

Vol. 78
Theoretical Backup
Four

Joyce Lexicography
Volume Seventy-Eight

How to Read Finnegans Wake?
Why to Read Finnegans Wake?
What to Read in Finnegans Wake?



Texts put together by Tatsuo Hamada.



A L P
Abiko Literary Press (ALP)
Iriake 7-18, Kochi-shi
780-0041, **Japan**

Edited by
C. George Sandulescu & Lidia Vianu

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How to Read *Finnegans Wake*?

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ISBN 978-606-8366-88-3

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The Story in *Finnegans Wake*

Place of origin: Japan.
Profession: retired scientist and professor. Why *Finnegans Wake*? This book we are publishing in our **Joyce Lexicography Series** will tell you the story of Tatsuo Hamada, if a story it is. Maybe you will also find out while reading it whether there **is** a story in *Finnegans Wake* too, whether Joyce's last book is or is not a novel, considering that, as Hamada quotes, "What you cannot tell the story of is not a novel." (C. George Sandulescu, *The Language of the Devil*).

Tatsuo Hamada's book asks three very didactic questions: **How to Read *Finnegans Wake*?** **Why to Read *Finnegans Wake*?** **What to Read in *Finnegans Wake*?** He interviews

Despre ce este vorba în *Finnegans Wake*?

Locul nașterii: Japonia. Profesia: om de știință și profesor; pesnionar. De ce *Finnegans Wake*? Publicăm acum în seria **Joyce Lexicography** o carte care dezvăluie într-un fel indirect povestea lui Tatsuo Hamada, autorul ei. Citind-o, e posibil să aflați dacă are și *Finnegans Wake* o poveste a lui, dacă această ultimă carte a lui James Joyce este ori nu este roman. Este de remarcat că Hamada dă la acest punct, printre alții, cuvântul lui C. George Sandulescu, citând din *Language of the Devil*: "Ceea ce nu poate fi povestit nu este roman."

Cartea de față pune trei întrebări simple, didactice: **Cum** să citim FW? **De ce** să citim FW? **Ce** să citim **în** FW? Ele sunt adresate cercetătorilor Joyce cu reputație internațională. Aceia care, pentru un motiv sau altul, nu au putut fi intervievați, sunt

the top Joycean scholars. Those whom he cannot interview, he quotes. Nothing written about FW seems to have escaped him: he has done his homework with Japanese precision, to the least detail. His aim is not to parade his knowledge. All he wants to do is **understand** and help his readers do the same.

Maybe his English betrays his unEnglishness. Joyce, however, would have welcomed this Japanese researcher, since there are Japanese words in FW which someone had to find at some point. Maybe Tatsuo Hamada is the one.

The opinions recorded in this book have a common denominator. Hamada is trying to demonstrate that the composite woman+sex is the key to FW. He starts with Joyce's daughter Lucia, and ends with ALP—Joyce's wife, who, he tells us, closes the book with her monologue. In an introductory poem written by himself, he even gives an explanation in a contemporary key: Marilyn Monroe.

This Japanese synthesis of FW research to date opens a gate that most certainly leads somewhere. It is for the reader to go in and find his way now.

18 January 2014

prezenți cu citate din cărțile lor. Nu pare să fi scăpat nimic: Hamada și-a făcut temele cu precizie japoneză, până la cel mai mic amănunt. Scopul volumului nu este, însă, să etaleze lecturile impresionante ale autorului în domeniu. Tatsuo Hamada urmărește să **înțeleagă** și, implicit, să ne ajute să înțelegem.

Engleza în care scrie trădează pe alocuri faptul că autorul aparține unui spațiu cu totul diferit de cel englez, de cel european. Dacă, însă, ne gândim că există un număr de cuvinte japoneze în *Finnegans Wake*, am putea gândi și că Joyce îl aștepta pe acest cercetător minuțios ca să le descopere.

Ideile cuprinse în interviurile și citatele din cartea lui Hamada au un numitor comun, și anume ideea ce-l obsedează pe autor că îmbinarea dintre imaginea feminină și sex este o cheie pentru FW. Introducerea se ocupă de fiica lui Joyce, Lucia. În încheiere găsim părerile personale ale lui Hamada în ce privește prezența în text a soției lui Joyce—ALP, care, afirmă el, închide cartea cu un monolog. Mai mult decât atât, Hamada prelungește explicația către contemporani, prefăcând cartea cu un poem scris de el însuși despre Marilyn Monroe.

Această sinteză japoneză a cercetării FW la zi deschide un drum care cu certitudine are un sens. Suntem încredințați că cititorii lui Tatsuo Hamada îl vor descoperi.

C. George Sandulescu & Lidia Vianu

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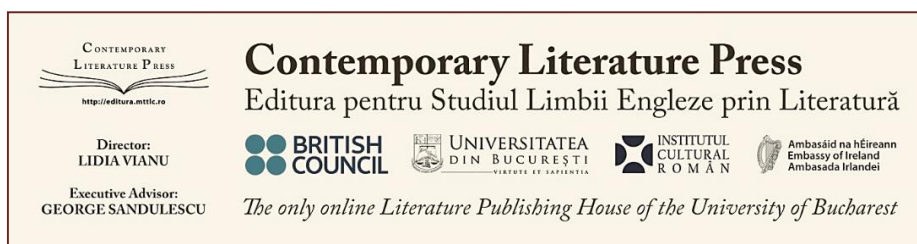
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N.B. This Lexicographic Series as a whole is primarily meant as **teaching material** for the larger half of Continental Europe, which, for practically three quarters of a century, was deprived of ready access to the experimental fiction and poetry of the world. All Western literary criticism was also banned. Hence, the imperative necessity of re-issuing a considerable amount of post-war discussions. **The Publisher.**

Given the importance of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, all postgraduates in English, Romanian, French, and German work on this research project as part of their normal and regular academic assignments.

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Academic Director C L P

If you want to have all the information you need about *Finnegans Wake*, including the full text of *Finnegans Wake* line-numbered, go to the personal site **Sandulescu Online**, at the following internet address: <http://sandulescu.perso.monaco.mc/>

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For Laurel Willis,
In memory of *Abiko Quarterly* (*Abiko Annual*)
and James Joyce Parlour

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Kenji Miyazawa

Introduction of Spring and Demon

Translated by Tatsuo Hamada.

A phenomenon called I
is a blue illumination
of a supposed organic AC electric lamp
(It's all a complex of a transparent ghost)
With a landscape and everyone
flickering busily, busily
being kept burning unfailingly,
it's a blue illumination
of a casual AC electric lamp
(Light is kept but the lamp is lost)

With the paper and mineral-ink
from the direction of the perceived past
of the previous twenty-two months
(all are flickering within me
and are simultaneously felt by everyone)
these are a genuine image sketch
being kept until now
for each chain of alternating light and shade
Men, the Milky Way, the demon or the sea urchin,
eating and breathing the space dust, air and salt water,
may think of each fresh ontology
But they are ultimately natural objects in the heart
This scenery recorded in any case
is exactly the same as was recorded
If it is the nothingness
the nothingness is like this
and may be common to everyone to some extent

(As all is all in me
all is all in everyone)
But in the alluvial epoch of the Cainozoic era,
in the huge bright accumulation of time,
these words to be transcribed rightly
in the light and the shade equal to that one point
(or in some billions of years for the demon)
may have changed their structure and quality,
although such a tendency might exist
as I and the printer feel them unchanged
But as we feel our sense-organs,
as we believe in a landscape and persons thereafter,
and as we believe only in common,
documents, history and geological records
with their miscellaneous data
(under the restriction of the causal time and space)
are nothing but matters of our belief
Probably after the next two thousand years
a considerably different geology will be prevalent
and corresponding evidences will appear,
one by one, from the past
Everyone will think that
about two thousand years ago
there were colorless peacocks
full in the blue sky
New college graduates
will unearth splendid fossils
from the brilliant iced-nitrogen
of the uppermost layer of the atmosphere
They will discover
the transparent footsteps of mankind
in the sandstone layer of the Cretaceous
All these theses are proposed
in the four-dimensional extension
as the nature of the time and the image themselves

Tatsuo Hamada
Hymn to Marilyn Monroe

(1)
In San Francisco I bought
a set of five Monroe pictures
My friend put each of them in frames
She asked me one day
“Who is more beautiful
Monroe or I?”
“Of course you”
I answered with a joking laugh
Monroe’s sudden death became
a shock wave
Was it a plot?
or an accident?
or a mafia hit?
A mystery to another mystery

(2)
America epitomized
our last century
In that America
President Kennedy was assassinated
An illegitimate child called Marilyn
became a Hollywood super star
But with cheaper contracts than Taylor,
married to Miller after DiMaggio,
and affairs with two flirtatious Kennedy brothers
She addicted herself to drugs upon exhaustion
In her last day,
haunted by death’s shadow,
what did she ask for?

whom did she call?
At last dead alone

(3)
Cleopatra tempted Caesar,
lived a life of decadence with Antony,
killed herself with a venomous snake bite
God took her to his bed,
not letting the beauty decay
There was also a tragic death in Japan
Oda Nobunaga brought an end to Medieval Age,
being regarded as a Deity or a mad man
He was killed by Mitsuhide's coup d'état
What did he think before death in raging flames?
He ordered his page to conceal his head even from Buddha
Since destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atomic bombs,
the world has survived with too many such bombs
In this crazy world,
wasn't Marilyn a single rose
that Poet Rilke admired in an old castle?
Will a Marilyn re-appear in the 21st century?
Monica Lewinsky shall be no avail

(4)
We found a high vanadium content
in Mt. Fuji underground water,
in contrast to other clean waters
Mt. Fuji consists of high-vanadium basalt rocks
similar to old Cretaceous basalt volcanoes
Vanadium was abundant
in many fossil fuels from the ancient biosphere
So Mt. Fuji, the most beautiful stratovolcano, is exceptional,
like Marilyn Monroe in our modern world
Dinosaurs, kings of the earth, perished
sixty-five million years ago
What caused their deaths remains to be solved yet
Homo sapiens species also will perish
over deserted lands,

as the earth gets warmer
by increased discharge of CO2

(5)
As Computers prevail,
Present Being by Philosopher Heidegger fades
Not a virtual reality
but a naked body of Marilyn
being blown by Broadway subway wind
Under her turned-up skirt
her bare legs shorn with whitish, gleamy light
Under the shadow of a sexy symbol
she was such "a flower of the mountain",
with unsophisticated smile
and wounded heart of simple innocence,
wanting to progress
"Dear Marilyn,
Will you be traveling
and coming into a future?"
"Yes I said yes I will Yes."



Tatsuo Hamada

Lucia Joyce's Lamenting Calls to her Father in *Finnegans Wake*.

James Joyce was and remains almost unique among novelists in that he published nothing but masterpieces—*Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. When Sylvia Plath read Joyce's *Ulysses*, her self-confidence withered "I was a nothing," she explained, "A zero." My friend Laurel Willis experienced the same feeling when she first read *Ulysses* as a student at the University of Hawaii. Laurel organized readings at the James Joyce Parlor in Abiko-shi on the first Sunday each month to study *Finnegans Wake*. Fortunately, we had a superb reader, Meg, who was a Harvard graduate. Her father was a professor of mathematics and her major was psychology. When I saw her picture, I thought Meg was likely over thirty, but she was much younger. She was tall and looked active, I thought. It was a real surprise for me when I heard Meg reading the first chapter. She read all of it at a constant, rapid speed and without pause. —*riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth castle and Environs.* —(The beginning of *Finnegans Wake*)

After having written *Ulysses* Joyce spent seventeen years (1923-1939) writing *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce felt that people should make the same effort to read him. Joyce even expected his readers to devote their lives to reading it. Joyce said, "It may be outside literature now, but its future is inside literature." The book seems to be mainly auditory because Joyce was dim-sighted like John Milton at that time. Joyce spoke Italian and French freely and read German and several other European languages such as Dano-Norwegian. He invented new words not only from English but also from the other languages. Joyce liked music, especially opera. Once he had wanted to become a professional singer. By using many portmanteau words he created a dream world.

James Joyce died in 1941 at the age of 59 and his wife, Nora Joyce, died in 1951 at the age of 67. Joyce said, "How I hate god and death, how I like Nora." When Joyce worked on *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce wrote to Nora, "It was you who slid your hand down inside my trousers and pulled my shorts slightly aside and touched my prick."

When Joyce was writing *Finnegans Wake*, Nora heard laughter constantly coming out of her near-blind hard-working husband's room. Nora scolded him loudly for getting egg all over the bedspread and wondered audibly why in the world he didn't get up to work instead of sitting in bed all day writing. Nora was convinced at last that the man she married had indeed been what the world calls a genius. Nora once said, "I guess the man is a genius, but what a dirty mind he has, hasn't he?" Joyce had an obsession with the female bottom and was very interested in female clothes. Joyce was awfully fond of lions. But Joyce detested flowers, especially the periwinkle and the daisy. He also had a dread of physical violence. He was superstitiously afraid of thunderstorms and dogs.

Joyce once said, "I am like a tailor who would like to try his hand at making a new-style suit. Everybody congratulated me on my extraordinary memory, my clear diction and my charming voice. Someone added: what a pity he is such a fool." After the death of her husband, Nora would express impatience with people who talked about nothing but *Ulysses*. For Nora *Finnegans Wake* was the big book.

In *Finnegans Wake* I like the closing passage most. ————— *O bitter ending! I'll slip away before they're up. They'll never see. Nor know. Nor miss me. And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms. I see them rising! Save me from those therrble prongs! Two more. Onetwo moremens more. So. Avelaval. My leave have drifted from me. Lff! So soft this morning, ours. Yes. Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair! If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he'd come from Arkangels, I sink I'd die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup. Yes, tid. There's where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then, Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the*

This part is the passing-away scene of Anna Livia. Anna Livia is named after the Anna Liffy in Dublin (the only feminine river in Europe). Life flows like a river. The river reflects woman and woman is renewed as a river. Joyce said, "I love rivers; all which flows, all that undulates, all which passes away, image of ourselves, of our instability." Joyce wrote in *Finnegans Wake*; ———— *O tell me all about Anna Livia! I want to hear all about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course, we all know Anna Livia. Tell me all. Tell me now.*

Lucia Joyce (1907-1982), Joyce's daughter, was hospitalized for the first time as schizophrenic in 1932. In 1934 the famous C.G. Jung worked with her, but to no avail. In 1935 Joyce wrote to Lucia, "If you are unhappy and if you want to go elsewhere I will try to arrange everything and to come to your rescue." And also "We

are fairly well and hope that your health is improving. Do not give way to moments of melancholy. Some day or other everything will change for you," but Joyce was only too painfully aware that Lucia had no future. However, that did not prevent Joyce from seeing the difference between what was beautiful and shapely and what was ugly and shapeless.

Joyce wrote to a friend, "Lucia behaves like a fool very often but her mind is as clear and as unsparing as lightening. She is a fantastic being speaking a curious abbreviated language of her own." Joyce thought that so long as Lucia was within reach, he could control her. But Joyce had to be loyally concerned about Nora. Formal marriage between Joyce and Nora occurred as late as 1931. Lucia might have believed that Joyce relied on Lucia alone. Lucia was afraid of losing Joyce's affection. Much as Joyce loved Lucia, he always put Nora first. Joyce confessed "There are moments and hours when I have nothing but rage and despair, a blind man's rage and despair!"

In the closing passage of *Finnegans Wake* quoted before, Anna Livia slipped slowly away, drifting, sad and weary, down to the dark sea. There seems to be calls of Lucia to Joyce, "My cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father." The lamenting voice of Lucia might have mixed with those of Anna Livia and the river. The tone was sad and beautiful. There is also a hope for resurrection, Joyce's pray for Lucia's future.

It was tragic period for women. Camille Claudel (1864-1943), a sculptor and elder sister of Paul Claudel, became an affectionate of A. Rodin, but separation from Rodin made her life difficult. She was hospitalized as schizophrenic in 1913. She survived for 30 years in a hospital, from which she wrote many letters in vain to Paul for her rescue. Zelda Fitzgerald (1900-1948) was the wife of Scott Fitzgerald. She was diagnosed as schizophrenic in Paris and hospitalized in 1930 and in the end she was burnt to death in a hospital in the United States. Lucia Joyce was also diagnosed as schizophrenic. Before that, Lucia wanted to marry Samuel Beckett, but Beckett rejected her. It was doubtful whether Lucia's condition was truly schizophrenic.

The hospitalization of those women was rather cruel treatment. People were afraid of schizophrenia. In the hospitals no effective treatments were done or available. In those days at the time of new developments in science and psychoanalysis, people feared such patients and confined them in hospitals. Family members wanted those patients to be institutionalized. Even today schizophrenia is a difficult malady. We don't know yet the biochemical or neurological mechanism that causes schizophrenia.

Joyce, Beckett, Paul Claudel, Rodin and Scott Fitzgerald could not rescue their beloved women. However, all these men attained their goals. In their own way they seemed to have been strong and egoistical. However, in those times there were

brave women like Anais Nin (1903-1977) and Lou Andreas-Salome (1861-1937) who accomplished works of art. Nin was once a lover of Henry Miller and Otto Rank, and Lou was a lover or friend of F.W. Nietzsche, R.M. Rilke and S. Freud. Nin married Ian Hugo in 1923 and Lou married F.C. Andreas in 1887. For both women marriage was carried out rather more obviously for their benefit than for their men. Nin found the writer/lover, Henry Miller in Paris in 1932. In 1933 she acted on the advice of her psychiatrist and a lover Otto Rank to seduce her father and then left the father as punishment for abandoning her as a child.

Lou never slept with her husband after marriage. She had a succession of sexual relationships with men who were much younger than she. Rilke became her lover when she was thirty-six and he twenty-one. The passionate affair between Lou and Rilke lasted several years, including two journeys together to Russia. Then she said good-bye to him. She wasn't interested in the typical relationships that women have with men. All her life she resisted the position of domesticity and motherhood which accompanied monogamous existence. Nin and Lou did not have faith in society's morals. It was a general advantage for women to disregard moral convention. Nin and Lou learnt psychoanalysis very well.

Joyce wrote in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*— *You have asked me what I would do and what I would not do. I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland or my church; and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning.* These women such as Lucia, Camille and Zelda were talented, but fragile. They seem to have not been able to use those defences such as *silence, exile and cunning*.

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PART ONE:

Interviews on *Finnegans Wake*, by Tatsuo Hamada.



1. Fritz Senn and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW from the beginning to the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Yes, many parts cannot be “understood”, whatever we mean by understanding. The high proportion of such occurrences has troubled me. I naturally am not arguing for such a chimera as complete understanding, all of Joyce’s works undermine such a notion. But a minimal understanding would sometimes be a help. (See question 16.)

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

No. We have some traditional summaries, also some put in circulation by Joyce himself. I find them most unsatisfactory and unhelpful, they usually leave out the hard parts and recirculate what we already think we know. I simply cannot believe that FW would be as blandly uninteresting as those summaries suggest. There is also *A Plot Summary* by John Gordon, an excellent, provocative scholar. His outline adds gratuitous complications to me and does not tell me what I need to know.

About Q2: Do you advise that for general readers A Plot Summary by John Gordon is worthwhile reading?

Readers may try it, if they find it rewarding they will use it. If not, not. There is another book, *Understanding FW* by Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon, two Dublin experts who are among the most knowledgeable readers of the *Wake*. It is a sort of update on the *Skeleton Key*. My problem with it is that it does not live up to its title, it more or less summarizes/explains what I think I find out for myself and blithely skips over the parts where clarification is required.

Q3: Then what did Joyce want to say in the book?

I never make statements about what “Joyce wants”, out of my ken.

Q4: *How do you evaluate the book?*

Great challenge, with unique reading experiences and correspondingly great frustrations. Certainly very funny and often touches chords deep down that we cannot explain.

Q5: *Is reading FW worthwhile or not?*

Certainly. It is done all over the world by readers who do not have to do it but often invest a great deal of time, energy, etc. *Finnegans Wake* may even spoil us and make us feel “ordinary” books are flat and insipid by comparison. (That goes for *Ulysses* too).

Q6: *Do you think FW concerns sexual matter too much?*

Hard to say, “too much” is a value judgment. There is a lot of sexual content, for some readers there seems to be nothing else. One unfortunate result of finding something sexual in every passage is that thereby SEX is removed from the book. What I do miss, however, is anything erotic.

About Q6: *“What I do miss, however, is anything erotic.” Please explain further. Is the sex in FW not erotic? Then what is it?*

Totally subjective. In my response none of the abundant parts with sexual content, or overtones (or vibrations, etc.), are erotic as something pleasant or stimulating, or cheerful. Other readers I am sure feel different. However, I believe that some of us engage in Joyce’s text (the language, the interaction with the text, not any erotic content, I mean) is a kind of substitute for what cannot be had in real life. Many of us are amateurs in this sense as well. Reading is a kind of intercourse, almost in the original sense of a merging of the courses of the text and our own mind. A sort of sublimation: the next best thing, perhaps. (Maybe not well expressed).

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not?*

No doubt it is—understanding or not.

Q8: *Will FW become the book of the 21st century?*

I would think so. A growing interest is apparent. It shows in the number to papers (“papers” unfortunately) at Joyce conferences, growing in proportion. Also the many amateur reading groups. One reason may be that FW goes so much against the grain of the binary, digital predominance all around us. *Finnegans Wake* shows that the world is never to be resolved into either—or +, cannot be reduced to 1’s and 0’s. There is no doubt a need for ambiguity and indeterminacy. *Finnegans Wake* cannot be dominated, controlled, domesticated, in spite of our efforts.

Q9: Can we learn something by reading it?

I suppose it reinforces a sort of skepticism. Its basis seems (to me) instant contradiction, or a choice of alternatives. Antidote to dogmatism. It may also teach that all is vanity, the same anew, but somehow must go on.

Q10: Do you think that Lucia’s madness affected Joyce’s writing?

It most likely did.

About Q10: Do you think Joyce had writer’s block before, during or at all writing FW? If Joyce had writer’s block, was it caused by Lucia’s sickness?

I can’t tell. Obviously there were long periods when Joyce did not work on the *Wake*, because of problems, eyes, Lucia, lack of inspiration, maybe writer’s block. (This is not my area).

About Q10: Do you suppose Lucia could read FW? If so, do you think she could understand it better than others?

No idea. If she had read it, or ever could, she might well have picked out meanings that are hidden from us.

Q11: Which pages are the most interesting?

Too many to specify.

Q12: Can we find literary techniques to use from reading FW?

Well, the polysemantic procedure is something writers could learn from. Even advertisers have taken over some techniques.

About Q12: *Can you define "the polysemantic procedure"?*

Very simple: making use of several meanings, ambiguities, what is commonly labeled (with utter lack of discrimination) "pun".

Q13: *Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how do you recommend?*

Vaguely, yes. Not in the sense that we should force people into it. But give everyone a trial run. As in our reading groups in Zurich; there is no missionary effort. Some people are drawn to it. Leave the door open.

Q14: *Why are a growing number of scholars and students interested in FW?*

A lot remains to be explained, related, perhaps even clarified. It offers multiple openings for research, a rich field for academic and amateur research, reinvigorated by novel theories and trends. Also it is often hard to falsify claims made about it. One strange characteristic about the book: without real familiarity, intimate knowledge, one can say valid, brilliant, perceptive things about FW—and also very vapid ones. *Finnegans Wake* has become part of literary and verbal culture, by a process of osmosis.

Q15: *If you think the reading difficult, what are the major causes?*

If we knew the causes, some of the difficulties might go away. Main cause is my obtundity, what I cannot figure out. Some such obtundity is likely to be shared, though not felt, by many others, to judge from publications. It is just conceivable that the able work done by genetic scholars (studying notes and drafts and galleys) may throw light on some obscurities. But if that is the only (almost) way towards such clarity, this would be an esthetic argument against the *Wake*.

About Q15: *Explain the word "obtundity".*

Being obtuse, dumb, insensitive, lack of perception, insight. As when one simply cannot "hear" a meaning that may be in a phrase. Not being smart enough.

