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A JOYCE DEEPLY INTERESTED in history is not perhaps the first Joyce that springs to the minds of most critics and students, yet history in one form or another fills the pages of his works from the earliest *Dubliners* stories to the final revisions of *Finnegans Wake*. An entire episode of *Ulysses*, "Nestor," has "history" as its symbol, according to Joyce's schema for the novel. Now that numerous approaches to Joyce—feminist, post-structuralist, textual, to name a few—have challenged the pre-eminence of mythic, symbolic, and formalist readings, the time seems ripe for an historical Joyce as well. Recently, critics have begun to respond to this interpretive lacuna.[1] A notable gap is Joyce's experience of history during his stay in Rome, when he was beginning to turn from a rejection of the past towards a tentative acceptance of it; and the various modes of historical engagement explored by Nietzsche in *The Use and Abuse of History* provide a helpful and relevant commentary on Joyce's ambivalences in 1906–07. The Rome period also saw Joyce's celebrated "change of heart" towards Dublin, for it was here that he ceased regarding his *Dubliners* stories as bitter chapters in the "moral

[1] See the essays in W. J. McCormack and Alistair Stead, eds., *James Joyce and Modern Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), especially Fredric Jameson's piece, "*Ulysses* in History." See also Colin MacCabe, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (London: Macmillan, 1978); and the collection of essays edited by MacCabe, *James Joyce: New Perspectives* (Indiana University Press, 1982), especially Seamus Deane's "James Joyce and Nationalism." Dominic Manganiello's *Joyce's Politics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) and G. J. Watson's *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival: Synge, Yeats, Joyce, and O'Casey* (Barnes and Noble Books, 1979) are also important contributions to an historical reading of Joyce. The Tenth International James Joyce Symposium in Copenhagen (16–21 June 1986) featured panels on "Joyce and the Concept of History" and "Modernism and Politics: Joyce and Others," as well as major addresses by Colin MacCabe and Robert Scholes, both of whom explored the impact of history and politics on Joyce and his writings. See also Jules David Law, "Joyce's 'Delicate Siamese' Equation: The Dialectic of Home in *Ulysses*," *PMLA*, CII (March 1987), 197-205; and Robert Spoo, "'Nestor' and the Nightmare: The Presence of the Great War in *Ulysses*," *Twentieth Century Literature*, XXXII (Summer 1986), 137-54.

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history" of Ireland and began to see them more in terms of a sympathetic revelation of his countrymen, as chapters in "Irish history," as he put it in a letter of 13 November 1906.[2] The ample correspondence with Stanislaus which survives from this period is a remarkable record of Joyce's encounter with Rome and its past, an encounter which made him consider his native city in new and significantly historical terms. It was also in Rome that Joyce read the Italian historian and sociologist Guglielmo Ferrero. Ferrero's writings, especially his controversial history of ancient Rome, influenced Joyce's conception of history and his notion of the average, unheroic individual's place in it, and it may have assisted Joyce with the idea for a short story he wanted to call "Ulysses."

The sheer inescapable presence of Rome's past has overwhelmed many sensitive visitors to that city. In 1873, Henry James wrote of the excavation work around the Forum that "It 'says' more things to you than you can repeat to see the past, the ancient world, as you stand there, bodily turned up with the spade and transformed from an immaterial, inaccessible fact of time into a matter of soils and surfaces."[3] And, under the dateline "1764. April-1765. June" in his *Autobiographies*, Edward Gibbon recorded his reactions to Rome's imposing historical strata:

> I read the Tuscan writers on the banks of the Arno; but my conversation was with the dead rather than the living, and the whole college of Cardinals was of less value in my eyes than the transfiguration of Raphael, the Apollo of the Vatican, or the massy greatness of the Coliseum. It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.[4]

Gibbon speaks of the overlap of the past upon the present, of a communion in the midst of life "with the dead." Joyce's sojourn in Rome, from the end of July 1906 to the beginning of March 1907, was a time-warping experience for him too, a communion, fretful and unavoidable, with the past. And it was in Rome that two of his most complex works, both filled with history and the traffic of the living and the dead, started to his mind: "The Dead" and *Ulysses*.

Joyce's view of Rome and its ostentatiously visible past was initially

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[2] *The Letters of James Joyce*, eds. Stuart Gilbert and Richard Ellmann (Viking Press, 1957, 1965), II, 193-94. Hereafter cited in the text.

[3] From "A Roman Holiday," in *Italian Hours* (Grove Press, n.d.), pp. 142-43.

[4] Edward Gibbon, *Autobiographies*, ed. John Murray (London: John Murray, 1896), p. 302.

far from sympathetic. In a letter to Stanislaus of 25 September 1906, in which, like Gibbon, he speaks of a monastic vespers service, he says,

> Yesterday I went to see the Forum. I sat down on a stone bench overlooking the ruins. It was hot and sunny. Carriages full of tourists, postcard sellers, medal sellers, photograph sellers. I was so moved that I almost fell asleep and had to rise brusquely. I looked at the stone bench ruefully but it was too hard and the grass near the Colisseum [sic] was too far. So I went home sadly. Rome reminds me of a man who lives by exhibiting to travellers his grandmother's corpse. (*Letters*, II, 165)

This could almost be a parody of Gibbon's experience as he "sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol." Whereas Gibbon conversed with the dead and saw more "value" in ancient than in modern Rome, Joyce was equally ill at ease with antique ruins and aggressively actual photograph sellers. The noble past did not serve to temper his characteristically witty disgust for the ignoble present: past and present received the same scornful treatment at his hands.

