

*JOYCE, MODERNITY, AND ITS MEDIATION. European Joyce Studies I*, edited by Christine van Boheemen. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989. 228 pp. \$32.50.

Before me is the first volume of the projected series entitled *European Joyce Studies*. The introductory essay by the volume's editor, Christine van Boheemen, gave title to the whole volume: *Joyce, Modernity, and Its Mediation*. While the essay defines Joyce as a writer who "seems to have made marginality into a strategic art of elusion and [who] preprogrammed elusiveness into textuality of his writing," it also seeks to read Joyce in much wider terms than style, theme, or artistic intention which, so far, notes van Boheemen, has been the focal concern of studies devoted to "Joyce-and-Modernism." The ambition of the volume, therefore, is to reread this vast term by placing it in the context of "cultural-historical, philosophical, and other non-formalist approaches to the text" (3), so as to emphasize the degree to which Joyce had made the modernist readers/writers throughout the world "aware of the philosophical implications of textuality" (4). Van Boheemen's own awareness of the complexity of post-modern intellectual and "cult"/ural currents accounts for the impressive breadth of her introductory essay and, by extension, for an eloquent contextualization of all essays in the volume. (In fact, the thoroughness of the introduction hinders the task of a reviewer who dares not engage in any polemics concerning the content of the content.)

Notably, this contextualization made it mandatory that the word "mediatization" be used for a concept/process which most of the essays in this volume refer to as "mediation." The reason for the new term, we learn, is to prevent theological and/or philosophical associations that the word "mediation" evokes: "Our purpose was to emphasize that the subject of these discussions is not "mediation" as preliminary step towards totalization. They concentrate on the limitations imposed upon representation by the necessity of mediation through the medium [of language, of ideological structures such as sexual difference or other oppositional concepts/models]" (7). That the term "mediatization" is not used consistently by the contributors to this volume points to the inherent complexity of any discussion of

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textuality in general; but, particularly, it points to a near impossibility of a univocal approach to textuality of modernist/post-modernist thematization of the unrepresentable. Lexically speaking, "mediation" is a fairly unambiguous word; I would like to think that we "mediate" through the medium of language rather than "mediatize." Nominalizing verbs and/or verbalizing nouns often minimalizes meaning and maximalizes verbiage—so far Joyceans have been quite successful at avoiding "izm"-ing; should we "ize"?

The essays in this volume are divided into three groups: the first five, under the heading of "Representation and Its Limits," share a thematic axis of precisely that—the limits that the "language'd" author is bound to reach in his/her endeavor to represent. Five essays in this section provide a thorough foregrounding of this vast dilemma. Ulrich Schneider's essay, "Mediatization in 'Aeolus' and 'Oxen of the Sun,'" after initial grappling with vocabulary, restores the word "mediation" by referring to Hartman's phrase "mediatory process." The phrase (used by Hartman to describe Carlyle's modernity) names the process of foregrounding that allows a writer a distance from the text so as to render that text as having presence of its own. Schneider observes the complexity of such a process in Joyce's fight against literary conventions:

on the narratological level, the dismissal of an intrusive, mediating narrator and the preference for "showing" over "telling" in Joyce's early works make an important chapter in the history of the novel after Flaubert. Nevertheless, like other novelists of early modernism, Joyce became increasingly aware of the fact that, no matter how unmediated the writer's vision might be, he is bound to express it in mediated language. (17)

What Schneider sees as fight, Jean-Michel Rabaté interprets as profound doubt. Rabaté in his essay "The Modernity of *Exiles*," reads *Exiles* and the accompanying notes not so much as a play and a set of tips on performance, but as pieces "presenting the central problem Joyce faced when writing, which is often the same as that of the staging of the text: how to represent something which eludes representation?" (24). The notes, according to Rabaté, show Joyce "uncertain, mediating on the gaps left by his text" (27), a text that strives to represent in language "absence and suffering: two 'conditions' which cannot easily be signified by the mediation of the bodies of actors on a stage and yet [which] reveal the themes treated by the text as a whole" (32). Where Rabaté focuses on the authorial mediation, Fritz Senn, in his essay "Anagnostic Probes," approaches the dynamics of linguistic mediation from the perspective of the reader.

