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JAMES JOYCE BROADSHEET

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Virgil and Joyce: Nationalism and Imperialism in the 'Aeneid' and 'Ulysses' by Randall J. Pogorzelski

Review by: Wei Zhou

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Randall J. Pogorzelski ***Virgil and Joyce: Nationalism and Imperialism in the 'Aeneid' and 'Ulysses'***

Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press 2016 178pp

ISBN: 978-0-299-30800-1

RANDALL J. POGORZELSKI'S BOOK 'investigates the engagement of *Ulysses* with the *Aeneid* as a bidirectional process'. Not only does it illustrate how Joyce uses the *Aeneid* to construct an Irish identity in *Ulysses*, but it also shows how such reception sheds new light on the nationalist elements in the *Aeneid*. Primarily drawing on Benedict Anderson's theory of nations and nationalism as modern inventions, Pogorzelski enquires into the ancient presence of these concepts embodied in the Italianisation of Augustan Rome in the *Aeneid*. He redefines the Italy represented in the *Aeneid* as the Roman state bound to the territorial borders of Roman citizenship which differs from the Roman Empire in its aspiration for global domination. The redefinition of Virgilian Italy irons out the conceptual dissimilarities between an ancient state and a modern nation so as to enable a dialogue between the *Aeneid* and *Ulysses* in the formation of collective identities.

While tracing Virgil's influence on Joyce, Pogorzelski resuscitates political nuances in certain expressions in the *Aeneid* suggested by their appearances in *Ulysses*. Pogorzelski's book title seems to invite the reader to see Virgil and Joyce as uncanny doubles. A series of 'literary twins' can be found in the correspondences made between a selection of episodes and characters in both texts. He opens the first chapter by analysing a direct allusion to Virgil's first *Eclogue* in Stephen Dedalus's story of the two Dublin women in 'Aeolus'. For Pogorzelski, the allusion to the land confiscations in ancient Italy represented in the *Eclogue* resonates in the context of the Land Acts between 1870 and 1903 as resistance to British imperial power. The politics of land involved in the emergence of the nation in the first *Eclogue* anticipates the construction of nationhood in the *Aeneid*. The parallel reading of the first *Eclogue* and 'Aeolus' thus establishes a roadmap which reveals echoes between the *Aeneid* and *Ulysses* in the following chapters.

Chapters Two and Three critique the purist nationalism represented in *Aeneid VIII* and 'Cyclops'. Pogorzelski demonstrates both the liberating and disruptive forces of Irish nationalism represented by the Joycean citizen in proposing alignments with the monster Cacus and the hero Hercules. He then attempts to illustrate both the terrible and sympathetic aspects of the Citizen in association with the Theocritean/Ovidian Polyphemus through Cacus. In my view, this complicates the argument. I hesitate to agree with Pogorzelski's claims that Joyce intended to entangle the Citizen with these archetypes. From his discussion of Irish nationalism mainly through Virgilian allusions, Pogorzelski further explores the construction of a homogenous Italian identity out of the cultural heterogeneity of Augustan Rome in *The Aeneid*. In this reading, Virgil's formulation of Italian nationalism is considered to be an analogy for the Irish revivalists' ideal of a 'pure' Irish culture which Joyce criticised in *Ulysses*.

Chapters Four and Five interrogate imperialism through an interpretation of the symbolic connections between the patrilineal and political discontinuities in *Aeneid VI* and 'Circe'. In *Aeneid VI* the premature death of Augustus's heir, Marcellus, is associated with the uncertainty of the imperial future of Rome. Such 'familial and political disruption' corresponds with the complex postcolonial future of Ireland in Pogorzelski's allegorical reading of 'Circe'. Through the paralleling of Leopold Bloom's son, Rudy, to Marcellus, he suggests that the death of Rudy symbolically links the problems of the Bloom family's succession to the instability and struggles of the emerging Irish nation. The political and patrilineal discontinuities are intensified by the semantic rupture in *Aeneid VI* and 'Circe' as exemplified in the failure of communication between the Cumaean Sibyl and Aeneas.

The book demonstrates much skilful organisation in the multiple references which illuminate analogical connections between the *Aeneid* and *Ulysses*. One of the main challenges in making these connections is to acknowledge and negotiate the differences between the ancient empire as represented in the Latin epic and the modern nation as imagined in the Irish novel. These differences are handled with caution. However, the repeated clarifications, for example that 'the *Aeneid* is not an Irish text', might well have been left out for they undermine the proposition of the book itself. More convincing evidence might have been expected in making the claim that the Bloom family allegorises an Irish dynasty aligned with the Julian gens represented in *Aeneid VI*. While the comparison appears not to be direct, the potential interest of the symbolic correlation remains.

Pogorzelski's *Virgil and Joyce* reinvigorates the reader's understanding of the *Aeneid* and *Ulysses*. The tracing of an allusive dialogue between the selected episodes throws light on the rest of these texts as a whole, providing a new perspective on the representation of nationalism and imperialism in literature. The thorough account of the context of Augustan Rome enhances the non-specialist reader's appreciation of the political implications of the *Aeneid*. The character analysis is scholarly and effective. Despite the intricacy, the combination of Cacus with other characters in classical literature is reminiscent of an Eliotian 'familiar compound ghost'. Most importantly, the reader of the *James Joyce Broadsheet* is likely to find this work engaging.