Joyce's personification of Rome as "a man who lives by exhibiting to travellers his grandmother's corpse"—a nightmarish image of the interinvolvement of the past and the present—is not unlike one of Stephen's visions of history in *Ulysses*. The answer to the riddle Stephen poses in "Nestor"—"The fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush" (27.8; 2.115)[5]—is a rich roundabout image for that nightmare of history which he complains of to Garrett Deasy and would bury if he could, a nightmare associated with the recurrent memory of his dying mother. "No mother. Let me be and let me live," Stephen thinks in "Telemachus" (10.26; 1.279),[6] a mental cry of anguish which is also an urgent, visceral attempt to bury his personal history. Like the Stephen of 1904, the Joyce of 1906 in Rome saw history as a horror, the corpse of a loved one threatening to spurn its graveclothes, all the more ghastly because, as with history, its kinship and intimacy cannot be denied.[7] And like Stephen, Joyce was plagued in Rome "by horrible and terrifying dreams: death, corpses, assassinations in which I take an unpleasantly prominent part" (*Letters*, II, 151).[8]

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[5] *Ulysses* page references are given for the 1961 Random House and the three-volume "Critical and Synoptic Edition," prepared by Hans Walter Gabler, et al (Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984). Citations are from RH 1961.

[6] The absence of a comma in the "No mother" of RH 1961 suggests that Stephen's apostrophe might be a total denial or burial of history. But the Gabler text corrects this to "No, mother!"

[7] In his 7 August 1906 letter to Stanislaus, Joyce remarked, "The neighbourhood of the Colisseum [sic] is like an old cemetery with broken columns of temples and slabs" (*Letters*, II, 145).

[8] Anarchist activity in Europe made assassination a real and constant possibility at this time. Joyce's complaint about bad dreams appears in his letter of 19 August 1906. On 31 May of that year an attempt was made on the life of Alfonso XIII, King of Spain, and in June the Italian newspapers were full of reports about a plot to kill King

This desire to flee the oppressiveness of the past recalls the discontent of Nietzsche in *The Use and Abuse of History*.[9] Man, says Nietzsche, "wonders also about himself, that he cannot learn to forget, but hangs on the past: however far or fast he runs, that chain runs with him."[10] Nietzsche illustrates this historical obsession with imagery that Joyce and Stephen would appreciate: "It is matter for wonder: the moment, that is here and gone, that was nothing before and nothing after, returns like a spectre to trouble the quiet of a later moment."[11] This is why man "envies the beast, that forgets at once, and sees every moment really die, sink into the night and mist, extinguished for ever. The beast lives *unhistorically*."[12] So Stephen casts himself as a fox burying his grandmother, a creature that is able to consign the historical moment to oblivion as soon as it has occurred, unlike those Akasic records Stephen thinks of in "Aeolus," which contain "all that ever anywhere wherever was" (143.31-32; 7.882-83). And when Stephen cries inwardly, "Let me be and let me live," he is expressing the same desire for self-determination that we hear in Nietzsche's remark "Forgetfulness is a property of all action."[13] Nietzsche was attacking the nineteenth-century pride in the "historical sense," which, he claimed, turned a spontaneous and vital personality into "a man of culture, a savant, poet or politician" and paralyzed the character and the will with "second-hand thought, second-hand learning, second-hand action."[14] Although Stephen rebels specifically against the oppressiveness of Church, nation, and family, he also shares this general *fin-de-siècle* sense of a burdensome historical inheritance, what Nietzsche called the "malady of history."[15]

Paul de Man has claimed that "Nietzsche's ruthless forgetting, the blindness with which he throws himself into an action lightened of all

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Victor Emmanuel III, whose father, Humbert I, had been assassinated in 1900. In a postcard dated 14 November 1906 Joyce reported a bomb explosion very near the bank where he worked (*Letters*, II, 194).

[9] Ellmann tells us that around the age of twenty or twenty-one Joyce "came to know the writings of Nietzsche, 'that strong enchanter' whom Yeats and other Dubliners were also discovering . . ." (*James Joyce* [Oxford University Press, 1982], p. 142). Although both the young Joyce and Stephen Dedalus have their *übermenschlich* moments, the extent of Nietzsche's influence on Joyce's life and writings has yet to be determined.

[10] *The Use and Abuse of History*, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Dr. Oscar Levy (Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), V, *Thoughts Out of Season*, p. 6.

[11] Nietzsche, p. 7.

[12] Nietzsche, p. 7.

[13] Nietzsche, p. 8.

[14] Nietzsche, pp. 40, 99.

