

Other weekends we traveled. I remember peregrinations on snowshoe around his Vermont retreat. I recall a Thanksgiving dinner at Professor Brooks' home, an 18th-century farmhouse lovingly removed from upper New England and reassembled board by board in the hills above New Haven. The antique beams were so low that I had to stoop, and I remember William Wimsatt, who was seven feet tall, propping his chin on one of those beams and gazing down on the proceedings like a curious, great horned owl.

In 1972, Mr. Warren was in Europe and his liver nearly failed. Yale flew him home by ambulance jet, and I went to see him. His color was jaundiced. I read him poems which revealed my homosexuality. He retorted, "That has no place in poetry!" It was the most stinging rebuke I'd ever received from any man other than my father. Two weeks later my parents attended my graduation. One of their first dates at the University of Minnesota was the stage debut of *All the King's Men*. I took them to the hospital where they thanked Mr. Warren for fostering so wayward a boy.

For a man of such scholarly attainment, Warren held academia in contempt. Once I was sitting at Sterling Library's book return desk with 12 books about Wallace Stevens. When Warren walked up I asked which ones I should read. He said, "Send those books back to the stacks, and read Wallace Stevens for yourself."

His advice was infallible. "If you're going to persist in this mad pursuit of meter and rhyme, you better get in touch with Dickie Wilbur, 'cause he's the best man we've got." I asked him to recommend me for the post of poet-in-residence at Phillips Exeter. He flat-out refused. "You've spent your life surrounded with juvenile minds, and that's the last thing you need. If I had it to do over again, I'd never be an academic. Go home boy. Buy a farm. Sink your toes in that rich soil, and grow some roots." Lesson given, lesson taken.

Those two pieces of advice set the course of my life. My struggles as a farmer animate the best of my work. Dick Wilbur proved to be as unfailingly kind and generous as Mr. Warren was. But as our master prosodist he was better able to guide me through the metrical thickets in which I entangled myself. During my tutelage Mr. Warren was finishing *Audubon*, a dark, difficult poem,

for which I no longer have much affection. Did a boy's stumbling, fumbling attempts at prosody amuse him? I hope so. These days when lads bring me verses, I begin, "Boy, this doesn't scan."

Teachers transmit knowledge, but a great teacher seduces and infuses young minds with passion for learning. By force of personality he manipulates pliant lives. Robert Penn Warren was a great teacher.

Timothy Murphy is a poet from Fargo, North Dakota, whose poems can be found in this issue. A collection of Mr. Murphy's verse, with a preface by Richard Wilbur, will be published next year by Story Line Press.

Belated Bloomsday by Patrick J. Walsh

June 16 is Bloomsday, named after the character of Leopold Bloom in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce's huge book takes place all on that long June day in 1904—250,000 words long, that is.

We are told that *Ulysses* is one of the most important books of the century. We are told it is an intelligent book. But who amongst us has ever had a serious and satisfying intellectual discussion of the book? Dare we ask who has truly read it?

Ulysses seems to encourage false postures and impostors of bourgeois bohemia—those bores who eagerly call themselves "artist" and who create no art. It has also been a boon to academia, to the producers of thesis papers, and to those who hold literary conferences. There are so many theories about the book that it keeps this crowd away from the unemployment queue, enabling them to wander further around in mazes lost.

Those who seek to solve the riddle of the great *Ulysses* can do it with one blinding strike of the pike. You can put out the eye of that giant, dumb Cyclops by reading "An Analysis Of The Mind Of James Joyce," a short essay in a very intelligent book by Wyndham Lewis entitled *Time and Western Man*. Lewis, a contemporary of Joyce, picked up the

thread to lead us out of the Joycean labyrinth and examined much of what is wrong with the intellect in our age.

Therein is examined the all-in-one-day scheme, the obsession with time, the interior monologue, and the tendency of modern man to create his own reality, his own country, whose borders are the walls of his skull.

For modern man is mind in isolation. To his own peril man hovers, as Melville said, over Descartean vortices. Heed well, ye pantheist! Joyce's *Ulysses* starts with a mockery of what once united European civilization—the Mass. Soon thereafter the book, like Western culture, breaks up into solipsistic soliloquies.

Joyce took refuge from our troubled times inside his mind, creating a dream world of Victorian Dublin. Since the Renaissance and so-called Enlightenment, man has turned away from God, thinking himself not only the master but creator of his world. We have closed down the cloistered orders and have cloistered ourselves within our minds. The so-called Enlightenment and scientific method encourage us to throw out all things of tradition and human knowledge unless they can be rationally proved. The modern mind today is at the mercy of these rational experts. Yeats (whom Joyce arrogantly dismissed as someone he had met too late to help) had taken the pulse of our agonally breathing civilization. He saw correctly and was deeply troubled that—

Ancient lineaments are blotted out
Irrational streams of blood are
staining earth
Empedocles has thrown all
things about
Hector is dead there's a light
in Troy

Joyce posed and "pared his fingernails," unconcerned about his country's struggle for independence and two world wars. He cared not for his time nor for history or tradition. In *Ulysses* all that exists, exists only for now. The past has no significance except as the "I" imagines it.

