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Dominus Tuus." In effect, the philosophy of realism (through its spokesman Hic) is defeated by Ille's power to "summon" a contending reality from a supernatural realm (which Yeats would later call the Anima Mundi, or corporate imagination) where all of the archetypes of man's imagination live in eternity.



### INFLUENCE OR COINCIDENCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF "THE BEAST IN THE JUNGLE" AND "A PAINFUL CASE"

By JOAN ZLOTNICK

In 1903 Henry James published *The Better Sort*, a collection of tales which included "The Beast in the Jungle." The very next year, James Joyce was working on *Dubliners*, which, although completed in 1905, would not be published until 1914. Included in that volume is "A Painful Case," which in plot, theme, characterization, and even in certain technical aspects closely resembles "The Beast in the Jungle." There is no conclusive evidence that Joyce knew this particular story, but we do know from the journals of his brother Stanislaus that the two read and discussed James's works<sup>1</sup>. Even if there were no direct influence, however, the striking similarities between the two stories would warrant our consideration.

Although, according to Stanislaus Joyce, Mr. Duffy is a portrait of what Joyce "imagined" he (Stanislaus) "should become in middle age,"<sup>2</sup> Duffy is, in fact, more similar to the fictional John Marcher than the real Stanislaus Joyce. Both are detached from life, guarded against emotional involvement, inordinately egotistical, and scornful of "common" people. Both are engaged in a similar flight from the present. Marcher, living in the future, waits for the leap of the beast, or that supreme moment when his destiny will be revealed to him. Duffy, on the other hand, lives primarily in the past. He has

1. George H. Healey, ed. *The Complete Dublin Diary of Stanislaus Joyce* (Ithaca, 1962), 75, 85.

2. Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years*, ed. with Introduction by Richard Ellmann (New York, 1958), 159-160.

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an "odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time short sentences about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense."<sup>3</sup> He does, however, like Marcher, look forward to a particular event that will give color and meaning to his dull life: "Duffy allowed himself to think that under certain circumstances he would rob his bank, but as these circumstances never arose, his life rolled out evenly — an adventureless tale" (p. 120).

In short, Marcher and Duffy are middle-aged bachelors about to be offered a chance to experience love and redeem their unlived lives. Love in both instances is offered by a woman who is capable of genuine emotion and selflessness. Patient, dedicated, sympathetic, and nurturing, May Bartram and Emily Sinico are quite willing, so far as they are able, to suppress their needs and desires, to live life through the men they love. From the moment May agrees to "watch" with Marcher, that is, to wait with him for the leap of the beast, she becomes "his kind wise keeper."<sup>4</sup> She does not mock his obsession with the beast; rather she has "a wonderful way of making it [the secret] seem, as such, the secret of her own life, too (p. 563). Indeed, her association with Marcher gives "shape and colour to her own existence" (p. 564). Like May, she invests the man she loves with more importance than he deserves, and Duffy believes that in "her eyes he would ascend to an angelic stature" (p. 122).

In her role as confessor, Mrs. Sinico is once again reminiscent of May Bartram. With "almost maternal solicitude, she urged him [Duffy] to let his nature open to the full. She became his confessor" (p. 122). Nonetheless, she, like May, will be disappointed in love. Both will be ill treated and, in fact betrayed, by their self-involved "lovers."

Duffy's betrayal takes the form of outright rejection when Mrs Sinico shows signs of becoming emotionally involved, but Marcher's betrayal is almost as palpable, for he fails both to acknowledge and to respond to May's emotional needs. He

<sup>3</sup> "A Painful Case" in *The Portable James Joyce*, ed. Harry Levin (New York, 1947), 119. Subsequent citations are from this edition, pagination indicated parenthetically.

<sup>4</sup> "The Beast in the Jungle" in *The Short Stories of Henry James*, ed. Clifton Fadiman (New York, 1945), 563. Subsequent citations are from this edition, pagination indicated parenthetically.

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discovers ways of soothing the bad conscience that occasionally stirs within him. He buys, for example, birthday presents for May that cost more than he can afford, thus proving to himself that "he hadn't sunk into real selfishness" (p. 565).

Duffy is both cruder in his behaviour and more skilled in the art of rationalization. He is dismayed when one evening Mrs. Sinico presses his hand to her cheek. The call for intimacy both frightens and repels him. Duffy does not see her for one week and then arranges a meeting to say farewell. On this occasion "she began to tremble so violently that, fearing another attack on her part, he bade her good-bye quickly and left her" (p. 123). Months later, he wrote in his notebook: "Love between man and man is impossible because there must not be sexual intercourse and friendship between man and woman is impossible because there must be sexual intercourse" (p. 123).

The ultimate result of this rejection is the death of Mrs. Sinico. Although she is struck down while crossing a railroad track in an inebriated state, the doctor's report indicated that "death . . . had probably been due to shock and sudden failure of the heart's [Duffy's, of course] action" (p. 125). May Bartram, suffering from a prolonged physical ailment, slowly wastes away. There is, however, the implication that an emotional commitment from Marcher would have restored her spirits and might even have saved her life. Only after the women who loved them are dead do Marcher and Duffy realize the enormity of their loss and the depth of their guilt. Marcher now knows that only May could have saved him: "The escape would have been to love her; then, *then* he would have lived. *She* had lived — who could now say with what passion? — since she had loved him for himself; whereas he had never thought of her . . . but in the chill of his egotism and the light of her use" (p. 597). Likewise, Duffy now realizes that "one human being had seemed to love him and he had denied her life and happiness: he had sentenced her to ignominy, a death of shame" (p. 128).

Both recognize, for the first time, the emptiness of the passionless existence. Marcher comes to see himself as a man to whom nothing has happened because he has spent his life waiting for the great event to spring upon him. Duffy "gnawed the rectitude of his life; he felt that he had been an outcast from

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life's feast" (p. 128).

In both instances awareness is brought about by the observation of other people who are experiencing passion. Marcher sees a man weeping at the graveside of someone he has loved and Duffy witnesses a couple embracing. For once, these men who have always observed life are brought beyond observation to feeling. There is, however, the little hope held out for them. They have lost their only chance for happiness. Their lives will remain empty and passionless, altered only by the newly acquired feeling of remorse.

The epiphanies occur in the chill of autumn and in both stories there are images of coldness and darkness to suggest the emotional failure of the protagonists. Among the many other images which convey the sense of their cold and dispirited lives are the unfit fireplace in James's story and the unused distillery in Joyce's. Both stories are punctuated with irony and the titles are, of course, particularly ironic. "The Beast in the Jungle" and "A Painful Case" can best be described as stories that are to a large extent abstracted. This is indeed appropriate when one considers that they deal with protagonists who are withdrawn and disengaged, whose efforts are to flee from both the personal and the present.

Others besides Henry James and James Joyce have written about the un-lived life. However, the remarkable similarities in the way they have characterized their protagonists, spun out their plots, and employed particular literary techniques leads one to believe that there is more influence than coincidence in this particular case, and that Joyce may indeed have known James' story.

