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Who Reads "Ulysses"?: The Rhetoric of the Joyce Wars and the
Common Reader (review)

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(Review)

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³ Andrew Gibson, *Joyce's Revenge: History, Politics, and Aesthetics in "Ulysses"* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002).

⁴ See Genesis 1:28.

⁵ Sir Robert Ball, *The Story of the Heavens* (London: Cassell, 1893).

WHO READS "ULYSSES"?: THE RHETORIC OF THE JOYCE WARS
AND THE COMMON READER, by Julie Sloan Brannon. New York
and London: Routledge Publishers, 2003. 192 pp. \$75.00.

Routledge's "Outstanding Dissertations" series presumably does recent Ph.D.s a favor by publishing their dissertations without revision and, therefore, helping new academics build a publishing profile. There is a difference, however, between a book and a dissertation, and, though I would agree with Routledge that Julie Sloan Brannon's *Who Reads Ulysses?* is an outstanding dissertation, I would have preferred to see the work grow into a book, with the guidance of editors and peer reviewers who might have helped the author develop the promising core of this work into a richer analysis.

In bald outline, *Who Reads Ulysses?* follows the recent publication history of *Ulysses* and the surrounding controversies of each publication as played out in book reviews and journals. What is at stake in doing so, Brannon tells us, is the question of who, in fact, reads *Ulysses* outside of the academy. An interesting question this and one that Brannon only briefly tackles in a short conclusion that analyzes data from a Cambridge, Massachusetts, Public Library reading group that read *Ulysses* in 2000-2001 (never noting the irony of that address for her analysis of the "common reader"). Instead, the question remains implicit as she tracks, literally volley for volley, the public correspondence between Hans Walter Gabler, the editor of the 1984 edition of "*Ulysses*": *A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, John Kidd, a critic of Gabler's edition, and Danis Rose, the editor of "*Ulysses*": *A Reader's Edition*.¹ Readers interested in the history of editing and editorial theory will find the details published here fascinating.

Brannon explores the tension between editorial theories that play out in the publication of different versions of *Ulysses*. After dutifully reporting the original publishing history of the novel, she settles into an in-depth exploration of Gabler's edition, noting that the "combination of German editorial methods" informed by "structuralist theories and the eclectic school of editing in the Greg-Bowers tradition," which Gabler used, "forced Joyce scholars for the first time to confront the fact that *Ulysses* as a unified, stable text does not actually exist" (60). Brannon points out, though, that Gabler's own method was inconsistent, at least theoretically, for, whereas eclectic editors privilege the author's intentions, German structuralists (used syn-

onymously with the term poststructuralists) situate the author among a number of other factors producing a text. This left Gabler vulnerable to the criticisms of Kidd: that Joyce's intentions were not taken into account in the synoptic edition and that the use of facsimiles rather than originals led to an inferior version, condemnations that Gabler initially shrugged off as an "'amateur critique'" (77).² Yet as Kidd and Gabler continued a debate in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*,³ others took heed, and Kidd's assumptions about authorial intentions were championed by those who most wanted to please the "common reader": *Ulysses's* publishers. The 1961 edition of *Ulysses* was reissued, and the Gabler trade-edition's title was changed from "*Ulysses*": *The Corrected Text* to "*Ulysses*": *The Gabler Edition*.⁴

In 1997, the Irishman Rose entered the fray by issuing "*Ulysses*": *A Reader's Edition* in which he claimed to increase the "pleasure of the reader" by emending the manuscript for ease of reading (vi). Again, Brannon points out the fissures in editorial logic where Rose claims to present an "isotext . . . literally '*Ulysses* as James Joyce wrote it'" (xiii) at the same time that he relies on what she refers to as grammatically challenging areas in Joyce's work and "misrepresentations of Joyce's intent . . . without any concrete evidence given to support such an interpretation" (151). Thus Rose hyphenates and adds clauses at will in order to "smooth" the reading experience for the lay reader, but, as Brannon shrewdly points out, "[w]hether these alterations make any real change to the actual process of reading the novel is doubtful" (169). And so the question remains, who reads *Ulysses* anyway?

Part of Brannon's point is that the seemingly petty, but fiercely territorial, arguments about commas and hyphens in the published versions of *Ulysses* purport to concern themselves with the reader's experience of the celebrated text, while, in fact, overlooking the larger question of *Ulysses's* accessibility to readers in general. Brannon's argument, with its faithful reenactment of each editorial concern and squabble, brings us no closer to answering the question.

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NOTES

¹ James Joyce, "*Ulysses*": *A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984); John Kidd, *An Inquiry into "Ulysses": The Corrected Text* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1988); and Joyce, "*Ulysses*": *A Reader's Edition*, ed. Danis Rose (London: Picador Press, 1997). Further references to the Rose edition will be cited parenthetically in the text.

² See Gabler, "A Response to: John Kidd, 'Errors of Execution in the 1984 *Ulysses*,'" *Studies in the Novel*, 22 (Summer 1990), 255.

³ Kidd, "The Scandal of *Ulysses*," *New York Review of Books* (30 June 1988), 32-39, and Gabler, letter to the editor, *New York Review of Books* (18 August 1988), 63.

⁴ Joyce, "*Ulysses*": *The Gabler Edition*, ed. Gabler (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

UNA ROSA PER JOYCE/A ROSE FOR JOYCE, by Renzo S. Crivelli.
Trieste: MGS Press, 2004. 221 pp. €18.00.

Joyce's Triestine years have been investigated in various ways by several different authors, including Richard Ellmann, John McCourt, Peter Hartshorn, and Renzo S. Crivelli.¹ One would, therefore, not expect to find any new material in yet another book on Joyce in Trieste. Crivelli's *Una Rosa per Joyce*, however, brings to the forefront a surprising wealth of new or little-known elements that significantly enrich the picture we already have of Joyce the teacher, Joyce the tenant, Joyce the drinker, and Joyce the seducer.

The title of Crivelli's book refers to an actual event—the occasion of Joyce's reading "The Dead" aloud at Italo Svevo's villa. There are actually differing versions of what occurred that day. According to Ellmann, Svevo's wife, Signora Livia Veneziani, told him in an interview that she "was so moved by ['The Dead'] that she went into the garden of their villa, . . . and gathered a bunch of flowers to present to Joyce" (*JJI* 280). Crivelli, however, presents a different version based on an interview he had with Svevo's daughter, Signora Letizia Fonda Savio, who has her mother returning from the garden with one rose, which she then gives to Joyce in token of her appreciation of his reading. As Crivelli puts it:

The emotional impact of those pages . . . prompted a sudden, spontaneous gesture on the part of Livia. According to her daughter Letizia, she rose from her seat and went out into the garden and down the central pathway, which was shaded by a vine-covered trellis and flanked by rose bushes on both sides. After a few moments she returned with a rose in her hand, offering it to Joyce in token of her admiration. (10)

There is a significant difference between a woman stirred by emotion presenting Joyce with one rose as opposed to a number of flowers; that Crivelli selects the single-rose story rather than the bouquet indicates both the theme of seduction that pervades the book and the justification for the work, which, through its wealth of detail, allows for a different and deeper appreciation of Joyce and his world in Trieste.

In the opening chapter, "A Rose for Joyce" (10-53), Crivelli