Three Acts* was on Joyce’s radar.

In late 1924, however, when Joyce was compiling VI.B.14, his reasons for reading Caradoc Evans’ *My People* were more specific. During his vacation in Brittany the previous summer, he developed an interest in Celtic topics of all sorts, taking notes on prehistoric archaeology in the Breton landscape, Breton songs, folklore and legends, the wizard Merlin, bardic culture and so on; reading he carried out in tandem with some extensive research on the life and traditions of Saint Patrick. That summer and autumn, with most of Book I and about half of Book III

sketched out, Joyce was pondering how the two parts would join together. A return to the giant HCE, an embodiment of the Irish landscape and Irish history, was, if not the solution, at least a way out of the impasse. The notes on Saint Patrick and the pan-Celtic interest, linking a Christian with a pre-Christian national origin, may have contributed something to the doubling of Tristan with Saint Patrick that Joyce was to work out in chapter III.3 in the autumn of 1924. More generally the material in the notebook served for the earthy expansion of HCE's character. Added to these themes and motifs, the notes from Caradoc Evans' *My People* were as much an afterthought as an addition to the pan-Celtic explorations.

Evans came from a Welsh-speaking family of tenant farmers, and that made him more at one with the native Non-conformist community of West Wales that he describes in his stories than the predominantly Anglo-Protestant writers of the Irish Revival were with the people of the West of Ireland. At the same time, Evans' tales have none of the idealism that characterizes the work of Synge, Lady Gregory, and even O'Flaherty. The High Church Protestantism of West Wales functioned within a defined nationalist agenda, and insofar as the Church in Wales and religious sentiment stood in opposition to the Church of England, it also directed itself against the English colonizer. Yet in spite of the strongly Wesleyan fervour of his protagonists, religion has hardly any redeeming quality for Evans. The Church Elders of the "Seiet" (or Society) of Capel Sion, one of the fictitious villages in Cardiganshire (now Ceredigion) in which the narratives are set, are the focus of heavy satire, not the least, for example, in a story called "The Woman Who Sowed Iniquity". In this bitter tale, the main protagonist, a woman of loose morals, is cold-heartedly turned out by the men of the village, and her life considered expendable; if a slate would "accidentally" fall on her head while her roof is being repaired, no great harm would be done, for God "promised to be on the side of His religious children".² It is his frank treatment of sexuality and criticism of the Church that earned Evans his hostile reception. In that respect his early reputation was not unlike Joyce's.

Joyce only seems to have read the first four stories in the collection: “A Father in Sion”, “A Heifer Without Blemish”, “The Way of the Earth” and “The Talent Thou Gavest”; most likely, the stories were read to him in one sitting while he took notes. The stories are striking, but crude evocations of primitive life in the remote countryside, usually ending with a twist. In “A Father in Sion” the main protagonist, Sadrach, a godfearing and hardworking man, marries a woman who bears him eight children, before she goes mad and is locked up in the loft of the house, upon which he takes another woman. In “A Heifer Without Blemish” marriage is reduced to an economic requisite. When Tomos, the son of one of the Village Elders, is encouraged to marry, he needs to find a “woman who will be profitable” (26) and who can look after the land and the farms; he finds his bride on the market in nearby Castellybryn, where he barterers with Sam Blaenfoss for the hand of his daughter Nell as if she were no more than a piece of cattle. “The Way of the Earth” tells a similar tale in which William Jenkins haggles over the dowry of Sara Jane, whom he has gotten pregnant; he needs the money to pay off his debts, only to abandon her less than a year after the wedding when his creditors return; he flees abroad. “The Talent Thou Gavest” is a story of a more allegorical type about Eben, a young shepherd, who is called by God in a vision to become a preacher. At first his talent for inspired, chanted sermons earns him a reputation that quickly spreads through the district, and he is given a post in the neighbouring church of Capel Salem; but his talent inexplicably vanishes; he has doubts about religious doctrine; let down by the people and feeling betrayed by God, he commits suicide.

Joyce seems to have had little concern for the narrative, but picked up on the peculiar blend of language that Evans uses. Joyce’s fairly extensive set of notes in VI.B.14 represents a fair sampling of the Anglo-Welsh rhythms and idioms of the local people mixed in with the biblical expressions of a culture saturated by religion.

VI.B.14.228

(a) b party at Hengler's

Note: ?Hengler's Royal Circus. This was held in 10 Rutland Square (present-day Parnell Square) East, which later became a temporary General Post Office for several years after the destruction of the G. P. O. in 1916. See *U* 4.349, 16.412, 17.975-6.

VI.C.12.218(h)

(b) O'C hand on heart

Note: O'C. Daniel O'Connell.

