INTRODUCTION

A couple of decades ago, some scholars and critics had the idea of gathering people together in one spot, for a few days, to talk about a writer whom many people regard as either the greatest writer of the twentieth century, or the most influential, or both. With a touch of veneration (more on that later), they wanted for James Joyce what Simon Dedalus calls in *Ulysses* "a symposium all his own"—and, as he also puts it, the devil wouldn't stop them.

They went to Dublin that first year, and for a long time the James Joyce Foundation, which sponsors and runs what came to be called the International James Joyce Symposia, kept to the tradition of holding them only in cities in which Joyce himself had lived for an extended period of time. Given Joyce's comparatively nomadic life, that would seem to provide a goodly number of choices. Even so, it obviously became unnecessarily or even pedantically limiting.

So the tradition was broken; and when the invitation to hold a Symposium in Copenhagen in 1986 was issued, it was eagerly accepted. Certainly the timing was right: for the conference, always held around Bloomsday, came within a few weeks, as well, of the fiftieth anniversary of Joyce's own visit to Copenhagen.

There was also a more general appropriateness in the conference being held in the capital city of the Danes who founded the capital city of Ireland in the first place: for to Joyce, Ireland itself seemed a sort of offshoot of Scandinavia. As he wrote in "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages" in 1907, the original Scandinavians did not leave Ireland, "but were gradually assimilated into the community, a fact we must keep in mind if we want to understand the curious character of the modern Irishman."

At the very start of his literary career, Joyce made clear the importance to him of Scandinavian literature—and especially of Henrik Ibsen. His first notable publication was, after all, on "Ibsen's New Drama," *When We Dead Awaken*. But even before that he had written about Ibsen in his "epiphanies," in one of which Ibsen is called "the greatest man in the world." Later, in 1907, Stanislaus Joyce recorded in his diary that "Jim told me that he is going to expand his story 'Ulysses' into a short book and make a Dublin
'Peer Gynt' of it.' And in *Finnegans Wake* we have numerous ‘peers and gints, quaysirs and gallyliers, fresk letties from the say and stale headygabblers, gainganglers and dudder wagoners, pullars off societies and pushers on rothmere's homes.'

So Joyce's connection with what the "Ballad of Persse O'Reilly" calls "Scandiknavery" has long been acknowledged. For decades, scholars—especially, of course, Scandinavian scholars, displaying what the *Wake* more positively calls "domfine norsemanship"—have also chronicled the influence of Joyce on later Nordic writers. All that kept coming up, again and again, during the week-long gathering in the city the *Wake* calls "the cope of heaven."

To have reached the milestone of a Tenth International James Joyce Symposium also means that we have passed through a succession of James Joyces along the way. As Fritz Senn implies in his provocative address "named" "Joyce the Verb," there are as many meanings to the word Joyce, the name Joyce, as there are to that strange word "Joycean." As a community of Joyceans (scholars and readers, teachers and students, translators and enthusiasts) have redefined themselves in various ways over the past two decades of coming together internationally, "coping" with Joyce has come to have a meaning beyond the wordplay that associates it with Copenhagen.

Three distinct approaches have previously been apparent to many who have attended these Symposia and the many other Joyce conferences and seminars that have proliferated across the world during the 1970s and 1980s. "Venerating" Joyce has long been in evidence, and can still be noticed on occasion: it has made Joyce an insurmountable obstacle, a totem for adulation, which if it has not actually impeded interpretation has at least set the first and forming condition, that Joyce was a genius and in such full control of his material and techniques that his intentions could only be surmised. Veneration has met with skepticism by the younger generation of Joyceans, some of whom have even avoided the name Joycean for fear that it implies unquestioning adulation. In addition, recent theoretical assumptions that all authors lack the authority that resides either in the text or with the reader have made veneration—even of Joyce—uncomfortable. Nonetheless, all of those who approach the Joyce texts find themselves having to contend with the redoubtable presence of James Joyce.

