

Joycean Body-Building and Midnight Charades  
(Not Stripped Naked) in the Piazza: A Review of  
the Twelfth Annual Trieste Joyce School, 29  
June-5 July 2008.

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Christopher Whalen

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**In lieu of** an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

**Joycean Body-Building and Midnight**

# Charades (Not Stripped Naked) in the Piazza: A Review of the Twelfth Annual Trieste Joyce School, 29 June–5 July 2008

*Christopher Whalen*

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A week after the Tours Symposium, the twelfth Annual Trieste Joyce School convened on the final Sunday in June. The opening reception at the Revoltella featured the traditional opera recital and readings from translations of *Giacomo Joyce*. Scrán was served afterwards on the terrace with sunset views over the Adriatic, casting over the rooftops that dry blue-lilac light so peculiar to Trieste at magic hour.

Monday to Saturday mornings followed a pleasing routine with one- or two-hour-long lectures, then a coffee break and another lecture before lunch. The caffè across the road provided a scrumptious spread, each day outdoing the previous one's hospitality by laying on more elaborate and voluminous snacks and sandwiches. There is nothing quite like chilled ice tea to quench a thirst and stimulate already-excited minds; and when that iced tea is brewed by San Benedetto, Italy's finest, one is but a sip from bibulous Valhalla.

There were some excellent lectures and engaging discussions. Brian Cosgrove (Professor Emeritus at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth) set the tone with a provocative reading of "The Dead." Cosgrove's talk had a freshness hard to achieve with the most often-discussed story in *Dubliners*. He began with maxims: first, always assume Joyce's texts are ironic; and, second, when Joyce is sentimental (as at the end of "The Dead"), put a question mark in the margin. Cosgrove's argument was antifeminist in the sense of redressing the negative readings of Gabriel proposed by critics such as Ruth Bauerle, who dismisses Gabriel's feelings for Gretta as mere "lust."<sup>1</sup> Clare Hutton (Loughborough University) warned in response that we should read *Dubliners* more literally: there is a tendency to over-generalize and extrapolate too much—after all, it is only one night!

John McCourt (Università Roma Tre) spoke on “The Use and Abuse of Joyce in Ireland,” sharing the fruits of his research at the Irish College in Rome, which promises to introduce some fascinating material on Joyce’s reception in Catholic Ireland. He continued the vein of correcting received errors by pointing out that *Ulysses* was never, in fact, banned in Ireland, although it was banned for a time in the United States and the United Kingdom. That said, it was not until 1947 that the National Library of Ireland bought its first copy of *Ulysses*.

It was grand to see John more relaxed. He front-loaded his own **[End Page 415]** commitments by lecturing on the first day and leading his walking tour later that evening so he could enjoy the rest of the week. The organizational burden is beginning to take its toll after twelve years, but changes are afoot for the future. John has been appointed Director while Renzo Crivelli has agreed to become Honorary President. Laura Pelaschiar assumes John’s former role of Program Director.

Hutton began her excellent talk with a dramatic reading from “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” using male audience volunteers. This performance highlighted just how funny the story is when read aloud. Hutton also refreshed inherited assumptions about *Dubliners* by pointing out that the publication histories by Terence Brown, Michael Groden, and Jeri Johnson are, at times, plain “wrong” and tend to rely too heavily on Joyce’s self-interested and exaggerated accounts from letters. She argued that Grant Richards clearly had not read the manuscript of *Dubliners* closely and explained that his caution about publishing the stories was mainly due to his precarious financial position, since he suffered bankruptcy in April 1905. Hutton pointed out that *Dubliners* has never been published word for word as it was written in 1905. It is quite surprising to see that Father Keon was originally called a “sodomite” in a passage deleted in the Cornell manuscript (the deleted text is marked in angled brackets):

—No, no, no! said Father Keon, speaking in <the> ☒a☒ discreet, indulgent, velvety voice, <which is not often found except with



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