

TEXT OF INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY **PROFESSOR MARGARET KELLEHER**, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, on 16 September 2010, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*, on **PROFESSOR HANS WALTER GABLER**.

A Aire, a Shoilse, a Uachtarán, a mhuintir na hOllscoile agus a dhaoine uaisle (Chancellor, members of the University and Distinguished guests)

The National University of Ireland is proud to honour the distinguished career of Professor Hans Walter Gabler in recognition of his outstanding work as Joyce scholar and editor, his world-renowned contributions to scholarship and his visionary educational leadership.

Hans Walter Gabler was a student of 'English, German, Scandinavian Literatures and Languages', with (in his own words 'some Musicology thrown in') and studied at the Universities of Frankfurt, Munich and Uppsala. In the course of his doctoral studies, he pursued research at King's College Cambridge where he recalls his good fortune at joining the Monteverdi Choir at its founding. Professor Gabler's love of music has stood him in great stead over his career, from his continuing links with John Elliot Gardiner and the Monteverdi choir; to his longstanding membership of Munich's Bach choir. A close college friend at King's College Cambridge, Professor David Skilton, recalls a lexicographical game they invented, in which they took one volume of the shorter OED each, and challenged each other to give the meanings of the strangest words they could find; an early signal of life-long work!

His doctoral subject was Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, specifically the function of dramatic and literary parody in Elizabethan drama, and this formed the subject of his important early publications; for example, his editions of the dramatic works of John Fletcher for Cambridge University Press published between 1979 and 1989. His work for the newly founded Shakespeare Library in Munich, begun in 1966 directly following the completion of his doctorate, would prove highly influential in inaugurating his interest and expertise in textual criticism. Over the next years, he held prestigious fellowships, including the Harkness postdoctoral fellowship in Textual Criticism at the University of Virginia (1968 to 1970) and fellowships at the Huntington Library and Folger Shakespeare Library. In 1970 he returned to his *alma mater*, the University of Munich, where he pursued a long and illustrious teaching career until his retirement in 2003, a period which included the positions of Pro-Dean and Dean.

In the late 1970s, his first editorial work on *James Joyce* was published as part of the James Joyce Archive, a 63 volume series of which he was an Associate Editor and a crucial influence in achieving the series' full bibliographical and textual potential; he himself was the editor for 6 volumes. We might see this as a prelude to the magisterial work *Ulysses: A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, the three volume work which was first published in 1984, 'prepared by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior'. This work of preparation spanned over ten years and, with the assistance of a larger editorial team, involved laborious return to manuscript evidence, typescripts of the individual episodes, and successive sets of the first proofs of *Ulysses*, sometimes as many as nine or ten sets for a 16 page segment; the task was thus in large part to undo the faults and corruptions introduced by this deeply complex process of transmission from draft to print.

The aim, put simply in Professor Gabler's words, was 'to rebuild *Ulysses* as Joyce wrote it' and the result was a highly innovative two-fold edition: the

synoptic edition which traced the growth of the text through all stages of composition and revision, and the critical edition - a 'new original' text. If some of the textual changes were in Richard Ellmann's approving word "quiet", and no less significant for that, the state of Joyce studies in the late 1980s might best be described as "noisy"; but the dedicated, sensitive and painstaking textual readings of Professor Gabler have been more than vindicated and what he calls his "reading text for Ulysses" greatly enjoyed; reissued by Bodley Head, Penguin, Random House and latterly Vintage, his edition has shaped the readings of Joyce's novel for countless readers and students.

As NUI Maynooth honours and salutes Professor Gabler's work, it's fitting to cite the high standing and renown of Joyce scholarship here in Maynooth: the work of Dr Emer Nolan, Professor Luke Gibbons and Professor Brian Cosgrove, Professor Emeritus; I welcome to today's ceremony also distinguished colleagues and friends of Professor Gabler from the field of Joyce studies who include Professor Anne Fogarty, President of the International James Joyce Foundation, Professor Jim Mays, Danis Rose and Dr John O'Hanlon; Joyce publisher Antony Farrell, and members of the Joyce family Bob and Joyce. And most especially, and at this special time, we welcome his wife Gisela.

From 1996 to 2002, Professor Gabler directed an influential interdisciplinary graduate programme on "Textual Criticism as Foundation and Method of the Historical Disciplines", testimony to the power of Professor Gabler's leadership of younger scholars. These years saw his work move directly to engage with the electronic dimension of textual criticism and editing, not surprisingly given the pioneering and innovative nature of his earlier textual scholarship. Since his so-called retirement in 2003 he has been busier than ever and in 2007 was elected a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of English Studies, University of London. The titles of some of his recent publications testify to the significance of his current research: "Making Texts for the Next Century", "There is Virtue in Virtuality: Future Potentials of Electronic Humanities Scholarship" and most recently "Theorizing the Digital Scholarly Edition" where he provocatively argues that "the digital medium has the potential to develop into an environment suitable to re-integrate textual criticism into criticism - and just as importantly to ground criticism again in textual criticism."

Professor Gabler is currently Chair of the international COST Action "Open Scholarly Communities on the Web" launched in 2006, whose aim is to create a research and publication infrastructure on the Web and an advanced e-learning system for the Humanities. This Action has involved members from 15 countries; in May of this year, a workshop on 'Critical Editions' was hosted here in NUI Maynooth by Dr John Keating and Ms Aja Teehan of An Foras Feasa as part of the COST Action and we look forward warmly to future collaborations.

Colleagues and friends of Professor Gabler salute his unerring instinct for what is valuable in scholarship and his firm determination to defend the ends of scholarship above all. His instinct for value has been attributed to his being a champion walker, musing over textual problems while walking long distances, but also his skill as a water diviner: Seamus Heaney's words offer an apt metaphor for the textual craft that yields discoveries:

"Spring water suddenly broadcasting/Through a green hazel its secret stations".

I borrow directly from the words of Professor Gabler's longstanding colleague Danis Rose in saying that [quote] 'above all other things, Hans is progressive ...

not content with the existing paradigms where he believes things can be improved ... with his own imaginative grasp of possibilities [framing] solutions to aspects of text presentation unthinkable a generation ago'.

The honouring of Professor Gabler's work today is a very important and timely occasion for NUI Maynooth as colleagues across the University celebrate the opening of the Lontas building - and with it the joys and surprises of intellectual discovery, the vitality of scholarly exchange in research and teaching, and the dynamism of educational change; the career and continuing work of Professor Hans Walter Gabler are a true exemplar of all of these qualities.

*PRAEHONORABILIS PRO-VICE- CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:*

*Praesento vobis hunc meum filium, quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in Litteris, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo, totique Aademiae.*