

## BOOK REVIEW

*Virgil and Joyce: Nationalism and Imperialism in the Aeneid and Ulysses*. By RANDALL J. POGORZELSKI. 2016. University of Wisconsin Press. Pp. ix-x; 178. \$65.00. ISBN 978-0-299-30800-1.

This book is an attempt to study the interaction of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, although such a comparison would appear more likely to be made to Homer's *Odyssey*, particularly since Joyce's Episodes studied here tend to overlap primarily (at least in title) with Homer's poem. But as the very interesting introduction explains, the real theme of the book consists of the comparative effects of nationalism and imperialism in these two works. As Pogorzelski explains in the introduction, both works were written after major conflicts. In Ireland, World War I had lasted from 1914 to 1918, and the Irish War of Independence, from 1918 to 1921. Vergil wrote the *Aeneid* in the years following the civil wars of the first century BC, from 29 BC to 19 BC.

He examines the idea of nationalism from the perspective of Benedict Anderson,<sup>1</sup> who argues that nationalism is a relatively new concept, with roots in the American and French revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and as a cultural formation rather than a political one (4). For Pogorzelski, "Joyce's incorporation of Vergil into his novel of the new Irish nation is an act of classical reception in the formation of modern national cultures" (4). Based on this (and much more discussion of Anderson's theories), Pogorzelski shows how Augustan reforms led to an "administrative enactment of the ideological Italianization of Rome" (11), and then proceeds to show the parallels between Virgil and Joyce as they convey the emergence of their respective new nations.

The book is divided into an invaluable introduction, five chapters, and a short conclusion. According to Pogorzelski, the transformation of Italy culminated at the time Virgil was writing the *Aeneid* (5) alongside the change of Rome from an imperial state to a territorial one (bringing the whole of Italy into this state). This has parallels to the rise of Irish nationalism in the works of James

<sup>1</sup> B. Anderson (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: New York: Verso.

Joyce, which Pogorzelski traces to the evolving interpretations in Joyce's fiction: in the 1930's- 1970s, Joyce's *Ulysses* is seen as a rejection of Ireland; in the 1980s there was a renewed interest in the politics of Joyce's fiction and Irish nationalism, and in the '90s the prevailing opinion was that "Joyce's fiction is not only intensely political, but also contains a great deal of nationalist sentiment." (13).

The chapters then examine several episodes in the *Ulysses*, from the perspective of their connections to Vergil's first *Eclogue* and also selected books of the *Aeneid*.

In Chapter 1—"Joyce's Aeolus and the Semicolonial Virgil"—Joyce's Episode 7 is referred to as the "Aeolus" episode and Virgil's *Eclogue* 1 is positioned as the basis for the discussions of the character "McHugh", a professor of Greek and Latin, whose lengthy exposition Pogorzelski compares to the laments of Meliboeus to Tityrus in Vergil's first *Eclogue*, before he departs from Italy into exile. For Pogorzelski, this episode serves as an "allegory of the politics of land in late colonial Ireland".

In Chapter 2—"Joyce's Citizen and Virgil's Cacus"—Pogorzelski argues that Joyce's Episode 12, often referred to as the "Cyclops" episode, is based instead on the Hercules and Cacus episode in Virgil's *Aeneid* 8. The character in Joyce referred to as the "Citizen", is based not only on Homer's Polyphemus ("Cyclops"), but also on "the Irish nationalist, Michael Cusack, founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association....The Citizen further resembles the legendary heroes of Irish folklore popular among the nationalist proponents of the Irish Revival." (41).

Pogorzelski proposes a fourth (sic) model, "both the hero Hercules and the monster Cacus" (41) of Virgil. He concludes that, "through Virgilian allusion, 'Cyclops' demonstrates both the destructive and the liberating aspects of Irish nationalism." Joyce's allusion to Hercules and Cacus thus "characterizes Irish nationalism as a hybrid...of dependence on and independence from colonial rule" (41). This leads him to conclude that "the allusion to Hercules and Cacus is that the Citizen <who is associated with both of them> is not wholly good or evil, but a combination of the two" (50). Chapter 3 ("The Virgilian Past of Nationalism") continues the Cyclops theme of Chapter 2, but from the perspective of the emphasis in the second half of *Aeneid* as reflecting "Augustus' political reshaping of Rome into a territorial Italian state" (69).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> R. Syme. *The Roman Revolution*. Oxford, 1939

In chapter 4 ("Joyce's Rudy and Virgil's Marcellus"), Pogorzelski argues that Joyce's "Circe" is dependent on *Aeneid* 6. He opens with a discussion of the apparition of Leopold Bloom's infant son, "Rudy," but at a later age, which in turn alludes to the appearance of the "ghost" of Marcellus at the end of *Aeneid* 6. Each had embodied the hope of a smooth transition of happiness (Rudy) or of a smooth succession and prosperous future for Rome (Marcellus). Pogorzelski allows that, "Although Joyce's other uses of *Aeneid* 6 as well as some general correspondences between that book and <Joyce's> "Circe" <have> apparently escaped notice, elsewhere Joyce alludes extensively to Aeneas' journey through the underworld," particularly chapter six of *Ulysses*, the "Hades" episode, with which "Schork catalogues a long list of parallels" (92).<sup>3</sup>

In the fifth chapter ("Virgil's Joycean Poetics"), Pogorzelski concludes that the *Aeneid*, like Joyce's *Ulysses*, "thematizes discontinuity rather than continuity" (111). Following recent interpretations, he concludes that "the dislocations of life in the imperialist metropolis and the fragmentation and defamiliarization of modernist poetics might apply just as well to the innovation and defamiliarizing poetics of the *Aeneid* that he applies in this chapter" (113).<sup>4</sup> Citing episodes such as the details on Daedalus' temple doors in *Aeneid* 6, he compares the connection between the Circe episode and *Aeneid* 7, with their connections between discontinuities of patrilineal succession and discontinuities of artistic representation.

This book approaches a complex subject, but draws some very interesting analogies, particularly to modern theories. It probably would be helpful if he would provide some sort of summary—perhaps an Appendix—of the text's "Episodes" to which he refers, in Joyce, for the non-specialist in this complex text. A similar list for the non-classicist might also be helpful. Even in my multiple copies of Joyce, the divisions into "Episodes" is rarely indicated.

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<sup>3</sup> R. Schork. *Latin and Roman Culture in Joyce*. University Press of Florida. 1997: 128–131

<sup>4</sup> Frederic Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping." In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. University of Illinois Press. 1988: 349.