

A Dream Come True: Reflections on "Joycean Dreaming,"  
Zurich Foundation James Joyce Workshop, August 1992

The Summer of 1992 was an eventful summer for me, especially academically. Not only did I have a wonderful opportunity to visit Dublin and participate in the 13th International James Joyce Symposium in June 1992, but also I was a part of the annual Zurich Workshop on "Joycean Dreaming" in August.

We were a truly international group: students and scholars represented Italy, France, the United States, England, Switzerland, Denmark, and India (I was counted as "also Polish," so, there you go: also Poland). Women outnumbered men—an historical "first," as Fritz Senn pointed out. We were also a surprisingly young group, both age-wise and experience-wise, which was great because we felt quite uninhibited. Other than two or three published, established Joycean scholars, we were on our own with respect to interpretations, close readings, and discussions. We would begin our "workshopping" each morning with the warm-up close reading sessions and then proceed with individual presentations. The range of the issues we tackled is best reflected by the presentation titles: "Interpretation of Dreams," "Stephen's Dream: *Portrait I*," "Dubliners' Dreams," "Dream/ Film/ Time," "Which Freud? Dream or Play?," ". . . Dreaming the Language of Dreaming. . .," "An Oriental View," "Dream Elements of Stephen: Between the Ikaros and the Sea," "On 'Circe,'" "Putting the Dictionary to Sleep: Notes on the Genesis of 'Wakean' Dreaming," "The Spell of Dreaming: Language," "Dreams Portrayed," and "Language of Dreaming and the Question of Ethics."

Needless to say, the workshop was engaging and stimulating. It allowed for the kind of dissection of a single subject that Joyce conferences and symposia do not allow anymore, even if they have themes or topics. It was equally rewarding and illuminating to be a part of a brilliant, "upwardly mobile" group of Joyceans, who are well on their way to crystallizing their scholarly careers. The experi-

ence and the invaluable contributions to the discussions by John Bishop took all the participants through the labyrinthine intricacies of Joyce's dreamworld(s); they were amply supplemented by ad hoc additions from other workshop participants, and the workshop's built-in democratic approach to learning resulted in a variety of novel and/or stimulating readings and interpretations.

And that's the charm and the challenge of the Zurich Joyce Workshops. All of them, as I heard from former participants, have differed vastly from the Joyce conferences, thanks to their focus and an intensity impossible to achieve in a conference setting. The process of looking at a given aspect/concept/passage from a variety of angles invariably yields unexpected depths and creates a subtle micro-"chaosmos" of intertextuality confined to that particular week and to that particular group of people. It is enriching. It is unique. It is worthwhile.

I hope to work at the Foundation again in the future. The place is a veritable gold mine for a Joycean to use. All primary and secondary texts are there, including foreign language Joyce texts and criticism, as well as audio and video tapes, photos, curios, and ample space to work. In addition, there are the Zurich Joyceans, hospitable beyond expectations, well beyond. . . .

Here is what I mean. Other than getting there, the actual cost of staying in Zurich for the Workshop was surprisingly low: the accessible Zurich hotels made a difference as did the hospitality of the Friends of the Zurich James Joyce Foundation. The Foundation's kitchen facilities enabled us to prepare lunches right there, saving all of us a bundle of money (which none of us had too much of, anyway) and valuable time (we didn't have to disperse and gather again). After work-packed days, we dined out a few times—Fritz Senn leading us to a few outstanding and economical restaurants. Also, there were two exceptional dinner events: the evening out at Dorothea Isler's place, accessible via a two hour boat ride on the spectacular Lake Zurich, and another one, at the Adlers, on Lake Walensee in the Swiss alpine country. The two events featured stress-reducing frolicking in the water, Joyce's Swiss wines, and fabulous food provided by our hosts. A truly welcome relief after our long, nine-to-five (and longer) days amid the books.

A week of stimulating intellectual events and NO FEE. Whereas I thought it a travesty (and would have gladly paid a nominal participation fee), I realized that in order to keep the workshop open to all, a fee for this quite costly event was never even introduced. The passport to the workshop is nonpecuniary; the participants bring gifts of intellect and input. The fee is the thorough homework that

everyone is expected to have done prior to arriving at the Foundation, homework inspired by genuine interest in a topic and substantiated by quite an amount of research.

Some of us took the opportunity to join and support the Friends of the Zurich James Joyce Foundation, glad to be winners in regard to the scholarly gains afforded by our week at the Foundation. One can't put a price tag on THOSE.

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