VI.C.12.218(i)

(c) silvered reflections

VI.C.12.218(j)

(d) Standfast Dick a

Note: Standfast Dick. A rock in the river Liffey. It was an obstacle for sailors, but it also ran along the south side of the river, where it provided a firm foundation for City Hall and Dublin Castle.

MS 47474-221, PrTMA: a rise ~~in the~~ ^{^+every+^} morning for Standfast Dick and a drop every minute for Stumblestone Davy | *JJA* 48:201 | Oct 1927 | I.8§1.9 | *FW* 210.28

VI.C.12.218(k)

(e) fragments of abbey

VI.C.12.219(a)

(f) 'notesnatcher n

MS 47473-39, TsILS: that odious and still today insufficiently ~~despised~~ ^{^+malestimated+^} note ~~taker~~ ^{^+snatcher,+^} Shem the penman | *JJA* 46:337 | Feb-Mar 1925 | I.5§1.3/4.3 | *FW* 125.21-2

(g) well let down

VI.C.12.219(b)

(h) 'I want you to tell me b

Not located in MS/*FW*

(i) There's lovely it was >

VI.C.12.219(c)

(j) — the small

Caradoc Evans, 7: "[A Father in Sion] 'There's lovely it was,' said Sadrach the Small."

VI.C.12.219(c)

(k) you did hear >

VI.C.12.219(d)

(l) **rNice Big Man**

Caradoc Evans, 7: “[A Father in Sion] ““Your mother Achsah is not what she should be. [...] You did hear how I said to the Nice Big Man that I was like Job? Achsah is mad.””

MS 47484a-12, LMA: ^+How voice you that, nice Sandy man? Not **big** large ~~gent~~ ^+goodman+^ is he, Sandy nice!+^ | *JJA* 58:113 | Dec 1924-Jan 1925 | III§3A.*3/3B.*3 | *FW* 492.01

(m) **mam**

Caradoc Evans, 8 and passim: “[A Father in Sion]: Rachel went to the foot of the stairs. ‘Mam!’ she called.”

VI.C.12.219(d)

(n) **°Lloyd the Schoolin’**

Caradoc Evans, 10: “[A Father in Sion] Once, when the moon was full, the pair was met by Lloyd the Schoolin’, and the sight caused Mishtir Lloyd to run like a frightened dog, telling one of the women of his household that Achsah, the madwoman, had eyes like a cow’s.”

Not located in MS/*FW*

(o) **dear me,**

Caradoc Evans, 11 and passim: “[A Father in Sion] Achsah, dear me, was frightened by the old bull.”

VI.C.12.219(e)

(p) **Big Seat**

Caradoc Evans, 11: “[A Father in Sion] He answered neither yea nor nay until the first Communion Sabbath, when he seized the bread and wine from Old Shemmi and walked to the Big Seat. He stood under the pulpit, the fringe of the minister’s Bible-marker curling on the bald patch on his head.”

note: The Big Seat is the Deaconate comprising the Church Elders of Capel Sion, but here also clearly pulpit.

VI.C.12.219(f)

(q) **, weepful,**

Caradoc Evans, 27: “[A Heifer without blemish] ‘Me and your mam are full of years, and the hearse from Capel Sion will soon take us home to the Big Man’s Palace--a home, Tomos, where we will wear White Shirts, and where there is no old rent to pay. Tomos, Tomos, weepful you will be when I am up above. Little Great One, keep an eye on Tomos. Be with your son in Capel Sion. Amen.’”

note: The Big Man is God; the Palace is heaven

Note: Entered in left margin: see reproduction.

Not located in MS/*FW*

VI.C.12.219(d)

- (r) **r, folk,**
 Caradoc Evans, 27: “[A Heifer without blemish] ‘Be you restful now, folk bach,’ he said, ‘for am I not going to speak about religion?’”
Note: Entered in lower right margin: see reproduction.

VI.B.14.229

- (a) **peck**
 Caradoc Evans, 13-14: “[A Father in Sion] Had not her transfer letter been accepted by Capel Sion, and did she not occupy Achsah's seat in the family pew? Did she not, when it was Sadrach's turn to keep the minister's month, herself on each of the four Saturdays take a basket laden with a chicken, two white-hearted cabbages, a peck of potatoes, a loaf of bread, and half a pound of butter to the chapel house of Capel Sion?”
 VI.C.12.219(g)
- (b) **whitebearded >**
 VI.C.12.219(h)
- (c) **°why for**
 Caradoc Evans, 68-69: “[The Talent Thou Gavest] One afternoon, his legs dangling over the edge of the stone quarry, he fell asleep, and in his dream the Big Man--a white-bearded, vigorous, stern, elderly giant, broad as the front of Capel Sion and taller than the roof--came to him, saying: ‘Eben bach, why for now do you waste your days in sleep Go you, little son, and dig a hole in the place where stood Old Shaci's hut.’”
 MS 47478-267, ILA: For one hundred's thousand?. ^+For why? ^+Why for?+^+^ | JJA 52:165 | 1932 | II.2§4.*3 | FDV 153.05
- (d) **the Male of —**
 Caradoc Evans, 14: “[A Father in Sion] Of all who worshipped in Sion none was stronger than the male of Danyrefail; none more respected. The congregation elected him to the Big Seat.”
note: Danyrefail is the name of a farmhouse in the village of Sion.VI.C.12.219(i)
- (e) **bach**
 Caradoc Evans, 23 and passim: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Indeed, now, there's a daft boy bach!’ exclaimed Tomos.”
 VI.C.12.219(j)
- (f) **fach**
 Cardoc Evans, 33 and passim: “[A Heifer without Blemish]: ‘Nell fach,’ said one of the group, ‘is not old Job of the Stallion needing you?’”
note: “bach” and “fach” are used throughout, both meaning “small”, “little” as a term of endearment for male and female respectively.VI.C.12.219(k)