Joyceans have also had to face charges of "exploiting" Joyce, a concern recently brought forward (at the Symposia and in the media)
by Joyce’s grandson, Stephen Joyce. The institutionalization of what has been called The Joyce Industry has been responsible for the vast amount of scholarship and criticism filling library shelves, the organizational self-propagation through a series of periodicals—two or three seem always to be in circulation—and the self-identification of a Joycean community made most noticeable by the biannual International Symposia. Stephen Joyce has been particularly offended by the selling of blue-and-white neckties and other such paraphernalia at the Joyce Museum in Sandycove, a “commercialization” of James Joyce that after all was intended to help keep a small and unique museum in operation. That James Joyce was in danger of becoming a commodity in which speculative shares were being bought and sold has bothered Joyceans and others not immediately related to Joyce himself. Yet, since most Joyceans work in the academic marketplace—whose companies rarely appear in the Blue Chips board and where the stakes are usually embarrassingly low—the idea of Joycean academics getting rich on their investments is easily dismissed. But the idea of exploiting Joyce in less obvious ways, of living Joyce’s life vicariously, has caused some degree of unease within the community. The mere specter of exploitation, however, has had the effect of reevaluating the scholar’s relationship to the subject—and especially the motivations of those who have elected to involve themselves with so prominent a subject.

Perhaps the most audacious approach to that subject over the years has been the intention of “mastering” Joyce, of viewing the texts as capable of yielding up their secrets to the overpowering ingenuity of highly skilled practitioners of the Joycean craft. This conquistadore attitude made itself apparent fairly early, long before the first of the Joyce Symposia brought a working community together. It has its touch of Faustian audacity, each alchemist working alone and almost in secret to find the touchstone that would open up the formidable door, each cryptographer intent on breaking the code. Rumors circulated that certain scholars had found the central motif of Finnegans Wake, that the “grand design” would soon be disclosed, that a central thesis would be expounded. Others guarded their findings jealously, hinting at what they now knew but refusing to be specific for fear of having their discoveries appropriated. The coming together of a Joycean grouping in regular attendance at the Symposia has done much to dissipate the incipient paranoia, although it has also occasionally contributed to the heady atmosphere in which
Joyceans felt all the more assured of the inevitability (or at least the possibility) of mastering Joyce. Concentrated assault, under a corps of generals, replaced more individualistic forays, and the pooling of knowledge made for a more democratic campaign. Joyce has withstood the onslaught and has no more been mastered than has Nature, and as with Nature, neither exploitation nor veneration has contributed to mastery, an unlocking of secrets. Instead, we have come to the realization that “coping” with Joyce remains viable and productive—and perhaps even valuable.

Diversity and complexity, therefore, characterize the eighteen essays in this volume, representative of the numerous presentations and the prevalent ambiance of the Tenth International James Joyce Symposium. Describing them, much less classifying them, proves to be difficult, although arranging them in a reading order suggested itself very easily. The first five essays were major addresses at the Symposium, and, characteristic of such addresses, they all assume some sort of overview of the Joyce texts or of the Joycean perspective. The litany of these perspectives is almost in itself Joycean (or at least Shakespearean): historical, biographical, cultural, thematic, linguistic, textual, sexual—a plethora of Joyces (venerators would have said a “pantheon of Joyces’)—with whom to cope. Thereafter, the chronology of the Joyce texts determines the order, from *Dubliners* to *Exiles* and then very rapidly to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. The aspects of diversity/complexity, however, make discreet classifications at times impossible, since it has become increasingly apparent that Joyce’s texts interleaf with each other, depend on each other, complement each other, extend each other. Margot Norris’s opening essay establishes the intricacy and significance of that intertextuality: she reads the *Wake* “through” the other Joyce works and reads it as an organic text with the generating powers of a flower, Joyce’s designated heliotrope. The answer to the riddle of desire in the *Wake*’s “mime,” and the narrative structure of the riddle, reside in the thematic heliotrope that derives from *Nausicaa* and “The Dead,” coloring each of the texts, turning toward each of the texts.

The quest for Joyce takes Colbert Kearney to Cork and Robert Scholes to Italy, has Bernard Benstock investigating plaques, street signs, and tombstones, and Fritz Senn investigating Greek and Latin grammar. Kearney locates Joyce among the Joyces of Cork, the father, grandfather, great-grandfather, as well as the marriage to an O’Connell, the building up of a *Joycead* that James Joyce contributed to
in the history of his fiction. If Kearney exhumes the ancestors, Scholes exhumes Joyce's contemporaries, those involved as Joyce was with European socialism, and the divergent paths youthful socialism took for Joyce and others at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as the cross-currents of politics and aesthetics. Each identifies a complex Joyce within the diversification and complexity of human history. Benstock carries that reading of history into the human family, determining landmarks noted by Joyce as he read the runic indicators to the history of the race in the individual. And Senn sifts through Joyce's own runes, deciding on the Joycean process of naming, the use of active and passive voices and the finding of a mediating way, a middle voice, between the fixity of nouns and the activity of verbs. Senn's concept of such mediation should in turn be read against Scholes's notation of Joyce's middle road between naturalism and aestheticism. As Norris reads the old stories as providing structures to make new ones, the other four authors of major addresses read the old stories of family and influences, linguistic and epigrammatic structures underlying Joyce's contributions.