During the process of reading, Joyce's text as a whole emerges as a result of "postponed clarification: later passages throwing light on earlier ones . . . in perpetual retroactive resemantification" (37). Such process inherently undermines, if not subverts, the cognitive process, thus amplifying the question of the ultimate validity of mediation through language. Fittingly, Christine van Boheemen, in "The Language of Flow: Joyce's Dispossession of the Feminine in *Ulysses*," sees *Ulysses* as subverting the conventions of realism through "its irregularity, its violation of conventions, its unsettling of identities, its subtle frustration of readerly expectations, and its apparent desire to create uncertainty and doubt rather than distinct clarity and meaning" (65). Through the reading of a seemingly unrelated advertisement (featuring the body of a car and that of a nude woman), van Boheemen attempts to decipher "Joyce's use of the image of woman [in the] architecture of *Ulysses* both as imaged reflection of our world and as the intentional act of authorship, the signature, of James Joyce" (64). Although the ad could simply be seen as a tasteless pun on the word "to ride," in the context of a postmodern "collusion between rhetorical configurations and man's illusion of transcendent subjectivity" (70), van Boheemen's inquiry into these structures of signification weaves into a fabric of poststructuralist exploration the nature of signification and subjectivity. The last essay in this section is a fascinating attempt by Marilyn Brownstein to trace, as the title indicates, "The Rule of the Postmodern in the *Phaedrus* and *Finnegans Wake*." In both texts, proposes Brownstein, "doubled forms of memory offer respite from language's strictest mediations" (80), whereby both texts move away from "the rationalizing proclivities of ordinary discourse by presenting a particular view of memory as compensation and play" (80). Memory in Plato and Joyce, as in the postmodern text, survives as a "primary nostalgia reified, an etymological restoration, a reversal, in which *algos*, the grieving or longing for *nostos*, for home-coming, is renewed as a kind of corporeal eloquence—a speaking of the body through disruptions in the body of language" (82). Brownstein sees the text of the *Phaedrus* and of the *Wake* as two manifestations of the reversal of the mediating role of language; in Joyce, it is accomplished through the use of feminine maternal memory ("playful and dangerous remembering of the origins of *eros* in direct relation to the maternal body"—83), whereby the *Wake* recovers all that is forbidden; in Plato, it is achieved through the memory of the ideal beauty (lost to consciousness but triggered by sensational apprehension of the beauty of the beloved—remembering in the body—"which initiates goodness through semblance to perfection so that the lover ap-

proaches the ideal [known only by gods] in the beauty of his beloved" –84). In the Platonic dialectics the true means of knowing is celebrated through the sustenance of "erotic-ironic fluctuations:" the irrational, the mute, the extra-linguistic, all reminiscent of Joyce's use of the feminine.

Part Two of the book seeks to explore the "Contexts" for modernity and its mediation. Richard Brown's essay "'Perhaps she had not told him all the story . . .': Observations on the Topic of Adultery in Some Modern Literature" and Mary Power's "Molly Bloom and Mary Anderson: The Inside Story" share a scholarly zeal for reading Joyce's "fiction" as an artistic mediation of contemporaneous cultural actualities. Joyce's fascination with adultery is shown by Brown to have been mediated not only through such modern literary instances as *Emma Bovary* or *Connie Chatterley*, but also through their pre-figurations in Homer, Shakespeare, and even the Gospel ("in Joyce's surviving library there are no less than four items which propose or refer to the hilariously and heretically literalist idea that Joseph was cuckolded by the Holy Ghost at the conception of Christ" –104). Brown, admitting to have come "dangerously close to repeating the critical cliché that modern or Modernist fiction focuses on the unknowability, the undecidability of human experience" (111), proceeds to read Joyce's treatment of adultery as a narrative moment of doubt, as cognitive hiatus whose final locus, rather than pointed out, can only be mediated through language: "Passages like the end of 'The Dead' have their effect partly because the linguistic signifier is not always necessarily attached to a given signified, but partly also because it sometimes, however arbitrarily, is" (111). For Mary Power, however, the signifier "Molly" denotes the whole range of signifieds connected with the fact that Molly is an artiste (which gives her not only "license to languish in bed and about the house all day," but also possibly to combine "business and pleasure in her choice of managers" –113). Reading Molly through the historical women of the stage appearing in *Ulysses*, particularly through actress Mary Anderson, allows Power to "establish context for looking at an actress's career at the turn of the century realistically" (114), that is, through mediation (!) of such music hall publications as *The Encore*, *The Sphere*, and *The Era Almanac*. The meta-fictional sources of Molly's character remain unrecognized as such, although it is precisely the tabloid meta-reality that informs Power's brilliant "historical" reading of Molly Bloom.