- (g) **daft**
 Caradoc Evans, 23: [A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Indeed, now, there's a daft boy bach!’ exclaimed Tomos.”
 VI.C.12.219(l)
- (h) **out of his old head**
 Caradoc Evans, 24: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Dinas is a fairish farm,’ said Deio. ‘Out of his old head is Enoch to leave it.’”
 VI.C.12.219(m)
- (i) **sure me**
 Caradoc Evans, 23-24 and passim: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘What say you does Enoch want to do that for! Sure me, Dinas is as much as he can manage.’”
 VI.C.12.220(a)
- (j) **Es, es**
 Caradoc Evans, 24 and passim: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Iss, iss,’ said Deio. ‘She is a burden on the place. Where is the sense now in Enoch keeping a wife and a servant?’”
 VI.C.12.220(b)
- (k) **iob**
 Caradoc Evans, 24: “[A Heifer without Blemish] [‘]For why, dear me, did the iob marry such a useless woman?[’]”
 VI.C.12.220(c)
- (l) **°sober serious**
 Caradoc Evans, 25 and passim: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘What nonsense you talk out of the back of your head! Sober serious, mouth not that you have thrown gravel at Sara Jane's window I She's not worth her broth.’”
 MS 47472-38, ILA: and that ^+sober serious,+^ he is he and no other he | *JJA* 44:133 | Nov 1926 | I.1 1.*2/2.*2| *FW* 029.34
- (m) **How voice you**
 Caradoc Evans, 26: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘How voice you then about Gwen the widow of Noah?’ asked Tomos.”
 MS 47484a-12, LMA: ^+How voice you that, nice Sandy man? Not big large gent ^+goodman+^is he, Sandy nice!+^ | *JJA* 58:113 | Dec 1924-Jan 1925 | III§3A.*3/3B.*3 | *FW* 492.01
- (n) **Not respectable is that**
 Caradoc Evans, 26: “[A Heifer without Blemish] [‘]No, boy bach, don't you deal lightly with Old Simon's wench. Not respectable is that to Capel Sion.’”VI.C.12.220(d)

- (o) **Tomos nice >**
VI.C.12.220(e)
- (p) **the 11th month >**
VI.C.12.220(f)
- (q) **she was full**
Caradoc Evans, 26: [A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Your father speaks sense, Tomos nice,’ said Katto. ‘It’s time you wedded. Do you look round you for one like the wife of Tydu. Is she not tidy and saving? Was she not carting dung into the field when she was full? You will be five over forty in the eleventh month.’”
VI.C.12.220(g)
- (r) **Shire Cardigan**
Caradoc Evans, 28: “[A Heifer without Blemish] [‘]Tell her your father sits in the Big Seat in Sion, in the parish of Troedfawr, in Shire Cardigan. [’]”
VI.C.12.220(h)
- (s) **say you have ?**
Caradoc Evans, 30: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Say you have an empty stall, little son?’ Tomos asked.”VI.C.12.220(i)

VI.B.14.230

- (a) **How was y/ou/? — / dreadful, thanks be —**
Caradoc Evans, 30: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Fair morning, Tomos. How was you, man? And how was your old father?’ [...] ‘Quite well, thanks be to you, Job bach.’”
VI.C.12.220(j)-(k)
- (b) **‘this 1 minute**
Caradoc Evans, 32: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Dammo!’ came the reply. ‘She was here this one minute. Nell Blaenffos! Nell Blaenffos!’”
MS 47484a-12, LMA: Ask him ^+this one minute+^ in his good ear | *JJA* 58:113 | Dec 1924-Jan 1925 | III§3A.*3/3B.*3 | *FW* 492.02
- (c) **Dango**
Caradoc Evans, 32: “[A Heifer without Blemish] ‘Dango!’ he exclaimed. ‘There’s Nell Blaenffos. Do you know Nell, Tomos?’”
VI.C.12.220(l)
- (d) **carry him nice >**
VI.C.12.220(m)