Wei Zhou

Michael Groden ***The Necessary Fiction: Life with James Joyce's 'Ulysses'***

Brighton: Edward Everett Root 2019 276pp

ISBN 978-1-911454-39-7

MICHAEL GRODEN'S MEMOIR is unconventional but not entirely *sui generis*: an academic autobiography told specifically through Groden's near-lifelong engagement with *Ulysses*. There have been a few broadly comparable books – the autobiography of an academic or bibliomemoir – notably Alice Kaplan's *French Lessons* and, within Joyce studies, Fritz Senn's *Joycean Murmoirs* (but the latter is a series of edited interviews and not an autobiography as such). A term that Groden credits to Mary Lowe-Evans neatly captures the heart of what he's doing, an 'autobloomography'. Through the prism of the autobiography, the reader is also treated to a partial history of Joyce studies, a field in which Groden has been a major player, as well as a thoughtful contemplation of Joyce's text and, specifically, how Groden's thoughts about Joyce's text have evolved and matured over the course of his life.

In a sense it's a love story between a man and a book, but folded into it is another love story, that of Groden and his wife, the poet Molly Peacock. They were high school sweethearts who reconnected almost twenty years after their initial romance. The coincidence of names between Groden's Molly and Bloom's is but one of many echoes or rhymes that Groden lays out between and across his life and *Ulysses*.

What truly sets this book apart is how Groden applies a 'scrupulous meanness' to himself. He reads himself through his decades-long readings of *Ulysses*. That is, in reading *Ulysses*, he is, 'reading the book of himself'. Throughout the book he uses examples from *Ulysses* to illuminate moments of his life, thereby providing an 'Exquisite contrast' (to use Miss Kennedys words) between a lifetime of reading and a life being lived. Because he is a scholar of the highest order, his references to *Ulysses* are nuanced and detailed, but never pedantic. He applies this scholarly rigour and perspicacity to telling the story of himself. Groden is lucid in terms of his self-presentation and in many cases the autobiography is very moving. Beyond matters of such analysis, his book shows in its style of honest and probing self-expression what *Ulysses* has meant to him.

Groden grew up a bright, inquisitive boy in a working class Jewish home in Buffalo, New York. Buffalo is home to many of Joyce's manuscripts, but this is not something Groden was aware of during his childhood. Instead, his interest in Joyce or, rather, his love affair with *Ulysses*, began, as he says, 'on a warm and sunny mid-September day in 1966 in tiny Hanover, New Hampshire', in his second year as an undergraduate student at Dartmouth College. After Dartmouth, he progressed to do his graduate work with A. Walton Litz at Princeton, which led to his seminal



Michael Groden (1947 – 2021)

first book *'Ulysses' in Progress*, a groundbreaking study of *Ulysses*'s evolution across multiple drafts. This was a transformative work for Joyce studies and established Groden as one of the pre-eminent textual and genetic scholars. As such, he was chosen to be the general editor of the 63-volume *James Joyce Archive* and managed to shepherd this ambitious project to publication. Joyceans have perhaps become so used to the existence of the *Archive* that we don't always appreciate how difficult it was to get this project done and how improbable it was to begin with.

Besides detailing his work on the *Archive*, Groden discusses his work advising Hans Walter Gabler for his edition of *Ulysses* as well as his work for the National Library of Ireland in 2002 for their acquisition of the Paul Léon papers, a truly significant – and hitherto unknown – collection of *Ulysses* manuscripts. His account of these materials is enlivened by showing the tangible thrills of discovery when looking at all-new material. He also describes moments of scholarly frustration, such as the so-called 'Joyce Wars' of the late 1980s and early 1990s and his dealings with the irascible Stephen James Joyce.

Groden also discusses another of his companions, cancer. He was first diagnosed with cancer at the age of 33 but managed to keep it in abeyance for many decades. He calls his cancer his 'malignant Mulligan or Boylan', a recurring, unwelcome character, but one that can be dealt with, lived with, even.

To conclude, I would like to thank the editors of the *Broadsheet* for asking me to review Mike's book. Rereading it after Mike's passing in March 2021, it has moved me again. *The Necessary Fiction* really is the book of himself in that it manifests his keen analytic mind, kindness, decency and honesty. To those who knew and loved him, Mike will be missed. This book will remind us of him. And for those who never got a chance to meet him, this book will give a beautiful account of the man and of what *Ulysses* can mean.

Sam Slote

BLOOMSDAY 2021

IN RESPONSE to the Covid-fuelled Zoom phenomenon, we list below a sample of the many online Bloomsday events taking place on the internet.