Two remaining essays in this section provide a further historical contextualization of Joyce's modernity. Peter de Voogd's "James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, and the Mediatization of Word and Image"

scrutinizes the feud between the two contemporaries over representation of time and/or space in prose. Voogd summarizes the irreconcilable differences between Lewis and Joyce as follows:

outside versus inside, or outline versus detail, contour versus content, moment versus action, space versus time. Where Joyce creates circles and fluid streams, Lewis brutally curtails narratives. . . . Lewis segments circles, loves angles. In punctuation, Joyce liked to make distinctions disappear—no quotation marks, the Sternean dash. Lewis began his writing-career by disfiguring the pages of *Tarr* with eye-stopping sentence-blocking bold-faced (in both senses) punctuation marks looking thus: = = . (124)

Voogd leaves without comment Joyce's occasional attempts (for pun's sake or not) at pictorializing the verbal (the gestural footnotes at the end of "The Study Period"—*FW* 308; or the diagram at *FW* 293; "ace to ace" at *FW* 18.36; multiple exclamations at *FW* 475; or an over-diacriticized fragment at *FW* 24.09-21, to name just a few). Voogd's counter-Horatian conclusion that negates the complacency of the *ut pictura poesis dictum*—a conclusion mediated through the postmodern awareness of the limits of the linguistic signification—has an appropriately true ring to it: "you just can't mediatize word and image" (125). And finally Marius Buning's essay, "History and Modernity in Joyce's *Ulysses*," while acknowledging Joyce's lifelong preoccupation with history, sets out to dismiss Joyce as a historian. Instead, Buning proposes that, as an artist viewing human experience through the medium of language, Joyce regarded "the historical process and its representation. . . essentially [as] a verbal artifact, and therefore subject to a particular point of view or a collection of such viewpoints" (127). Thus seen as discourse, history is "inseparable from. . . its verbal representation or mediation." This line of inquiry enables Buning to point out two aspects of Joyce's modernity: first, his grappling with the problem of writing about "human history in a responsible artistic form—a form which "modernizes" our view of history as well as "revolutionizes" our concept of literature" (128), and, second, his blurring of genres that Buning sees as indicative of "a deconstructive critique of the traditional concepts and hierarchies which are our professional concern" (129).

The five essays in Part Three of the volume, "Commentary," share the subject of mediation of Joyce's texts in criticism, annotations, and translations. Marisa Gatti-Taylor's essay, "It Loses Something in Translation: Italian and French Profanity in Joyce's *Ulysses*," analyzes some mistranslations of French and Italian phrases in *Notes for Joyce*. This is an important set of glosses, considering, first, Joyce's obsession with semantic nuances, and second, the fact that, in Gatti-

Taylor's words, "the foreign phrases constitute a significant part of the violent or luxurious language in which Stephen escaped from the cold silence of intellectual revolt. They contribute more than occasional graffiti on the walls of the verbal labyrinth which is *Ulysses*" (149). Glosses, or rather "Protean Inglossabilities 'to no end gathered,'" is a subject of Fritz Senn's essay, a cautious common sense look at such mediating sources as "Annotations," "Notes for Joyce," "Allusions," "scholia," and "commentaries," and the extent to which "our notes are (sorry!) meta-notes" (152). Questions that inform Senn's scepticism about glosses are primarily didactic: "At what time is what kind of information profitable—or can information be on occasion premature and detrimental?" (152). His close reading of Virgilian and Dantesque echoes or of "correct information" from *Thom's Directory* points out at once the absence of some names and facts from Joyce's text and to their pervasive presence in glosses, and thence, in our reading and rereading of "Joyce." Affirming that we need glosses, Senn advocates that we "have to de-reify" them, for, what Joyce teaches us in *Ulysses* and in the *Wake*,

is that you can never trust any messenger, no matter how well disposed, even when the messenger is doing his or her best, seems ideally equipped (no-one is), and has no axe to grind (all communication is a grinding of axes). We cannot rely on the experts and messengers we need so desperately." (176)

