

2023

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Recommended Citation

Hoffmann, Barbara M. (2023) "Tribute to John Paul Riquelme," *James Joyce Literary Supplement*. Vol. 36: Iss. 1, Article 35.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/jjls/vol36/iss1/35>

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Photo by Marie-Anne Verougstraete

John Paul Riquelme, modernist scholar, editor, and educator, passed away suddenly on 2 March 2022 at the age of 76. Though there are many people more qualified than I to write a memorial for John Paul Riquelme—his good friends, close colleagues, graduate student mentees—my connection with him perhaps exemplifies the deep and long-lasting influence he had as a teacher and scholar. I was a sophomore in John Paul’s Modern Irish Writers class at Boston University in Spring 1999. That one class, so early in my academic career, shaped the course of my future life, and I am certainly not the only person so affected by John Paul Riquelme.

There is much to be said of John Paul’s scholarly work, his publications, his work as an editor, his contributions to the field. Indeed, Joseph Valente’s moving memorial to John Paul written for the Modernist Studies Association outlines the breadth of his contributions: he “produced landmark studies of modernist authors in the British, Irish and American traditions”; his “scholarship redelineated the architecture of literary periodization”; he was a “surpassingly fine and prolific editor”; and his “thoroughgoing intellectual hospitality” welcomed new ideas and new perspectives. Readers of the *JJLS* certainly know John Paul’s contributions to Joyce studies. His 1983 book *Teller and Tale in Joyce’s Fiction: Oscillating Perspectives* helped to shape the direction of contemporary Joyce criticism. His 2007 Norton Critical Edition of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, was, according to Vivian Valvano Lynch in her *JJLS* review thereof, “able to meet high standards in a single

bound.” Exemplifying his intellectual hospitality, John Paul “sought to include representations from three generations of critics from both sides of the Atlantic” in the NCE, and, Lynch enthuses, “Riquelme’s explanatory notes for the novel itself are nothing short of masterful.” Any professor teaching *Portrait* or scholar writing on it is lucky to have John Paul’s NCE by her side.

Here, though, it is John Paul’s generous and inspiring work as a teacher on which I want to focus. Even as a nineteen-year-old undergraduate, I felt in his classroom that I was part of a scholarly community—that he saw me and my peers as colleagues capable of participating in the conversation about Irish literature. He was sharp and witty and approachable; in his syllabus (yes, I still have it) he clarified: “If the office hours listed are not convenient for you, we can arrange to meet at another time. Do not hesitate to visit me if you need assistance. I have children and pets; I watch *South Park*; I’m friendly.” At a memorial service held for John Paul following his passing, one of the speakers noted that, when commenting on student papers, he sought the speck of genius in everyone he encountered. Indeed, a repeated theme at the memorial was that John Paul naturally went out of his way to make the people he encountered, from graduate students to new faculty to fellow lieutenant colonels (yes, John Paul was one), feel welcome, comfortable, and at home.

He certainly went out of his way to help me, for which I will be eternally grateful. Over ten years after I had John Paul as a professor for only one semester, I reached out to him, telling him I was planning on applying to graduate school to study Irish literature; not only did he amazingly remember who I was, but he also responded with a detailed overview of the prospects for graduate school applicants in literature, recommendations for next steps I should take, and specific suggestions for how to situate myself in the field for the particular area of study I sought to undertake. His initial email response to me ended in his typically giving fashion: “Please let me know if there is more that I can do. Don’t hesitate to write again.” And after that, he occasionally emailed me with tidbits of advice as they occurred to him. Imagine, if he did that for just one student, what he did for all of us.

John Paul inspired me and continues to inspire me as a teacher. Following my time at BU and before returning to graduate school, I taught high school for almost a decade in the Boston area. I found myself frequently including works and themes I studied in John Paul’s class: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, “The Dead,” poetry by Seamus Heaney; home, identity, duality. John Paul’s trust in me as a student capable of handling Joyce—and Yeats and Wilde and Heaney and Beckett and even Walter Pater—inspired my trust in my own students and their abilities. When I grade student papers,

I frequently think of a comment John Paul put on my final paper for his class, an analysis of Heaney's poem "Punishment." That one comment, I now know, played no small role in my belief in myself as a student of literature. While I am happy to share many interactions I had with John Paul, I think I will keep that comment for myself. He showed me just how much of an influence a teacher can have on a student.

John Paul instilled in me and countless other students an abiding love and respect for Irish literature. Though I took copious notes in his class (I still have those, too), I only wrote down one thing on the first day of class: "Irish writers carved out an area of freedom and creativity through their writing—something new came out of Ireland." John Paul helped us feel that excitement for the rest of the class, that Irish writers were doing something new and different, creating something out of, if I may, the sluggish matter of the earth. I still feel that excitement about Irish literature; that's why I keep studying it. At the memorial service, I learned that I have one more thing in common with John Paul: we are both Jewish. I always felt a natural affinity to Irish literature as a Jewish person (and clearly Joyce saw that as well in making Bloom Jewish). Speakers at the memorial service talked of John Paul's connection with both Irishness and Jewishness as the connection felt by cultural outsiders, by those who feel they belong everywhere and nowhere. It made John Paul's influence on my study of Irish literature all the more poignant to find out, now, that we shared that as well.

My last interaction with John Paul was an email exchange following the panel he chaired virtually at MLA in January 2022. His final note was: "On the efficacy and pleasure of teaching and collegial friendship: [the person] who asked the first question [at the MLA panel] was my dissertation advisee, you were my student long ago in my favorite lit class, and Patrick [McCarthy], my old friend, stands in advisor relation to you. . . . It's a small communal world." As great a scholar as John Paul was, he always made me and, I am sure, all of his other students feel part of that world. I will forever be grateful to John Paul for his support, his scholarship, and especially his teaching. Thank you, John Paul, from all of us.

—*University of Miami*