[15] Nietzsche, p. 95.

previous experience, captures the authentic spirit of modernity."[16] In *Ulysses* Stephen reflects this modern spirit with its eagerness to sever itself from the past and to "make it new." His restless desire to awake from the nightmare of history reveals a longing for a base of absolute newness from which to begin aesthetic operations, a longing we can also see in his misunderstood assertion in "Circe" that "in here it is [in his mind] I must kill the priest and the king" (589.28-29; 15.4436-37). Stephen's entire progress, as Joyce sketches it in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, can be seen as a series of fitful and possibly false starts at becoming a Modernist of the type de Man discerns in Nietzsche. Among Stephen's "innovative" efforts are his rejection of personal and national history; his difficulty with father figures ranging from his own parent to Garrett Deasy, John Eglinton, and Leopold Bloom; and the self-inflicted irony with which he repudiates even the few historical foundations he has tried to lay for himself.

Extending such an analysis briefly to *Finnegans Wake*, we might say that this most Modernist of works takes forgetting as the very condition for the act of aesthetic creation. Here, not only has language been forgotten and re-invented under countless bewildering patents, but the very movement of the "narrative," borne in upon us in waves of gossip, myth, and chaotic chronicle, seems to be an elaborate compensatory effort to remember at all costs, to fill in the spaces left blank by the historians. For example, Chapter 2 of Book I contains the attempt (or the several attempts) to establish an accurate account of HCE's life and strange name. But before "the genesis of Harold or Humphrey Chimpden's occupational agnomen" can be determined, we learn that we must discard "once for all those theories from older sources which would link him back with such pivotal ancestors as the Glues, the Gravys, the Northeasts, the Ankers and the Earwickers of Sidlesham in the Hundred of Manhood . . . ."[17] And we are off on a merry digressive chase, having forgotten the original purpose of the inquiry, which has become eclipsed by the problem of alternative histories.

A very clear exposition of the *Wake*'s aesthetic of oblivion occurs towards the middle of the *ricorso*, just before the last appearance of ALP's letter (itself a product of frequent forgettings):

> What has gone? How it ends?

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[16] Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 147-48.

[17] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (Viking Press, 1939, corr. 1958), p. 30. Hereafter cited in the text.

> Begin to forget it. It will remember itself from every sides, with all gestures, in each our word. Today's truth, tomorrow's trend.
> Forget, remember! (614.19-22)

The "it" that "will remember itself" after a willed act of forgetting is presumably the cyclic pattern of history in which all events come back even to those who forget. But "it" is also the spontaneous act of artistic creation, made possible by a purposeful *lapsus memoriae*, one of the many falls celebrated in the book. In this sense, Nietzsche's two antidotes to the malady of history merge in *Finnegans Wake*. The first of these is this "unhistorical" act of forgetting. The second requires enrollment in the ranks of the "super-historical men," who "are unanimous in the theory that the past and the present are one and the same, typically alike in all their diversity, and forming together a picture of eternally present imperishable types of unchangeable value and significance."[18] This clearly points in the direction of Nietzsche's theory of Eternal Recurrence, and it is entirely compatible with the Vician system as adapted in *Finnegans Wake*. The Nietzschean ways of forgetting and transcendence coalesce, then, in Joyce's last work, although we can see the merger beginning to take place in "Ithaca," in which fantastically complex answers to relatively simple questions seem to presuppose a need for memoranda on a large and desperate scale. And with Bloom nodding off, the narrative itself seems to lapse into sleepy forgetfulness, mumbling variations on a theme of Sinbad and posing one last unanswered and unanswerable question, "Where?" (737.17-27; 17.2322-31). In the oblivion at the end of Bloom's day is the beginning of the *Wake*'s forgetful remembering.

Joyce's strong reaction to Rome's past was not a purely "unhistorical" rejection, however, but part of a complex ambivalence toward history that he was beginning to experience at this time. Although his letters from this period refer to corpses and assassinations, they also reveal a keen interest in history and historical study. Even before he left for Rome, he was at work writing a "'history of Eng. Literature'" for a "German chap" at the Berlitz School and "reading Ecclesiastical History in the intervals of teaching" (*Letters*, II, 90). And in the same letter in which he refers to the Roman ruins as a "grandmother's corpse," he remarks that "While listening to the [vespers] service a most keen regret seized me that I could not gain for myself from historical study an accurate appreciation of an order like the Dominicans" (*Letters*, II, 165).

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[18] Nietzsche, p. 14.

The complexity of Joyce's feelings about Rome and its history shows up most clearly in a letter to Stanislaus of 4 October 1906:

> Rome must have been a fine city in the time of Caesar. I believe it was chiefly on one or two hills: the inter spaces being used as military exercise-grounds, market-places &c. The forum must have been a magnificent square. But the papal Rome is like the Coombe or old Trieste and the new Ludovisi quarter is like any secondary quarter of a fine metropolis. Not as fine as Pembroke township, for example. I wish I knew something of Latin or Roman History. But it's not worth while beginning now. So let the ruins rot. (*Letters*, II, 171)

Here, Joyce is able to say a few good words about Rome, if only by means of a sympathetically imaginative reconstruction of the ancient city. More important is the way Joyce's Dublin ("the Coombe," "Pembroke township") weaves in and out of his speculations. Clearly, the judgments he passed on cities of new acquaintance, as on history, were bound up with his shifting moods about Dublin and its past. His letters at this time are full of Icarian returns to his native city.