Moreover, according to Geert Lernout's essay, "The *tertium comparationis* Is the Message: Mediation and the European Joyce Studies," we cannot even rely on ourselves:

The ideal reader of Joyce is a Catholic and polyglot Dubliner who has spent several years in Trieste, Rome, Zürich, and Paris. Everything that distinguishes this reader from Joyce himself puts him at one more remove from the possibility of understanding his work: if he was born a protestant e.g., or if he grew up in the Bronx, or if he is a she. The problem with this is, of course, that even if such a reader ever existed he died some thirty-seven years ago. Since that date we have left the paradise of unmediated perception and have entered the world of glossaries, annotations, concordances, and gazetteers. (187)

A different angle is assumed by Alan Roughley in "The Mediatization of Joyce." After supplying an OED "gloss" for "mediatization," he specifies the twofold meaning of his title denoting

at least two sets of textual operations: (1) Joyce's mediatization of the literary styles and textual fragments absorbed by his writing, and (2) the responses to Joyce's writing that we make as readers and critics

who must attempt to annex our experiences of Joyce's writing to what is presumably a larger understanding of language and writing in general. (190)

Among the former, Roughley analyzes the writings of the Marquis de Sade; the latter include E.R. Leavis, I.A. Richards, and Edmund Wilson. His valuable critical contextualization is expanded by Jeri Johnson's theoretical essay, "'Beyond the Veil': *Ulysses*, Feminism and the Figure of Woman," firmly rooted in Anglo-American and French feminism. Johnson starts with criticism of Sandra Gilbert's reading—or rather misreading—of women in Joyce, a misreading based on a fundamental fallacy of treating them at first as lexical (representational) constructs and then shifting to regarding them as "real":

And what are these females like? Intellectually shallow or impoverished, even rendered irrational, they are condemned, says Gilbert, simply to be, or, at the very best, to utter inanities ("met-him-pike-hoses"). . . . No longer a linguistic effect, Molly has become real. Gilbert may claim that these women are *sentenced* to flesh, embodied in *language*, but those sentences, that language are invisible to her. No longer a sign of physicality, Joyce's Woman is physicality. Only by ignoring that words are not flesh nor ever shall be can she say, wholly without irony, that "what marks these women's words is a kind of *essential* emptiness." (204-05)

Johnson criticizes Gilbert for assuming that adequate representation as such is possible, and assuming that mimesis in language presents no problem and, hence, that "an *a priori* real exists (e.g., a real woman's experience unmediated by patriarchal ideology) which can be adequately represented in a language which in turn remains undisturbed by figurality" (205). The implications of failing to account for the rhetoricity of Joyce's language amounts, according to Johnson, to failing to account for Joyce and for the fact that his unique violations of linguistic norms expose the fallaciousness of mimesis. Johnson juxtaposes Gilbert's view on Joyce to that of Kristeva, in whose "linguistic/psycho-analytic paradigm, Woman has no essence, no substance; 'she' merely signifies 'the invisible secret of femininity which . . . [is] the inaccessible part of both sexes' personality'. 'She' is the very sign of the inaccessible" (206). Whereas for Kristeva Woman is a rhetorical figure that functions "within a Narrative economy as means to the end of a revolutionary textual formation" (207), for Gilbert Joyce's Woman is all flesh. Johnson's is a much more thorough and succinct an analysis than I have space here to present, and fundamental to her argument about the seeming

naturalness of Joyce's "characters" is her recognition that it is the text itself that "produces the illusion of presence, of a rational mind mediating" (208).

Ultimately, that is all that the rhetorical means can accomplish. The debate between Gilbert and Kristeva is symptomatic of a much larger debate in present-day Joyce criticism and scholarship. The essay by Geert Lernout mentioned above offers a poignant outline of the polarities between the "American Joyce," the "French Joyce," and the "Continental Joyce," all terms deftly described and judiciously mediated by Lernout. The content of the volume accounts for an exceptionally rewarding reading, and, given the pervasiveness of philosophical and theoretical perspectives on language, textuality, and the rhetorical nature of signification, *Modernity and Its Mediation* will prove an indispensable "gloss" for post-modern approaches to Joyce.

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