Q16: *How would you describe your experience of reading FW?*

I started out full of enthusiasm at the age of about 25 and invested a great deal of time, at one time really trying to resolve its minute obscurities into tentative meaning, and often this brought good returns, and experiences. But more often not. After many years—as a scholar—I simply gave up *Finnegans Wake*, in semantic despair; my ignorance it so overwhelming that I cannot, in all honesty, pose as an expert (and the experts don't help). This does not exclude occasional probes and references in what I have written. All Joycean ways lead to FW. But I cannot imagine writing a book about something that I so fundamentally and in many details fail to grasp. So often in our weekly reading, I find that after 40 years or so of endeavour, I have no clue what a passage or a sentence does. Disheartening. Fortunately most others do not have such qualms. (I articulated my defeat in "Linguistic Dissatisfaction at the *Wake*"—which I vaguely remember the *Abiko Quarterly* may have reprinted long ago.) One actual, "real life" effect of *Finnegans Wake* is to bring people together and closer, literally so. Reading groups take on social functions, and I believe beneficial ones. Some do become therapy groups (not as much irony involved as it may seem).

About Q16: *Would you explain more about your reading of FW at the age of about 25? I wish to know why you chose Joyce study as your life-long object. I suppose you read Ulysses first and then went to FW.*

I got into *Ulysses* first and very soon escalated to *Finnegans Wake*. In the early years not understanding was no problem, just a beginner's handicap. I simply thought it would take time to get a basic grasp. Well, a certain grasp has of course evolved, but nowhere near what it should be for comfort. It also has to be said that hardly anyone nowadays is interested in producing useful glosses. What goes on in the *Wake* chat groups, as far as I can tell resembles my own incompetent glossing of past decades. I never "CHOSE Joyce study as my life-long object" It just happened that I found something to distract myself, to cope somehow with everyday frustration, to keep me going. (As indicated, then the frustrations re/emerge in the failure to come to terms with most of the *Wake* text.)

About Q16: *Why did Joyce write FW which took you (such a reputable scholar) being to such semantic despair state? Did Joyce do it intentionally? If so, why did Joyce choose such a way? Was it a necessity for Joyce? Or was it a mere fun on his part?*

Joyce did not have me in mind, whatever he had, when he wrote the book. I suppose Joyce came to write the way he did in a process of rapid escalation, which I called “provection” (and I am NOT going to explain this here). I do not think he made anything obscure for the sake of obscurity. He probably overestimated our, certainly my, perspicuity.

About Q16: *Would you explain more about “Some do become therapy groups”?*

From my experience, the reading groups become something that helps various member to go on, maybe it is the exercise of grappling with a text, maybe to engage in a common pursuit, a kind of community feeling arises (also animosities, naturally), maybe the sort of processes for which in real therapy sessions one would have to spend a lot of money. Not to forget, no one sees the reading groups as therapy, they may just keep some people out of even more harm. What I can tell is that many friendships do arise, locally and beyond.

Additional Q: *Which part or chapter of FW is the most interesting or favorable for you?*

Roughly: chapters 1, 5, 6, parts of II,1 and II,2, book IV, certainly the fables.

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2. Michael H. Begnal and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW until the last? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Yes, I have read it from beginning to end several different times. It is too intriguing to stop, but certainly I never understand everything.

About Q1: Many readers gave up and still do after the first ten pages of reading FW. However, apparently some scholars like you immersed themselves in FW thoroughly, not giving up. Explain the difference between many readers and you. What caused such difference?

I was fascinated by the language, and I liked the challenge. The book makes the reader work.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

I think I can follow sections, episodes, incidents, even chapters. Only a crazy person would keep reading a book without an inkling of understanding.

About Q2: Is it better for general readers to know the plot summary before reading FW?

Yes, I think it would help. And some readers might choose to start later in Book I, to ease into the complexities, say with Shem or ALP.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

Hard to say. I'm very old fashioned. The flow of human life.

About Q3: Explain more about the flow of human life?

Maybe the larger rhythms that all humans experience, as opposed to specific incidents in a specific place. In other words, what makes us more the same, rather than different.

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

Not for everybody, but definitely worth it to some.

About Q4: *Explain more about "some".*

For those who will persevere, be active rather than passive, who will go looking for something, rather than waiting for it to appear.

Q5: *Reading FW is worthwhile or not?*

It certainly is to those who enjoy it, but no one should be forced to read.

About Q5: *Do you think only special persons could enjoy the language of FW?*

No, I think there's possibly something in the language for everybody, on any level.

Q6: *Do you think FW concerns with the sexual matter too much?*

No, not at all, and usually the sexual parts are funny.

Q7: *Reading FW was interesting or not?*

Of course. I try to avoid boring books and people.

About Q7: *What do you mean "I try to avoid boring books and people"?*

I avoid tell-all confessional books that say look at me, look at me, or ponderous tomes filled with smug advice. The same for people.

Q8: *FW has a future to be read in the 21st century?*

Absolutely, with its instantaneous communication on many levels at once.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

I don't think we read novels to learn things, like morality.

About Q9: *Most people may read novels for pleasure. However, don't people want to learn something useful by reading novels?*

Yes, but what do we learn? I don't read *Madame Bovary* to learn that adultery is not a good idea, or *Crime and Punishment* to find out that one shouldn't bludgeon little old ladies with an axe. I knew that already. We know basic morality—we want to learn about the possible complexities of the human condition—what could be more useful?

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

Hard to say, but it might have made him more interested in the complexity of the mind.

About Q10: *Did Joyce want to communicate with Lucia by discovering the Wake language?*

I honestly don't know.

Q11: *Which pages are most interesting?*

Can't eliminate or abridge.

Q12: *Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?*

Multiplicity of perspective, point of view, steps beyond *Ulysses*.

About Q12: *In order to use the Wakean techniques in voice, in language and in dream extensions, what structure or what means to express structure did Joyce search for in FW?*

I am very interested in the model of the shortwave radio, with many voices listening in at once and answering or commenting at will.

Q13: *Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how to recommend?*

I encourage, but don't recommend. FW is too large a commitment.

Q14: *Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?*

I don't know. The geneticists seem to like the notebooks and manuscripts, and theorists like to say it doesn't mean anything. I still like to try to figure out little parts of the text, but, since no one seems interested any more, I keep these to myself.

Q15: If you think the reading difficult, what are the causes?

Adapting to experimentation is always difficult at first.

About Q15: How do you evaluate your wonderful book "Dreamscheme" now?

Probably very old fashioned, but it might still help a beginner.

Q16: How to describe your experience of reading FW?

My experience of reading FW is fun. It makes me happy.

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3. Michael S. Begnal and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW until the last? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Of course it would be impossible for anyone to understand all of FW, but that's what keeps you reading perhaps.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

At any given point it may be difficult to say what's going on, right then and there, but as you go along the book seems to reveal its general framework. Cumulatively.

About Q2: Did you read and enjoy FW without the help of the illustrative books on FW (for example, A Plot Summary)?

If I recall, I may have glanced at *Skeleton Key*, and my father's *Dreamscheme*, just to get a feel for what was happening. But I didn't want to read too much about other people's opinions at that stage; I wanted to form my own impression.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

Everything from the simplest details of everyday existence to the whole cosmos, i.e. "life".

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

Its sheer scope and Joyce's use of language makes it a truly great work of art. But otherwise it can only be "evaluated" by the individual reader.

About Q4: Would you explain more about Joyce's use of language?

He did not restrict himself to everyday/common prose, he made his language reflect the context of the subconscious mind.

Q5: Reading FW is worthwhile or not?

It was for me. Obviously, not that many people think so though, in terms of general readers.

Q6: Do you think FW concerns with the sexual matter too much?

No. The “sexual matter” is probably the most important matter, besides staying alive.

Q7: Was reading FW interesting or not?

It was for me.

Q8: Has FW a future to be read in the 21st century?

For the select few. On the one hand, I think the language of FW was ahead of its time. On the other hand, not that many people read it in the 20th century, and there’s no reason for this to change now.

About Q8: Would you show other writer’s names who also contributed to the language innovation, if any?

Other big names of Modernism jump out—Pound, Eliot. Djuna Barnes was working in a similar vein.

Q9: Can you learn something by reading it?

It prompted me to more fully investigate certain ideas/ subjects contained in the book.

About Q9: Show one example of ideas/subjects which you want to investigate now.

Television kept jumping out at me—thus my article. I am also intrigued by the various different languages Joyce incorporated into FW, especially Irish.

About Q9: What do you learn from FW for your poetry writing?

In my own writing—the use of different voices, and the possibility of freedom from conventional form/syntax.

Q10: Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?

Don't know. But I don't think that the style utilized in FW is an attempt to reflect madness.

Q11: Which pages are most interesting?

3, 52, 109, 150, 349, 395, 597, 611, 627-28.

Q12: Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?

More or less sets the standard for 20th century experimentalism.

About Q12: *Explain more about the 20th century experimentalism. What was it? Who else was involved in it?*

Aside from the aforementioned Modernists, the Surrealists spring to mind (Breton, etc.). In America, William Carlos Williams was very influential, then later the Beats (Kerouac, for example). All tended to use a style that dispensed with traditional form/language, in order that it reflect new situations, states of mind, etc.

Q13: Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how to recommend?

A serious fan of literature might see it as THE greatest literary challenge.

Q14: Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?

Since the language used is often portrayed as “nonsensical” it is easy to impose one's own theories on the book without paying serious attention to what Joyce was actually trying to do.

About Q14: *Please paraphrase “nonsensical”.*

It is possible that the chaotic appearance of FW's prose might encourage an opportunist to twist Joyce's words to benefit his or her own theory.

Q15: If you think the reading difficult, what are the causes?

Most are not willing to do the work of reading such a book. You need discipline.

About Q15: Please explain more about discipline you mentioned.

Reading FW can be a trying experience. You need to be persistent to keep coming at it.

Q16: How to describe your experience of reading FW?

Very interesting/very difficult. But then, difficult books are often the most satisfying in the end.

About Q16: Do you want to write a book on FW like your father?

A whole book hadn't crossed my mind (I am primarily a poet), but who knows.

Michael S. Begnal is an American poet living in Galway, Ireland. His work has been widely published in journals such as *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Books Ireland*, *Review of Postgraduate Studies*, and many others. His collection *Ancestor Worship* is forthcoming from the Irish press SalmonPoetry.

4. Finn Fordham and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: *Can you read FW until the last?*

From first to last, and till the rending of the rocks.

About Q1: *Are there many parts which cannot be understood?*

What is “to understand”? Do I understand the play *Othello* if I know that at the end Othello killed Desdemona because he thought she was unfaithful with Cassio? Well, I’ve understood a bit of it—some plot. But if I cannot understand why Iago persuaded Othello of this untruth, does that mean I don’t understand the play? If it does it shouldn’t matter—I’m caught up in the play anyway—I’ve been mesmerised by it. With *Finnegans Wake* it doesn’t matter if you don’t understand it all or even much—because you get caught up in it anyway. Unlike *Othello*, however, it’s harder to say at the end what exactly has happened, and harder still to say why anything’s happened—and that includes why Joyce wrote it in the first place. On the other hand, because there is so much to understand (and to fail to understand), there’s a great deal that one can understand. For instance, I understand that Joyce puts two words together (“river” and “run”) to make “riverrun”, and in so doing makes something that sounds like “reverrons” (which means we will see again, in French) and “riverain” which means those who live by a river (in Trieste dialect, I think), and I understand this is a technique that is going to astound me as I read it.

About Q1: *Would you explain more about the meaning of “to understand”? Does the best understanding mean to know exactly what the author thought or felt or planned? Or is it more subjective to each reader’s mind? Is it a creative act in a reader’s mind?*

These are huge questions! Understanding is what you need for an instruction manual: understanding enables you to do or say something. Art/fiction may not wish you to understand in this sense. But yes, the best understanding would be to know exactly what the author thought or felt or planned—but this assumes that the author himself knew—and Joyce didn’t always know—or so he said. At these points then you carry on the quest for meaning and intention, and it’s creative, projecting,

like a shot in the dark, your understandings of the range of readings. Despite this element of creativity, that doesn't open it up to absolutely free readings, where any subjective reading is somehow validated. I don't think any part of FW can simply mean anything at all—there are limits, indeed there are patterns that you pick up on: so it seems subjective, but you negotiate with something else (the text, other readers) to get away from pure subjectivity.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

No. Not conventionally. At the moment, the main story for me is how Joyce wrote it, how he smashed words and disparate articles of abstruse knowledge together: each word or phrase or sentence tells a story therefore.

About Q2: Don't we want to examine and find universal significance in Joyce's treatments on father-son, rival brothers, father-daughter relationships?

Some may, but I'm not sure how far you can go. I'm more interested in specific and particular meanings. If you lay down notions of universal significance, then you find the world is full of exceptions! I find the idea of universal significance (a dominant one in early criticism of *Finnegans Wake*) too normative and prescriptive. It was a symptom of post-war humanism: a healing search for a common humanity. Joyce does seem to have chosen "characters" of a "family" who, some argue, represent the basic types of the human race. But what he does is, layer on layer, find analogies for these types, none of which are a perfect fit: so you get a composite picture which is a kind of muddle. The types in *Finnegans Wake* are huge cumbersome entities into which have been poured so many different candidates for the type—but none of them fit the job description perfectly. *Finnegans Wake*, I begin to think, is as much a parody of the quest for universal significance: that a consequence of such a concept is to end up with such impossibly swollen and unstable "people." The particular keeps falling onto the universal, denting its reputation and threatening to knock it over. Having said that, I can't help finding significances that reflect and echo with Joyce's structures. Even the recent New York bombings echo in the first page: "The fall (bababada etc) of a once wallstrait old parr." Shem and Shaun are Palestine and Israel—but you can't take that very far either.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

Ummmm—here's a stab at this difficult question: the order and the muddle of the human and non-human world, and the comic inability of ordinary language to code that order and muddle.

About Q3: *Do you think Joyce wanted to describe the dream world or unconscious world? If so, why?*

Yes, he wanted to evoke the otherness of dreams, their fragmentariness, their shifts, their openness to interpretation, their lack of censorship. But he does so without being mimetic of a dream (which never lasts as long as the *Wake*). Moreover, it's not clear that he started with the idea of a dream: it looks more as though the dream was a structure that was imposed gradually as he wrote, in an attempt to unify disparate sections. Part of the unification comes from thematic preoccupations taken from dreams and theories of dreaming.

Q4: *How do you evaluate FW?*

As the greatest book ever written or compiled.

About Q4: *How do you evaluate the progress from Ulysses to FW?*

I don't know what you mean by progress—how he changed from one to the other or whether he improved? Experimentally, FW is more interesting, more original. But it turns its back on the wisdom of *Ulysses*, and has nothing like the same control. It's difficult to know which will last longer. FW is still an unexplored continent compared to *Ulysses*.

Q5: *Is reading FW worthwhile or not?*

Absolutely: it's entertaining, informative, cute, silly, bizarre, awesome.

Q6: *Do you think FW is concerned with sexual matters too much?*

Not at all, there's hardly any sex in it. There is a lot of innuendo about genitals, and toilet humour but it's always a ridiculous surprise. In my opinion, if there's too much of anything, it's obscure songs: they're hard to track down as a researcher, and you can't hear them unless you know them.

About Q6: *You wrote "FW and the dance" in the Abiko Quarterly #17. Doesn't the dance convey some sexual imagery?*

Well dance is thought to be a vertical substitute for sex. Dancing is energetic and arouses. So the dance might seem erotic but no, there's a distinction in Joyce's world. Erotic dance involves issues of voyeurism, detachment from the body of another, a contract between dancer and audience: that's not sex as such. There's more dancing in the *Wake* than there is sex.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not?*

Entirely fascinating.

About Q7: *Would you tell me your favorite writers other than Joyce?*

Canonical favorites: Chaucer, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Baudelaire. I go for range and/or bawdiness and/or experimentation. And yet Jane Austen is also one of my favourites. Recent writers I admire include De Lillo and Mark Z. Danielewski.

Q8: *Does FW have a future to be read in the 21st century?*

Yes and beyond.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

Yes—that all previous attempts at fiction come nowhere near *Finnegans Wake* does in coding, and in respecting the order and muddle of the world. But I should add, it doesn't reflect it but evokes it, by attempting to make something equally unique in its combination of order and muddle.

About Q9: *It appears to me that Ulysses more reflected Nora's image whereas FW more reflected Lucia's image.*

Interesting but I wouldn't agree. Molly's monologue is the "clou" or "star-turn" of *Ulysses*. I don't think Issy/Lucia features in the same way. She's just a component—large, but not dominating, especially when ALP is given such a prominent position at the end of Books I and IV. You could equally say FW reflects the image of the relation between Joyce and his brother, or Joyce and his family, rather than just Lucia. Lucia

couldn't stick to anything, according to Joyce—but *Finnegans Wake* does: to itself, to its characters, structure, themes. *Finnegans Wake* was finished and was distributed out into the world. Lucia, sadly, ended in a home, protected from the world and barely engaging with it. (And, I'd argue that parallels between Academic Institutions and Mental Institutions don't wash).

Q10: Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?

Definitely—but in the latter stages more than the former.

About Q10: You mentioned Lucia affected Joyce's writing "in the latter stages more than the former." Would you explain this?

Just that Joyce turned his attention more to Lucia as she approached, and then began to go through her crisis in 1932. Details are in my thesis (unpublishable because the Joyce estate would not give me permissions to quote Manuscripts) which you can order from London University. Chapter II.1, the footnotes in II.2, Issy in II.3 and the revisions to the whole book, are frequently marked with references to Lucia's fate, her condition and prognosis.

Q11: Which pages are most interesting in FW?

It varies for me, but, at the moment, 119-124, 292-300, 526-532, and 619-627 (The Book of Kells, The Triangle, the run up to Here Comes Everybody and Liffey's monologue) but there are many that have interested me more in the past and others still waiting to reveal themselves as more interesting than these.

Q12: Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?

Many. Especially in the formal language-puzzle kind of area.

Q13: Do you recommend for other people to read FW?

Yes.

About Q13: If so, how do you recommend?

Get a very rough overview from introductions to any of the guides (Campbell and Robinson, Tindall, Begnal, Glasheen, Bishop), then look at one or two pages in

intense detail, using Roland McHugh's *Annotations*, Dictionaries, the Internet, and if possible, tracing its evolution through the drafts in the Archive. Then loosen up—whisper/speak/sing/shout it aloud. In different accents.

Q14: Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?

It is the most satisfying form of the pleasurable game known as close reading, and yet, however close you get to the text every so often it seems to take you to the edge of the human universe and give you a glimpse of things from up/down/over there. It feels like a cosmological vision of the universe of language.

About Q14: Would you let us know about your thought on the critical approaches like Derrida, Lacan, etc?

Blimey—in a paragraph? I'd like to know more about what influence Lacan's reading of FW had on his ideas: I think his theory of mirror-stage could be traced back to Issy. Derrida's "Grammatology" claims to cover the science of writing but it doesn't examine the processes of revision in writing and rewriting. *Finnegans Wake* and its archive is an incredible place to take this early strand of Deconstruction on into a new science of writing.

About Q14: Do you expect a new theory coming out in the future? If so, what type do you expect and why?

Let me look into my crystal ball.... I see... wild predictions coming soon... Cultural materialism looks to be emerging as the dominant new practice, that could well run and run. Its methods are simple and conclusions satisfying (they're quantifiable, to some extent, which is important for Research Assessments for funding). But it's wedded to historicism which could come under attack. Aesthetics might then be a reaction against the ideological commitments in the above (and a return to the text). It wouldn't be very new though. Religion will replace race and gender to be the new topic studied ideologically in literature and culture because of the perceived dualism between the West and Islam since September 11. I hope there'll be more genetic scholarship—comparative genetic scholarship, but it will always be a specialized and marginal scholarly activity.

Q15: If you think the reading difficult, what are the causes?

You're reading too fast and too quietly and with too few people.

Q16: How do you describe your experience of reading FW?

To be honest, sometimes it is frustrating. But generally it's intense.

About Q16: Do you want to write novels or poetry other than essays in your future?

Yes I do—I'm trying to write poetry about my experiences of and in London streets.

Finn Fordham lives in London and is Leverhulme Research Fellow at University College Northampton. He's been reading *Finnegans Wake* for about ten years, and hopes to stop in 2008. He's currently writing an intro called "Lots of Fun at *Finnegans Wake*: Genesis and Exegesis" for Lilliput Press.

5. Michael Patrick Gillespie and *Finnegans Wake*

Q1: *Can one read and find interest in Finnegans Wake?*

I think that is the most important question that one can ask about Joyce's writings, for to me *Finnegans Wake* is a radical challenge to readers. It overturns the linear, cause and effect mode of thinking that has been a formal part of reading (at least in Western culture) since the Enlightenment. It embodies the pluralism of language that stands as a key feature in the way that we perceive the world, but, at the same time, remains at best at the margins of any public pronouncements. Finally (if such a word can be used with regard to *Finnegans Wake*), it resists all formal literary criticism because it does not submit to the exclusionary positions that any methodology necessarily adopts. (By exclusionary, I mean the characteristics that set one methodology apart from another. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce shows a marvelous ability to go beyond the limits of any single critical approach.)

Q2: *Then what is the meaning of reading for you?*

Having said why I think that the question is important, I am afraid that I must go on to say how little prepared I am to answer it. First, let me respond by explaining my own critical biases. For me, the goal of reading literature is always pleasure. If my aim were instruction, I would read technical manuals, metaphysical works, or directions for programming my VCR. Because I seek pleasure from literature, I see the experience of reading as highly subjective. Knowing *Finnegans Wake* pleases or frustrates another reader cannot increase or decrease my own gratification, just as knowing that someone is a vegetarian will not blunt my appetite for roast beef.

Q3: *I think an important key word in your assertion is "pleasure". You said, "the goal of reading literature is always pleasure". Can you explain about pleasure more? Is that pleasure different from the pleasure when we hear Mozart or opera?*

By pleasure I mean the aesthetic satisfaction that comes from the imaginative engagement with any piece of art. Thus I feel pleasure from Joyce in the same general way that I feel when listening to Mozart's Piano concerto #21 or Puccini's *Madama*

Butterfly. It is similar to the pleasure that I take from natural beauty—a sunset for example—but not the same for I am aware of the imaginative workings of another mind when I engage art. Some people with deeply religious beliefs might argue that the beauty of nature excites the same feeling, but I think that mistakes my meaning. Art brings together two minds working on the same plane. Few theists would wish to equate themselves with God, and no atheist would think the analogy worth making.

Q4: *Doesn't that pleasure concern the right or wrong value of the human life in Plato's sense?*

I do not think that pleasure directly concerns right or wrong values in human life, though some pleasures have links to moral systems—sexual gratification, gustatory fulfillment, almost any sensual indulgence can have the pleasure blunted or in rarer cases enhanced by how they relate to our moral values. For art, the pleasure is purely subjective, imaginative, and self-contained. It does not touch on our moral values, for it does not produce activity. Think of the difference between erotic art and pornography. Erotic art is sufficient in itself. It gives pleasure by its representation of our sexuality. Pornography stimulates desire while leaving the viewer unfulfilled.

Q5: *Do you suppose that in the future it will be possible to have a literary criticism or methodology that can be fit to analyse *Finnegans Wake* satisfactorily?*

I think that every reader of *Finnegans Wake* struggles to come up with a personal system for reading it. I do not think that these systems have a broad application, but I do believe that when an individual finds a method of use to him it becomes possible to take a great deal of pleasure from reading *Finnegans Wake*.

When I ask myself if I can benefit from reading *Finnegans Wake*, I find myself unsure how to answer. Thinking of it purely in an instinctive fashion, I must say that I do not enjoy it as much as *Ulysses*, and perhaps not as much as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *Dubliners*. This may be a reflection of my own limitations as a reader. Whenever I take up *Finnegans Wake*, and I have read it through perhaps a half a dozen times or so, I do so with the feeling that I must comprehend it as a whole. This is admittedly a very linear, Cartesian approach. I feel a good measure of frustration because I can never find sufficient connections to produce in my mind a unified impression of the work. If I read criticism that makes those connections for me, I come away feeling that too much of the text has been omitted.

Q6: *If so, an alternative way must be an approach similar to Einstein's view in physics which is different from linear, Cartesian approach which is similar to Newton's view.*

I agree with you that a nonlinear, post-Newtonian way of thinking is the most useful form for discerning meaning in *Finnegans Wake*.

At the same time, I have had moments of great pleasure reading portions of *Finnegans Wake*, particularly when I do so with a group. When people around me begin to read passages aloud, I hear things in Joyce's words that had previously escaped me. I find delight in connections that I did not know existed. I take pleasure in hearing others explain puns, allusions, or multiple references that did not occur to me. It is moments like this that make me feel that it is not *Finnegans Wake* but me that has limitations that inhibit my enjoyment of the work.

