Book Reviews

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This brief review focuses on the inaugural issue of the Dublin James Joyce Journal, published in 2008. The journal offers itself as a forum not just for Joycean scholars but also for the wider audience of Joyce. In line with this stated aim, the journal opens up the possibilities for scholars working in other fields to keep abreast of Joyce studies and to contribute to discussions across fields. Amongst the articles published in the journal, Cóilín Owens’ article “The Charity of Silence”: “After the Race” and the Emmet Centenary’ offers a particularly stimulating analysis of Joyce’s short story that might not immediately have been apparent to the casual Joyce reader. Although all the articles are enlightening, and the journal itself offers up an appropriate mix of historical research and literary analysis, comparative studies were somewhat lacking in the journal. Given the post-colonial bent of the articles by Malcolm Sen and Fintan O’Toole, which focus on Joyce’s Orientalism, and the historical and political bent of the other articles, comparative studies might have offered up new possibilities of looking at Joyce’s work in new ways and, indeed, assessing the expanding audience of Joyce as his work continues to be translated and received by new generations and cultures; a milestone of which was marked by the completion of the Chinese translation of Ulysses into Chinese by Xiao Qian and Wen Jieruo in 1995, although many extracts had been translated previously.

Using the relatively young field of Taiwanese Literature Studies as an example, we can find several parallels in the colonial and post-colonial histories and literatures of Ireland and Taiwan. Liang Qichao’s exhortation for Lin Xiantang to use the example of Ireland’s resistance to British rule to resist the Japanese in Taiwan spurred a series of comparisons between Taiwan and Ireland, which have continued to this day. Despite the differences between the two, they have undergone similar journeys from the colonial era to post-modernity. Taiwan has looked to Ireland, and Joyce’s work in particular, as a mirror for itself in some ways. The Irish Literary Revival in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and its opposition to the literary modernism of those like Joyce (who recognized the globalization of the world and rejected the insularity of the Celtic Twilight, as Fintain O’Toole points out in his article, “‘I Suppose They’re Just Getting Up in China Now’: Joyce, the City and Globalization’), are echoed in the Nativism versus Modernism debates that came with the transition to democracy gripping Taiwan in the 1990s and beyond. Indeed Wang Wenxing was singled out specifically for the influence that Joyce had on him, criticized as absurd for being a Taiwanese author who did nothing but ‘swallow the author’s words whole, like a date, pit and all,
without any critical or skeptical reflection. Then he’d publish an article brimming with high expectations and self-confidence, referring to himself as “Taiwan’s Joyce” (as charged by Song Zelai, writing in 1981; translated in Helmut Martin, Modern Chinese Writers: Self Portrayals, 1992: 235). According to research by Professor Lin Yu-Chen, Joyce was first introduced to Taiwan through Canadian missionaries and Chinese scholars who fled to Taiwan after the Chinese Civil War (Joyce in Taiwan, 1). Parts of his work were later translated by the magazine Modern Literature, founded by Bai Xianyong and Li Oufan, amongst others, and had a profound impact on the Taiwanese modernist movement.

Many of the articles made interesting insights into the inspirations behind Joyce’s work, and its critical reception; these include Anne Fogarty’s article on the role of sculpture in Joyce’s work, Terence Killeen’s exploration of Alfred Hunter as the inspiration for the character Leopold Bloom, and Christian O’Neill’s exploration of the role of Niall Montgomery as one of the first critics to see value in Joyce’s work. The article by Stephanie Rains provides an interesting insight into nineteenth and early twentieth century Orientalism in the bazaars that attempted to represent cultures including Japan; this offers an interesting comparison with the way Japan represented the Orient, itself, and its imperial dominions at around about the same time in the exhibitions which were frequent during Japanese Colonial Rule in Taiwan – and in fact how ‘Oriental Orientalism’ functioned as a part of the narrative behind Japan’s imperial ambitions (see Emma Jinhua Teng, Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895, 2006, 13) compared to the European Orientalism that Rains touches upon in her article. The postcolonial tone of her article when it refers to the protagonist’s reaction in ‘Araby’, faced with the woman with the English accent at the bazaar, puts one in mind of the Taiwanese protagonist of Yang Yunping’s (楊雲萍) ‘Curry Rice’ (1927) and his reaction when he spends all his money on a plate of curry rice and is intimidated by the Japanese girls in a Japanese restaurant, which only goes to underline the commonality in the postcolonial writing of Taiwan and Ireland.

“Wonder what I Look Like to Her”: Joyce’s Views on Animals in Ulysses’ (in Chung Wai Literary Monthly, 32.9: 7–40, 2004), and ‘Joyce, Language and Postcolonial Conditions’ (Chung Wai Literary Monthly, 27.9: 44–63, 1999); Iris Tsung-Huei Huang (National Taiwan University), who authored the papers ‘The Gift that Always Reaches Its Destination?’: The Economy of Gift in Ulysses’ (in Concentric: Studies in English Literature and Linguistics, 29.1: 175–197, 2003) and ‘The Desire to Feed or the Desire to Be Fed?: The Entangled Relation Between Bloom and the Maternal Figure in Ulysses’ (in NTU Studies in Language and Literature, 12: 23–49, 2003); and Chuang Kun-Liang (National Taiwan Normal University), editor of Joyce in Taiwan (Taipei: Bookman, 2008). Hopefully, through more comparative studies the journal will be able to encompass a larger range of interpretative perspectives.

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A Hungarian friend of mine has visited Dublin several times over the past seven years. Her daughter, who originally went to Dublin for her law degree, had married a fellow student, from South Africa. Later, Dublin became home to this immigrant couple from Hungary and South Africa with their locally born mixed-race son. Integration into Irish society is part of their daily life, and the citizenship of their son is an issue that emerged as early as his birth in the republic. Focusing on integration, Bryan Fanning’s Immigration and Social Cohesion in the Republic of Ireland illuminates challenges to immigrants such as the family of my friend’s daughter, as well as to the host Irish society. The transformative experiences of Irish society, from being an emigration society to an immigration destination (19), render comparative insight for Taiwan, an island that is also experiencing such a quantitative and qualitative transformation.

Fanning’s survey of recent immigration to Ireland begins with a cautious note about viewing immigration within the framework of multiculturalism. Post 9/11, multiculturalism in the west as a political discourse and a set of public policies is besieged by counter-discourses of anti-terrorism and calls for strengthening security and border control. Fanning’s studies of immigration to the Irish Republic are valuable resistance against this kind of overarching discourse. In line with Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between negative and positive freedom, Fanning argues that immigrants’ integration is as much an issue of desirability as one of ability (6–7). Located in ‘concrete situations’ (2), his research draws on social policy that aims to induce social integration, and he explores the impact of social policy on immigrants’ well-being. In this undertaking, social integration is defined as the process by which ‘immigrants become accepted into a society, both as individuals