DUBLIN, IRELAND, THE WORLD: The James Joyce Centre, Dublin, is hosting *Bloomsday Festival 2021*, an extensive and lively array of Joyce-related events to celebrate Bloomsday. Most of the events will be online, including a broadcast of readings and songs, a *Ulysses* Punk cabaret, Bloomsday film festival screenings, Joyce art exhibitions and drawing workshops. A 'Performing Joyce' series features Evanna Lynch as Lucia Joyce in the Irish premiere of *Calico* by Michael Hastings, along with readings by the Bloomsday poet, Èilís Ní Dhuibhne, while Sonny Condell has re-recorded his song, 'The Fruit Smelling Shop', based on the 'Wandering Rocks' episode of *Ulysses*. Lisa Hannigan performs the poetry of Joyce in 'Pomes Pennyeach' and the spoken word collective, 'Word Up', explores Joyce's work in *Ulysses*. Dublin City Libraries will broadcast an introduction to *Ulysses* in a live lecture with music and readings. There is also to be a webinar entitled 'Reading Joyce in Russia'. Further information about these events (and more) can be found on the James Joyce Centre website (http://www.bloomsdayfestival.ie.bloomsdayprogramme)

THE ROSENBACH MUSEUM, PHILADELPHIA: ***'I Said Yes: A Celebration of Bloomsday at the Rosenbach'***. This new film production, celebrating Bloomsday and the significance of Joyce's writing, features interviews, commentary, music, readings and more. It premieres on Wednesday 16 June, beginning at 7.00 p.m. EST and lasts 90 minutes. You can watch the film on rosenbach.org or facebook.com/rosenbachmuseum. Various other events are planned for June, including: 'Written in My Heart': James Joyce & Irish Authors, a free, virtual 'Behind the Bookcase' tour on Thursday 3 June, from 6.00 – 7.00; 'The Will to Forget: Memory, the Nation, and *Ulysses*' – In conversation with Vincent Cheng, also free, on Wednesday 9 June from 7.00 – 8.00; *Love's Old Sweet Song*: The Music of James Joyce is another free, virtual 'Behind the Bookcase' tour of a number of historic Celtic harp performances; there is also a Bloomsday Artwork Contest, with the results being made available on Bloomsday. The 2020 Rosenbach Bloomsday Festival was celebrated virtually last year and it is possible to watch the entire virtual festival here, at info@rosenbach.org , https://www.facebook.com/rosenbachmuseum/ , https://twitter.com/TheRosenbach .

THE JAMES JOYCE SOCIETY OF NEW YORK will be holding a virtual meeting on Wednesday 16 June 2021 from 7.00 p.m. (Central Time) featuring a talk by Robert Seidman, novelist, Emmy-winning screenwriter and literary critic entitled 'Inexhaustible *Ulysses*'. For more information contact Nicholas Fargnoli, the President of the James Joyce Society, at afargnoli@molloy.edu

BLOOMSDAY IN MELBOURNE: Bloomsday Festival, from Wednesday 15th to Sunday 27th June 2021. Welcome to three events celebrating James Joyce's *Ulysses*: A new play, *Love's Bitter Mystery: The Year that Made James Joyce* (15 – 17 June) and a Bloomsday Joyce Seminar, *Joyce and the Women* (4.00 p.m. Wednesday 16th June). It's not entirely clear whether these events are available online or via Zoom so check it out at www.bloomsdayinmelbourne.org.au (editor)

IRISH NETWORK MINNESOTA: 4th Annual Bloomsday Celebration. 'Tune in and celebrate Bloomsday and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Hosted by Stephen Murray, this is an online event that will feature live music, poetry, an award presentation and (of course) a reading of the famous novel.' Follow us on https://twitter.com/IrishNetworkMN , https://facebook.com/irishnetworkminnesota , http://www.instagram.com/irishnetworkmn .

FESTIVAL BLOOMSDAY MONTREAL: In a run-up to *Bloomsday in Montreal*, a number of Joyce-related online events will be on offer, beginning on Saturday 12th June with 'Molly in Motion', focusing on choreographer Margie Gillis's work in progress, continuing through to Bloomsday itself with a variety concert hosted by Dennis Trudeau (on Sunday 13th), two academic panel sessions (on Monday 14th), featuring John McCourt, Cleo Hanaway-Oakley, Casey Lawrence and others, and concluding on Bloomsday itself with readings from *Ulysses* hosted by Kevin Wright and a performance of 'Molly Bloom's Reverie' by Kathleen Fee with musical accompaniment by Geraldina Mendez. See https://bloomsdaymontreal.com/2021-events/

BLOOMSDAY IN BUDAPEST 2021 – On Bloomsday last year (16 June 2020) the Embassy of Ireland to Hungary unveiled their 'Bloomsday in Budapest' project, a collaboration between Irish and Hungarian composers for the guitar, 'interrogating stereotypes of the instrument and enriching the canon of works for 6- and 8-string guitars'. As a result of a strong response to the call for new compositions, the works of eleven composers have been selected to feature in a performance by Katalin Koltai at the Budapest Music Centre on 16 June 2021 as a part of the Bloomsday 2021 programme presented by the Embassy of Ireland in Hungary, along with performances in Ireland during 2020 and 2021. Katalin is an internationally acclaimed guitarist, soloist and chamber musician. For further information, email Linda O'Shea Farren, Communications & Projects Manager at the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland at losheafarren@cmc.ie

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