But these are returns with a difference, for Joyce's letters from Rome show that he was thinking of Dublin in increasingly historical and empirical terms. He had already, in his 5 May 1906 letter to Grant Richards, referred to *Dubliners* as "a chapter of the moral history of my country" and defended its realistic detail on documentary grounds: "he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. I cannot do any more than this. I cannot alter what I have written" (*Letters*, II, 134). Six months later he informed Stanislaus that he had written Aunt Josephine and asked her to send him "a Xmas present made up of tram-tickets, advts, handbills, posters, papers, programmes &c. I would like to have a map of Dublin on my wall. I suppose I am becoming something of a maniac" (*Letters*, II, 186). And in the same letter, "I wish someone was here to talk to me about Dublin. I forget half the things I wanted to do" (*Letters*, II, 189). For the moment, at least, Joyce was willing to forget about unhistorical forgetting.

In a letter to Stanislaus of 13 November 1906, he renewed his hint about a map of Dublin and added other requests: "I wish I had a map of Dublin and views and Gilbert's history." By the last item Joyce meant John Thomas Gilbert's three-volume *History of the City of Dublin*, published in 1861.[19] He mentioned these desiderata apropos of another matter: "You remember," he wrote Stanislaus in the same letter, "the

[19] Joyce may have meant *Gilbert's Historic and Municipal Documents of Ireland* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1870), as Ellmann suggests in the revised biography (236n).

book I spoke to you of one day in the Park into which I was going to put William Dara and Lady Belvedere. Even then I was on the track of writing a chapter of Irish history" (*Letters*, II, 193-94).[20] Joyce was thinking here of *Dubliners* and of a handful of stories he had lately considered adding to the volume (such as "The Last Supper" and "Ulysses"). But the important point is that Joyce was coming to think of his "scrupulous meanness," that accusatory realism born of his cold steelpen, in the broader terms of an historical record of his country, only one of whose aims was to expose its paralysis, to bring Ireland to the bar. "Moral history" (5 May 1906) was becoming "Irish history" (13 November 1906).

Joyce's conflicting views of history, inextricably bound up with his feelings toward Dublin, a city he was seeing more and more in impartial historical terms, seem to have played a role in "the change in his attitude towards Dublin," which Richard Ellmann emphasizes.[21] Indeed, the letter containing Joyce's most bilious remarks about Rome contains this also: "Sometimes thinking of Ireland it seems to me that I have been unnecessarily harsh. I have reproduced (in *Dubliners* at least) none of the attraction of the city for I have never felt at my ease in any city since I left it except in Paris. I have not reproduced its ingenuous insularity and its hospitality (*Letters*, II, 166). Joyce seems almost willing here to blame the negativity of *Dubliners* on the effect other, less hospitable cities had on him. And one reason, surely, that Dublin was beginning to seem more dear than dirty was that his bitter experiences on the Continent had shown him that there were worse microcosms than Dublin to which a writer might consecrate his art. At any rate, on 7 December 1906, he could write Stanislaus, "I think the Irish are the most civilised people in Europe, be Jesus I do: anyway they are the least burocratic [sic]" (*Letters*, II, 202).

Joyce's range of historical perspectives was increased at this time by his reading in Roman history. Despite his feeling in the letter of 4 October 1906 that such a course of study was "not worth while beginning now" (*Letters*, II, 171), he wrote Stanislaus a month later that "Ferrero devotes a chapter in his history of Rome to the Odes of Horace: so, perhaps, poets should be let live" (*Letters*, II, 190). And in an aside

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[20] Lady Belvedere found her way into the "Wandering Rocks" episode of *Ulysses*, in which, curiously enough, Father Conmee also contemplates writing a book about her. He imagines the opening scene: "A listless lady, no more young, walked alone the shore of lough Ennel, Mary, first countess of Belvedere, listlessly walking in the evening, not startled when an otter plunged" (223.26-28; 10.164-66). Evidently, Father Conmee's book would have a sensationalistic adultery theme.

[21] Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 243.

in his Trieste lecture, "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages" (1907), Joyce remarked that "Ferrero now tells us that the discoveries of these good professors of Germany, so far as they deal with the ancient history of the Roman republic and the Roman empire, are wrong from the beginning—almost completely wrong. It may be so."[22] Joyce was referring in both cases to Guglielmo Ferrero's *Grandezza e decadenza di Roma* (1902–07), a work whose popular reception brought fame to its author while drawing heavy fire from the specialists for what they deemed its irreverent, liberal, journalistic approach.

