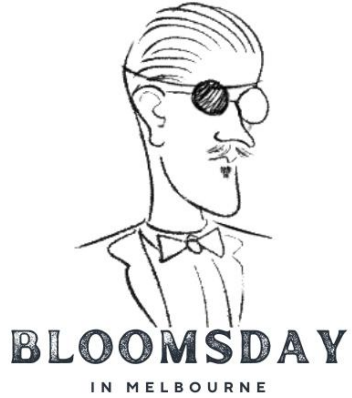




Feminist Literary History and Joyce: in Four Snapshots



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Feminist Literary History & Joyce:

in four snapshots

- **Precursors:** Mary Wollstonecraft's (*Vindication of the Rights of Women*) & Mary Shelley (late c18 – early c19) and the feminist gothic
- **First Wave Feminism 1880-1920**
 - Crop of pre-feminist women writers to build on...
 - The male feminist *littérateurs* – **Ibsen**, G B Shaw, Thomas Hardy (& others).
 - Virginia Woolf & JJ – class and Irishness, and imitation. Rebecca West (great review of first half of U). Mary Colum (positive review, but Molly with 'the mind of a gorilla').
- **Second Wave Feminism (1970s- till Gender studies, 1990s)**
 - **Gynocritics** (UK and US): A parallel canon & reclamation of lost works. A substantial body of feminist works. Cancellations, but not of JJ.
 - **French Literary Theory:** Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva – women writing the body; broader analysis of gender, power & feminisms.
- **Women Rise Up:** JJ Symposium, Provincetown, June 1984, and Bonnie Kime Scott & Karen Lawrence; an interaction with Marilyn French in 1982.

Gender-blind (male) Critics on Molly (Herring, MFS, '69)

- Morse and Steinberg: 'the **bitterest and deadliest thing Joyce ever wrote**'; 'the very **centre of paralysis**'.
- Hugh Kenner: 'Her "Yes" is the **"Yes" of authority... over the animal kingdom of the dead**'.
- S.L.Goldberg: her '**emotional falsity**'.
- Darcy O'Brien: '**a thirty-shilling whore**'.
- Harry Levin: '**repulsive**'.
- Steinberg takes her **17 infidelities** (Bloom in Ithaca) as truth.
- Robert M. Adams: 'a woman as conceived by a man trained to think the flesh naturally dirty...**a slut**, a sloven, a voracious sexual animal as conceived by one of those **medieval minds to whom the female can never be anything but a saccum stercoris [bag of dung]...deliberately obscene.**'

An notable exception – the medic, Carl Jung

- ‘The forty pages of non stop run in the end is a string of veritable psychological peaches. I suppose the devil’s grandmother knows so much about the real psychology of a woman. I didn’t.’

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ARTS & FILMS



Kelly Fitzpatrick, Patrick Bedford and Peter Rogan in a dramatization of Flann O'Brien's "The Dalkey Archive" at Provincetown.

PHOTO BY STEVE HEASLIP

Feminist Joyceans demand more say

By Robert Taylor
Globe Staff

PROVINCETOWN — The women Joyce scholars of America don't want to say "yes."

In a letter to Morris Beja, president of the Joyce Foundation, 23 of the country's best-known female Joyceans led by Bonnie Scott, of the University of Delaware, author of a forthcoming study "Joyce and Feminism," yesterday demanded a greater voice in the decisions of the Joyce "industry." Each year since 1967, the Foundation has sponsored international conferences devoted to the work of Irish literary giant James Joyce, and this year's conference, the second to be held in Provincetown, is called "Joyce After the Centenary: New Directions."

Few had expected feminism to become a major issue. The annual Joyce conferences are generally occasions for erudite discussion and cultural kickshaws. This year, for instance, Nathan Halper, the "Finnegans Wake" authority who arranged the Provincetown agenda, included a dramatization of Flann O'Brien's novel "The Dalkey Archive," a tribute to James Joyce by painter Robert Motherwell, Samuel Beckett's "Film" (with Buster Keaton), a program of Joycean songs by Keven McDermott, who sings them in period attire, and a moving tribute to Joyce's poetry by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Stanley Kunitz.