Q7: How do you evaluate the deconstruction theory that was "famous", although I can't understand it well?

Deconstruction falls short of this because it cannot get beyond Cartesian cause and effect thinking. When Derrida sees language as imprecise and arbitrary, he presents this condition with regret and a nostalgia for the certitude that others had in the efficacy of language. A more useful way of thinking is Joyce's own, which embraces the ambiguities in language and takes pleasure in them.

Q8: Do you understand the plot as you read Finnegans Wake? How do you evaluate the plot analysis by John Gordon in his famous book?

I have a great deal of difficulty holding on to the storyline of *Finnegans Wake*. John Gordon's approach is not helpful to me for I feel that it must overlook too much to find the linear development in the plot. That being said, if it gives someone else a helpful perspective of *Finnegans Wake* then it is of value to that person.

Q9: What is your advice for reading Finnegans Wake?

My advice to other readers is simply to trust your judgment. If reading *Finnegans Wake* pleases you, then you need no one else to validate your efforts. If it does not, or if the pleasure seems qualified, then turn to Joyce's other writings and enjoy them. This is what I have been doing for the last twenty-five years. From time to time, I find someone who can point to aspects of *Finnegans Wake* that become a source of pleasure for me. From time to time, I will reread portions and get more enjoyment. I remain hopeful that someday I will feel the enthusiasm for *Finnegans*

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Wake that many of my colleagues in Joyce studies enjoy. For now, I can only try to remain open to the possibility of the pleasures of its text.

Michael Gillespie is Professor of Literature at Marquette University and has written on Joyce, Oscar Wilde and other twentieth-century Irish writers.



6. John S. Gordon and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW until the end?

Yes, I've done so many times, with pleasure.

About Q1: Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Fewer with each reading.

About Q1: Your excellent book FW, A Plot Summary (1986) may be one of the illustrative books for the newcomer when he/she can't read through the original FW. Could you read through FW the first time? How do you describe your first reading?

My recollection is that I didn't get to the end of FW until my third try. But of course you can do it on the first go-through if you set your mind to it: you just have to decide to keep turning the pages, no matter how confused you may feel. In other words, you adopt the Berlitz approach to language learning—an observation not unconnected to the fact that Joyce was a Berlitz teacher. If you want some help, then some page-by-page précis such as that given in Bernard Benstock's *Joyce-A gain's Wake* or—on a larger scale—Danis Rose-John O'Hanlon's *Understanding Finnegans Wake* can at least keep you from feeling completely at sea.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

Yes but the relationship of one subplot to another keeps changing.

About Q2: How do you evaluate your book A Plot Summary now?

I haven't read it since I wrote it. I'm sure that it contains more than a few mistakes, which I'd correct now if I could, but its central thesis—that FW takes place chronologically, according to a fixed set of temporal and spatial coordinates, with certain identifiable characters and stage properties—seems to me rock-solid, one that

needed saying only because the Zeitgeist always has one particular way of being an ass, and at the time that way consisted of denying the reality of reality.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

1. A family. 2. The family.

About Q3: Do you mean a universal family (a family) with regard to Joyce's family (the family)? On what matter of families did Joyce want to describe as a main plot?

I think that there is a specific family at the center of the book, that this family has certain identifiably derivative affinities with Joyce's family on one end, and that at the other end it is made to stand for all families everywhere.

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

The greatest book ever written by one individual.

About Q4: Why must Joyce have created such difficult language in FW?

He was fascinated with the production of meaning, and the one human experience in which that process is most immediately encountered is the learning of a new language. So he made his readers learn a new language, at the same time showing them how, according to his lights, language came to be in the first place. At no phase is either the generation of language or the learning of language a simple business; neither, for that matter, is reality: all meet or exceed our cranial capacity for comprehension. So a book along the lines he laid out should do the same. The linguistic (and non-linguistic) world of meanings we inhabit is bottomless; therefore a book about it should be too.

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

As much as learning a foreign language, proficiency in a musical instrument, or mastery of some art or science.

About Q5: *Do you think FW concerns also the dark side of human nature such as incestuous desire or triangular relationship?*

No doubt: Freud was in the air, and Joyce had always believed that his contemporary writers were to blame for flinching at the uglier side of human nature. So he made a point facing it squarely—and of course some would say he overdid it.

Q6: *Do you think FW concerns with the sexual matter too much?*

No.

About Q6: *How do you think of the opinion that the sex in FW is not erotic but comic?*

I don't see the distinction. It's both. As, for that matter, is sex, period.

About Q6: *Would you explain more easily?*

Sorry for being facetious. What I mean is that, first, sex is in a way the most serious thing in life—it makes marriages, establishes families, produces children and love of children, lovers and love of lovers—and in another way the most ridiculous: the basis of a disproportionate percentage of the world's humor, jokes, ribaldry, farces, mixups, assuming of ridiculous positions. It has certainly been the cause of most of the bad or good or ridiculous or grand things I've done in my life. And none of that would be true if its (erotic) force were not powerful. So its power to make people behave erotically is inseparable from its power to make people behave buffoonishly.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not?*

Always, except when I'm too tired for it.

About Q7: *For general readers isn't it more interesting to read About FW than FW itself?*

FW is more interesting by far than anything written about it—it may of course be easier to read the latter.

Q8: *Will FW continue to be read in the 21st century?*

Its audience should grow.

About Q8: *If FW can be paraphrased into modern English, is it more helpful or useful for general readers?*

As a means to an end only.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

A million things.

About Q9: *Can we find any new, unknown knowledge or remaining, hidden meaning in FW other than riddles of language?*

I don't think that there's any encrypted orphic truth, but "riddles of language" puts it too narrowly—it's riddles of everything.

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

It interrupted his work on it; he made it into one of the themes of the book.

About Q10: *Do you suppose Joyce had had a plan to write the duality or splitting personality like Lucia from the start of his writing?*

I think Lucia brought out a theme always latent in his writing.

Q11: *Which pages are most interesting?*

It depends. II.2 and II.3 may be the most challenging.

About Q11: *Why are II.2 and II.3 challenging?*

In general, I think that Joyce is following a theory of dream psychology according to which the mid-points of any given dream are the deepest, thickest, and most complicated. II.2 and II.3 constitute the mid-point of the whole book, and are therefore especially challenging. There is, I think, a corollary pattern in Books I and III, both of which become especially dense at their respective mid-points. Which makes them, in a way, especially interesting—in a way, say, that I.8 is not.

Q12: Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?

I don't understand the question.

About Q12: Can FW show some new techniques for writers or poets to learn?

Yes, but they'd better be very good at it.

Q13: Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how to recommend?

The more the merrier. Keep reading, and build on what registers.

About Q13: Even for the native English speakers isn't FW itself too difficult to read through?

Well, I've done it, many times. It depends on how much time you're ready to devote to one book.

Q14: Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?

It's the crowning achievement of the author many consider the greatest of the 20th century.

About Q14: Do you think today's critical approaches on FW have been much progressed than when you wrote A Plot Summary?

The main thing is to keep piling up information—and that process has continued. I think the high theorists who dominated the field at the time are now in decline, and that that is all to the good.

Q15: If you think the reading was difficult, what are the causes?

Joyce's insistence that reality was difficult, and that literature should reflect that fact.

About Q15: What do you mean by your saying that reality was difficult?

That humanity has been arguing about how to interpret it and how to act in accordance with that interpretation forever. If understanding the fundamental nature of things were a simple matter, we'd have settled on it by now.

Q16: How do you describe your experience of reading FW?

When it goes well, one of the high points of my life.

About Q16: Do you have a plan to write ABOUT FW more?

I've done some articles and e-mail commentary since my book came out. If I live long enough, I may do a second book.

John S. Gordon is currently a professor of English at Connecticut College. He received his B.A. from Hamilton College and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is the author of *James Joyce's Metamorphoses* and *Finnegans Wake: A Plot Summary*, a monograph entitled "Notes on Issy" and about forty articles and notes on Joyce.

7. David Hayman and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW through? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

I confess that the first time I read it through, 50-odd years ago, I took over a year to do so. At the time I had Campbell and Robinson's *Skeleton Key* to help me with the book's structure. There were plenty of passages that gave me pause and pause I did, but I was bent on finding evidence for a thesis that I no longer believe in and that meant I had to do a careful, line by line and word by word reading. I don't recommend that procedure. It dampens the joy. I have since read it through a few times, but I tend to read only passages or chapters these days. *Finnegans Wake* is not in any sense a conventional novel, but it has a clear structure and certain novelistic characteristics: character, situation, action, development, etc. However, there is only the most rudimentary suspense, for which it substitutes 'interest' the quality adhering to the word play and the details but also to the reiterative or rhyming aspect, the fact that, as we acclimatize ourselves to the many components, we find ourselves engaged in the system of echoes: e.g., the names and attributes of persona. Beyond that there is the surprise element which functions on many levels but begins with the shifts in style and approach and is allied with the joys of recognition and even of awareness. It is fun to see through puns to unexpected meanings or fresh associations. This is a text with which we play games that are deeply engrossing in part because the challenges are both real and surmountable. There are, still, after all these years plenty of passages that I find challenging, a fact that keeps rather than dampens my interest since I have every confidence that someday I will master them. But master is not the word. One of the sources of pleasure is our sense that the text is infinitely mysterious, that no matter how much we know, no matter how many keys we have, no matter how deeply we go, we will never exhaust the potential of this book.

About Q1: *I am looking at "James Joyce A to Z" by Fagnoli and Gillespie. According to it you developed the concept of the "arranger" as an attempt to explain Joyce's innovations in the narrative strategies of Ulysses. Would you explain the Arranger in relation to FW?*

I invented the Arranger to explain the reader's reception of Joyce's many styles and to locate a source: the Arranger is a presence located somewhere between the authorial presence and that of the various narrators. That presence justifies the style shifts which cannot be ascribed to any locatable narrator or the Joyce directly.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

Yes, but there is not always a plot in any conventional sense.

About Q2: There are many books about FW. Would you list some that could help us understand FW?

Skeleton key, my First-Draft Version of Finnegans Wake, the Introduction as well as its text, the forthcoming book by Crispi and Slote which covers each chapter in sequence, and John Bishop's new introduction to the Penguin edition.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

Joyce is evoking a sense of universal, using archetypal situations. The book depicts a universal night or a universe of nocturnal activity in which all aspects of creation participate.

About Q3: In relation to the universal night, doesn't FW reflect a strong influence by Lucia on its dualities, wordplay and human relationships similar to the influence of Nora on Ulysses?

That would be hard to prove, though she may have had some impact. Nora's influence has been overstated.

Q4: How do you rate the book?

A masterpiece. I do not use that term lightly. A life book or the book of a lifetime for both Joyce and the reader.

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

Yes, especially if it is seen for the challenges than for the rewards, less as a chore than as a game played over an extended period of time.

Q6: Do you think FW is too focused on sex?

Sexuality is a crucial part of (the) creation. By today's standards Joyce's sexual reference is hardly shocking. Joyce is honest and straightforward and never pornographic.

About Q6: Was the sex in FW related to the Creation and the Fall in the biblical sense?

Yes, but much more generally to lived experience and to a broad range of myths.

Q7: Was reading FW interesting or not?

Fascinating, frustrating, amusing, challenging, rewarding, etc.

Q8: Has FW a future in the 21st century?

Sure.

Q9: Can you learn something by reading it?

A great deal about yourself and your world and your traditions and society, but what you mainly learn is how flexible knowledge is, how many ways it can be rearranged.

About Q9: Why was Joyce so flexible in his thought?

Joyce was a product of the end of the 19th Century, a period in which the encyclopedic impulses of the 18th C had their full impact. He must have been alert to the informational flux of the moment. On the other hand, Joyce was heir to writers like Flaubert and Mallarmé. Flaubert's *Temptation of St. Anthony*, and *Bouvard and Pécuchet* were clear precedents. But I am simplifying this.

Q10: Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?

Of course it did, but not in any simple or straightforward fashion. Joyce's relationship to his daughter, his wife, his son and himself figures in the book on many

levels and defies analysis. It is prime matter if not primal matter. On the other hand, he wrote the book with Lucia firmly in mind. She figures in some of his earliest conceptual notes as a model of young femininity. If her madness predated the composition, then it may have infected that part of the book, but madness is a theme in Joyce at least from *Portrait*. It frightened him as it does most of us. His daughter's madness left him helpless and in denial, but the *Wake* is bigger than that.

About Q10: Do any of your essays relate to Lucia's impact on FW?

See "Her Father's Voice" (much reprinted, but available in *James Joyce: the Centennial Symposium*). That essay treats Lucia's [auto]biographical papers and her dreams. See also "I Think Her Pretty" (*James Joyce Annual 1990*) in which I treat the responses to her behavior that I have found in one of Joyce's notebooks. They may give you some ammunition.

Q11: Which pages are most interesting?

The pages that challenge me at any given moment. If you mean which are my favourites, the answer is many an the reasons are multiple. If you mean which are most accessible, perhaps I'd have to say the concluding monologue, the 'Soft morning city' of ALP or I.8. On the other hand I enjoy Shaun wherever he appears. I love 'Butt and Taff,' one of the most demanding sections and that most demanding of chapters: II.3. But the question is unhelpful. It is too much like asking me for my favorite book or symphony or art work.

Q12: Can you learn literary techniques from FW?

Writers have done so with remarkable results. (See my book: *Writers in the Wake of the Wake*.)

Q13: Do you recommend that other people read FW? If so, how to recommend?

Of course provided they approach it as an endlessly evolving game and accept the fact that it does not yield its treasure at once or in any reading or fully at any time. See it as a timed relapse capsule. Grow up with it. Incidentally, I am running weekly *Wake* sessions for 20-odd people here on Deer Isle right now.

Q14: Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?

For quite a number of reasons.

About Q14: *Some critics deny the existence of narrative structure in FW and dig only the language. What do you think of this trend?*

The emphasis is fine, but it does not rule out plot or narrative.

Q15: *What is your next target in FW study?*

I am still working on the evolution of the *Wake*. My most recent Joyce essay is a longish treatment of chapter II.3 for Crispi and Slote. In progress are essays on aspects of the notebook including an essay on the *Wake*-era epiphanies or 'epiphanoids.'

One last comment by David Hayman: These answers should not be taken as the last word on anything, but I have done my best to be honest.

David Hayman is Evjuc-Bascom Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin. Along with 100 essays, he has published 15 books of which 11 deal with Joyce. Most of his writing have been on *Finnegans Wake* and most of that in the fields of Genetic Criticism. The creative process and the process of apprehension have been and remain preoccupations.

8. Tim Horvath and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW from the beginning to the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

The notion of what it means to “understand” is challenged by all of Joyce’s work, not just *Finnegans Wake*, but by it most acutely. No book is less paraphrasable, to its credit. Similarly, no book ought to be paraphrasable, and in this sense the *Wake* is exemplarily insofar as it resists paraphrase. One can only read and reread it, passage by passage, page by page, and like a pot of water in folklore, it boils endlessly. The book is post- and pre-literate at once. It makes its literate readers feel stupendously illiterate, and yet it liberates the mind from the hold that literacy places on it that equates words with things and sees them as discrete entities.

About Q1: How and why were you interested in reading FW? Did you read other works of Joyce as well?

My mother’s given name, although she has always hated it, was Joyce, and I was lucky or unlucky enough to grow up in a household where it was a given that James Joyce was undisputed heavyweight champion, i.e. the ultimate writer. When I eventually read *Dubliners* I was amazed at their straightforwardness and simplicity. This would have been in high school, so I was not equipped to see how deceptive this simplicity was. I wrote innumerable essays on “The Dead” for various tests such as the Advanced Placement—they’re hopefully keeping the worms well-fed in a warehouse somewhere. In college I took a summer class in *Ulysses* that thoroughly defined that summer for me. And I had a second go of *Ulysses* with the poet Eamon Grennan once I got back to college. The *Wake* always loomed for me like the golden pavilion in Mishima’s novel. It’s a family touchstone for my brother-in-law, Rob Cappiello, who in fact is the copy editor that inspired my story—the *Wake* comes up at every family gathering. But it was the birth of my daughter and my joy at reading aloud to her that catapulted me into the ranks of enthusiasts.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading? Does the best understanding mean to know exactly what the author thought or felt or planned? Or is it more subjective to each reader's mind? Is it a creative act in a reader's mind?

Understanding has less than we'd like to think to do with understanding the author's intention. Contemporary psychology and the history of literature up to and including Joyce show us that intention is far too vexed and convoluted a concept to be laid out and anatomized on the table. Understanding is not one thing but many – see above in terms of the *Wake's* ability to undermine the one-to-one equation of words to things. Understanding is sometimes a subjective feeling, an aha, a sense of cohesion in the midst of a reading experience. Too quickly we become complacent when we read that which caters merely to our understanding, or which appears to. Then we encounter the Bay of Fundy-like tides of a book like *FW*, and suddenly we're nauseous, seasick, the illusion of *terra firma* torn asunder from beneath us. This is good—we should not rely on literary dramamine. But still, there is never *no* understanding. At the very least we understand things about words, about language, about text, about the world, even if we are not able to assemble the propositional knowledge that we associate with discursive understanding in most cases. My 17-month-old daughter, Ella, knows all sorts of things about her world and language, although she may stammer and spout as she does her proto-speaking and speaking. And thinks the moon ought to be available for her viewing pleasure at all times. But such are the reasons I love to read *FW* to her.

By the way, we also know more and more about how the brain processes story as we read, and we are learning that the brain has innate capacities to create and seek narratives. To cite one example, Xu et al. have a magnificent, elegant study (in *NeuroImage* 25) in which they show how the brain treats language in stories differently than in non-story contexts. Different parts of the brain are at work. Our notion of understanding is at a crossroads right now where we are able to describe it and parse it out in unprecedented ways thanks to cognitive neuroscience. However, these studies are dealing with Aesop's fables; the brain having a go at *FW* is going to look wildly different.

About Q2: *Do you read FW with the help of other illustrative books such as McHugh's Annotations?*

Yes, absolutely. I'm a one-page-at-a-sitting sort of reader. I photocopy a page, align it with McHugh, and read it twice, thrice. Thank goodness for McHugh. The virtue of his book in particular is that it allows us to peel away and peer at the layers

that Joyce has built into the text. I think of *FW* as a sort of linguistic Adobe Photoshop—the same way that that computer program allows one to layer images dozens of times, Joyce embeds layer upon layer of words, ideas, allusions. This layering creates a three or four or nine-dimensional texture innocently disguised as a two-dimensional text. Works such as McHugh's allow us to see the "code," to peek at single layers at a time, then reassemble them with renewed appreciation for their nuances.

Q3: What did Joyce want to describe in the book? Do you think Joyce wanted to describe the dream world or unconscious world?

Joyce wanted, I think, to drape us in a dream-state while amplifying certain virtuosities of our waking state. He creates a sort of impossible fusion state—in dreams, as J. Allan Hobson has repeatedly emphasized, our linguistic faculties and sense of reference are shut down completely or are hindered, while our associative and emotional capacities are heightened. Joyce wants us to experience what it would be like to have the "unconscious structured like a language," as Lacan puts it, as well as "the language structured like the unconscious." I would guess that Joyce is influenced here by notions of the collective unconscious as well, although I haven't researched this. Because "the language" in his case is not confined to any particular language, nor is it confined to some Chomskyan "idealized" language in its molecular forms, he is really referring to and using the collective language of humanity itself. In Bishop's *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, which I've found to be a fascinating interpretation, he traces etymologies in order to map out this collective language and its resonances.

About Q3: We know that Lacan and Derrida were famous about speaking on FW. But as shown in Lernout's French Joyce they did not read all FW as well and they picked up only the phrases or sentences of their likeliness and interpreted them in their own theoretical ways. Do you still support such reading and understanding of FW?

Of course Lacan and Derrida did this with all sorts of texts. Derrida has a whole book on Marx's "spectress." Now, really, what does this have to do with Marx or Marxism proper? However, once we recognize this and stop expecting these texts to be exegeses, viewing them rather as springboards for Derridean and Lacanian riffing, then they can yield pleasures and insights of their own. As Dylan Evans has pointed out, it is rather a shame that Lacan went astray from some of the cognitive scientific insights he had early on and treated science as sheer metaphorical grab-bag. Still, I would rather neither expect nor want the poststructuralists to have an abiding fidelity

to the text, and I can hardly think that Joyce would have been unsympathetic to their playfulness. I must admit that being a fiction writer, I don't particularly care about rigor in my criticism, thank you very much.

Q4: How do you evaluate FW?

Not to be repetitive, but I think the *Wake* has the potential to radically transform the way we read. Still, its influence on contemporary fiction such as that written in MFA programs like mine is minimal. It is read by fans and by literature students, not by writers typically looking to hone their craft. This is a bit of a shame. It is the mark of the narrowness of the contemporary writing aesthetic that it has not wielded more influence. However, it is understandable to some extent; in our reading, we like to be taken under the sway of narrative and evocation—we like our dreams “vivid and continuous,” as John Gardner famously put it. Joyce's narrative is radically discontinuous, and not at all vivid in the sense that Gardner invoked. So, in evaluating Joyce's later work, I would say that he is a resource as yet untapped, a wilderness or continent not yet explored, and a challenge not yet met.

About Q4: Most writers like to read Ulysses but most could not read FW because most could not understand it because FW is completely different from Ulysses in styles and languages. How do you think this opinion?

One of the wonderful side-effects of reading *FW* is that it suddenly makes *Ulysses* seem by comparison eerily lucid, a veritable stroll in the park. This is fabulous... one could only posit, in Borgesian fashion, an imaginary book that would be to *FW* what *The Wake* is to *Ulysses*. It is true that they are altogether distinct experiences, and one should not confuse one with the other. A metaphor I like to consider for the entire oeuvre is that of exponents. *Dubliners* is the first power. *Portrait* is x squared. *Ulysses* is x cubed. Finally, *Finnegans Wake* is x to the fourth power. Can we visualize an object in four dimensions, a hypercube, say? I've heard it said that we can with proper training and guidance, and a work like McHugh's offers precisely that training. Of course, the earlier books serve as training as well—one proceeds gradually.

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

I have gotten great pleasure out of reading *FW* aloud, to myself and to my daughter. It is, therefore, entirely worthwhile, maybe more worthwhile than we know.

About Q5: *It is interesting that your daughter has an interest in hearing of FW reading. Can she understand the story of FW while she listens to your reading?*

Not at all! I'd be rather frightened if she could! But perhaps it puts us on equal footing more than any other book. I'd love to see a children's version of it, perhaps a pup-up book.

Q6: *Do you think FW is concerned with sexual matters too much?*

Concerned with sexual matters? Goodness, the *Wake* is one of the few phenomena that can rival sexuality in terms of sheer complexity. It is extremely sensuous, of course, and one might say hermaphroditic in its "both/and"ness. Nevertheless, I would hardly describe it as "too concerned with sexual matters." Or "lexical mattress," for that matter.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not? Would you tell me your favourite writers other than Joyce?*

Yes, the book of course is interesting. My other favorite writers include Norman Rush, Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, Primo Levi, Paul West, Rick Moody, Denis Johnson... they run the gamut from realists to magical realists and/or irrealists. In each of them, we see a subjectivity which reaches out and embraces the world and universe in a rather encompassing way. As the Minutemen once put it in an 80s punk song, "Our Band Could Be Your Life"; each of these writers could be your life, but I prefer to lead many.

About Q7: *If you recommend three books which are the most favorite?*

That's tough, but I can stand by *Mating* by Norman Rush, *Visible Worlds* by Marilyn Bowering, and *The Periodic Table* by Primo Levi. Each is built to withstand a lifetime of vigorous reading; for me they've held up thus far.

Q8: *Does FW have a future to be read in the 21st century?*

Yes, I believe it has a future — I'd like to think that it can influence future writers more than present-day ones.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

“Learning” is just as complicated and multifarious as “understanding,” if not more so. What do we “learn” from an experience? How do we quantify it, how do we sift through it and specify what was learned? This may be itself an outmoded notion, a relic of behaviourism and/or early psychology. We are *transformed* by the book/experience/*Wake*. That’s a good standard for education to aspire to.

About Q9: *What did you learn from FW when you write your own stories or novels?*

All good literary works involve the layering, the texture that I described earlier. Reading Joyce predisposes me as a writer to add layers, to thicken the text. He also emboldens me to hang the peg of language high up on the hierarchy of things to attend to and to relish. He also underscored some dangers, those of allusion in particular, since *FW* almost demands a scholarly apparatus that automatically turns off some readers.