Ferrero's study is now regarded as an example of "new history," which Harry Elmer Barnes describes as "a type of historical writing which has abandoned the Freemanesque conception of the adequacy of history as 'past politics,' anecdotally selected and episodically expounded."[23] He continues:

> In other words, those looking forward to work in the new history must be grounded in biology, anthropogeography, psychology and sociology. They must also be specially trained in the social sciences and in such branches of science or esthetics that are most relevant to the particular aspect of historical writing in which they intend to engage.[24]

It was Ferrero's emphasis on psychological, sociological, and economic factors in the development and decline of Rome that disturbed the historians of his time.[25] Benedetto Croce, who later opposed a bill to create a Chair in Philosophy of History at the University of Rome for Ferrero, attacked the work for containing "all the formulae and derivatives of historical materialism" and lamented Ferrero's "sociological expedient" of "characterizing ancient matters with modern names and concepts, comparing, for example, Julius Caesar to a socialist leader or

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[22] *The Critical Writing of James Joyce*, eds. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (Viking Press, 1959), p. 155. Hereafter cited in the text as *CW*.

[23] Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (1937; revised edition, Dover Publications, 1962), p. 373.

[24] Barnes, pp. 373-74.

[25] Ferrero's judgment on the historical method of Sallust applies equally to his own work:

> Sallust's excessive partisanship naturally obliged him to confuse and distort his facts, but at the same time he rendered great service to lovers of literature by reviving the artistic and psychological mode of writing history in opposition to the dry record of the Annals, which for centuries had been the official history of Rome; as dry and absurd a mode of narration as the critical and scientific historical methods which certain pedants would revive today.

The Greatness and Decline of Rome, trans. Alfred E. Zimmern (G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.), III, *The Fall of an Aristocracy*, 218. In the letter to Budgen in which he describes the technique of "Oxen of the Sun," Joyce says that the Episode is "introduced by a Sallustian-Tacitean prelude" (*Letters*, I, 139).

a Tammany Hall boss in New York."[26] Italian scholars also did not take kindly to the conclusion that "Caesar was not a great statesman; but he was a great destroyer."[27] Ferrero himself, in his "Preface to the American Edition," explains that his history represents an alternative to the great accounts by Mommsen and Duruy, products, he says, of the nineteenth-century fascination with the great-man theory of history and politics and "the conflict between republicanism and monarchy."[28] His approach will "adopt a psychological and moral interest." "I have studied the history of Rome," he says, "from the point of view of the transformation of manners, of the increase of wants and luxury and of the standard of living and of expenditure, from generation to generation." And he intends his work to "help toward understanding many aspects of contemporary life."[29]

Ferrero's historical assumptions led Joyce to portray him in the Trieste lecture as in a camp apart from the "good professors of Germany." Joyce no doubt found Ferrero's approach appealing, since he himself had been developing in *Dubliners* a rigorous, unflinching psycho-social method which he felt was lacking in most fiction at the turn of the century.[30] How much Joyce read of *Grandezza e decadenza di Roma* is uncertain. Dominic Manganiello thinks "probably all of it,"[31] while Susan L. Humphreys bets more safely, saying that he knew "at least parts."[32] Ferrero's section on Horace, which Joyce mentioned in his letter, sets that poet's work against the socio-political background of his

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[26] From Croce's review in *La Critica*. Quoted in the Prèface by Mario Borsa to Ferrero's *L'Europa giovane: studi e viaggi nei paesi del nord* (1897; Cernusco sul Naviglio: Garzanti, 1946), pp. xiii-xiv.

[27] *Rome*, trans. Alfred E. Zimmern, II, *Julius Caesar*, 345.

[28] *Rome*, trans. Alfred E. Zimmern, I, *The Empire-Builders*, iii.

[29] *Rome*, I, iv.

[30] For brief analyses of Ferrero's history and its possible influence on Joyce, see Dominic Manganiello, *Joyce's Politics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 46-48; and Susan L. Humphreys, "Ferrero Etc: James Joyce's Debt to Guglielmo Ferrero," *James Joyce Quarterly*, XVI (Spring 1979), 239-51. Ferrero's importance to Joyce is being increasingly recognized by scholars. The subject was touched on as early as Edward Brandabur's *A Scrupulous Meanness: A Study of Joyce's Early Work* (University of Illinois Press, 1971). About a decade later, Humphreys and Manganiello independently examined Joyce's use of Ferrero in "Two Gallants" and went on to discuss the Italian historian's influence on *Ulysses*, especially on the portrait of Bloom. Some interesting observations on Ferrero and Joyce can be found in Giorgio Melchiori, "The Genesis of *Ulysses*," in Melchiori, ed., *Joyce in Rome: The Genesis of "Ulysses"* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1984), pp. 37-50. This selection of contributions to the Rome Joyce Centenary in 1982 explores Joyce's stay in Rome from numerous perspectives.

At the 1986 International Joyce Symposium, Robert Scholes gave a major address entitled "Modernism and Socialism: Joyce, Lukàcs, and Others," in which he spoke of Ferrero as a possible source for Stephen's notion of the "conscience of my race" in *Portrait*. See also Robert Spoo, "'Una Piccola Nuvoletta': Ferrero's *Young Europe* and Joyce's Mature *Dubliners*," *James Joyce Quarterly*, XXIV (Summer 1987), 401-10.

[31] Manganiello, p. 47.

