

Editorial:  
**Joyce in Antwerp**

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Last year, on Bloomsday 2017, we launched the 17th issue of *Genetic Joyce Studies* with an appeal to the Joyce community to work together on a digital genetic infrastructure for ‘Work in Progress’ as a ‘collaborative enterprise’. This year, a few days before the start of the 26<sup>th</sup> International James Joyce Symposium at the University of Antwerp, Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon launched their *James Joyce Digital Archive* (designed by Stacey Herbert and James O’Hanlon). We congratulate them with this great accomplishment and hope they are open to the extended invitation and heartfelt request to work together with other digital projects, several of which have been presented on previous symposia (such as the *The ‘Finnegans Wake’ Genetic Research Archive* and the *James Joyce Digital Library*) or will be launched during this year’s Joyce symposium (such as *Ulysses: A Digital Critical and Synoptic Edition*).

The title of the Joyce Symposium 2018 (<https://uahost.uantwerpen.be/joyce2018/>) is ‘The Art of James Joyce’. We are happy to be able to welcome 250 Joyceans to Antwerp, the city where Joyce stayed from 17 to 20 September 1926. After one of his many eye operations, he took his family on holiday to Belgium. In August and the first half of September, he stayed at the sea-side resort Ostend, stopping at the Auberge Littoral Palace until the expense drove him elsewhere. He did not fail to notice that it had the same initials as Anna Livia Plurabelle.

Shortly before he went to Ostend, Joyce had written the first drafts of the ‘Triangle’ or ‘The Muddest Thick That Was Ever Heard Dump’, in which two boys try to figure out the first problem of Euclid’s *Elements* – how to construe an equilateral triangle on the segment AL. While the two boys find the solution to the Euclidian problem they also discover the secret of their own origin, ALP’s pubic triangle, or what Gustave Courbet called ‘L’origine du monde’. This was to become the basis of the text he sent to Wyndham Lewis, who had commissioned a piece for his new magazine. Joyce finished it while he was in Brussels, at the end of September.

Belgium was not only the place where Shem and Shaun discover the secret of birth, but also a constant reminder of life’s other bookend, the ‘allwombing tomb’. Brave little Belgium was the battlefield of Europe during the First World War (recalled as ‘Ill Sixty’ or Hill 60 near Ypres in *Finnegans Wake*) and also, a century earlier, the site of Napoleon’s final defeat. The tour in the Museyroom – ‘This is me Belchum’ – was inspired by Joyce’s own visit to Waterloo.

On top of these layers of battlefields there is Antwerp. In 1926, Joyce and his family stayed at the Grand Hotel. The hotel no longer exists, but it was located next to the Opera.

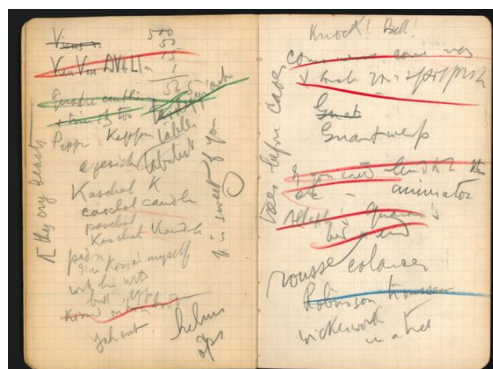


Image courtesy of Benoit Vanhees (www.retroscoop.com)



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During his stay at the Grand Hotel, he was bothered by mosquitoes and gnats and noted in one of the *Finnegans Wake* notebooks: ‘gnats / Gnantwerp’ (VI.B.15).



He visited the printing museum, Museum Plantin Moretus, and sent facsimile postcards of early Antwerp printing to Sylvia Beach.

Christophe Plantin was a prolific printer and good friend of Peter Paul Rubens. The Flemish master’s works – some of which are in the Cathedral – are central to the cultural city

festival 'Antwerp Baroque 2018: Rubens inspires', which has just started. If you compare Joyce to, say, Samuel Beckett – which we will do in a few panels during this symposium – Joyce is obviously the more baroque of the two. In that sense, the coincidence of the symposium and the festival 'Antwerp Baroque' is perfect timing, and our title is quite fitting: 'The Art of James Joyce' is a baroque art, which in its turn inspired many other artists. Our social programme contains music inspired by Joyce (Tuesday, at Vleeshuis), contemporary art (Thursday, in M HKA), film (Mary Ellen Bute's *Passages of 'Finnegans Wake'* on Thursday, Joseph Strick's *Ulysses* on Friday, John Huston's *The Dead* on Sunday, all at Cinema Zuid), and a special Bloomsday happening, called *So Prettly Pratty Pollylogue* (Saturday 16 June 2018 at DeSingel, Witte Zaal).

Not just Joyce and the arts, but also the abundance of Joyce's own art is the topic of our symposium. As Beckett noted, Joyce was 'always adding', 'you only have to look at his proofs to see that'. That is why the title of the symposium is also a homage to *The Art of James Joyce*, A. Walton Litz's pioneering study of the creation of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. For Antwerp is also the home town of *Genetic Joyce Studies* and the *Centre for Manuscript Genetics*, which grew out of the *Antwerp James Joyce Centre* (founded in 1989).

The two themes of the conference, art and genetics, came together beautifully in January of this year when a student of the University of Antwerp cracked the code of a challenge that DNA Storage scientist Nick Goldman had hidden in a sequence of DNA. Three years ago, in January 2015, he issued the Bitcoin Challenge at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos: he had encrypted information, including a bitcoin, in a DNA sample. The challenge was to decrypt it. Sander Wuyts (University of Antwerp) managed to sequence the DNA sample and decode the Bitcoin. Together with the bitcoin, he also managed to decode more information, notably a drawing of James Joyce by the Belgian artist Bruneau, which the Antwerp James Joyce Centre used to have on its website. After a few inquiries it turned out that Nick is the son of the British Joycean Arnold Goldman and that he had added the drawing partly as an homage to his father. It seems only fitting, therefore, to open this new issue of *Genetic Joyce Studies* with this drawing by Bruneau, stored in DNA and decrypted again.