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia’s madness affected Joyce’s writing?*

Madness, blindness, all no doubt had their impact on Joyce’s writing. I don’t know enough about Joyce’s biography to add something to a discussion of Lucia’s madness, except to say that the book challenges the dichotomy of madness and sanity as well as any other book, much better than, say, the works of Foucault, which try to so on while remaining rather safely in the rational side of boundary. I would argue that Joyce was probably more tapped in to the capacity for madness within himself than many might be, and that this as much as witnessing any sort of external madness was as influential as anything else.

About Q10: *Do you think that all literary geniuses have more or less madness? Or don’t you recognize the specific influence of Lucia on FW?*

Since I’m not a scholar of Joyce’s biography, I’m ill-qualified to say much of value about this. But you’ve got me interested—I am going to read up on Lucia now. Alice Flaherty’s *The Midnight Disease* is the best book I know of on writers and madness, incidentally.

Q11: *Which pages are most interesting in FW?*

I can't single out any particular pages offhand; I'd have to look into them. Today I read page 273. Each page yields its surprises each time one encounters it. The opening chapter, of course. The opening of the Anna Livia section, which is shockingly earthy and straightforward. The madcap lists like that on 71 or 183. Actually, I wouldn't say that these are intrinsically *more* interesting than others, but ones that I find myself drawn to reread for various reasons. As I said, I read a single page at a time, and "finishing" a single page gives me disproportionate satisfaction.

About Q11: *Did you read through FW until the last of Part IV?*

Eventually, I hope to, but I'm still a beginner.

Q12: *Can we find literary techniques to use from reading FW?*

Absolutely, there are many literary techniques that can be extracted from the *Wake*. One learns to treat every word as a sounded/material composite, which is something writers can certainly gain from. One learns to read the work aloud, to hear its rhythms and repetitions and transmigrations of syllable, as with poetry but without the brace of line breaks and stanzas and the like. One gets to experience language viscerally and as though for the first time. One feels its flexibility and unfinishedness, the combinatorial nature of it (as emphasized by someone like a Steven Pinker) taken to new extremes. What once appeared solid turns out to be in flux. One learns to foreground language rather than narrative or characterization or plot or any of the traditional building blocks of creative writing as they are currently taught. This stripping away is a good thing, though one need not renounce the so-called fundamentals in order to gain by applying Joycean techniques to one's writing.

About Q12: *FW may be copies and remakes of all previous writings of Joyce's own and others from not only literature but also religion, history, philosophy, etc. What do you think of this opinion?*

Yes, of course, Joyce was interested not merely in language per se, but rather in language as a sort of flypaper to catch history, allusion, myth, idea, song, sign, politician, advertisement, candy, bodily function, and so forth. Occasionally I find myself wishing he'd just stuck to language, or that Joyce had given us an intermediate book as linguistically rich and compelling as *FW* without his damned encyclopedic mind also firing on all cylinders. But, the again, it wouldn't be *FW* were this the case.

Q13: Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how do you recommend?

I recommend that others read the book if they already are inclined, or can find a group with which to share the experience, or the time to follow up with guidebooks and annotations. Otherwise, people tend to become anxious and frustrated and resentful, the natural reaction to what we don't understand. I know I have the same defensive stance with chemistry, for instance, which is why I made one of the main characters in my novel a chemist, thus forcing myself to spelunk around in the most poorly illuminated corners of my mental catacombs.

About Q13: Did you read FW at first with these illustrative books?

Indeed, and I still do. After a few readings I can coast a bit without training wheels... but only for a few lines at a time.

Q14: Why are a growing number of scholars and students interested in FW?

Scholars are interested in the *Wake* because of its versatility, and the same way they might be interested in any largely-uncharted continent. Even the charted continents need to get reappraised, which is why postcolonial approaches or feminist ones to canonical texts are not uncommon. Scholars are also moved by difficulty. It's the Everest phenomenon, of course – Joyce has given us a peak (or set of peaks) that juts into the clouds. You yourself invoked Fuji in your own poem ("So Mt. Fuji, the most beautiful stratovolcano, is exceptional / like Marilyn Monroe in our modern world"); perhaps this is related. I believe that the most fruitful movement in literary studies right now will be approaches that are audaciously interdisciplinary, and connect scientific insights with those of the humanities. I speak specifically of literary Darwinism, cognitive literary studies, etc. These movements are in their infancy, still clarifying their ground principles and distinguishing themselves from less nuanced approaches, and struggling to overcome disciplinary barriers and prejudices to build bridges between the sciences and humanities. Brian Boyd, perhaps the world's foremost Nabokov scholar, is taking a Darwinian approach in his latest volume, which will focus on *The Odyssey* and Dr. Seuss. If I had to put money on a future theory that will sweep up and reinvigorate the past ones, this would be it. We can rummage through poststructuralism, historicism, etc., with cognitive and Darwinian eyes and find much that is fruitful. Those intrigued by this can find links on my website to my reviews of some books that advance this movement. My hope is that my reviews are balanced – not entirely gung-ho, but guardedly enthusiastic.

About Q14: *I think one of the most significant progress of natural science in the last part of 20th to 21st century is the biology starting from the structural findings of DNA. In the period of Joyce's days people did not know this. Do you have an interest to write this fact in your fictions?*

Joseph Carroll, one of the pre-eminent literary Darwinists, reminds us that literary writers have been, for most of history, "our best psychologists" (*Literary Darwinism* 109), by dint of intuition, observation, and introspection. Indeed, scientific paradigm shifts such as those we've seen in the last half-century do radically alter our conception of the universe, but the great writers of the past don't go out with a whimper; on the contrary, we admire them that much more for their foresight and perspicacity given the inevitable limitations of historical moment. Certainly Joyce would have had a grand old time with DNA and the Human Genome Project – one can have fun imagining the helices coiling down the page like some of the musical staves.

Q15: *If you think the reading was difficult, what are the causes?*

Most probably the sheer density of the text and its stratigraphic depth. Reading becomes a form of archaeology, an endeavour that most people don't have the patience for.

Q16: *How do you describe your experience of reading FW?*

My experience is sometimes exhilarating, sometimes trying. And I mean "trying" in the most *Wakean* sense with its multiple meanings. As for novels –yes, I am a fiction writer, not a critical theorist. In fact, my interest in critical theory is entirely tributary to my desire to represent and narrate the world in my own fiction. My own novel is a work-in-progress, and I thank you for the opportunity to think through my own literary values as a part of this questionnaire. Indeed, this has inspired me to think about my own use of language and techniques in the current manuscript. The book is already in a state of extreme flux, so why not a bit more, eh?

I think you'll find that "The Copy Editor's Wake" embodies many of the ideas above. It is about the disruption of meaning and understanding that reading the *Wake* precipitates, and then what comes next. The story was inspired by an actual set of circumstances – my brother-in-law, Robert Firpo-Cappiello, was working as a copy-

editor and became rather obsessed with the *Wake*. This was the premise; beyond that, everything is invented.

Tim Horvath is completing the brand-new MFA program in fiction writing at the University of New Hampshire, where he is working on a novel tentatively entitled *Goodbye in Many Languages*. His story "The Understory" won the 2006 Raymond Carver Prize sponsored by the magazine *Carve*, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Another story of his, "Circulation," won the 2006 prize of the Society for the Study of the Short Story. He has been a four-time finalist in *Glimmer Train* contests and has stories forthcoming in *The Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, *pacific REVIEW*, *Seventh Quark*, and *Cranky*. He can be contacted at www.timhorvath.com
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9. Richard Kostelanetz and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: When and how did you read FW for the first time? Did you read it without the help of illustrative books?

The first time I read it intensively was during a course exclusively on the *WAKE* given by William York Tindall at Columbia University in the spring of 1963, though I suspect that I owned my trade paperback copy of the *WAKE* before that time. My sense in retrospect is that Tindall and his friends in the classroom, including the legendary *WAKE* publicist Nathan Halper, got so bogged down in the multiple meanings of certain passages that they didn't convey a sense of whole, which I learned a few years later via Marshall McLuhan.

About Q1: Can you read FW to the end?

Yes, if only to return to the beginning.

About Q1: Are there many parts that cannot be understood?

Sure, beginning with the smallest unit of many individual words.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

Yes, because the plot of relations (conflict) among five people is nearly always present—a father, a mother, a daughter, and two sons.

About Q2: Would you explain more about five-person conflict? What conflict did Joyce want to describe? And why?

The best explanation known to me of the ramifications of these relationships is the chart by L. Moholy-Nagy in his *VISION IN MOTION* (1946). A masterpiece of graphic literary criticism, this chart identifies various forms taken by these five figures. I've reprinted it more than once, most visibly perhaps in my anthology *THE AVANT-GARDE TRADITION IN LITERATURE* (1982)

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

His image of the relevance of at least parts of this five-person conflict toward understanding all human experiences.

About Q3: What do you mean by understanding all human experiences?

Again, see the Moholy-Nagy chart, which I hope you'll reprint here, for suggesting dimensions of possible relevance.

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

Among the most extraordinary achievements of esthetic modernism.

About Q4: Explain "esthetic modernism". Is it also your principle or method? Who else belongs to that movement?

Esthetic Modernism is one way of characterizing the high modern art to which I am especially devoted. That is the bias behind my *DICTIONARY OF THE AVANT-GARDES* (1992, 1999), which contains hundreds of entries.

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

Always. Marshall McLuhan for one has demonstrated how much insight can be found in it.

About Q5: I don't know much about Marshall McLuhan's theory? What is it? And how do you like it?

It's hard for me to summarize, especially since I recently reconsidered all my McLuhan commentaries for a book *3 CANADIAN GENIUSES* (2001). What should be most interesting for you is how he used the *WAKE* to understand modern media and modern life.

Q6: Do you think FW concerns with the sexual matter too much?

No, scarcely.

About Q6: *Aren't there many conflicts related to the sex in FW?*

Only in the sense that familial conflict includes sex, but does not dominate it.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not?*

Always, if only for appreciation of the endlessly inventive word-play.

About Q7: *Please explain more. What kinds of word-play do you find in it?*

I wouldn't begin to enumerate "kinds of word-play" for fear that someone else would then identify kinds I missed. Sorry. This question is almost a set-up I can't accept.

Q8: *Has FW a future to be read in the 21st century?*

Certainly.

About Q8: *Why are there so many individual differences in reading ability of FW?*

It's different and thus problematic.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

Every innovative text ultimately teaches you how to read itself.

About Q9: *How do you think of the influence of FW upon your writing?*

This is not for me to measure. Its influence on my electro-acoustic music composition appears most clearly in my *INVOCATIONS* (1981, 1984), which is briefly described under the category of Inventories on my website, www.richardkostelanetz.com. Also see under the sub-heading of media commissions, itself under Proposals, *ACOUSTIC FINNEGANS WAKE*, which I describe an electro-acoustic composition I'd like to do, support willing, also titled *WORLD-AROUND WAKE*.

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

I've not thought about it.

About Q10: *Lucia was the most important concern for Joyce at that time. Can you find Lucia's image in FW?*

All daughters appearing in the WAKE are Lucia.

Q11: *Tell me your favorite phrases or sentences in FW.*

Probably the opening of Anna Livia Plurabelle, if only because of my love of the historic recording of Joyce's declamation of this passage.

About Q11: *Which pages are most interesting?*

Anna Livia Plurabelle, probably, but not necessarily.

Q12: *Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?*

In my own experience, working with words in languages one did not know particularly well, such as the "string" poems that I've written (and published) in French, German, and Swedish.

About Q12: *Would you explain more with respect to your writing experiences?*

In my extended description of *INVOCATIONS*, accompanying the commercial release of the piece (Folkways-Smithsonian) and then reprinted in my *RADIO WRITINGS* (1995), I specifically identify the WAKE as influencing the theme that prayer in all languages sounds alike.

Q13: *How do you recommend for other people to read FW?*

Don't expect to read from beginning to end, as one would a conventional book. Rather, dip into it here and there, probably in increasingly larger batches.

About Q13: *Without reading from beginning to end how can you understand the plot or narrative structure?*

Since the plot is continually present, while the narrative structure is the continuous presence of the plot, you need not read the *WAKE* from beginning to end.

Q14: Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?

The wealth of reference and stylistic inventions that can be found in it.

About Q14: What do you mean by wealth of reference and stylistic inventions?

See Moholy's chart for documentation of the first. The second is obvious.

Q15: What do you think makes reading FW difficult? What are the causes?

Trying to read it straight through as you could a conventional book raises unnecessary difficulties that can be transcended if you dip into it, as I've suggested.

About Q15: Can you recommend books about FW for general readers?

May I recommend not books but essays by McLuhan as well as a single brilliant essay by his colleague at the University of Toronto, Northrop Frye, plus the Moholy-Nagy chart mentioned before.

Q16: You have read FW forty years. Amazing! FW may be the most important. How to describe your experience of reading FW?

After forty years, I continue to find things new to me in its incredibly rich text.

About Q16: Are there any other comparably rich books for you?

I've reread Moholy-Nagy's *VISION IN MOTION* for almost as long. Did I mention before that McLuhan himself first brought Moholy to my attention early in 1966. I've also reread Ralph Ellison's *INVISIBLE MAN* since 1960 or so.

Individual entries on **Richard Kostelanetz** appear in Contemporary Poets, Contemporary Novelists, Postmodern Fiction, Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, A Reader's Guide to Twentieth-Century Writers, the Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature, Webster's Dictionary of American Authors, and Britannica.com, among other selective directories. Living in New York, where he was born, he still needs \$1.50 (US) to take a subway.

10. Geert Lernout and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW until the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

I have read FW from first to end on only three occasions, but have read in FW almost daily. It is only fair to say that there are a great many parts that I do not understand.

About Q1: You wrote "Finnegans Wake: the Genesis of the Text" in the Abiko Quarterly #17. In that article you compared Joyce's works with the Bible. In Harry Burrell's Narrative Design in Finnegans Wake: The Wake Lock Picked, the story line of FW was interpreted according to the Bible (See Chapter 4). What did you describe in your article of the AQ?

My point in the article was that it is possible to read the *Bible* as a single book, although we know that in reality it is a compilation of many different texts, written at different times, in different genres, for different purposes and with different audiences in mind. The fact that it is possible to read the *Bible* as a single book does not in itself mean anything and the same is true for the *Wake*.

About Q1: How do you evaluate the Bible as a narrative structure that is shown in Harry Burrell's generic interpretation?

See the article mentioned above. The narrative approach to the *Bible* is only the latest version of attempts to turn the *Bible* into a single book.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

NO. I greatly admire scholars who claim they can. There are little coherent plot lines and Book I as a whole seems to be going somewhere, but overall I don't see a plot at all, at least not in the normal sense of that term.

About Q2: Would you explain why the theories of Lacan or Derrida were so important in the recent critical approaches on FW?

Not only the theories of Lacan and Derrida but every single new theoretical approach has had Joyce as its hero. Whether that says something about FW or about those approaches, I don't know. It seems clear at least that Joyce's work is still important enough to challenge new theorists.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

Even on the basis of what Joyce himself claimed about his book, it is impossible to answer the question. He seems to have been happy explaining words and passages, but only spoke in very general terms when discussing the whole book.

About Q3: How do you think of the attempt to find hidden messages related to human nature of conflicts in FW?

My attitude to such endeavours is similar to that of other paranoid ventures along the lines of the *X-files*. All other attempts to find such meanings have been unsuccessful and though they might be of interest in a distant and fictional fashion, it is hardly to believe that they have anything to do with the real world.

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

You mean as in a newspaper review? I would recommend this book to people who like puzzles and libraries, who find delight in getting to grips with something quite difficult. But this is definitely not a book if you want plot or character or milieu.

About Q4: If FW is a book of language puzzles and has no philosophical meaning, is it mere a comical word-play book that is not interesting to general readers?

There are not real alternatives, I hope. That FW does not interest the most general of "general readers" is clear but that has something to do with the large investment that has to be made, not with the presence or lack of philosophical meaning.

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

See the answer to the previous question: it depends on what kind of person you are.

About Q5: *Don't we want to know more about the secrets of the greatest genius writer named JJ?*

I am only interested in his secrets as a writer, and absolutely not in the person JJ.

Q6: *Do you think FW is concerned too much with the sex?*

This depends on how much sex you would consider normal. Although there is a lot of sex in the book, there are lots of other themes too. And strangely enough, as Fritz writers, there is almost nothing here that can be described as erotic.

About Q6: *There are many intercourse scenes described in FW but those scenes are comical and not erotic. Is the sex necessary and important as a gate toward the Fall in FW?*

Surely sex has something to do with the FW fall (unlike in the original fall). I don't see so many "intercourse scenes" in FW, but I might have been looking in all the wrong places.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not?*

"Interesting" is too neutral a word. Reading FW is exhilarating (but again, see answer to question 4: a lot of people do not find it interesting at all).

About Q7: *Are you contented as a scholar to analyze the language?*

Absolutely not. Language in itself does not even exist. Even a book as difficult as FW cannot fail to refer to an outside reality.

Q8: *Has FW a future to be read in the 21st century?*

If we can extrapolate from what was happening at the end of the 20th century, the answer can only be "yes".

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

The encyclopaedic nature of the book makes that you cannot read this book without learning something. Sometimes I find that a lot of what I know seems to come from various failed attempts to understand some word or passage in FW.

About Q9: *Would you comment on Beckett's famous words, "FW is not about something: it is that something itself."*

I don't understand Beckett's words anymore. I think I used to see it as a gesture towards linguistic self-reference, language being the means and the object of the exercise, but I don't anymore. Any linguistic artifact is about something (see About Q7).

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

In the strict sense of having an influence on the practice of writing, of course; just read Joyce's letters of the thirties. But I don't know if her illness is an integral part of the book.

About Q10: *Whereas Ulysses had a strong influence of Nora, didn't FW have a strong influence of Lucia as shown in Issy, split-personality and dark side of human nature?*

If you look at the history of FW you would have to assume that Joyce was being prophetic about his daughter's mental problems because most of the writing of the *Wake* precedes their first appearance. For that reason alone it is difficult to argue that in any useful sense FW is "about" Lucia's problems.

Q11: *Which pages are most interesting?*

This is impossible to answer: as soon as you begin to read it even the most boring page yields something of interest. Although I should say that I consider some parts of book II (with the exception of chapter 2) belong to the category of "not very interesting."

About Q11: *Do you think beyond the riddles of language in FW there is hidden meaning or salvation?*

If there is, I haven't found it yet.

Q12: *Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?*

Less than in the case of *Ulysses*, and multilingual punning existed before Joyce.

About Q12: *How do you evaluate Joyce's method to bring Vico's theory as a base to construct the structure of the book?*

Apart from references to Vico that Joyce himself identified, it is quite difficult to find the same kind of role for Vico's philosophy as that of Homer in *Ulysses*.

Q13: *Do you recommend FW to other people? If so, how?*

Again, see Q4. That vast majority of people read for plot or character, and they should not even begin reading FW. I have been able to interest students by reading isolated bits like the Prankquean or the final monologue.

About Q13: *For the students whose native language is not English is it more difficult to read and understand FW compared to native English-speaking students?*

Of course, but it does depend on what language(s) the reader does know. English is the syntactic base of the language and lots of words that may appear to be foreign are in reality rare or obsolete English words, but it does help if you know German, Italian, Latin, French etc.

Q14: *Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?*

Its reputation as "*the most difficult book*" certainly has something to do with it: people like a challenge. On my more cynical days, I think that scholars like to refer to this book because only very few people will challenge what they say about the book. But see Q4: there are rewards.

About Q14: *Do you expect a new theory will (or must) come out for the critical approach on FW in near future?*

I don't think so, but can you predict such things?

Q15: *If you think the reading difficult, what are the causes?*

The lack of a clear plot and identifiable characters, the many languages, obscure references.

About Q15: *Why did Joyce make the book so difficult? Is it done intentionally?*

Of course it was intentional. The second half of *Ulysses* was pretty difficult already, and Joyce cannot have failed to notice that the new work was even more complex. Why he was doing it is another matter. His comments are far from clear about this, although he does seem to have thought that the complexity of his style reflected the complexity of the book's subject matter.

Q16: *How do you describe your experience of reading FW?*

My first reading was the result of undergraduate hubris and it is only when I began to work with the notebooks and the drafts that I understood that it was possible to understand more of FW if you could understand the way it was written. I agree with Fritz that that fact in itself is an "*aesthetic argument against the Wake*".

About Q16: *Would you explain the meaning of the "aesthetic argument against the Wake"?*

I was quoting from Fritz's answer: he believes that if it is necessary to study the notebooks and drafts in order to understand FW, then the book does not stand on its own and that would be an aesthetic argument against it.

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11. Patrick A. McCarthy and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW through to the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

I don't think there is a single right way of reading FW, but certainly one way would be to start with "riverrun" and go straight through to the end. I have taught a FW class several times, and this is our basic strategy: to read through the entire book from beginning to end with as much comprehension as possible but without any illusions about our ability to interpret every passage satisfactorily or to understand the relation of parts to one another. A reading group can afford to linger as long as necessary over a given passage, but in a class that option seems less reasonable, at least to me. Also, parts of the book get easier to read once you have read other sections: you start noticing familiar scenes and phrases, for example.

About Q1: Teaching FW in a class seems to be unrealistic because of its difficult nature. Once I met a young woman, a graduate of Harvard, who could read FW very well and wrote about it. I thought she was exceptional. Couldn't only a few students read through FW?

I did teach FW to undergraduates once, long ago (1975), but my experience since then has always been in seminars limited to graduate students. Even for the average M.A. or Ph.D. student in an English department, FW is a difficult book to tackle, but the students in these classes have chosen to be there and are somewhat more alert and more adventuresome than those who stick with courses with far less demanding texts. This is also true, by the way, of courses in modern poetry: I have had graduate students who can read through novels satisfactorily but who avoid poetry courses because they find many modern poems so hard to read. The result is that a course in FW or in modern poetry attracts better, or at least braver, students.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

There are plots within FW, but whether or not there is "a plot"—one central narrative—is a question on which readers are divided. I personally think that there is not a central, continuous narrative, but that does not mean that summaries of the main subject matter for each chapter, or part of a chapter, are not helpful. Early attempts at

summaries were made by Edmund Wilson and by Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson; each of the three editions of Adaline Glasheen's *Census of FW* has a summary that I find helpful; there are synopses by John Gordon, in *FW: A Plot Summary*, and by Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon, in *Understanding FW*; and I have offered one of my own, in part of a long essay entitled "The Structures and Meanings of FW," in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, edited by Bowen and Carens (1984). Anyway, there are continuities and discontinuities in the narrative elements of FW, and I think most agile readers who are patient enough will start to make connections.

About Q2: *The Introduction in Critical Essays on James Joyce's Finnegans Wake by you is a very excellent summary of writings about FW. If Joyce were alive now, what would he think of the present status of FW studies? Could he be happy?*

I don't know whether Joyce would be pleased with the sort of critical work being done; writers tend to like critics to pay attention to their works, but they often resent analyses that differ from what the writers imagined they were doing. Surely Joyce would like the fact that FW receives so much attention, but I imagine he would be perplexed, and perhaps even discouraged, by the fact that FW gets far less attention than *Ulysses*. He considered FW his best book and his most important book, but there are many Joyce scholars who focus solely on the early works and *Ulysses*. I think this is a shame.

Q3: *If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?*

There are clues to Joyce's intentions in his letters, notes, and statements to friends, but I think we are a long way from being able to summarize his artistic aims with any degree of precision.

About Q3: *What did you want to find or know in letters and notes? Are the letters so important? If so, why?*

Some of the letters are quite revealing: take, for instance, the famous letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver about 1.8 ("a chattering dialogue across the river by two washerwomen who as night falls become a tree and a stone") and the one in which he described the symbols that he was using for the characters. These were both written in March 1924, and apart from providing useful information about the book they also demonstrate how early some of its most important features were fixed.

Q4: *How do you evaluate the book?*

I think FW is Joyce's supreme achievement, greater even than *Ulysses*. It is endlessly fascinating. It takes the formal experimentation of modernism as far as it can be taken—or perhaps even farther.