[32] Humphreys, p. 243.

time: "To understand these poems is to understand the uncertainties of Augustus and his political work. No one realised more profoundly than Horace the immense moral vacuum upon which the vast edifice of the empire rested."[33] As both Manganiello and Humphreys point out, the author of *Dubliners* would have sympathized with Horace's position, as well as with his opposition to war and his self-conscious evasiveness on religious matters, both of which Ferrero stresses.[34]

But what must really have struck Joyce, if he read even spottily in Ferrero's history, is its consistently anti-heroic treatment of the great Romans. In a typical passage, Ferrero defends his portrait of Caesar as demagogue and "Archdestroyer,"[35] as a manipulator and temporizer:

> Hero-worshippers will no doubt think it almost blasphemous to assign so petty and personal a motive to a series of acts which had an immense influence on Caesar's life, and which are therefore among the leading events of history, but this consideration will not weigh with those who have learnt by experience how often the most important actions are performed just for the very reason that their ultimate consequences are not realised at the time.[36]

Ferrero's approach is realistic, psychological, and humanizing: "Brutus was neither a fool nor a man of genius, nor a ruffian nor a hero, as historians have attempted to paint him in accordance with their party leanings."[37]

Joyce himself was combating the notion of heroism at this time. In early 1905 he wrote Stanislaus, "I am sure . . . that the whole structure of heroism is, and always was, a damned lie and that there cannot be any substitute for the individual passion as the motive power of everything—art and philosophy included" (*Letters*, II, 81). Three weeks later he was careful to disclaim any vocation for martyrdom: "I dislike to hear of any stray heroics on the prowl for me" (*Letters*, II, 83). Even in the heat of battle with Grant Richards over *Dubliners*, Joyce took the opportunity to announce, "You must not imagine that the attitude I have taken up is in the least heroic. The fact is I cannot see much reason in your complaints" (*Letters*, II, 136).

Ferrero's discussion of Virgil's *Aeneid*, occurring only ten pages after

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[33] *Rome*, trans. H. J. Chaytor, IV, *Rome and Egypt*, 210-11.

[34] *Rome*, IV, 208-09.

[35] *Rome*, II, 347.

[36] *Rome*, II, 375.

[37] *Rome*, III, 206-07.

the section on Horace, would have been especially interesting to Joyce. Ferrero describes the Latin epic as "a poem of adventure and travel in imitation of the *Odyssey*" and as, in part, "a miniature *Iliad*." He continues: "Both in the new *Iliad* and the new *Odyssey* Aeneas was to be the very human hero of the Homeric poems, fierce or cunning, simple or treacherous, loved and protected by the gods for himself."[38] Joyce also emphasized the humanity of Homer's man of many devices and considered Ulysses the perfect hero for his novel because, like Hamlet, he is "a human being," and "a complete man as well—a good man."[39] Much of the critical debate over whether Leopold Bloom is exalted or stultified by the Odyssean backdrop overlooks the fact that Joyce usually talked about Homer's hero in terms of Bloom rather than the other way around—that is, primarily as a son and father, a husband and a lover, and only secondarily as "a companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy and King of Ithaca."[40] Ulysses is "all-round" because Bloom is so, and Joyce, with his strong aversion to "stray heroics on the prowl," allows his modern anti-hero to revise Homer's figure.

Joyce's first mention of his projected story "Ulysses" occurs in a postcard to Stanislaus dated 30 September 1906, but here he says only that "I have a new story for Dubliners in my head. It deals with Mr Hunter" (*Letters*, II, 168). Joyce usually mentioned a title when he had one, often even before he had written a sentence of the story. It was not until his letter of 13 November 1906 that he produced the title, and mentioning it seems to have put him in mind of Ferrero's history: "I thought of beginning my story *Ulysses*: but I have too many cares at present. Ferrero devotes a chapter in his history of Rome to the Odes of Horace" (*Letters*, II, 190). It is just possible that Ferrero's comments on Virgil, immediately following the chapter containing the discussion of Horace's Odes, gave Joyce the hint he needed for naming this story about a very human man who, so the story runs, tended the young Joyce after a fracas involving a young woman and her surly escort in St. Stephen's Green.[41] At any rate, Ferrero's description of the author of *The Aeneid* might equally fit Joyce: "He was an admirer of Greek

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[38] *Rome*, IV, 222-23.

[39] Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses"* (1934; Indiana University Press, 1960), pp. 16, 17.

[40] Budgen, p. 16.