At a luncheon Tuesday, however, the long-

simmering issues of the role of women in Joyce studies reached the boiling point. "We had discussed this in Dublin last year," said Scott, "but we finally decided to act as a pressure group, and our letter asks for a more representative administration."

Fritz Senn, the great Swiss Joycean to whom this year's meeting is dedicated, is sympathetic to the female demands. A founder with Thomas Staley of the Joyce Quarterly, he feels that the conferences have evolved to the point where other voices must be heard. "The first to institutionalize Joyce studies were men," he said. "We've tried to keep them [the conferences] open as much as possible, but clearly younger people must be heard." A seat on the board of the Foundation is obtained by invitation from an inner group, not nomination and election by the dues-paying membership. The board itself has a large responsibility for state-of-the-art Joyce studies in the US.

Aside from the emergence of a more militant women's presence, this year's conference of more than 200 Joyceans has had a number of striking moments. Hugh Kenner of Johns Hopkins delivered a witty discourse on "Oddities in Ulysses." Carol Schloss of Drexel pointed out the need for new biographies of Joyce (some are on the way, and are more specialized than Richard Ellmann's classic account), and Richard Pearce of Wheaton indicated how Leopold Bloom, the hero of "Ulysses," fulfills a role as

husband and spiritual father that runs counter to most heads of households in patriarchal 19th-century Dublin.

A Joyce symposium is made up of moments like these — of Stanley Kunitz' revelation that when he proposed Joyce as a thesis topic at Harvard in the '20s, he was told, "At Harvard we do not consider such writers worthy of a master's thesis; why not write about Amy Lowell?"; Fairfield University's Louis Berrone presenting his vision of Joyce's novels as the facade of a Gothic cathedral; of Patrick A. McCarthy of the University of Miami, refuting a scholar who maintained (rather improbably) that Leopold Bloom wasn't Jewish; of Robert Day of Queen's College, strolling down Commercial street and saying, "There's a wonderful textual scholar in Munich named Hans-Walter Gabler who's working on a perfect 'Ulysses' and there are about 20 people working on 'Finnegans Wake'; but I don't think we'll ever see a perfect 'Finnegans Wake' in our lifetime. A variorum on microfiche is the best we can hope for."

Last night the scholars gathered at the Flagship Restaurant for the traditional Bloomsday banquet in honor of Joyce's immortal character. This was ritual. No one symbolizes the spirit of the conferences, however, better than Senn. Although he has held academic appointments, he has spent his career in publishing. The pub-

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Feminist Joyceans demand more say

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lishing house for which he worked ran into financial troubles this year and he is presently jobless. He has assembled the most comprehensive Joyce archive in private hands in the world. "It saved me over a year of work," says Brook Thomas of the University of Hawaii.