Q5: *Is reading FW worthwhile or not?*

It depends on what you are looking for. If you primarily want to read for plot, then you are likely to be frustrated rather than energized by reading FW. Those who read the book largely for what they imagine is its social meaning might or might not be right about that meaning, but the amount of effort required to read the book certainly must limit its social impact. Those who read for the pleasure of immersing themselves in this strange book have a distinct advantage, since it is in their interest not to have the book reduced to a plot or a social message. I'm reminded of a wonderful passage in the second half of Beckett's *Molloy*, where Jacques Moran thinks about the nature and significance of the "dance" of his bees: "*And in spite of all the pains I had lavished on these problems, I was more than ever stupefied by the complexity of this innumerable dance, involving, doubtless other determinants of which I had not the slightest idea. And I said, with rapture, Here is something I can study all my life, and never understand.*" I think there is a similar pleasure to be gained from FW.

About Q5: *Would you paraphrase Beckett's famous comment on FW; "Finnegans Wake is not about something; it is that something itself."*

Beckett was strongly against readings of literary works—including his own and Joyce's—that seem to overshadow the works themselves. In his monograph on Proust, he attributed similar ideas to Proust, claiming that "*he makes no attempt to dissociate form from content. The one is a concretion of the other, the revelation of a world.*" I think this is essentially what he says about FW (or *Work in Progress*, as it was then known): that its meaning, or content, is to be found in its form and cannot be distinguished from the texture of the book itself. The result is that no synopsis or summary of its meaning is ever a satisfactory substitute for the experience of reading the work.

Q6: *Do you think FW is overly concerned with sexual matters?*

FW is about everything, including sex, which is an inescapable part of human life. The view of sex in the book, though, is always comic, and I think that must be kept in mind.

About Q6: *Was Joyce affected by psychoanalytical views of Freud and/or Jung et al. very much?*

As far as I know, Joyce never professed much interest in, or knowledge of, psychoanalysis except for some attempts to get help for Lucia. I might be wrong: a critic like Sheldon Brivic or Jean Kimball would be much better qualified to answer this question. But I do think that Joyce's interest in the dreaming mind had to be affected by the knowledge that it was the subject of studies by Freud and Jung, even if he did not read many of those studies.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting for you or not?*

I started trying to read FW in earnest when I was about 21 or 22, shortly after I had read *Ulysses*, but I was doing it entirely on my own and had relatively little time to devote to it. Over the next few years I made several attempts, and on two occasions worked my way about halfway through FW before graduate courses intervened and I was forced to give it up for so long that I decided I would have to start over. What kept me going through all this was the humor: I would sit and read, and I kept laughing aloud at passages that I found hilarious. I think I was 26 when I finally finished reading the book, and immediately I sat down and started over. The second time was easier and even more interesting. I was so pleased at the little I understood that I tended to overlook how much I didn't know—or at least I was not bothered by that.

One reason I got through FW as I did was that in spring 1968, Phillip Herring, who had introduced me to *Ulysses* while I was an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, told me that Bernard Benstock was coming to town and asked whether I wanted to meet him. I learned two things from that first meeting that were typical of Beni and that I have tried to emulate in my own work. When I mentioned Beckett's "come in" story and asked about Joyce's superstitious concern with divine intervention, or chance, in his work, Beni noted that nobody had yet found the passages that Joyce was reputed to have left in his book. The lesson is not to take anything for granted without checking the evidence. I also recall asking whether it might be best for me to read Burgess's *Shorter FW* before attempting the whole thing. Beni advised me to skip Burgess and go straight to Joyce; he said that reading the

Wake was not beyond my abilities, and that while it required a fair amount of effort, the effort would pay dividends. Letting Burgess stand as a mediator for my first reading, I now realize, probably would have meant that I would never have finished reading the real *Wake*. So let me pass along Berni's sage advice: skip Burgess and go straight to Joyce.

About Q7: *How do you evaluate the contribution of Bernard Bendstock in the critical studies on FW? What is his major contribution?*

Berni was a superb reader of FW whose prose was colorful and exuberant, his critical posture one of energetic involvement with the text. His work—especially his book *Joyce-again's Wake* and a series of articles—was particularly informative on thematic, stylistic, and narrative aspects of FW. When he died, he was planning a book entitled *Narrative Con/Texts in FW*, a companion volume to studies he had already published on *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*. Three articles that were planned for inclusion in that book are being published by the *James Joyce Literary Supplement*, and they show that Berni was still at the top of his form. All of his work is clearly written and very accessible, which is important because he wrote not just for specialists but for what he called “middle-range” readers. He'll continue being an important source for some time because he did the most important thing a FW reader can do: he paid close attention to the words on the page, their meanings and their sounds.

Q8: *Will FW be widely read in the 21st century?*

I hope so, but I doubt it. We are moving away from the book and toward other media that provide instant gratification and place fewer demands on us: television, movies, the internet, rock concerts. This is a book for people who really love books, and I am afraid there will be fewer of us in the future.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading it?*

We learn by reading almost anything, but reading FW is especially instructive, if you want to look at it that way. We all pick up a lot of odd information in the course of tracing the book's allusions and hearing its wordplay, but information is the least of it. What I have learned from reading FW is primarily the virtue of patience: “*Now, patience; and remember patience is the great thing, and above all things else we must avoid anything like being or becoming out of patience*” (108.8-10). I think in reading FW one becomes “out of patience” either because it is annoying not to be able to interpret

every passage with any degree of assurance or because when we generalize about the book there are passages that don't fit into the large scheme that we have constructed.

About Q9: *The words you cited from FW (108.8-10) are impressive. Originally what situation did Joyce have in mind?*

Joyce might have had a great deal in mind, but one thing, surely, was the frequently expressed wish that he state his meaning more clearly. In the context of FW the words are spoken in a soothing voice by someone (a scholar, perhaps) responding to the impatient question about the letter recovered from a midden heap: "*Say, baroun Iousadoor, who in hallhagal wrote the durn thing anyhow?*" The scholar can't really answer that question, so he stalls—but in the process he inadvertently gives good advice about the virtue of being a patient reader of FW.

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

Yes, I think Lucia's mental problems affected the book in some ways, both good and bad. Their effect was negative when Joyce was so worried about Lucia that he had trouble concentrating on FW. On the other hand, those problems helped to shape Joyce's portrait of Issy, the daughter. Joyce tried to put everything he knew into the book, and many of its sources are personal: Joyce's bad eyesight is passed along to Shem, for example. It was inevitable that he would try to make use of a family tragedy.

You asked Fritz Senn whether Joyce had writer's block at any time. I think not, at least as I understand writer's block, which is a psychological condition. Other writers have been afflicted with writer's block in one form or another: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Malcolm Lowry, and Dashiell Hammett are examples. One factor in some cases of writer's block is an obsession with originality, but I think Joyce avoided that by seeing all previous writings as something he could appropriate. In any event, apart from times when problems of health or other personal problems kept him from writing, he never had trouble writing—and he did bring his projects to completion. As to whether or not Lucia could read FW, I don't know.

About Q10: *Didn't Joyce think that splitting seen in Issy might be a normal psychological phenomenon rather than a mental disorder?*

I think Joyce regarded mental disorders as extreme manifestations of tendencies in the "normal" mind. So in that sense you're probably right.

Q11: Which pages are most interesting?

Different people will be interested in different pages. I don't have a favourite page or pages, although some chapters might interest me more than others (see my response to Q17 at the end).

Q12: Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?

The techniques of FW are so daring, so revolutionary, that few writers have been able to adapt them successfully for the writers' own purposes. An exception is Samuel R. Delany, who has used some Wakean techniques in his science fiction novels: for example, his 1974 novel *Dhalgren* employs a variation on Joyce's idea that a book could begin in the middle of the sentence with whose first half it would conclude. Many writers have used puns that demonstrate the influence of FW, and in general I think Joyce's experiments with stretching language to its limit are important because they demonstrate the resources all writers have at their command. As Normal Mailer said some years ago—with reference to *Ulysses*—even a writer who chooses not to use these resources so extensively will benefit from the knowledge that they are available.

About Q12: Why didn't Joyce use ordinary English expression in FW? Does creating new words in FW contribute to an improvement or in some a distortion? Can you guess necessary reasons for those changes?

I don't think I can improve on Joyce's 1926 letter to Miss Weaver (cited in the revised version of the Ellmann biography, pp.584-85): "*One great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cuttanddry grammar and goahead plot.*" By use of polylingual coinings Joyce was able to combine many meanings into one word and thereby suggest the shifting, ambiguous nature of the dreaming state and simultaneously to universalize the characters' experiences.

Q13: Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how should they go about it?

The number of people who will enjoy reading FW carefully, from beginning to end, is rather small, but I think that anyone with an appreciation for language should read a page or so, just to get a sampling of Wakeese. I recommend reading aloud. A possible alternative is to have the book open to a passage while listening to a recording

of that passage. There's a very good recording of some passages from FW available on compact disk.

Q14: Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?

I think people are attracted to the book's richness and complexity, and above all to its humour. But this is a guess; I haven't conducted a survey.

About Q14: Do you expect a new theory coming out other than those of Derrida or Lacan in the critical approaches on FW?

I don't know what will come next, but to some extent Derrida and Lacan have already been displaced by postcolonial theory, in keeping with the tendency to politicize all literary works. This too shall pass.

Q15: If you think the reading difficult, what are the causes?

There are several reasons why FW is hard to read. First, there is the language itself, with puns in various languages and frequent references to arcane materials. Then there is the dream situation, which (as I read the book) is one reason for the constantly shifting, discontinuous narrative. Finally, there are the characters themselves, who seem to change form and at times even to become indistinguishable. All of this means that the book is complex and ambiguous in its language, narrative(s), and characterization.

Q16: How would you describe your experience of reading FW?

Over the years I have derived more pleasure from reading FW than from any other book with the possible exception of *Ulysses*. There are passages that I have read dozens of times and still find so funny that I laugh every time I read them.

About Q16: How do you evaluate your book The Riddles of Finnegans Wake now?

The book appeared in 1980. That is a long time ago, and it has been so long since I looked at the book that I don't know what I would think of it now. I remember that people whose opinions I especially respected—including Mike Begnal, Tom Staley, Bob Boyle, Berni Benstock, and Zack Bowen—liked it, and that gave me a great deal of reassurance.

Q17: Which part or chapter of FW is the most interesting for you?

Different chapters attract me for different reasons. The book's first and last chapters are obviously interesting because, like "*The Sisters*" and "*The Dead*," they are in a position to initiate or to recapitulate major themes, images, verbal patterns, and situations. Book I, chapters 5 and 7, are very interesting for what they have to say about art and the artist. In Book II, I especially like the marginal writings of chapter 2 and the overlapping narratives of chapter 3. There are innumerable attractions in Book III: for example, the Yawn inquest/séance in the third chapter and the Honuphrius law case in the fourth. But I suppose I would say that Book 1, chapter 8—"Anna Livia Plurabelle"—is the one that most attracts me right now, since I recently wrote a long article on its genesis, and that experience renewed my pleasure in reading that chapter and FW in general.

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12. Roland McHugh and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW from the beginning to the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Yes, I can read it from beginning to end but in practice it's best to read only a few pages at a time. That gives the highest chance of noticing something new. As you press on, the experience increasingly resembles previous readings. Many things are accepted rather than understood: one has got used to them and cease to question.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

The term '*plot*' is of limited utility in FW. The discoveries one makes in reading are not like the uncovering of the plot in a conventional novel. It is true that at one level a small number of personalities with particular mutual relationships may be discerned, but one can hardly fail to be aware of these whilst reading. Grasping them is hardly the matter which gratifies or illuminates.

About Q2: How do you evaluate FW: A Plot Summary by John Gordon? Is there any book to illustrate the plot of FW other than Gordon's? For the general readers who want to read FW at first A Plot Summary is useful, isn't it?

No, I don't find it useful. Looking for a plot is a bad approach. FW isn't a code message.

Q3: Then what did Joyce (J) want to say in the book?

Neither is this matter a set of J's opinions. Ultimately, what one gets from reading FW is similar to what one gets from reading *Ulysses* (U). Concepts formed from the superposition of several seemingly irreconcilable images, forced to cohere in beautiful fragile clouds through accidents of language. Usually their logic and the grotesque picture it conjures conspire to produce humour. Sometimes I have to get off the chair and lie on the floor because I can't stop laughing.

About Q3: *Those who praise U could not always praise FW. Those readers who can understand U find it difficult to read and understand FW. There exist large differences between U and FW. Explain more about your expression that, ultimately, what one gets from reading FW is similar to what one gets from reading U.*

Well, what you get from reading U isn't exposure of a plot, is it? The plot is almost non-existent. What you get is what Stephen Dedalus calls 'aesthetic pleasure'.

Q4: *How do you evaluate the book?*

Two constraints are valuable in evaluating FW. Firstly, exposure to the environment of Dublin helps one to decide how much one is justified in reading into the text. Secondly, awareness of the kinds of the material used to construct it produces the same feeling of objectivity. The main source here is the set of J's notebooks at Buffalo. See the forthcoming edited transcriptions *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo*, eds V. Deane, D. Ferrer, G. Lernout, from Brepols Publisher N. V. (Turnhout, Belgium): the first volume is expected in June 2001.

About Q4: *Is The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo useful in other studies than genetic studies?*

The 66 notebooks allow us to identify real words and quotations in the FW text and are therefore priceless.

Q5: *Is reading FW worthwhile or not?*

Yes, very worthwhile, but as I said, it provides similar sensations to those obtained from U, so naturally it's good economics to read U several times first, and then when one starts getting less from it, to begin phasing in FW.

Q6: *Do you think FW concerns sexual matter too much?*

No—but many studies of FW contain far too much, which is boring.

About Q6: *Aren't there too many words and expressions related to the sex in FW?*

No.

Q7: Was reading FW interesting or not?

It could not have been sustained were it not interesting. The first time I read it took almost 3 years.

Q8: Will FW become the book of the 21st century?

Maybe, but the erosion of the book's cultural background will abstractify its study. Decreasing literacy and appreciation of good English style will not help.

Q9: Can we learn something by reading it?

Yes, but what we learn often defies verbal expression. Also, the book tends to mean very different things to different people. The most encouraging fact is that many people obviously enjoy it.

About Q9: *Please explain "what we learn often defies verbal expression".*

Take an FW sentence, spell out exactly what its contents mean and look at what you've written. You've destroyed its interest. The sentence only works in its original form.

Q10: Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?

Yes, he could obtain inspiration from seemingly unlikely sources.

About Q10: *Could you explain more about this?*

Lucia probably understood next to nothing of what Joyce was doing. When I met her shortly before her death, she asked me whether FW was a play. But probably odd little expressions of hers interested Joyce enough for them to find their way into FW.

Q11: Which pages are the most interesting?

Mostly Book II, chapters 1-3. Say pp. 219-355. But they're also the hardest parts until you're used to them.

Q12: *Can we find literary techniques to use from reading FW?*

I don't think we need another FW. One is quite enough to be going on with!

Q13: *Do you recommend for other people to read FW?*

As a biologist I hardly ever come into contact with literary people or prospective FW readers.

About Q13: *There is an expression by Beckett "Mr. Joyce, biologist in words". Explain the meaning of biologist in your sentence.*

I'm a specialist in myxomycetes (acellular slime molds). See my book *The FW Experience* (1961). I work as a lecturer in Biology. My other books are *The Sigla of FW* (1976)—which you might say deals with 'plot'—and *Annotations to FW* (1980, 2nd ed. 1991).

Q14: *Why are a growing number of scholars and students interested in FW?*

I suppose it'd a consequence of increased exposure to U. The gratitude to the author one feels after U produces the energy to attempt to cope with FW.

Q15: *If you think the reading difficult, what are the major causes?*

The prime necessity is repetition. Problems arise from insufficient repetition plus failure to understand words and see overtones. My *Annotations* should help.

Q16: *How could you describe your experience of reading FW?*

Covered in my *The FW Experience*.

13. Margot Norris and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW until the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Yes, I have read FW through from beginning to end several times. All texts—by Joyce and by other writers—offer possibilities for different levels of understanding. I believe all parts of FW can be understood on some level, but no part of FW can be perfectly or totally understood. (I think this is true of all other literary texts as well). However, some parts of FW are much more difficult, on a first or second reading, than other parts. I personally find Book III the most difficult.

About Q1: Would you explain about the meaning of understanding? Does the best understanding mean to know exactly what the author thought or felt or planned? Or is it more subjective to each reader's mind? Is understanding a creative act in a reader's mind?

I consider a text to be somewhat more complicated than a communication by an author through language with a reader. For one thing, the author writes through a fictive persona, a narrator in fiction, a lyric voice in poetry, a character in drama. By the same token, a “reader” is not only the individual who is reading a text, but also an interlocutor of the text, someone to whom a narrator addresses a discourse, and the “reader” is thereby turned into a fictional construct, for example, a listener to a narration who might be called “narratee.” In FW this already complex negotiation between the narrating voice, its language, and its listener is complicated even more because each of these terms may be multiple or split. For example, in the “ALP” chapter (Book I, chapter 5), the washerwomen may also be the “sons,” Shem and Shaun. ALP may be the mother or the river Liffey, and if she is the river, then it is the banks of the river that seem to be doing the talking. Since the washerwomen conduct a dialogue about ALP to each other—where does the “reader” fit in? Are we put into the place of one or the other washerwoman? Are we listening in or eavesdropping on a conversation we are not meant to hear? The reader’s “understanding” takes the form, among other things, of recognizing that the text poses these kinds of questions. Put differently, one of the levels of “understanding” in reading FW is a metatextual understanding.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

I don't believe FW has a plot, in the novelistic sense, but it contains many episodes that have some sort of narrative line. Some of those narratives are more accessible than others, and I believe I have a sense of many of those episodic plots. Some of the little stories in FW echo recognizable tales or fables—for example, the Ondt and the Gracehoper is a parody of the fable of The Ant and the Grasshopper. Often, when I reread a chapter, new narrative lines will come to my attention, so that I consider the plots of FW as constantly proliferating and multiplying and changing.

About Q2: *Since you published your wonderful book The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake, more than a quarter century has passed. How do you evaluate your book now?*

Thank you, very much, for the kind words about my book. I believe I was very lucky to have begun a dissertation on FW at the very dawn of what we now call "critical theory," when the first Derrida essays and books were becoming available in translation, and acute attention was being paid to the theoretical works of early twentieth century linguists. I especially benefited from having my attention focused on the linguistic and poetic implications of Freudian dream theory—which gave me a theoretical handle on the work's punning and portmanteau words, and on the instability, shifts and multiplicities of the work's figures, with their anxieties and guilts and passions. We have a much broader and richer array of critical theories now, than were available in the early seventies, but I believe I used what I had at hand to make the work's seeming irrationalities more comprehensible to myself.

Q3: *If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?*

Many things. Language, when it is cut loose from sense and from conventional rhetorical purposes and gives pleasure mainly through sound. Thoughts and feelings that are transgressive and repressed in waking thoughts. The poetry in the gossip of working washerwomen. The verses and little songs in children's games. Pedantic lessons. An absurd trial. Riddles that have no solution. Prayers or snatches of liturgy. Accusations of absurd behavior. Excuses that are ineffective because they don't make sense. Non-human things. Light on water that breaks into prisms. Clouds that precipitate rain. A river flowing out to sea. A tree or a book that is losing its leaves. A landscape with hills and mountains. A rainbow. A chicken that is pecking at rubbish. Husbands and wives walking and talking about their children. Boys quarreling over a girl. A girl wisecracking. Babies. Thunder. Myths. Poetry and fiction and philosophy.

Fables. Insects. Clothes. Men listening to a radio. Wars. Museums. Writing. Dying. Many insects.

About Q3: *Do you suppose that Joyce had an initial plan to write about the dream-world or unconscious world in FW?*

Joyce already pays a great deal of attention to symptoms of the “unconscious” in *Ulysses*, for example, when Bloom suppresses a painful thought or makes a slip of the tongue. There is also evidence that Joyce read Freud with care, and was aware of Freudian theories of dream work and the unconscious. I do believe, therefore, that he planned to write FW as a dream work right from the start. John Bishop’s brilliant *Joyce’s Book of the Dark* further elaborates the text as a kind of performance of the sleeping body.

Q4: *How do you evaluate the book?*

It is the most stunning and inexhaustible book ever written.

About Q4: *How do you evaluate FW in comparison to Ulysses?*

The two books offer very different, but equally intense pleasures to the reader. *Ulysses* offer us such an intricately realized world that it makes readers feel as though they have lived two separate lives – their own, and one that transpired in Dublin on June 16, 1904. Ironically, we probably know our imaginary Dublin life infinitely better than we know our own, and any time we read *Ulysses* I believe we have an acutely pleasurable sensation of having come “home.” Reading FW, on the other hand, makes me feel like an utterly fascinated tourist who revisits a place over and over but never feels like a native.

Q5: *Is reading FW worthwhile or not?*

I always tell friends and students who apologize for not having read FW that they can have a full and happy life without doing so, and that not everyone has to read FW. But for anyone who likes language and who likes puzzles and who likes poetry and playing with a text, FW is a great pleasure and very rewarding and very funny.

Q6: Do you think FW concerns sexual matter too much?

FW was written in the early twentieth century when study and interest in the sexuality of human beings first became a discipline and a science, as well as a permissible subject of serious literary interest and representation. Because I believe that Joyce was definitely influenced by Freudian models of dreams and their expression of unconscious desires and the guilts they produce, I do not find the preoccupations with sexuality that haunt FW surprising or excessive.

Q7: Was reading FW interesting or not?

Reading FW is a fascinating and rewarding pleasure!

Q8: Will FW continue to be read in the 21st century?

Absolutely! FW will always present itself as a challenge to the adventurous reader, and there will always be adventurous readers who will want to tackle it.

Q9: Can you learn something by reading FW?

You learn how complex language is. You receive a practical, intuitive, fascinating linguistic experience. You see the way a single letter or a single sound can determine or change meaning. You learn the way different languages overlap or flow into each other or change each other over time. You learn that a single sentence can really be four different sentences packed into one and mean contradictory things. You learn the complicated and possibly contradictory intention and attitudes and effects at play when someone utters a bit of speech or produces a bit of discourse. You hear the poetry that exists in all language, and you learn that seemingly undisciplined and excessive language can be just as interesting and enticing as seemingly beautiful and tightly crafted language.

Q10: Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?

I don't know, and I'm not sure if anyone can know. But I suspect that if it did, he saw irrational language as not so different from dream language or avant-garde poetic language.

Q11: Which pages are most interesting to you?

I love the passages dealing with women and children: the ALP chapter and the gossip of the washerwomen, the children's games and the homework lesson. But my favorite chapter is the last chapter, in which dying is represented as going backward into one's life, reliving middle age, and one's prime, and one's youth and one's infancy again, and returning to one's origin in the fluids of one's parents. An astonishing concept retold in magical prose.

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14. C. George Sandulescu and *Finnegans Wake* (FW) : Who's Afraid of *Finnegans Wake*?

Q1: Can you read FW to the end? Are there many parts which one cannot understand?

Yes, FW is indeed meant to be read through. There are parts of the Book which are more readily understood than others, without any doubt. But if Joyce is sure to have understood everything, so can we! We are still, sixty years after, most humbly learning from him: In all respects. The ones who still reject any part of Joyce's writings considering them as failures will one day repent. If they are still alive.

About Q1: Would you explain about the meaning of understanding? Does the best understanding mean to know exactly what the author thought or felt or planned? Or is it a more subjective and a more creative act in a reader's mind? From your context you may support the former.

The understanding of understanding—or Understanding Understanding, for short—is a HERMENEUTIC problem which, I thought, stands, on account of its complexity, quite outside the scope of the present interview; initially I had a passage about it which I left out, its being too philosophical. Here is a quick tentative reply to your query: A text once definitive stands on its own two feet—be they FORM & CONTENT... The fundamental problem is that, in FW, Joyce fuses the two inextricably: The thing obtained circulates, but in another Cosmic dimension. That baffles Critics & Readers alike. And nonMaterialized (in the Text!) authorial intentions come to naught. They simply do not exist! Mine is a text-oriented approach. Not an author-oriented one. But Joyce's mind was so linguistically vast that no careful Reader can ever hope to find something in there that Joyce had not envisaged at least in part. Just scrutinize the Beckett "Come in!" controversy, as told by Nat Halper...