A discernible change in Joyce studies, reflected in this collection of essays, is not only the concentration on *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, but especially the concern with that latter text. What some have suspected for a long time has now become a widely accepted view: that ignoring the *Wake* when coping with Joyce seriously limits the range of Joycean perspectives. New theoretical approaches in particular have paid prominent attention to *Finnegans Wake*, a text that is at least as challenging as the complexities and diversities of critical theories. Perhaps the suspension of the awe with which Joyce has too often been surrounded, the veneration of genius that kept the *Wake* as a sacred book to be honored but not approached, as well as the suspension of the notion that it is a text that must be mastered and rendered up to explication, have opened *Finnegans Wake* for new considerations. And frequently one finds that a coupling of *Ulysses* and the *Wake* within the same essay makes for a kind of double reading, the "easier" text providing an entry into the more difficult one, the earlier text providing a quite different perspective on some obscure activity of the later text.

Identifying the diverse/complex James Joyce in his various guises and in his various capacities highlights *Coping with Joyce* as a group of divergent essays. Historically, Joyce emerges as a product of his genetic world, an early movie-goer whose retina recorded the flickering
of screen images allowing for a translation of that new and awkward medium into the magical transformations and quick changes of the Circe chapter. Politically he presents himself as a victim of a colonial policy toward his native land that colors his socialist ideals and causes him to espouse Irish nationalism while rejecting the theocratic state it has engendered. Culturally he is viewed as a central figure of a male modernism with which he was uncomfortable, preferring to move outside the masculine vortex that proves to be politically reactionary as well, and the Joyce now identifiable as the “womanly man” also has claims as a feminist opposed to the masculine modernist hegemony.

Correspondingly, Joyce has never lost his identity as the consummate artist, but new facets of his artistry have become apparent under recent examinations, especially with new materials of examination. Joyce as a creator of systems magnified the proportions of his ambitious range, and new credence is given to his role as rival to the god of creation, an anti-Babelist, for example, creating a “mediating” language rather than mediating between languages, repeating in the *Wake* the dispersal of linguistic controls that challenges “mastery.” Often it is in his diachronic role, manipulating the words as well as the music under his specific signature, that the dualistic powers of creativity become established: condemned by his earliest and most severe critic as a “schoolmaster,” he shows himself as a pedagogue of self-instruction, providing the means by which his readers teach themselves how to read the texts. As a worker in language, he can work the formal and fixed forms of speech in active relationship with colloquial and spontaneous modes of human expression. And as a writer credited with being the chronicler of everyday life in *Ulysses*, he simultaneously demonstrates his power as a mythmaker and esotericist, producing in *Ulysses* a perfectly heterogeneous text.

The essays collected in this volume not only mark a certain moment in the history of “coping” with Joyce but raise some new questions about the terms of that coping. The resulting volume is symptomatic of Joycean concerns: 1) reading the effects of Joyce’s presence and participation in a Modernism that is itself being reread and revised through various lenses—socialist, feminist, deconstructionist, psychoanalytic; 2) defining both the aesthetics and ideologies of Modernism in terms of Joyce; 3) reading Joyce’s texts through each other, with new interest in organic metaphors of Joycean textual
construction and with particular attention to the ways in which the
individual works, taken together, form a textual fabric—overlapped,
interwoven, seamed, signed by knots and marked by holes; 4) being
aware of Joycean pedagogy, a study of all facets of the notion of
the pedagogic, both within and outside of the texts proper; 5)
creating (or recognizing) rhetorical and grammatical readings of Joyce's
texts that focus on the ruptures in textual logic. What is evident in
this collection, and was in evidence in Copenhagen as well, is that
the Joyce “industry” is caught in a moment of self-evaluation, a
heliotropic turn to questioning the contexts in which we have for so
long situated Joyce's texts, with a backward glance reflected in both
irony and nostalgia at a time when our mutual goal was easily
defined but difficult to reach: that is, to “master” the Joycean
oeuvre. We have conceded the game, but—in a kind of wily,
polytropic gesture—refused to admit defeat. Like Leopold Bloom,
and Odysseus before him, we cope.
ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations—those also used in the *James Joyce Quarterly*—have been used throughout this volume to indicate standard editions of Joyce's works and important secondary texts. No additional references to these works have been given in individual bibliographies.