[41] Ellmann, *James Joyce*, pp. 161-62.

literature, but was irresistibly attracted by the burning questions of the day."[42]

It is striking that Joyce's first mention of the title "Ulysses" is followed in his letter by a lengthy summary of his recent reading in Ferrero. The juxtaposition suggests that a number of issues were connected in his mind: "Ulysses," the status of the poet in society, Roman history, and Ferrero's analyses. Joyce cites both *Grandezza e decadenza di Roma* and "Young Europe" (*L'Europa giovane*); the latter he has "just read," he says. *L'Europa giovane* also contains a reference to Ulysses. In one section of this work, Ferrero compares Latin and Germanic attitudes toward love, as exemplified in various ancient epics. The plots of such northern epics as the Siegfried legend, he claims, are propelled chiefly by honor, glory, and gold and show an indifference to love as a theme. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, on the other hand, have love and women as central motivating forces. Ferrero illustrates this by pointing out that "in *The Odyssey* Ulysses [Ulisse] returns to scatter the suitors, who are anxious to usurp his bed as they have already usurped his house and pantry."[43] Joyce's novel reverses Ferrero's theory, of course, since it is a northern epic with a woman at the center and with the many forms of love (frustrated, adulterous, maternal) as the motivating force behind both the main characters.

There are other points of contact between *L'Europa giovane* and Joyce's thinking in 1906–07. Taking industrial expansion and intelligent political systems as prerequisites for a nation's success, Ferrero tours the great European countries—England, Germany, Russia, Italy—assessing their proximity to this ideal and concludes that real power and prestige in the world have passed from Southern to Northern Europe, the "young Europe."[44] Joyce would have recognized his own views in Ferrero's lively discussions of cities such as Berlin, Rome, Moscow, and London. Here is Ferrero on London:

> The human spirit can vivify anything. A city can become a psychological document; and a condition of the soul, in the squares and in the streets, can take on a precise expression which, though fixed and immutable, is not less alive and eloquent to eyes that can see and minds that can grasp it. . . . [T]here are . . . cities that could be called expressive, that have a body and a soul and certain general characteristics, and thus could be considered

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[42] *Rome*, IV, 221.

[43] *L'Europa giovane*, p. 136. (The translation is mine here as elsewhere; no English translation of this work has appeared.) In her article on Ferrero and Joyce, Susan L. Humphreys discusses Ferrero's mention of Ulysses in *L'Europa giovane* (248), though her approach differs from mine.

[44] See both Manganiello and Humphreys for good discussions of specific influences of this work on Joyce.

> true expressions of a civilization, true creations of the mind and spirit of a people.[45]

For Joyce, who was quickly becoming a one-city man and author, and who had been examining Dublin as a "psychological document" in *Dubliners*, this type of passage would have had a special appeal. He had already asserted, in a letter to Grant Richards, that "the expression 'Dubliner' seems to me to have some meaning" (*Letters*, II, 122). And Ferrero's remarks are tonally consistent with Joyce's "change of attitude," for Joyce was now inclined to talk of Dublin's soul more in terms of "its ingenuous insularity and its hospitality" than of its "paralysis." When in "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages" he announced, "Nations have their ego, just like individuals" (*CW*, 154), he was thinking along exactly the same lines as Ferrero.

The most consistent vision of history offered In *L'Europa giovane*, as in the history of Rome, is a panoramic one of gradual change brought about by the tiny, mostly unnoticed efforts of individuals.[46] Social and political change is possible, Ferrero feels, but we must remain guardedly practical and realistic. Not without a certain pessimism, this view of history and change is similar to the one that lies behind "The Dead" and *Ulysses*, those stories about obscure, good, and thoughtful men who may, and yet again may not, be able to add a cubit to the stature of the universe. Ferrero shows a special fondness for the anonymous, hardworking man of England and Germany, who he feels contributes his share to the industrial success of his nation. Unlike the pompous political bureaucrats of the Latin nations, always posing as little heroes, the politicians of the Germanic countries "are almost never great geniuses with huge personalities, but men of good sense, industrious and energetic, who dress, eat, drink and walk like other men."[47] Ferrero's fondness for the unprepossessing common man of the northern nations may have chimed with Joyce's change of heart toward his own countrymen, and it must have amused and pleased the homesick Irishman that an eminent Italian thinker shared his views of Italian bureaucracy and decadence.

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[45] *L'Europa giovane*, p. 219.

[46] While discussing the national benefits of individual chastity, Ferrero takes time out to present his view of history:

> When we behold a social form developing little by little from one page of history to the next, we easily delude ourselves into thinking that things are created by history itself; we forget that historical facts, even the greatest ones, are the sum of an extraordinary number of tiny efforts accomplished by individuals who had ideas, passions, desires and needs, who were, in sum, the living and sentient material of history. (201-02)

[47] *L'Europa giovane*, pp. 204-05.

Joyce was delighted with Ferrero's law of "*Tutto* è *in tutto*," that the tiniest of socio-historical details can reveal a nation's soul as efficiently as its grandest works.[48] He illustrates this point by weighing the relative merits of cakes and biscuits in England and Italy. Joyce was so taken by the example that, to test it, he spent his last two lire on cakes in a Roman shop (*Letters*, II, 191). The assumption that seemingly insignificant social and personal details point to a larger complex of truth lies behind the economy of Joyce's epiphanies, and some form of "*tutto* è *in tutto*" is present in everything from Bloom's talismanic potato to the chaos of trivia that somehow implies a cosmos of meaning in *Finnegans Wake*.