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

Let me tell you the following story: Somebody went to Joyce once and said "I've read your *Ulysses* and I don't understand it!" And Joyce asked in his turn "How many

times have you read it?" And the man said: "I've read it twice over, sir." "Then read it **ten** times over!", replied Joyce commandingly. It is the same with FW: which reading are we talking about – the very first, or the very twelfth? Each and every one of us have so far done hundreds of readings of it, in part or in toto, and every time we discover new things. I'll tell you another one: Sergiu Celibidache – the famous Rumanian-German conductor of the Berlin, Munich, & Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestras, who never made a single intentional recording in his life, out of pure principle – said the following to the press: "When I scan a music score of genius the very first time, I don't understand absolutely anything. I read it ten times over: that's when I begin to understand its underlying patterns. I read it a hundred times: I know it better than its author!" Not quite so with Joyce, where even the two editors of the *Wake Newslitter* gave up in despair, and stopped publication of their most useful periodical more or less at the same time with the collapse of the Soviet Union, after a solid quarter century of endeavours. But **the Celibidache procedure** helps a lot: for, as the saying is, 'to travel hopefully is better than to arrive.' Another important point here: FW, just like *Ulysses*, is thoroughly episodic; so was in part *Dubliners* (mere sketches!), and the *Portrait of the Artist* (ultimately, a carefully hidden set of "prospective" & retrospective Diary entries & jottings down). And last of all the *Epiphanies*: so very short, but so overwhelmingly important. So significant that the term bobs up so frequently in the last thirty or so pages of the FW Book, where everything is so very important.

About Q2: *What is the Celibidache procedure? Would you explain more about your assertion that FW, like Ulysses, is thoroughly episodic? Can you recognize the narrative structure or plot which binds each episode in the whole book? Compared with Ulysses such narrative structure of FW appears to be invisible.*

(a) Both a Music score & a Lit.text have this in common that they have a script. But the music score has the advantage of carrying no stable semantic component. What a Conductor of genius does is simply to appropriate the "syntax" of music: melodic patterns & other patterns. Celibidache takes in EVERYTHING that is there, but no more: the FW Reader should do the same. Remember that an Opera is easier to direct than a Play: there are TWO Scripts.

(b) *Ulysses* is not at all divided into Chapters: it is made up of EPISODES. For Pragmatic features – Time, Place, Person, and **Manner** – are discontinued: the narrative thread is thus totally disrupted.

(c) In *Ulysses* we establish Paradigmatic Links between Episodes, and we understand perfectly: in FW there's still a lot of basic work to do.

(d) In FW, there are still so many macro- & micro- elements to be interConnected: once that done, the Reading will then become plain sailing. (Never give WindowsMillennium to a French or Italian old-age pensioner who'd never seen a keyboard in his life before: I was as frustrated when I read Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as a 12-year-old!).

[Footnote: For Manner, or MODE, SEE Stuart Gilbert. 1930. And James Joyce's *Ulysses*, *passim*.]

Q3: *If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?*

FW is the very first cosmopolitan Epic of the Global Village – together perhaps with Ezra Pound's a hundred and twenty or so *Cantos*. It is about EveryWoMan in the Eternal City of the World Village PanEpiphanizing in Time, Place and Person. Quite a mouthful this, for the average litCritic to swallow with contentment. Hence, the FW battle... But: In order to answer this question, you must first think in terms of Browning's *The Ring and the Book* (perhaps compared with his *Sordello*), Pound's *Cantos*, Eliot's *Waste Land* & Sam Beckett's two *Trilogies*—Only in order to stay reasonably within the end of the previous Millennium; to say nothing of Nabokov's *Lolita*, which was the first text ever to have an *Annotations* Volume published during the author's own lifetime... How well do you know these texts? If you haven't scanned them properly, then it is high time to get cracking, and do it now. Perhaps before proceeding to handle FW. Stop messing around with S. Conran's laces & P.D. James' devices, the flaming bonds & blondes, Folletts & Forsyths and that ilk of best sellers. As that guy Burgess put it, 'you must get it well into your head that, never for a second, Joyce ever intended to have his fwBook available for Airport purchase & inflight reading'. For you'll have to work hard at your forty (European?) languages, even before starting scanning the... *Books at the Wake*, the whole lot. (I find it more than weird how every reader is supposed to "know", even remotely, the... actual *Books at the Wake*, but nobody – ever – is equally supposed to be at all conversant with any of the forty languages...) And then, How many learners in this world of internet speeds & ubiquitous addresses are indeed prepared to invest so much time & so much effort? Only the philosophers... and the Joyce nuts.

[footnote: Beckett's *Two Trilogies* are as follows (with years of first publication in **French** or **English**): *Trilogy*: 1. Molloy (1950.fr). 2. Malone Dies (1951.fr). 3. The Unnamable (1952.fr). *Nohow On*. 1. Company (1980. eng). 2. III Seen III Said (1981.fr.). 3. Worstward Ho (1983.eng).]

About Q3: *In your book The Language of the Devil you said that FW is a universe simulacrum. Simulacrum means image or representation. Would you explain more about this?*

Simulacrum is far more than 'image' or 'representation': it should nowadays be interpreted as "virtual Reality" in Literature.

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

I leave this answer to A. Burgess, who, in his book *Ninety-Nine Novels, The best in English since 1939*, (first published in 1984!), rates FW as the star of his 99 texts, and even states by implication that the date of 11 February 1939 is far more important than its corresponding 1 September. AB, Mr ClockWorkOrange as it were, then concludes:

(1984:26) *Janus-faced, FinnegansWake looks back to the twenties but also to the indefinite future: no writer of the contemporary period has been able to ignore it, though most writers have succeeded in not being influenced by it.*

However, AB's opening statement of this two-page entry is equally important in placing FW against the important background of its specifically idiosyncratic literary tradition:

(1984:25) *This long and difficult work represents for many the end of the period which began in 1922 with Eliot's WasteLand and Joyce's own Ulysses (and, I add Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway). To eliminate all traces of Victorianism, literary style had to change to the spare, ironic, experimental. There was also a franker realism than known in the old days.*

I agree with him more than entirely.

About Q4: How do you evaluate FW or Joyce's other works if you might criticize them from the feminist perspective?

Practically all feminist criticism comes from the United States, where knowledge of Foreign Languages never counts for very much, except in professionals. I consider myself a LanguageMan first, and try to consistently promote a language-oriented approach. Joyce the Author decided to write FW in order to ram home the overwhelming significance of Language, which is less obvious, but always there, in his earlier writings (he admired Ibsen). (NB: There is no feminist approach in Linguistics: Linguistics is all ONE!)

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

More than that: it is the ideal and sole item to take along on a Desert Island! (in the sense of the BBC Radio Four programme anchored by Sue & her Disks): a

prerequisite to understand FW is never to back M. Drabble in choosing *Old Wive's Tale* (1908) by Arnold Bennett for sole reading on that island... FW is mighty malt whiskey, by comparison.

Q6: Do you think FW is too much concerned with sex?

It must be understood once and for all that the 20th Century and its Great War (the First) brought about the collapse of the Victorian Puritanism in Literature and social morals, which had put Oscar Wilde into prison just before the Fin de Siècle (though it is still lingering on in some non-European cultural and political Establishments, such as China and Cuba, and certain related areas). In the forefront of this change were writers like D. H. Lawrence & H. Miller. Joyce had identical intuitions with them and, in consequence, most, if not all, of his early books were banned for precisely the same reasons. The literary panorama nowadays is to such an extent overtolerant that the Joycean descriptions – in *Ulysses* – of Poldy's defecation, Stephen's & Poldy's respective micturitions, and Molly's menstruation (there's symmetry in all that!) look so benign by the side of the current literary output of, say, Anais Nin, Erica Jong, Régine Desforjes, and even... Alberto Moravia. To end this answer with a rhetorical question: how important is sex to current television programmes all over the world, with few totalitarian exceptions? It ultimately was Joyce who opened our literary eyes wide to it, though Stanley Kubrick wound it all up with his eyes wide shut (which, by the way, is, ultimately, a quotation from FW...). Then, **on a lighter note**, though wife sex & parents sex are never talked about in public, unless deviant, we shouldn't forget that we owe our own individual lives to our own parents' more than adequate sex life (singular, rather than plural; mutual & interactive, rather than individualistic & narrowly hedonistic). Joyce was more than aware as to how important Sex was to the newly set up Kingdom of Darwin, and, in incommunicado connivance with Lawrence (not the one of Arabia), helped bring down for ever the World Empire of Victorian Puritanism (which still survives in large pockets of the greenest Island of purest Ireland, where proper obstetrics is still practised **only** on board the Dutch ships...). No, there is never enough Sex in the highBrow Dantesque Circle where our friend under scrutiny – FW – sits. Just reRead the Honuphrius Episode (FW, pp 572-3)!

About Q6: Do you think that the treatment of the sex in FW is different from that in Ulysses?

Joyce is the same: though his Freedom of Expression (on Sex) is far greater on account of his CRYPTIC discourse: that may well have started it all! His cryptic stance, I mean!

Q7: Is the reading of FW any way interesting?

A large chunk of the answer here was already given, perhaps under Q4. However: The word *interesting* must be further qualified and/or rephrased: Reading FW is essential to the **Writer of Fiction**: for it is he who's got to learn. Reading FW is indispensable to the **Talented Poet**: for he innovates. Reading FW is necessary to the **Playwright**: Shaw hated it; O'Casey shunned it; Wilde would have adored it. Reading FW is a treasure trove to the **Journalist**: to better headings in *The Sun & News of the World*. Reading FW is an occasional fountain of ideas to the **Scientists**: for what would they do without the quark (fw383)? Reading FW is a menace to the **practising Literary Critic**: how to handle it & stay clean? And learned. Reading FW is an ideal kow-tow opportunity to the **Literary Historian**: for mentioning it would elevate his own Status (and a mere mention is a mere Form of Politeness...). Reading FW is a breadWinner-cum-Status Pedestal to the **fwNuts**: but even Nat Halper was sensitive to Brancusi in Paris in 1975... As to the Global-Village **Professors of Literature**: they are sure to know better.

About Q7: Would you explain the meaning and significance of the Global-Village?

The G8 Meeting starts about now in Genoa, Italy, where I am most of the time: it will deal with MONDIALISATION, and GLOBALISATION, which IS the Global Village. The European Union, likewise, is one Europe. So was the Soviet BLOC. So is Scandinavia, or the British Commonwealth. Joyce had sure seen this.

Q8: What, in your opinion, is FW's destiny in the 21st Century?

With some luck (which it never had, because of the outbreak of the Second World War), it may still be the Book of Literature which had witnessed **the Linguistic Pool of the World**: The Global Village idea didn't start when it started, nor did the Common Market; let us be honest about it: they all started in 1939, with the publication of *Finnegans Wake*: How many realized that? Practically nobody. For it is in there that **the Spirit of the Age** first nested: Chaos & Babel come again: sprouting in Brussels & Bruxelles, Belgium. But with Order superImposed: quite Administratively so; for the Euro kangaroo, qv, provided *The Concordance* of Maastricht, as it were...

Footnote: According to the O. E. D., and to most Australians, the Euro is the standard name of a kangaroo the size of a Labrador... (Look it up, if you don't believe me!)

About Q8: *How do you evaluate Vico's theory now?*

Vico's Theory, rightly approached, is for all time; like Lavoisier.

Q9: *Can one learn anything by reading FW?*

I defy anybody in this world who may say that Something — let us call it x—is not there: All Languages are there (Joyce listed at least 40 or so). All Great Authors & Texts are there (cf. Atherton's 1959 *Books at the Wake*). All major philosophic-historic-scientific-psychologic ideas are there: (from Vico to quark to young Jung to Freund Freud to Beria...). The very specialized branches of Scholarship are there too: (even Topometry & Geodesy, & Topography, according to Clive H, *Motifs...* (1962/1971: 95; 117; 249). Graphotactics, according to the *Concordance*, esp the overtones Section.

About Q9: *Didn't Beckett comment "the Wake is not about something; it is that something itself"?*

Beckett precisely meant the Virtual Reality I mentioned above (under Q3), though the actual term did not exist at the time (in 1929!).

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

Not at all. Neither the direction of his work, nor its very essence: He was far too single-minded for that. He was set on his course like a space rocket is set on its course: Linguistic acrobatics was, beyond doubt, Joyce's forte, and he was sure to go the whole hog. Give me six months, and I'll have any language. Volubly. Joyce was the same. Not even his wife ("Jim, how about writing a best-seller?"), the War, the European mess, the Irish mess could set him off his course. He finished FW, published it, as usual, on his Birthday, had it reviewed in the TLS in the very same issue with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and then, not having much else by way of plans, chose to pass away (13 January) his work completed. With a little effort he could even have managed to die on his Holy Birthday (**2 February**): Like Shakespeare (**23 April (both ways!)**) & St George, Patron Saint of England).

About Q10: *How could Joyce be so strong to cope with the daughter's sickness?*

Joyce was no ordinary man at all: he went for **Massiveness & Meticulousness** in both *Ulysses* (10 years) & FW (17 years), precisely because of Lucia's mental illness, (b) his own blindness (please try and dictate to somebody a difficult passage from FW!) and (c) his own wife's inability to understand what he was after ("Jim should write a bestseller!").

Q11: What passages do you find the most interesting?

Most certainly not the ones that Joyce recorded for Charlie Osgood in the 1920's. And not the opening—or closing—pages that make such excellent anthological & Seminar material for a host of respectable lecturers. No! I here advance that **Joyce should be read paradigmatically**, the way Atherton, & Hart, & Glasheen, & Halper used to do! And rather less so **syntagmatically**, which is indeed "the Passages", and... the pages. To make full sense, **we can never read FW in part, we must always read it in toto**. That's where the difficulty really is. Most difficult to interpret—but exceedingly fascinating—are to me the ten one-hundred letter words. In fact, that expression carries a slight inaccuracy of fact, as one of them—the last one, in fact—in 101 letters (fw424.20). Add it all up, and you will get **1,001**; *Les Mille et une nuits*, in French; *O mie și una de nopți*, in Rumanian, or *The Arabian Nights*, in English. A very good beginning that! Joyce carefully tells the careful reader right at the beginning of the Book—(005.28) (There extend by now one thousand and one stories, all told, of the same). Could these ten "words", hypothetically put together, end to end, make a run-on text? If so, take the ten together, start chopping them up the way Hart does in his *Syllafications*, and you will be having a splendidly difficult nut to crack: Like the genes & chromosomes of the human body. Sort of. Only more chaotic! Like Hamlet's (3.2.366) cloud/camel/weasel/whale analogies... That was, is, and will be **The Paradigmatic Approach!** It was thus that Bonheim (1967) followed the Germanic element quite germanically, and somebody else followed the Italian streak *italienissimo*. Cheng (1984) looked at Shakespeareana, and Reynolds (1981) at Dante (esp pp 302 to 326); I for one am looking at philosophy: In the FW texture. For I firmly believe that **Joyce remains the most exquisite philosopher of all Language**. A philosopher practitioner promoting a mandatory philosophy (oxymoron that?) of the panEuropeans' Language. Or should it be the common unional language of the **punEuropeans**? Very rare that. Shakespeare was one. So was Dante. So is Browning & Eliot & Pound...

And more especially, Joyce was indeed a philosopher of **languages other than his own**. It is a real pity that so many outstanding literary scholars of our days have so little languages (sic!): the linguistic tours de force of Browning & Pound, Eliot &

Beckett, and also, more recently, Borges & Nabokov are quite, quite out of our students' minds these days. But on top of it all, Joyce remains and will eternally be the Supreme Philosopher of Literary Rhetoric. For in the Age of exclusively **pecuniary** incentives, who will again work for nothing for full 17 years (not to take into account the so very special skills of genius involved)?

About Q11: *Do you think that FW cannot be paraphrased or summarized to anyone's satisfaction? Why did Joyce make such difficult expressions using so many languages? With such difficult word play did Joyce want to convey some important messages?*

As long as we do not exactly understand WHY Joyce fiddled with Language Convention to such a wild extent, and (b) WHY hce/HCE is so protean, and his Family too, we can neither paraphrase, nor summarize. Nor even Translate. Remember that WHY is a very difficult question Word indeed!

Q12: *Are there any literary techniques in FW worth imitating, or, at least, letting oneself be influenced by...?*

All. Everything. Stuart Gilbert (1930/1969: 172-176) pointed to many... It is only a pity that scholarship hasn't got that far yet. But it will come. It will sure come. When the period of linguistic-discourse debasement by the media will have spent its force... And it is here that the Internet will help. Stuart Gilbert brought circumstantial evidence to prove that ALL figures of speech were there within the span of a single episode of *Ulysses*. Later a contributor to the *Wake NewsLitter* proved beyond a shade of doubt that all these, and more, were to be discovered within one single page of FW! Though they were both speaking in terms of 50, or so, literary **devices**, rather than in terms of the existing 500 or more, their point was proven beyond doubt, and their evidence is very, very relevant.

Q13: *Do you recommend FW to other people? If so, how should they handle it?*

God forbid FW is ever recommended as obligatory Reading by any Educational Establishment well-established! through Government push anywhere in the World! Anywhere! For that would kill it the way it has quite killed Shakespeare & Flaubert & Proust & Blake in the eyes, ears & hearts of so many millions of little boys & girls plodding unwillingly to school, in ever so many schools all round the world. **I do recommend it most warmly, but only by implication...** and occasional hints: For imposition ex cathedra kills Literature. *Irrémédiablement*

About Q13: *Do you think that Joyce wanted FW to be read by general readers who have no profound knowledge in languages?*

He thought—together with Eliot & Pound—that the whole world would gradually get more & more educated: our own parents thought so too. Instead, the whole world gets more illiterate with pulp fiction generating cheap television (with a range of vocabulary of around 3,000 American words or even less), & Government Education foregrounding the Here & Now to the detriment of a panChronic Weltanschauung (with Thunder taught as part of Environment Studies), and Poetry having disappeared from the Media absolutely everywhere). Paradoxically, a Reader today is far less equipped culturally than a Reader 100 years ago. Then, WHY did Joyce study Italian (& French), and not English, like you & me? And not Irish either?

Q14: *Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?*

Because they might intuit its overwhelming importance. Others of course do it for mere academic—or scholarly—credit.

About Q14: *How do you evaluate the famous critical approaches of Lacan or Derrida on FW? What do you think of the future trend of those critiques?*

- (a) I met Jacques Lacan first in 1974 at the First World Congress of Semiotics in Milan, a congress organized by Umberto Eco (both his lecture, & my FW paper are printed in the Congress Proceedings). Then I met him again at the 1975 Joyce Symposium in Paris. His lecture there I have in front of me, edited by J. Aubert, entitled “Joyce le Symptome”. On both these occasions I discussed FW with him, sometimes in the presence of Roman Jakobson of Harvard. I basically agree with Lacan (esp pp.16-17 of vol.1 of Paris Proceedings) where he compares Joyce with Verdi & calls pages 162 & 509 ‘un tour de farce’, a comment full of praise.
- (b) I studied Derrida in the early 1970’s in Stockholm, in a Danish translation of *De la Grammatologie*, which I still must have somewhere. I was asked to do presentations of that particular book to the Swedish Society of Psychoanalysis whose members had no French. The discussions went on in Swedish about a text in Danish, originally written in French by Derrida. Then, I met the Man himself at the 1984 Joyce Symposium in Frankfurt, organized by Gabler: as I shared the same hotel with Derrida, we had breakfast together and, inevitably,

discussed FW. I feel I have very little in common with him, as his fundamental views on Language are so very divergent from mine. We never found common points worth the notice. There is a lot of preliminary FW work to do before we get to Derrida's brand of philosophy. I never even quote him in my book on FW.

Q15: *If you think the reading is difficult, what are the causes?*

I explained this in my book *The Language of the Devil*: the paradox is that—The more difficult the text, the faster the very first reading must be (forget the ReadersGuides!): just like driving a car on a bumpy road—going faster: you may kill the car, but you get there with less hiccups in your breast...

About Q15: *How do you evaluate your book Language of the Devil (1987) now? Why did you use the word devil?*

You ask how do I evaluate my book *Language of the Devil* now: I think it is as topical as ever, and as correct as ever. I would never change a syllable in it. I am slowly putting together a follow-up along identical principles: that was mentioned here and there in the text, if you remember. I am using DEVIL in the sense of Blake, esp. his *Marriage of Heaven & Hell*. It is the sense of Joyce too, in his letter entitled *The Cat & the Devil* to his grandson Stephen J, who visited me in Monaco several times, and who published that letter in bookform, in English, and then separately in French. Actually, Joyce was fond of the devil: he even looked like one. Remember also his slogan "Silence, Exile, & Cunning", very devilish indeed. Then the Dante-Inferno associations & affinities which bring in Beckett and the whole of Italian literature.

Q16: *How to describe your experience of reading FW?*

Exhilarating! Quite probably it is the most "charged-with-meaning" Book in the whole of World Literature.

[footnote: Always remember Ezra Pound's so very relevant definition of Literature: "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." (in: 'HOW to Read', in: *Literary Essays*. 1918/1968. p.23.)]

About Q16: *Would you tell me about your first experience of reading FW; when, how, and why?*

As a small child, during the War (1941-1944), my favourite hobby was to identify foreign languages on short-wave radio. Having had a smattering of Greek from earliest days (my paternal grandmother came from the island of Rhodos), and speaking English with my father most of the time (he had received an American education at Constantinople), I could identify up to twenty languages on the radio without ever having seen them written, or without having met any people who were native speakers of them. In secondary school, I was the best pupil at languages: first German, during the occupation, then Rumanian, Latin, some Russian, a lot of private lessons of French at home, and finally massive English at the end of the war. Throughout my schooling days, & University, I was the acknowledged multiLanguage expert. I then learnt Swedish in six months (after my father died), and thus easily understood both Danish & Norwegian. I tried Finnish without any success. It is against this language background that I came to FW as a teenager: I took it to be the universal language book. For I am one of the rare persons who reads FW for multiLanguage rather than for the Story: and I have remained like that all my life, I'm afraid. The fundamental attraction of my first reading of FW, fragmentary of course, was the rather childish research Question "How can so many Languages & so many difficult words be in one single head? That of Author Joyce?" And I have stayed with this Question. To put it bluntly, I think I am at the opposite pole of scholars like Adaline Glasheen & Bernie Benstock who concentrated on WHO'S WHO in the book and were almost exclusively digging for the Story, which was then so elegantly displayed by Anthony Burgess, my neighbour here in Monaco, in his book *A Shorter FW*. The Story is vastly important of course, but there are also other structural elements, like Clive Hart's motifs, which give the book both Shape & Symmetry. Then I discovered by myself that it is not the Story that is so important but rather the characters, headed by the protean HCE. But I usually I do not adopt other people's ready-made conclusions: I prefer to read & re-read FW until I reach conclusions of my own. That is why I always have a copy of it at hand.

Q17: Is FW translatable?