- (e) **to wear the White Shirt**
 Caradoc Evan, 40-41: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Jasto, now, my little father Simon has gone to wear the White Shirt in the Palace. Come you then and carry him on your shoulders nice into Sion.’”
 note: the wear the White Shirt in the Palace means to have died and gone to heaven.
 VI.C.12.220(n)
- (f) **the forehead of the house / lintel**
 Caradoc Evan, 43: “[The Way of the Earth] And Beca will rise from her chair and feel her way past the bed which stands against the wooden partition, and as she touches with her right hand the ashen post that holds up the forehead of the house she knows she is facing the fields, and she too will groan, for her strength and pride are mixed with the soil.”
 VI.C.12.220(o)-221(a)
- (g) **, whatever,**
 Caradoc Evan, 47: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Well, well, then. Tidy wench she is, whatever. And when we go she’ll have the nice little yellow sovereigns in the bank.’”
 VI.C.12.221(b)
- (h) **serious me**
 Caradoc Evan, 47: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Wisdom you mouth, Simon. Good, serious me, to get her a male.’”
 VI.C.12.221(c)
- (i) **“Shop Rhys!**
 Caradoc Evan, 48: “[The Way of the Earth] In the morning she took to Shop Rhys three shillings’ worth of eggs.”
 Not located in MS/*FW*
- (j) **courting in bed**
 Caradoc Evan, 50: “[The Way of the Earth] The rumour began to be spread that William Jenkins, Shop General, was courting in bed with the wench of Penrhos, and it got to the ears of Simon and Beca.”
 VI.C.12.221(c)
- (k) **W^m Shinkins, Shop General,**
 Caradoc Evan, 50: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘What for you want to court William Shinkins, Shop General, in bed for?’ said Simon [to Beca].”
 VI.C.12.221(d)
- (l) **‘Large gent is he**
 Caradoc Evan, 51: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Glad am I to hear that,’ said Simon. ‘Say you to the boy bach: “Come you to Penrhos on the Sabbath, little Shinkins.’” ‘Large gentleman is he,’ said Sara Jane.”

MS 47484a-12, LMA: ^+How voice you that, nice Sandy man? Not big large gent ^+goodman+^is he, Sandy nice!+^ | *JJA* 58:113 | Dec 1924-Jan 1925 | III§3A.*3/3B.*3 | *FW* 492.01

(m) move yr tongue about

Caradoc Evan, 52: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Move your tongue now about Sara Jane's wedding portion,’ said Mishtir Jenkins.”
VI.C.12.221(e)

(n) °hap = if

Caradoc Evan, 53: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Hap Madlen Tybach need coal?’”

note: Welsh “hap”: luck, chance, fortune. The meaning here is “Go and ask if Madlen Tybach need coal”.

MS 47472-158, TsOS: happened to have the loose ^+loots+^change of a ten pound note ^+crickler+^ about him at the moment as ^+addling that,+^ if ^+hap+^ so, he would pay the six pounds ^+vics+^ odd back | *JJA* 46:034 | 1926-7 | I.4§1A.3 | *FW* 082.26

(o) °Tell he me = Lei

Caradoc Evan, 53: “[The Way of the Earth] ‘Tell he me, when shall I say to Beca thus: “On such and such a day is the wedding”? Say him a month this day?’”

Note: It was a local custom to address one's betters in the third person.

MS 47472-158, TsILS: ~~taken off you, tell us by anyone~~ ^+takee offa you, tell he me, strongfella by pickypocky+^ | *JJA* 46:034 | 1926-7 | I.4§1A.3 | *FW* 082.13

VI.C.12.221(f)

(p) Marconi = S. P / mission ~

Note: Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937), radio pioneer. This is an important early conceptual note, linking radio broadcasting with the dissemination of beliefs and the spread of civilization represented by St Patrick's mission. See, for example, *FW* 407.11-22

VI.C.12.221(g)-(h)

(q) O'B (wireless / Co

VI.C.12.221(h)

(r) °radio

(s) +earpiece

Note: Left margin addition. See reproduction.

Not located in MS/*FW*

(t) +fog

Note: Right margin addition. See reproduction.

VI.C.12.221(i)

(u) use yr ether
VI.C.12.221(j)

¹ “A Study in Garbage”, *Everyman*, 23 February 1917, p. 398, quoted in Robert H. Deming, ed., *The Critical Heritage: James Joyce, Volume 1, 1907-27*, [London and New York: Routledge, 1997], 85.

² Caradoc Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 3rd ed. (London: Andrew Melrose, 1915). The text and pagination are identical to the first edition of 1915 and to the American edition published in New York by Boni and Liveright in 1918.