Ulysses smashes all unities of time and space and the reader is swallowed into the vortex of the Joycean modern mind. Lewis does not deny Joyce's skill. He does criticize the trend in Joyce and other modern writers to escape our Western inheritance and tradition of thought to wallow in the primitive unconscious.

Lewis calls the stream of conscious-

ness a "barbaric technique, an illusion dear to man in his decadence, the belief that an impoverished consciousness may be enriched by an uprush of unconscious vitality. As a chthonic creature man hopes to be born again from the same womb. He wishes to be either pure organism or pure spirit, but he is condemned to be man." The Joycean world is not a world of hard crisp reality or intellect. It is a vague one of timelessness and flux that conforms to the dominant ideologies of the age—Scientism, Evolutionism, Freudianism, etc. Behind it all is the dead idea that man is minutia that is acted upon like a puppet rather than a special creature who thinks and acts.

"So timeless seemed the grey warm air, so fluid and impersonal." This quotation from Joyce is demonstrative of the modern idea that eternity is imprisoned in its unchangeableness; God, too, is a distant prisoner of His own eternal plan. This intellectual naiveté looks at God in human terms. Eternity is thus misunderstood in a purely negative sense as "timelessness," as the opposite to time, as something that cannot make its influence felt in time. In short, there is no Holy Spirit. This is the despair of the modern mind-set. It lends itself to feelings of extreme loneliness, uselessness, and futility. It turns the mind in on itself. This is the modern equivalent of a very ancient and destructive heresy called gnosticism. It is the fundamental problem of the modern world.

With all his dramatization of Catholic education and talk of St. Thomas Aquinas, Joyce, the product of a corrupt Irish clericalism, did not understand the true nature of what it means to be Catholic nor the truth about grace, love, and the Holy Spirit. This is why there is a coldness and pride in his work.

Much is made of the Joycean technique of "epiphany." But it should be understood as a secular epiphany, one trapped in time that does not see through to the nature of things. Since rejecting the Holy Spirit, modern man cannot reconcile his eternal element of being with the world, and so he creates his own world. He becomes his own God in his own mind, with such terrible consequences in this century.

Lewis sees Joyce as conforming to his time and being coldly indifferent to a modern cultural problem where things are very debased—with a universal conformity of puppet people who never think for themselves but do as they are

instructed by the mass society so as to avoid thought, the exercise of free will, suffering, and all that makes a real human being. All the world—O'Connell Bridge included—is falling, falling down, falling down, while Joyce hides behind thick indifferent lenses. Patrick Kavanagh, a great modern poet and prophetic critic, said that Joyce was not building up a patrimony like Dante but was engaged in "spending our spiritual patrimony, leading us away from the Ideal to utter emptiness and futility, and that history would deal savagely with such spenders."

Nothing heroic happens in this *Ulysses*. No adventures present themselves to this inner traveler. No monsters met. No Circe circumvented. Nothing! Bloom meets Daedalus. Bloom masturbates. Molly adulterates. There is no recognized home to which to return. Modern man is adrift. There is no abiding city. When the rosy fingers of dawn appear, we are assaulted by words and endless excursions into the mind. Words and sounds take the place of constructive thought and action. Words are beat, beat, beaten into you. All is awirl like the pounding thump of modern dance, or the disorder of jazz.

For Lewis, the artist must be intelligent and stand outside the conformity of his era. With T.S. Eliot, he believed the artist should be heterodox when everyone else is orthodox in order to bring man back to the real. The artist must not be an empty cistern to be filled with the prevailing ideology but an overflowing fountain. Lewis sees Joyce as more of a technician than an inventive intelligence, saying, "There is very little going on in the mind of Mr. James Joyce."

This past Bloomsday saw the publication of yet another edition of *Ulysses* edited by another Joycean, one Danis Rose, and published by Picador. The *New York Times* arts page reported the controversy. Mr. Rose said he sought to clarify the text by making 10,000 edits to the 250,000 words. But another Joyce cultist rose up in arms against clarity. Fritz Senn, director of the James Joyce Foundation of Zurich, said "that in trying to make the text clearer, Mr. Rose may have subverted elements that brought genius to *Ulysses*." He added: "I've always enjoyed the passages where you couldn't tell what the author meant."

Another far more interesting controversy will brew with the publication this

autumn of a book by Lawrence Rainey of Yale entitled *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*. A synopsis of the book's thesis, "The Real Scandal of Ulysses," was published in the *Times Literary Supplement* on January 31. It seems *Ulysses* and other works of literary modernism manipulate the book market with limited expensive editions bought up by dealers and speculators in order to increase demand and inflate the price. As Professor Rainey writes, "no longer confident that they could appeal to the public sphere in support of their assertions about the aesthetic value of *Ulysses* [they] turned instead to the workings of the market itself, taking its outcomes to be confirmation, even justifications, of their claims." Adds the good professor, "the invisible hand of Adam Smith is not a moral or rational agent, nor can it be an aesthetic agent." One wonders whether this is a demonstration of the third principle in the Joycean trinity of "silence, exile, and cunning."