Most faithfully & absolutely accurately, **NEVER!** (Nor can Shakespeare, within the same **narrow Range of Rigour**, with Pentameters, (non)Rhyme, Alliteration, Pun, etc. met on an ABSOLUTE parity basis.) (No! No genuinely great literary text ever is: except perhaps by Beckett his own work only.) But very, very approximatively, **MAYBE!** If we define journalistic subediting of press agency fax & teleprint pulp as **intraLanguage paraphrase**, then Translation becomes almost automatically what we should call **interLanguage paraphrase**, the prerequisite of which is to define the

Language first. Let us state the following: There is genuine consensus that Dickens wrote in English. Balzac wrote in French. Equally clearly. Which means that the Languages of Dickens & Balzac are Constants. In the 20th Century however, the language picture changes drastically, as Sam. Beckett would be Dickens & Balzac in one, sending his English manuscripts to Publisher John Calder in London & his French manuscripts to Publisher Jérôme Lindon in Paris, equally famous. (There is then here the subsidiary question – Was Beckett translating himself? If so, **from what** Language into what Language? On that point, all Critics either fumble, or remain quasiSilent.) Bearing all this well in mind, we must then ask the question: How about Joyce in FW? Where is the Language Constant? It is not at all by mere chance that he clearly appended his List of 40 Languages right at the end of his (BritishMuseumLibrary) FW Manuscript. Why did he do that? To ram the point home with the finesse of a dull sledge hammer that it was these 40 Languages (and perhaps a little more) that was **his** Constant. Quite idiosyncratically so. If we are to adopt a consistent Fragestellung Approach in dealing with Translation, we must then also ask –Is the *Honuphrius Episode* (fw572.21 to 573.33 down to “Translate a lax”) written in crystal-clear English? My answer to that question is **most categorically YES!** One only needs to take into account the following types of “rewrite transformations” in point of ubiquity of personal reference, or **ubiquity of identity**, for short: Another theoretical aside is necessary here: Roman Jakobson’s fundamental definition of the Sign in 1972 at the Milan Congress of Semiotics is more than essential for a rigorous outline of the FW Story. Jakobson says in untranslatable French: “Le signe est un renvoi.” If we represent it by an arrow, thus $P \rightarrow \pi$. We obtain a remarkable placement of the 48-line long Honuphrius microtext against the overall macrotext of 628 pages (of, roughly, 36 lines each) which is the whole of FW: (in order of appearance in the Episode:)

Honuphrius → Humphrey → HCE	→ {Father...}
Felicia → Issy → Izzy → Isabel → Isolde	→ {Daughter...}
Eugenius → Coemghen → Finn → Kevin → Shaun	→ {Son 2...}
Jeremias → Jerry → Shem	→ {Son 1...}
Anita → Ana Livia → ALP	→ {Mother...}

It must be said in passing that the Honuphrius Episode carries exactly thirty different Names of Persons in 48 lines: the rest is **written in very “pure” and unadulterated English**. One of the relatively few writers of good literature who resorts to **ubiquity of identity** in his fiction is William Faulkner in his *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). Did he ever get it from Joyce? They seem to have caught a glimpse of each other in a Paris restaurant...The hypothetical answer (in part to **Q 12 above**) is that most Americans have always been fascinated by the ubiquitous Man in the

Macintosh... (*Ulysses* 6.895 "I don't know who he is. Is that his name?") Then, the most important question in Paraphrase & Translation is that of **Equivalence**. Complex informational-cum-linguistic equivalence. (Most acutely aware of it was of course... Beckett). It constantly asks the question whether **A is equivalent to B**, and on what grounds: the range of grounds is indefinite, too often fringing infinity. We should never forget that there is **Cultural Equivalence** and **Linguistic Equivalence**: a word is sure to always and invariably have a corresponding equivalent; not so much a Proverb or a Cliché. Or rather: not quite as easily. Then come the more complex StylisticRhetoric Equivalence, and last but not least national (?) Discourse Equivalence. One last thing on the issue of Translation: by the side of the most outstanding Linguistic Genius of James Joyce, the Linguistic Competences of a Dickens, of a Balzac, and even of a Beckett look minuscule: Shakespeare himself pales somewhat. The only pity is that the glitterati have so little foreignAlien Language to go by in their value judgments...

About Q17: *There are FW translations into French, Italian, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, etc. however, Yanase's FW translation into Japanese looks like to make a different FW. On the other hand a paraphrase of the end of FW entitled "Soft Morning, City!" by John Hinsdale Thompson (in The Analyst XII) conveys the original meaning and beauty. Do you think the paraphrase of FW into the modern English is still useful?*

I have right in front of me the Italian Translation of Luigi Schenoni as well as the French Translation of Philippe Lavergne. I know Schenoni personally—I met him often at Joyce Congresses, and he visited me several times in Monaco. Between 1977 and 1987, I used to co-ordinate—at Joyce symposia—panels called "Linguistic Analysis of FW" and both Schenoni & Liana Burgess (Anthony Burgess's wife) were my panelists in Dublin, Zurich, Frankfurt, etc. I have the Japanese translation, boxed somewhere too, though I cannot lay my hands on it right now. The Spanish & Korean translations I have never seen. I rate Schenoni's Italian translation the best of all the ones I know and I can judge: he is far more courageous, & dares to twist Italian most energetically; Joyce himself is sure to have looked benignly upon it. Schenoni is so cocksure of himself that he puts the original FW text a fronte, that is, by the side of his own work. Also, his critical apparatus is formidable. Lavergne's is quite tame by comparison: it is more than clear that he does not dare to mangle the delicate French language as he should in order to pack in all that Joyce wanted carried by the FW texture. The text is complete it is true, but the translator's flimsy Avant-propos (pp.3-6) does in no way reveal the translator's motivations or procedures. Whenever I look at it, I wish I could do some research into the specific constraints societally imposed

on French non-casual discourse... As to paraphrase, it is better than nothing, but I don't think much of it.

Q18: What is the place of FW in World Literature?

I am using the term **Weltliteratur** in the Goethe/Eckermann sense, qv, and I consider it superior to the overSubjective overCirculated **Comparative Literature**, for global-village mentality & ways of thinking do in the long run impose World Literature as one. Within this optic FW is still patiently expecting its doom in the Great Dentist's waiting room, with Joyce non-novices doing far too little to ensure it pride of place. This sustained interest in Japan for Joyce & ALL his work amply proves my point. Not quite agreeing with Vladimir Nabokov, who extols *Ulysses*, but not FW, this is exactly what I for one am trying to do. A quixotesque undertaking? In this world of semiLiteracy & avalanche of pulp fiction, perhaps. The book may have been halfkilled by Hitler & his War, but my conviction is that the 1939 artistic & literary standards are not history yet. FW is sure to come into its own when—(1) non-translation attitudes will carry the day, (2) individual European Languages will all of them be thriving all over the world, and (3) Rhetoric as a complex Theory of Literary Devices will again be what it used to be in the good old days...

[footnote: The term **Weltliteratur** is first mentioned in *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, 1823-1832, published by his secretary Johann Peter Eckermann.]

About Q18: *Could you tell us who are your favourite authors other than Joyce?*

Favourite Authors? I like to discuss William Blake or Joseph Conrad with my students: years ago, in a series of lectures at the University of Turin I gave an Analysis of Blake's Prose for a whole term. Other names of authors have already cropped up in my Answers to your Questions here, which I entitled "Who's Afraid of FW?". I am at the moment preparing for a couple of lectures on Ezra Pound, whom I consider to be, together with Eliot, even more important than Joyce or Beckett, in point of weighty theoretical statements. Beckett, of course: I gave about ten lectures on Beckett in Stockholm & Uppsala in December 1969, when he got the Nobel Prize. In Monaco, at the Princess Grace Library, where I had been appointed Director by Prince Rainier III, I organized the following international Congresses: (a) Gabler's 1984 *Ulysses*, in 1985. (b) William Butler Yeats (with Norman Jeffares, who even sent an invitation to attend to the Crown Princess of Japan), in 1987. (c) the Joyce Symposium, for 500 participants, in June 1990. (d) the first ever Congress on Samuel Beckett, in 1991. (e) the first ever Congress on Oscar Wilde, in 1993. (All Proceedings Volumes were

published by Colin Smythe.) My research interest at the moment is focused on Writers who Wrote in Languages Other than Their Own: (a) Tristan Tzara, Eugene Ionesco, Mircea Eliade & Emile Cioran (coming to French from a Rumanian background). (b) Elias Canetti, Nobel Prize 1981, (coming to German from Bulgarian & Spanish, via English?). (c) Vladimir Nabokov (coming to English from a clear Russian background). (d) even the poet Dylan Thomas, whose Welsh language is omnipresent in his English... They are practically all 20th Century writers. From previous centuries I would first name Dante Alighieri, who wrote everything in Latin, except the *Commedia* (I am lucky to be so close to Italy, and have the opportunity to polish my Italian all the time). And, of course, Black & Browning. esp, *The Ring & the Book*... and *Sordello*...

Q19: How many distinct **types of Imagination** did Joyce have?

There is a close interdependency between what I call Joyce's **Linguistic Imagination** (fw539.06 Daunt, Gouty and Shopkeeper) to say nothing of—(fw47.19 Suffolose! Shikespower! Seudodanto! Anonymoses!) on the one hand, and what is generally known as the **Imagination Character-Situational** on the other hand, in the following very relevant microtexts:

Dickens ("Papa, what's money?")

& Ch. Bronte ("Reader, I married him.")

& Swift ("My father had a small estate in Notthinghamshire")

& Defoe—Joyce's favourite! ("I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York").

Remember that, by comparison, **Joyce's Imagination has always been more than episodic** (Epiphanies, to Diary jottings down, to snatches of interior monologue, to—in FW—snatches of words). Throughout. It should always and invariably be defined as (a) episodic, and (b) thoroughly linguistic. One of the most superb of Joyce's "linguistic" achievements is beyond doubt—(fw244.34:1.2) (**Panther monster** for gloss 'paternoster'). Its counterpart in point of exquisiteness of aesthetic perfection (in plain words, Joyce's by far the most beautiful piece of texture) is the very last Sentence of the second Episode of *Ulysses*: the wellknown 'Mr Deasy' Episode: (u 2.448-9) (On his wise shoulders through the checkerwork of leaves the sun flung spangles, dancing coins.)

[footnote re **Panther monster**: cf my *Language of the Devil*, which is devoting a whole chapter to a Paradigmatic Analysis of the various occurrences of Paternoster segments in FW, pp.36 to 55]

About Q19: What is the source of Joyce's imagination?



There is no single source for Joyce's Imagination. He had a fixation with Languages, and ALSO a fixation with Prose Fiction: hence TWO, (a) we should all remember that wherever Joyce went he not only learnt the language of the Place, but also, more important, pushed all his family to do the same (his wife's Italian was adequate; his grandson's Stephen Zurich-German is near native). Then, Trieste has this in common with both Monaco & Zurich that they were & are places where many languages are spoken (cf Italo SVEVO, *La Coscienza di Zeno* & Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*—with Tzara, Lenin & Joyce in Zurich). According to statistics there are today 92 national groups in Monaco speaking at least 40 languages: this is hypothetically true of both Zurich & Trieste, full of exiles throughout the 20th Century. (b) Genuine imaginations, be they fictional or linguistic, are compulsive in nature. The most relevant examples are the major novelists who produced a novel a year (not necessarily for money!) for long stretches of time. Rebelais & Fielding. Balzac & Dickens, or Thackeray. Proust & Henry James. Graham Greene & Anthony Burgess. Not all had other languages (neither Greene nor James did!), but they all had the compulsion to write fiction, which is one way of materializing imaginative outbursts. What triggers the outbursts? That we do not know. Money? No! that only happens with very nonpermanent Literature...

C. George Sandulescu (Ph.D.) is Greek by origin, Rumanian by birth, Swedish by nationality, and English by education. He has worked as a teacher & researcher, & taken part in international congresses. His twin focus of research is (a) 20th Century European literatures, with emphasis on Joyce & Beckett, and (b) a handful of central European languages and their respective linguistics, again with emphasis on Joyce & Beckett. In 1978 he settled in Monaco, soon after Anthony Burgess took up residence there, and was appointed Director of the Princess Grace Irish Library, which he developed as a Conference Centre: in the following 14 years or so, he organized international conventions on Joyce (1985 & 1990), Irishness (1986), Yeats (1987), Beckett (1991), Wilde (1993), with all Proceedings published. At present he conducts massive research into how languages correlate with the narrative structure of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

15. Joe Schork and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW from beginning to end? Are there parts which cannot be understood?

No, I personally do not (and have not) read the *WAKE* continuously, from start to finish; rather, I read selected pages and puzzle through them. There are many parts which are very difficult to understand, even for readers who have gone over the pages many times. I suspect that almost every reader uses Roland McHugh's *ANNOTATIONS* for basic help with facts (linguistic, cultural, historical) buried in the text.

About Q1: When and how did you read FW at your first reading?

My first extensive and through reading of FW was in the 1980's, after I had examined the facsimiles of the *NOTEBOOKS* and was interested in tracing Joyce's use of a series of notes (from a popular biography of P.T. Barnum). Before that I had merely tried to make sense of a few passages here and there in the work.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

If "plot" means the presence of the basic characters and the repetition of primary themes (as determined and constantly modified and refined by experts), yes—after many years of examining the text itself, working on the underlying *NOTEBOOKS*, and reading the critical suggestions of experienced scholars, I feel fairly confident in following the general movement of the *WAKE* (which is nothing like the "plot" of a conventional novel). If "plot" means following the action and the characters involved in it on every page (as would be necessary in a conventional novel), hell no!

About Q2: Would you teach us about reading the texts hagiographically as suggested by your book JOYCE AND HAGIOGRAPHY (2000)?

Granted the cultural/religious aspects of Joyce's youth and his education in elite Jesuit schools, it is natural that the saints of the Roman Catholic church were as much a part of his early life as the heroes and heroines of Classical mythology or the

figures of early Irish history. Thus, when he wrote about turn of the century Ireland, saints played a significant role in his fiction. This is a matter of background, not belief. I share the same of the cultural and educational background (but in the United States, not Ireland), thus I have written a book on the impact of hagiography (saint-lore) on Joyce's work—especially since I have found out that most Joyceans know very little about this esoteric topic. The detection of saints and their usually humorous contributions to Joyce's fiction is just one of the many ways that scholars can help others to understand and enjoy the sometimes difficult task of getting at *ULYSSES* or *FINNEGANS WAKE*.

Q3: If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?

In my judgment, Joyce wanted to do at least two things in the *WAKE*: first, create a sustained work in which the language, techniques, and structures are very different from any other book; second, incorporate into that work elements from many cultures from different eras and places—with a natural (because that is what he knew best) emphasis on material from western European civilization, ancient and modern. The *WAKE* has no moral, political, social, or religious purpose; it is a literary experiment. Thus, it describes its own execution. And, always and everywhere in its conception and evolution, humour in the most important element.

About Q3: What do you mean by "FW describes its own execution"? Please explain more.

By "execution" I do mean "legally sanctioned death," but "the process of putting the work of art together," "the creating, making of the work, in all its details." Thus FW is about its own creation.

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

A huge success for those who (like me) enjoy working on 628-page multilingual, polycultural, funny crossword puzzles. I like a good laugh, even at the expense of days of trying to figure out what the joke is, and in what languages. Those who are not turned on by language-study and exotic references to minute bits of world history, all jumbled together, will be totally frustrated by even a few lines of the *WAKE*. Those who attempt to find in it a social or potical message, expressed in some buried code or key, are wrong and usually boring.

About Q4: *Can't we try to find great issues of universal significance in FW, such as the struggle between father and sons or the relation between father and daughter?*

Those who want to examine and find universal significance in Joyce's use of father-son, rival brothers, father-daughter relationships in FW are certainly welcome to do so. I personally find that a concentration on such issues usually stems from a desire to find parallels in Joyce's personal life or to construct some cosmic theory based on FW. That process does not interest me.

Q5: *Is reading FW worthwhile or not?*

If you enjoy the type of detection that I describe above, you will enjoy the *WAKE*, but it takes time, patience, and practice. If you want or expect a "moral message" or a guide to social action in what you read, pick up another book and wax ponderous over it.

About Q5: *Do you think Joyce wanted readers to read FW as you have stated?*

Yes.

Q6: *Do you think FW contains too much sexual matter?*

There is sexual (and scatological) matter everywhere in the *WAKE*, but it generally takes a lot of digging to figure out what's going on, how, and to whom. The *WAKE* is not a pan-European *KAMA SUTRA*; on the other hand, there are many humorous and outrageous references to sexual matters of every sort—and usually expressed in the language of clever, but raunchy high-school boys.

Q7: *Is reading FW interesting?*

If a reader is interested in the topics and techniques which I judge to be essential to the *WAKE*, yes. If the task sound too difficult, too Eurocentric, too much of a puzzle aimed at language-savvy fact-freaks, no.

Q8: *Does FW have a future? Will it be read in 21st Century?*

In my judgment, very few people read FW during the last half of the 20th Century. Many people pretend they have read the *WAKE*, but they have usually

merely read about it. Others read into FW their own political/social concerns. That will continue; but I suspect that the current century will see a drop in *WAKE* readers, as its linguistic and cultural foundations seem more remote and require years of study. The *WAKE* is now a book for a small international group of intellectually elite who like looking things up in reference books (and that has nothing to do with academic credentials or positions); it will remain even more so in the future. Please note, my answer is undoubtedly conditioned by my primary interests in the “genetic” background of FW, its sources, their traces in the *NOTEBOOKS*, and the development of the text.

About Q8: *When I see Joyce’s original hand-writing, I am afraid that some errors might have occurred in reproducing the manuscripts. Do you think the present text of FW has no such errors?*

Given the exotic nature of the development of FW there are certainly many typographical error in the final text. Also, Joyce’s handwriting is often extremely difficult to decipher. One of the reasons why I like genetic scholarship is that the finding of Joyce’s source is sometimes the only clue to what one of his notes says.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading FW?*

Yes, you can learn everything, but that knowledge will not make you rich, or just, or kind, or pious—it will, however, give you great fun and fill your head with wonderfully useless information which has been expressed with flair and humour.

Q10: *Do you think Lucia’s madness affected Joyce’s writing?*

Of course, since he was a human being and a concerned father. Did it leave an discernible mark on or is it the key to the *WAKE*? No—no more that the work’s sexual and scatological dimensions are indicative of Joyce’s personal behavior or taste.

Q11: *Which parts of FW are most interesting?*

My personal favorites are: I.6 The Questions (pages 126-168); II.1 The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies (pages 219-259); II.2 Night Lessons (pages 260-308); III.2 Shaun’s Sermon (pages 429-473); IV (.2) Kevin’s Isolation (pages 604.27-607.22). I must immediately add that I like these sections because I know the most about them, their sources, and the *NOTEBOOK* material from which they evolved.

About Q11: *What are the NOTEBOOKS? Where can we find the NOTEBOOKS you referred to?*

For brief comment on the NOTEBOOKS and their use, see R.J. Schork, "By Jingo: Genetic Criticism of *FINNEGANS WAKE*," in *JOYCE STUDIES ANNUAL 5* (1994) 104-127; a comprehensive overview in Danis Rose, *THE TEXTUAL DIARIES OF JAMES JOYCE* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1995).

Q12: *Can one learn any useful literary techniques in FW?*

Practically speaking, no—because FW is unique; it cannot be imitated (and can be parodied only in small bits). Theoretically, yes: any masterpiece (and it is) requires years of planning and revision, as did the *WAKE*. Hence, my special interest in its genesis and gradual revelation.

Q13: *Do you recommend that people read FW? If so, how?*

Yes, if they like puzzles and are prepared for years of puzzlement. For help in that frustrating task, I recommend Roland McHugh, *THE FINNEGANS WAKE EXPERIENCE* as the best introduction to the project. Two basic and essential reference works: Roland McHugh, *ANNOTATIONS TO FINNEGANS WAKE* (revised edition) and Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon, *UNDERSTANDING FINNEGANS WAKE*. Two more advanced helps are James S. Atherton, *THE BOOKS AT THE WAKE* and Roland McHugh, *THE SIGLA OF FINNEGANS WAKE*.

Q14: *Why are quite a number of students and scholars interested in FW?*

Because FW is known, world wide as the ultimate literary challenge. Many people like to try their hand at the most difficult tasks. Others like to pretend that they do.

About Q14: *People are interested to know why Joyce wrote FW after ULYSSES. How do you evaluate ULYSSES in comparison to FW?*

I guess that Joyce felt that FW was the next step in his writing career, one to which he was willing to devote seventeen years of intensive work, even though many of his friends told him that very few people would or could read it. Despite its

technical innovations *ULYSSES* is a relatively conventional novel; the *WAKE* is unique in matter and form. *FINNEGANS WAKE* stands all by itself as the ultimate linguistic/cultural puzzle. The two works cannot be compared, even though some Wakean elements are present in *ULYSSES*.

Q15: If you think that reading FW is difficult, what are the causes of the difficulty?

Throughout all my answers I have stressed that even a beginning reader of FW must have a wide language background (English, Latin, German, French, Italian), know ancient and modern European and Middle Eastern history, and have some background in the scriptures of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the heroes and ritual of Roman Catholicism. These prerequisites, I emphasize, are NOT matters of value, practice, or belief, rather they are necessary background—that of Joyce and of his ideal readers.

Q16: How do you describe your experience of reading FW?

Best fun in the world is working at *Finnegans Wake*.

R.J. Schork (D.Phil.[Oxford]) taught Classics (Latin and Greek language, literature, and culture) in several American universities. His publications include articles on Latin literature, Roman Egypt, Byzantine religious poetry, Shakespeare, 19-20th Century European novels, and James Joyce. His current project is an examination of Joyce's use and abuse of the *Bible*.

16. Sam Slote and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW from the beginning to the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

I can and have read FW from beginning to end several times (as well as having read chapters or passages individually many times). There are far too many parts that I can't understand at all; there are many parts where I would say my understanding is tentative at best; and in certain places, admittedly few, after much work, I've reached a level of comfortable, but still incomplete, comprehension. I'm not sure that this is the same as claiming that there are parts that cannot be understood *at all*. I would say that provisional comprehension is perhaps the best that can be achieved, but this is not quite the same as utter incomprehensibility.

About Q1: What is "provisional comprehension"? Explain more.

I simply mean an interpretation that does not cover everything; there are gaps and so on. It's something tentative, a first (or second or third) step; but never a final step, not something definite, that closes and resolves the matter definitively. To a large extent every interpretation is provisional, with FW I would say that most interpretations that are worth anything are somewhere aware or conscious of their limitations.

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

There is a great temptation for readers these days to focus on plot—at the detriment of other facets of the "literary experience". I try to avoid looking for plot in FW but the temptation is always there: it's easy to think you understand something if you can reduce it to a plot. I strongly doubt that FW tells a story that was then "mucked up" by all those puns. In a sense, I try to avoid "understanding the plot" when I read FW—but then I don't always succeed in this.

About Q2: Do you advise that for general readers the Plot Summary by John Gordon is worthwhile reading?

I don't want to rule anything out, if it helps fine, but be aware of its limitations. Gordon is very knowledgeable about JJ and FW and his approach is very scholarly. One way his book is useful is to show the limitations of a "plot analysis" of FW.

Q3: Then what did Joyce want to say in the book?

If I knew that....

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

Is evaluation the goal of reading? Why must there be a value? or, even, why must there be a goal to reading?

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

See above. Also, some people find it enjoyable, others (many others) don't. The same could be said about pretty much any human activity.

Q6: Do you think FW concerns sexual matter too much?

This question cropped up in our FW reading group last week. A simplistic answer is that FW aims to encompass all human experience and sex is certainly a part of human experience and perhaps, depending on who you ask, the key part of human experience. One need not resort to Freudian or psychoanalytic approaches to appreciate this.

Q7: Was reading FW interesting or not?

Certainly, otherwise I still wouldn't be reading it.

Q8: Will FW become the book of the 21st century?

What then was the book of the 20th century (and the 19th and so on)?

Q9: Can we learn something by reading it?

FW certainly forces its readers into learning how to read again. It can't be read in the same way as a traditional novel and thus requires something different, an

approach that comes slowly, after many years of engagement with the text. I certainly approach other texts differently now.

About Q9: *Could you explain more about the approach that you think the best now? Please extend your opinion.*

I don't think that there is any single mode of reading that can be applied 'en masse' to literary texts. Each text suggests its own protocols of reading, which should always be viewed with some degree of skepticism, i.e. they should be questioned. I think this might be a good way of characterizing how I approach texts differently now after the *Wake*. (This is something that Nathalie Sarraute calls the "ère de soupçon", the age of suspicion.)

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

I prefer not to answer questions like this.

About Q10: *Do you think Joyce had writer's block before, during or at all writing FW?*

Definitely. For the first four years of writing FW (1922-1926), Joyce worked without the benefit of a clear template for what he was writing (unlike *Ulysses* where he had the basic scheme in mind from day one; *Ulysses* did evolve over its seven years of writing but the basic template had been set from the beginning). In October 1923 he wrote Weaver: "The construction is quite different from *Ulysses* where at least the parts of call were known beforehand. ... I work as much as I can because these are not fragments but active elements and when they are more and a little older they will begin to fuse themselves". For those first few years, each new piece would lead to something else which in turn would lead to something else and so on. By 1926 he had enough written that the basic structure was finally apparent to him (the fourfold Vichian scheme, etc.). It only "fused together" in 1926. But, by 1927 Joyce's productivity declined sharply. One could say that Joyce had difficulty writing once he had a clear idea of what he was doing. From that point on he only could work in fits and starts with several lengthy periods of virtual inactivity. It was only in the mid-late 30s, with the final revisions and the writing of II.2, II.3, II.4 and IV that he built up sustained momentum again.

Q11: *Which pages are the most interesting?*

For me, I like I.5 and pretty much all of book III (especially III.3), but I would not claim that these are the most interesting pages.

Q12: Can we find literary techniques to use from reading FW?

Probably. As I said earlier, we can certainly learn to read again, differently.

Q13: Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so, how do you recommend?

Yes. Not everyone will like it. FW works for some sensibilities, not others. I usually say something along the lines of: don't worry about not understanding it, find something to latch onto, you may be wrong in that choice, but since you'll probably never be right about FW anyway, there's no harm in being wrong. In fact, being wrong about FW is more enjoyable than being right about many other things.