L'Europa giovane also gave Joyce, along with many details he would use later on, the notion of "*dio boia*, hangman god," which Stephen in "Scylla and Charybdis" uses to characterize "The playwright who wrote the folio of this world and wrote it badly" (213.21-23; 9.1046-49). Manganiello thinks the image derives from Joyce's reading in Bakunin and other anarchists who stressed the "concept of God as divine executioner of His Only Son."[49] But a passage from Ferrero's analysis of anti-Semitism is a much more likely source. Discussing the development of Christianity from its origins in the Jewish religion, Ferrero stresses the difference between Christ's gospel of love and the stern, punitive morality of the Old Testament, which he claims added a distinct kind of religious persecution to the violence prevalent in the early Christian period. From this time forth, "Christians scarcely ceased being victims of persecutions, and dedicated themselves, full of the gloomy spirit of the old Yahwism, to defining theological issues with blows of the sword and to imposing the faith on minds with the arm of the executioner (*con il braccio del boia*)."[50] Stephen presents his "hangman god," as does Ferrero, in the context of Old Testament morality (since he alludes to Genesis), hinting at the Christian Church's role as persecutor. This cruel and bloody deity is linked, like May Dedalus as ghoul and chewer of corpses, to the nightmare of history that weighs heavily on the young artist.

Ferrero was only one factor among many that helped shape Joyce's historical imagination and literary vision at this time. Rome itself, with its striking juxtaposition of the ancient and modern, set Joyce to thinking, as it had Gibbon one hundred fifty years before, about the living

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[48] *L'Europa giovane*, pp. 192-94.

[49] Manganiello, p. 103.

[50] *L'Europa giovane*, p. 405.

and the dead, and increased his sense of "a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity," to use Eliot's phrase for the "mythical method" of *Ulysses*.[51] The titles which Joyce proposed in Rome for prospective *Dubliners* stories reflect this double view ("The Dead," "Ulysses," "The Last Supper"), whereas his earlier titles were almost all thematic or descriptive ("Grace," "A Mother," "Two Gallants"). *Ulysses* and "The Dead" are more concerned with layers of personal and collective experience than with slices of life. Like Joyce in Rome, Gabriel Conroy is forced to confront disconcerting strata of history, although he does so in social, familial, and marital terms. Gabriel must come to recognize the reality of his wife's past and his own, as he must recognize other realities: "Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse."[52] It is only by admitting that the past is past and that the present inevitably becomes the past that Gabriel can mitigate his own nightmare of history and commune with "all the living and the dead." But in order for Gabriel to do this, Joyce had to do it first, since the story is based "on three generations of his family in Dublin."[53] Rome, the city which Richard Rowan tells Bertha "was so old,"[54] was the setting for Joyce's reappraisal of his past and his change of perspective in regard to it.

By early 1907 Joyce's rebellious flight from the past was giving way to a "comic frame of acceptance,"[55] an attitude he needed in order to create Leopold Bloom and Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, and one that was already discernible in his shift in 1906–07 to such characters as Gabriel Conroy and Alfred Hunter. Such a "de-cynicizing" frame of acceptance obviously did not leave cynicism entirely behind but found a place for it, a perspective on it. Nietzsche, in a less passionate moment in *The Use and Abuse of History*, proposes a similar therapy: "This is the point that the reader is asked to consider; that the unhistorical and the historical are equally necessary to the health of an in-

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[51] T. S. Eliot, "'Ulysses,' Order, and Myth," in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 177-78.

[52] *"Dubliners": Text, Criticism, and Notes*, eds. Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz (Viking Press, 1969), p. 222.

[53] Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 243.

[54] James Joyce, *Exiles* (Penguin Books, 1973), p. 145.

[55] I take this phrase from Kenneth Burke's *Attitudes Toward History*, a study concerned with stances or "frames" of acceptance and rejection. In his own struggle for a healthy perspective, Burke chose a "comic frame of motives" that "would not only avoid the sentimental denial of materialistic factors in human acts. It would also avoid the cynical brutality that comes when such sensitivity is outraged." *Attitudes Toward History* (1937; University of California Press, 1984), p. 170.

dividual, a community, and a system of culture."[56] That is, forgetting and remembering, rejection and acceptance, existing in an ambitious both/and relation, are necessary for rational creatures living in time, and when these ingredients are properly mixed, they yield what Nietzsche calls "critical history."

"It is my intention," Joyce wrote from Trieste on 12 July 1905, "to complete 'Dubliners' by the end of the year and to follow it by a book 'Provincials.' I am uncommonly well pleased with these stories" (*Letters*, II, 92). He had a right to be pleased, for just when *Stephen Hero* was becoming difficult to continue, he rediscovered his creative self in the writing of these stories, and in four months would have six more to his credit. But he would never have recourse to the reproachful title "Provincials," for his experiences in Trieste and Rome were to make him at once too much a citizen of the world and too thoroughly an Irishman. In Rome Joyce encountered the past as he had not done previously, and it forced him to rethink his role as recorder of his own nation and its history. And with the assistance of a now largely forgotten Italian historian, he developed a more generous view of the average sensual man's place in the vast historical picture. By the beginning of 1907, Joyce's "moral history" had irrevocably become "Irish history."

[56] Nietzsche, p. 10.

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