So perhaps your Bloomsday has been forever punctured. Not to worry. Get out that old Victorian dress, rent a horse, oil a jaunting car, and go for a drive around town. Someone will take your photograph. Everyone (well, most everyone) will believe you most cultured and intelligent. And what, after all, is mass society but solipsistic escape from reality?

Patrick J. Walsh writes from Dorchester, Massachusetts.

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White Self-Hatred and the Christian Spirit

by Wayne Allensworth

At the first Congress on Racial Justice and Reconciliation, held in Washington in May, the Reverend Earl W. Jackson, the black director of the mostly white "Samaritan Project" of the Christian Coalition, told 500 mostly black Christians that, despite many blacks' warnings that he was selling out to the "religious right," "our agenda" is "the work of God Almighty, as best we can understand." A white Christian might wonder if this agenda is not that of the Almighty but of the multicultural, anti-American, antiwhite left, for it turns out that the gathering was yet another exercise in white self-hatred masquerading as Christian charity, with Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition, using the forum to "reach out" to blacks and seek their approval.

The Samaritan Project, according to a report in the *Washington Times*, was launched earlier this year and is funded by the Christian Coalition's "donor base." The Reverend Jackson's group received a grant of some \$850,000 from the project to "rebuild burned churches." Never mind that the whole "church burning" episode (supposedly the work of a "racist" conspiracy) turned out to be a hoax, that many white churches had also been burned, and that law enforcement officials had confirmed that church arson is quite common. As so often happens in such cases, the story took

on a life of its own in defiance of truth and common sense. Mr. Reed was on hand to do penance for the white race ("We come not in self-righteousness, but in repentance") and to extend a helping hand to blacks, long "ignored" by the Republican Party.

Mr. Reed, it appears, also came to perform a common ritual for conservatives, that of seeking the dominant left's approval by confirming its agenda. After reiterating the myth about the racist burning of black churches, he then endorsed the left's entire antiwhite agenda, agreeing that "racial injustices" were common in bank loans (blacks have a right to loans no matter what their credit record may be), in real estate (the government should force whites to rent or sell to someone based on their race), in inner-city funding (the government should pour billions of additional tax dollars into welfare programs), and in prison sentences for blacks (black criminals are "overrepresented" in prisons). Mr. Reed even expressed dismay over the number of whites who did not feel they owed blacks an apology.

It is odd enough that a Christian, apart from the principle of Original Sin, should endorse the notion of collective guilt, and odder still that Mr. Reed apparently believes he can seek collective absolution for the white race. But the oddest of Mr. Reed's oddball ideas is that conservatives can win the "black vote" at all. Why, the befuddled leaders of the predominantly white, middle- and working-class "religious right" wonder, wouldn't their agenda appeal to a great number of blacks? The answer lies in a fundamental need that the Christian Coalition's leaders deny, the human need for group identity that defines the individual and his kin and sets the boundaries of his primary loyalties—something that, until very recently, Christians saw as normal and necessary. The fact is that most blacks will never be able to buy into a conservative, constitutional program precisely because such a program would involve betraying their kith and kin by stripping the federal government of the very (unconstitutional) powers that ended racial discrimination. Moreover, in the minds of many blacks, a reversal of the civil rights acts and the rollback of the powers of the federal courts would leave them undefended from renewed racial discrimination, no matter how many times well-meaning whites assure them that conservatives

have no such plans.

For other blacks, the end of affirmative action means the loss of something that they appear to enjoy: the sweet but poisonous taste of revenge. Black nationalists are correct insofar as they recognize themselves as a separate people with interests divergent from those of whites. They are African-Americans or black Americans, after all, never just plain Americans. Radicals go further, however, enjoying the indulgence of white self-hatred that forums like that of the Christian Coalition offer. The Reverend Melvin Tuggle II of Baltimore, for instance, told "white Christianity" to "put your money where your mouth is," that is, to pay up and like it, even as the Samaritan Project, funded by mostly white Christian Coalition donors, forked over a better part of a million dollars to rebuild black churches.

By now, it should be clear that the actions of Mr. Reed and his followers are part of a cult with well-rehearsed rituals. A common method of editorializing in conservative newspapers and journals, for example, is the "some of my best friends are black" argument. In this ritual, the white editorialist notes that he played with black kids as a child, or treated a black maid like a member of the family, before attacking a race-based program favored by the left. Another is the "look who said it" approach, where a black libertarian is quoted damning affirmative action, or an Hispanic is cited endorsing immigration reform; as the reasoning goes, if a black or Hispanic says it, then it must be all right. But the most common ritual is the worship of Martin Luther King, Jr. The thrust of these exercises is the tacit acknowledgment of the left's favorite theme: that there is something sinister about those who oppose race-based quotas or favor immigration reform. Hitler, it turns out, was a Republican.

White self-hatred buys nothing but contempt from blacks and prevents conservatives from mounting a serious campaign to restore a constitutional republic. Until they realize this and face the truth about the implications of what they preach, those on the political right will remain impotent, and the society they desire for their children will become just another lost cause for conservatives to mourn.

Wayne Allensworth writes from Purcellville, Virginia.

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