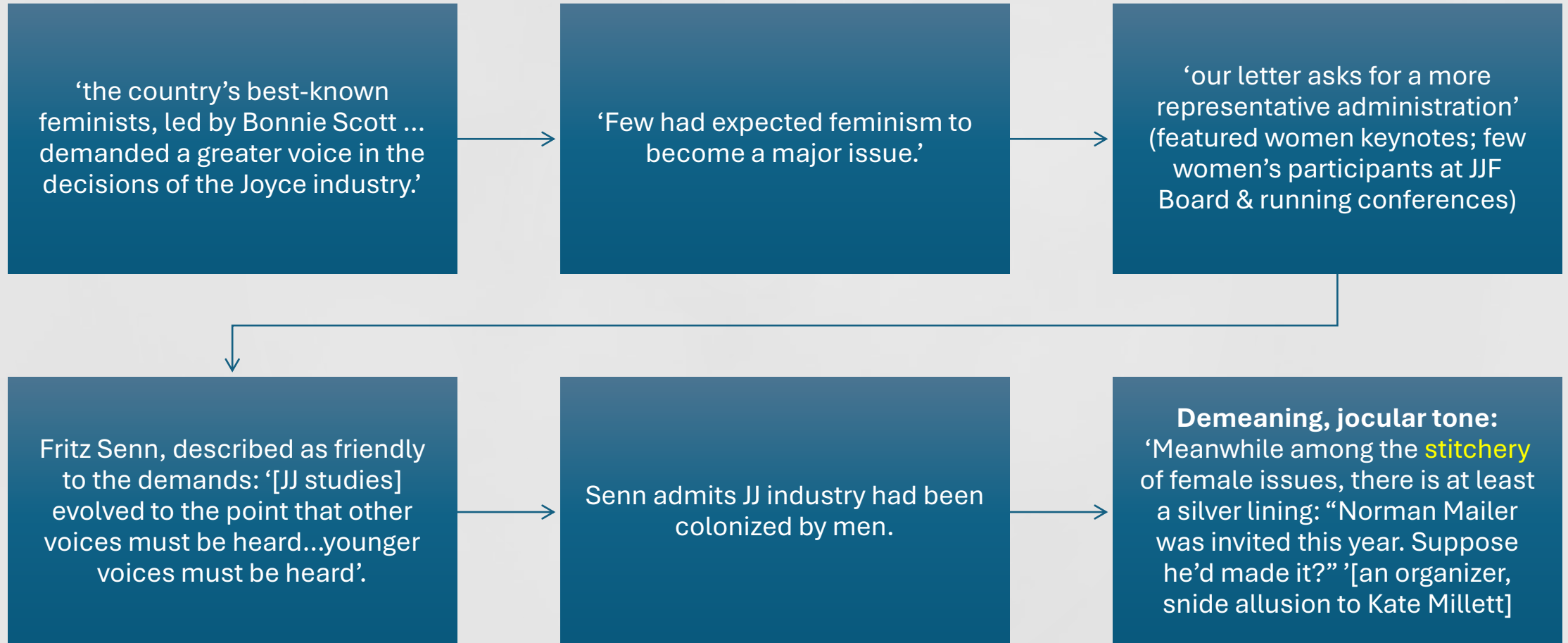
Senn says: "I began studying Joyce because I grew up in Zurich. When I was obliged to test my English I naturally looked to him. I started writing other Joyceans and then Clive Hart and I started the Newsletter ..."

Senn is a soft-spoken, modest man who tends to minimize his prodigious learning. Scholars revere him. Morris Beja of Ohio State declares: "Wherever he goes, no matter where that becomes the world center of Joyce studies."

Despite the success of the Provincetown conference, several questions remain concerning next year's gathering in Frankfurt, Germany. Carol Schloss says: "There are no featured women speakers and women proposing certain topics have been vetoed. Is it already too late?" In the rigorous world of scholarship, decision moves slowly.

Meanwhile amid the stitchery of feminist issues, there is at least a silver lining. "Norman Mailer was invited this year," said an organizer of the conference, "suppose he'd made it?"

The article: women's demands



Outcomes of Uprising: a seachange

- Women's letter of demands taken to Board by Morris Beja.
- Rules reformed: Board elected, not appointed; US domination ended and a wider global and gender representation achieved.
- Karen Lawrence (subsequent stellar career as Joycean and Pres. of Huntingdon Library) became Beja's deputy and President of IJF. Several women succeeded her.
- Bonnie Kime Scott was first woman to run a Joyce conference.
- More featured women speakers.



Lead, kindly fowl! They always did: ask the ages. What bird has done yesterday man may do next year, be it fly, be it moult, be it hatch, be it agreement in the nest....

No, assuredly, they are not justified those gloompourers who grouse that letters have never been quite their old selves again since that weird weekday in bleak Janiveerwhen to the shock of both, Biddy Doran looked at literature.

(Finnegans Wake, 112:9-28)