Q14: Why are a growing number of scholars and students interested in FW?

I'm not sure this is true.

Q15: If you think the reading difficult, what are the major causes?

Briefly: any single passage in FW (and, by extension, the book as whole) occasions a variety of interpretations, some of which will be contradictory. At the root level the punning and the syntax are behind this polysemy, but there are other factors as well. FW contains references to such a broad number of fields that no single reader has the requisite competence to catch them all (this is one reason why group readings are useful). And even if one could (armed with McHugh, Mink, Glasheen, O Hehir et al.), that might not make any substantive difference: annotation is not quite the same as understanding; at best it's a step along the way. We read FW with our ignorance (obtundity as Fritz said) as well as with our knowledge.

Q16: How would you describe your experience of reading FW?

At first: ambitious. I read FW before reading anything else by Joyce and thought that I could "get it" with enough work. The first time I went cover to cover in about a month and pretty much deluded myself into thinking I had attained some slim level of understanding. Still haven't cracked it, not expecting that I will anytime soon, or ever. In some ways I could say that at each new reading I understand it less

overall but enjoy it more. There is something almost magical when a passage starts to gel, not all the pieces resolve, but something unexpected emerges. I think that there's very little that's accidental in FW; I think Joyce rarely (if ever) puns for the sake of punning, there is some kind of cohesion within passages, but it's a lateral cohesion (and there would be many different modes in which this kind of cohesion could happen). As I said earlier I think people rely on plot too much, this may be because plot is a privileged mode of cohesion. I'd say that FW works otherwise.

About Q16: *I think this is an important opinion; so please explain more. What is cohesion? Explain the last sentence more.*

I simply mean an interpretation where everything fits together (see my first answer and the follow-up). Cohesion is when you can close a book, lay it on your table, and smoke a pipe (or another suitable activity for moments like this), smug in the knowledge that you have mastered the object you have just consumed. I don't think that one can ever approach FW with an expectation of eventual mastery, it's not in the dice.

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17. Donald Theall and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: *Can you read FW until the end?*

Yes, I have read it through a number of times, since my first reading in 1950—a small reading group which included Marshall McLuhan and my wife, Joan. I think it is important to read it as the learned satire that it is. This is why in the early readings of the *Wake*, it was frequently pointed out how central Swift, Sterne, and Rabelais were in the *Wake* (and to a bit lesser extent Pope). Joyce signals this by the constant play with Swift and Sterne's names in the *Wake*. Reading it in the spirit of learned satire, that is, playing with a multiple series of levels enriches the experience, but also brings one closer to Joyce's playing with myths and religions—another motif of the early discussions of the *Wake*. This is also genuinely in the spirit of the *Wake* being a book about books in an era where the book is being transformed by the new electric era.

About Q1: *Would you explain more about McLuhan and your first reading experience of FW?*

I first encountered Joyce's major works as an undergraduate at Yale in late 1948 when I read *Ulysses* in a seminar on great epic works. Because a close friend was doing a baccalaureate thesis on Giambattista Vico, I began playing around with *Finnegans Wake* at the same time. But my first major encounter with the *Wake* began in 1950 when I moved to Toronto and met Marshall McLuhan. In early 1951 as a graduate student working on a thesis under McLuhan's direction, he, my wife and myself and a varying group of two or three other people began to read the *Wake* a few days each week. Sometimes McLuhan and I did further readings on our own. This persisted over three years. During that period I was writing a doctoral thesis under McLuhan's direction on *Communication Theory in Modern Poetry: Yeats, Pound, Eliot and Joyce*, which included a substantial section on *Ulysses* and the *Wake*. I also wrote an article on Joyce's *Wake*, which appeared in the journal associated with McLuhan's first Culture and Communication seminars, *Explorations*, entitled "Here Comes Everybody"—an article which was praised in a letter from Carola Giedion-Welcker. She and her husband had been friends of Joyce who arranged his emigrating with his family to Switzerland during the Second World War. The activity with McLuhan was more than a reading, since it was an ongoing interactive dialogue about Joyce and his context, including

casual readings of a paragraph or two at virtually any time during the day. His personal sense of humor made the reading particularly rich, since he had a natural affinity for the Joycean style of wit (puns, portmanteau words, verbal overlaying, etc.) which permeated his later writings on communication, media and technology.

About Q1: *Are there many parts which cannot be understood?*

It is obvious that there are parts of the *Wake* that will elude most readers, but whether this is a question of their not being understood or rather a question of limitations on the time or attention that any reader can give to explicating an extremely complex, multi-level book. The work of so many Joyceans, such as David Hayman, Adaline Glasheen, James Atherton, Roland McHugh, Clive Hart, Louis Mink, Fritz Senn's *A Wake Newslitter*—and many later writers who have extended their researches into other areas such as children's games and lore, science and technology, popular culture, Greek and Latin references, linguistics, etc.—increasingly suggests that there are no parts of the *Wake* that do not provide perceptual, if not conceptual, significance to all of the text. While there may be parts that at one reading or another I don't grasp, does not mean that they cannot eventually communicate a significance and have an effect. Frequently, it is a question of acquiring further knowledge, particularly in areas such as history and the history of literature and the arts.

Q2: *Can you understand the plot while you are reading?*

Since there are multiple plots in the *Wake* and as plots they are not central to the nature of its structure, it is relatively straightforward to understand the various plots. But being a learned satire (a contemporary Franco-Anglo-Irish transformation of what Bakhtin has discussed as Menippean satire), the plot is not the central feature in the way that it might be in a traditional novel or in Aristotelean poetics. The obvious plot(s) have been pointed out since early on in critical discussions of the *Wake*. But it is an action like that of Lewis Carroll's Alice books—an imaginary dream action reflecting and refracting the everyday world in which plot elements actually become perplexing complexes of semantic ingredients. The famous letter is a prime example of this; the rainbow is another. Joyce constantly gave guidance to the significant elements, which are partly, if not largely marked by the earliest sketches that were to mark what Hayman in *The Wake in Transit* has described as the nodal system of the *Wake*.

About Q2: *Do you recommend to read FW from the beginning to the end (from Book I to Book IV)? Why do most people lose interest in that process? Are there too many difficult words that deviate or dissipate the interest? Isn't it too difficult to grasp the main theme for average readers?*

I believe it is best to set the goal of reading the whole of the *Wake*, but the beginning reader must be aware that he will from time to time wander around in different parts of the *Wake*. Since Joyce's work encourages intellectual play while still providing intense feeling and perceptual activity, there is a natural desire to seek complementary sources of information, while reading. When I first did it in 1950, the guide we used was the then highly regarded *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, but we supplemented it by looking at those books that Joyce used as basic frames of reference which we could recognize—i.e., the Bible, classical sources, the great spiritual books of the East and West, major writers of all periods, atlases, encyclopedias, etc. People often lose interest in the process of reading the *Wake* because they try to approach it like an ordinary novel (or perhaps long, relatively prosaic poem), while the work itself is an entirely new mode of oral, literate and graphic multiplexity which Joyce himself indicated repeatedly. The words ought not to be difficult if they are treated as puns, particularly multilingual puns and if they are listened to for their music as well as their sound and their graphic alphabetic structure. It helps to think of dream, nonsense writing and literature as constituting the code (Roland Barthes) and to think of Joyce as establishing transverse communication as described by Gilles Deleuze in his work on Proust. This transverse aspect causes some of the difficulty, since it is relatively unusual in literary material to lead the participating audience-reader back and forth throughout the work across the surface. This is why the motifs listed in Clive Hart's study of the *Wake* reveal a key aspect of this type of writing (i.e., motifs like "felix culpa", thunderwords, "fiat lux", Buckley and the Russian General, etc.).

Q3: *If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?*

"Describe" seems a strange word to use in relation to what Joyce is about in the construction of a waking dream. If it aims at asking about the core visions of the book, then it should be said Joyce is using learned satire on religion, myth and science to celebrate the re-embodiment of a faith in the world within the human person, fully recognizing that such a fleshly re-embodiment is situated in a world in which an embodied person is an electro-machinic construction of nature. For Joyce this re-situates in his world the love, respect and mutual support of the traditional familial relations through the primacy of the woman. In the process he is critiquing the

continual war that rises out of paternalistic or power oriented belief systems, whether as religions, mythical systems or the power-oriented aspects of science and technology. His satire, in the tradition of learned satire, is a mixture of praise and blame, celebrating the sacredness of everyday life, while condemning the multitude of modes of power, paternalism and control which threaten it.

About Q3: *Who is the most interesting character in FW among HCE, ALP, Shem, Shaun and Issy for you? And why?*

Each of the characters is interesting (not necessarily likable) in a different way and I would be hard pressed to choose between them. Besides such judgements may not be relevant since the characters are constantly undergoing metamorphosis throughout the *Wake* so there is a certain inconsistency to their nature when compared to the characters in a straightforward novel. HCE is largely an anti-hero (as Bloom is); Shem is a medley of the poet-intellectual and a trickster-con artist permeated by conflicting bouts of insecurity and ego; Shaun is a great study of the manager-politician-bourgeois; ALP, a medley of the feminine, like Molly and the mother goddess; and Issy is the embodiment of sexuality, virility, youthfulness, seductiveness and teasing.

Q4: *How do you evaluate the book?*

I'm not sure whether this is asking how one would go about evaluating the book, or what one's evaluation of the book is. Taking it to mean the latter, personally I would consider it one of the greatest books of the twentieth century and artistically on a par with Dante and Leonardo. Perhaps in the long run it is even more the unique epic of its time (like those of Homer, Vergil and Milton) than even his *Ulysses* is. It should be noted the impact that it has had on artists and thinkers from diverse areas of interest such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Jacques Derrida, Marshall McLuhan, and Phillipe Sollers. Further in the popular cultural sphere there are people such as Frank Zappa, Robert Dobbs—the Flipside columnist, and even the Beatles. In reaching such an evaluation I personally unabashedly rate as a high factor that it is an intensely intellectual, yet intensely human and emotional work contrary to many of our preferences of the present moment. While my references are focussed on the West, it is only because the generic direction Joyce chose rose out of that tradition, but as many discussions of Joyce have pointed out, his challenge was to produce one of those globally significant books on a level with the *Upanishads*, the

Koran, the Book of the Dead, etc. (and perhaps in the secularizing the sacred and re-inserting it within the everyday world of physical love, he has succeeded).

About Q4: *Why are such thinkers as Derrida and Lacan interested in FW? How do you connect FW to Beatles?*

FW is connected to the Beatles on various occasions by John Lennon himself (see, for example, *The Beatles Anthology*, 176). In a brief reply it would be hard to encompass all the complex inter-relationships of Joyce with Derrida, Lacan and for that matter, Deleuze. Derrida has explained his own fascination in two lectures on Joyce, which are well known in the Joycean world. Lacan incorporated Joyce into his lectures that have been published. These issues have been explored in Geert Lernout's *French Joyce*, in the essays in *Post-Structuralist Joyce* (ed. Attridge and Rabaté) as well as more specific studies such as Allan Roughley's work on Joyce and Derrida. But basically Joyce was a pre-post-structuralist who anticipated in his practice many of the issues that Derrida, Lacan and Deleuze later theorised. Their interest in the *Wake* was an interest into the intuitive realization within Joyce's art of what vitiates many aspects of their theories.

Q5: *Do you think FW concerns itself with sexual matters too much?*

No, since embodiment is central to the core vision of the work. The entire sexual realm is relevant and significant. The celebration of the sacredness of human intercourse at all levels necessitates, even welcomes, the entire spectrum of sexual activity, including the tactility and sensitivity of the flesh of human bodies.

About Q5: *How do you think of the incest desire or triangular relationship in FW?*

Incest is just one aspect of Joyce's encompassing all the modes of polymorphous perverse sexuality that permeate the *Wake*. It has a particular significance because of its association with the question of Freud-Jung and psychiatry which I'll comment on below, but it is only one of the modes of perverse sexuality that Joyce invokes and it is only one of the many sets of triangular relationship within the *Wake*. Joyce is not judgmental on any of these modes of sexuality, since he is reviewing the global modes of human existence through time and space that have been investigated anthropologically. Seeing he does approach these questions anthropologically through writers like Malinowski, Lévi-Bruhl, Jousse and others, he could approach the question of incest through its presence in tribal cultures as well as

the early stages of biblical history. In this context it became an essential part of his Viconian history of the emergence of humankind

Q6: Is reading FW interesting or not?

Since I've been reading it now for fifty-two years and am always happy to return to it, I find it fascinating and rich in emotional and intellectual rewards.

About Q6: *Can average readers find interest in reading FW?*

Obviously, since many have.

Q7: Does FW have a future to be read in the 21st century?

Like all great, complex works it has a prospect for being read long into the future as long as there is a future, which may not be, if we cannot sense the critique of war and violence in books such as the *Wake*.

About Q7: *Would you explain more about danger of "the critique of war and violence"?*

Joyce was writing the *Wake* between two wars, the first of which it is known affected him and his writing of *Ulysses* (see, for example, Fairhill's *James Joyce and the Question of History*). The *Wake* was launched as a period of military action and violence in Ireland was coming to a conclusion. As he was finishing the work, Hitler was rising to power and the threats of impending war permeated Europe. Joyce well understood Hitler's power as Ruth von Phul's note in the *Wake Newslitters* (New Series v. I, #5 (1964)) suggests. The *Wake* opens with the "museyroom" and its remembrance of Napoleon and Wellington ("Willingdone") and closes with the debate between Muta and Juva, which von Phul suggests referred to the Munich pact of 1938 among other things. Puns such as those present in "Ghazi power" link Irish violence to later Nazi violence. But it is permeated with remembrances and echoes of wars, some of which focuses around Buckley and the Russian general. The wars are often linked with religion which seems to be an aspect of the conclusion to the debate between Patrick and the Archdruid following the Muta and Juva interchange. But the point is that Joyce satirizes war and violence as part of his overall satiric vision. This association also often involves religious elements as well, since wars are so frequently permeated by religious elements as they were in Ireland. This fits with Joyce's satirization of organized religion and his celebration of the secularization of the sacred. I'd like to go

on at greater length, but the complexity and importance of this subject makes it impossible to encompass in an interview.

Q8: Can you learn something by reading FW?

Obviously from my previous remarks I believe that I have. It is also apparent that people like Cage and Derrida feel that they have. For an exemplary account of how much someone can learn by reading *Finnegans Wake* read the chapters about Joyce and McLuhan in my recent book *The Virtual Marshall McLuhan*.

About Q8: Would you explain more about the relationship between McLuhan and Joyce or FW?

The relation between Joyce and McLuhan is so extensive that it permeates three chapters in my recent book, *The Virtual Marshall McLuhan* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001). Therefore, I would suggest to anyone interested in Joyce and somewhat interested in McLuhan to read it.

Q9: Do you think Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?

No, not in the obvious way, but it did lead him into an intense interest in psychiatric literature which has a major role in the *Wake*. In other words, I think it opened him to influences he otherwise might not have pursued (e.g. Jung, whose analysis of *Ulysses* upset Joyce, but who, as a later contact through Lucia's problems intellectually involved Joyce).

About Q9: Did Joyce trust the psychotherapy of Freud and Jung?

Joyce never "trusted" any theories. While he was intrigued and used the work of Freud, Jung and other writers on psychology, he contained it within an ambivalent satiric context, which he foreshadows in such quips as the one about Alice, who is "jung and easily freudened".

Q10: Which pages are most interesting?

This question I find leads to a trivializing of genuine reading of the *Wake*, since it is the scope of the entirety that most fascinates. Genetically, perhaps the pages

associated with the original sketches are of great interest as guides to the nodal structure.

Q11: Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?

In a certain way, the *Wake* is an encyclopedia of literary styles, techniques and structures. Just as in Episode 7 of *Ulysses*, Joyce incorporates a comprehensive display of rhetorical figures and techniques. But he also incorporates an extensive display of the wide varieties of prosody. Most obviously, though, is his extensive variety of elaborate paranomasia and other forms of verbal display. Along with microstructures, the *Wake* like *Ulysses* exhibits a wide variety of macrostructures both in its overall structure which is a dream vision, a learned transformation of Menippean satire, an extended dramatic monologue, a cyclical or helical celebration of death and rebirth, etc., and the included structures with each of the seventeen episodes demonstrating one or more different generic forms. It could provide a major source of new literary techniques for contemporary writers, just as the variety of uses made by aspects of it by such various writers as John Cage, Anthony Burgess, Stanislaw Lem and Phillipe Sollers. Of particular importance was the way that Joyce was designing a new language to cope with the complexities of exploring a world in which the book was being transformed as all pre- and post-electric media were rapidly converging. This theme is associated in studies of this aspect of Joyce with the prehistory of cyberculture and virtual reality, and the emergence of hypermedia.

About Q11: Would you explain more about the study of FW through the Internet?

This cannot be outlined in a brief interview. Apart from material in my books on Joyce about this subject. I have two articles which would be particularly relevant to anyone who might be interested. The first "Beyond the Orality/Literacy Principle: James Joyce and the Pre-History of Cyberspace" can be found on-line in *Postmodern Culture* (May 1992) at the John Hopkins University site or the *Finnegans Web* site at Trent University (www.trentu.ca/jjoyce). The other, which is about using the computer technology in Joyce research is available through the journal *Text Technology* (Fall, 2001) and is available at the web site of the Centre for Computing in the Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Toronto. The latter text is more specifically about using the powerful facilities of computers in textual analysis; the former is a more speculative consideration of the way Joyce's vision and the emergence of the Internet were connected. Neither fully examine the wide potential of the web for research for aids to understanding Joyce and the large number of Joyce

aids available. Just the easy availability of the multitude of texts to which Joyce refers and the ease with which they may be searched is not only an impressive aid, but almost an anticipation of what Joyce's vision anticipated.

Q12: *Do you recommend for other people to read FW? If so how recommend?*

Of course, I recommend that people read the *Wake*. It is vitally important as a vision leading to an understanding of the wake of the twentieth century and it is accessible to a wide range of people, as those in reading groups exemplify.

About Q12: *Would you explain about your saying in Q3 that an embodied person is the electro-machinic construction of the nature?*

Again, because of the complexity, I must cite my *James Joyce's Techno-poetics* (Toronto: UTP, 1997) in which the fourth chapter is entitled "Singing the Electro-Mechano-Chemical Body". You see this motif coming up again and again in the *Wake*, particularly in the opening of II,iii in which HCE is described in terms of being an electro-mechanical communicating machine (FW, 309-10). It also suggests one of the ways in which Joyce incorporates and transforms Whitman's poetic vision in his own work. All of this ties up with Joyce's early medical training and with his living through a century in which there has been an increase in our awareness that human body functions are an assemblage of electric, mechanical and chemical energy. In fact, the whole of *James Joyce's Techno-poetics* explores this theme among other scientific, technological and mathematical aspects of Joyce's work. And it is Joyce himself who described himself as "the greatest engineer" as well as a "philosopher" and musician in writing the *Wake*. He also insisted on the *Wake* being grounded on a mathematical structure. It should be noted this has links forward to the next question about new theoretical directions, since these issues arise in the items I have cited there.

Q13: *Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?*

Just note the preceding replies.

About Q13: *Do you expect a new theoretical approach on the critical study of FW?*

The nature of literary theory is such that there will always be a new theoretical approach to the critical study of texts and the complexity of Joyce's text particularly invites this. In some ways the approach through virtuality and cyberspace that has

arisen in works such as those of Darren Tofts and my own writings suggest this. In the light of such recent work as Kathleen Hayles, *HOW We Became Posthuman*, this approach should take on new significance for reasons which I mention below.

Q14: You think the reading difficult, what are the causes?

An unfamiliarity with the complex play with language and languages coupled with a global culture that seems to favour the unintellectual and what is easily grasped and sensational. Reading the *Wake* becomes easier the more one plays with it while reading it. There are other attendant difficulties. It, like Ovid one of Joyce's most cited classical poets, invites a certain amount of research on the part of its readers into history, myth and religion because it is of genuinely satiric epic proportions.

About Q14: *Can FW be included in the poetical work too?*

The *Wake* can only be described as a post-Menippean (or Varronian) satire and like the Varronian or Menippean satire a poetic mixture of poetry and prose.

Q15: How do you describe your experience of reading FW?

That seems to me to be implicit in my responses to all the previous questions. It has been a wonderful, lifelong encounter and interaction with a great poet, visionary and thinker of the twentieth century.

About Q15: *What are the differences between the times of your first reading and the present with regard to reading and understanding of FW?*

Obviously with such a rich text there is increased pleasure and understanding which occurs over time through continuous study.

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18. Aida Yared and *Finnegans Wake* (FW)

Q1: Can you read FW until the last?

Yes, in fact I have read it several times. Initially, it was from beginning to end. Nowadays, I randomly open any page and read, unless I am working on a specific passage. However, whenever I read page 628, I cannot help but turn to page 3 where the sentence seems to continue.

About Q1: Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Way too many. I find that the parts that are understood are only a minority.

About Q1: I know your name by your feminist framework article entitled "Reference as Feminine Pleasure in FW" published in the Abiko Quarterly #18. You are also unique because of your Middle Eastern background. What language is your native one and how many languages can you speak? Where and how did you learn English?

I can speak Arabic, French and English. I grew up in Lebanon where most children learn 2 languages (Arabic and French or English) from the start. In my home, we spoke a hybrid of Arabic and French. The grade school I went to was mostly French, as it was a catholic school started by French missionary nuns. We started English as a 3rd language in Middle school, and then I went to an American University. Defining which is my "mother tongue" is very confusing to me, because I do not feel anchored in any of the 3 languages. Currently most of my work is in English, so this is the language I think and write in. People have suggested various ways of defining a mother tongue; my favorite is Fritz Senn's suggestion: it is the language in which you address a cat (for me Arabic), or possibly the language in which you count (French), you cuss while driving (Arabic), you tuck your children into bed (Arabic), you pray (French)...

Q2: Can you understand the plot while you are reading?

Most often, it is very difficult to understand the plot and there may actually be no plot at all. There certainly is some “action” going on but with no linearity to it.

About Q2: *Can you recognize a connecting story line or a hidden narrative structure from Book I to Book IV across FW?*

I personally cannot and do not try to. The way the “plot” if any is structured, is akin to what you may find in Shakespeare’s *Mid-Summer’s Night Dream* or in the *Arabian Nights*, with shifting identities and a storyline constantly distracted and diverted.

Q3: *If so, what did Joyce want to describe in the book?*

I think Joyce wanted to describe what writing is at its most basic level. The process of writing, the way letters look on the page, the difficulty and purpose of it. In many passages, he may be battling his own problems: the illness of his daughter, his eye problems, toothache, questions about intimate relationships. Very importantly in my opinion, he is describing the anxiety of death and the afterworld, and trying to push that moment away.

About Q3: *Would you explain how to prove your opinion that Joyce is describing the anxiety of death and the afterworld?*

It is only a component of FW. There are very frequent references to death, the afterworld, judgment day. The references draw on the *Bible*, Islam, the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and certainly many other sources. Quickly leafing through FW, I notice the presence of *Israfel the Summoner* (the *Angel of Death*) on p.49, the soul in Islam getting handed from angel to angel on p.191, many frightening images of death on p.549. All of chapter II.1 (The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies) may be taking place in the afterworld. I think one of the reasons Joyce was particularly interested in the *Arabian Nights* is that the storyteller Sheherazade is trying to defeat death by telling her tales, stringing them together or enclosing them in one another so that there is no definable “end”. Such storytelling may be a way of fending off death. Joyce further crams into FW countless reference books so that the amount of storytelling in FW, or rather through FW, is practically endless, and would keep one so busy as not to have time for fear, war, death and the such. There is a wonderful letter from Joyce to his daughter-in-law Helen in 1935, where he wishes for her to tell him tales to fill “the nights of the Imbecidrivelling war” (JLIII, 381).

Q4: How do you evaluate the book?

I think this is a great book. It reminds me of a movie by the French moviemaker Alain Resnais called “*Toute la Mémoire du Monde*” from 1956. In it Resnais visits and talks about the French Bibliothèque Nationale, and how it is a repository of human memory. *Finnegans Wake* seems a condensed version of the same. Joyce in fact used to go to the Bibliothèque Nationale and work there on a regular basis. If you were asked which book you would take on the proverbial desert island, and decided to take *Finnegans Wake*, you would have, included in it, fragments from or references to an enormous number of volumes. Some are “references” in the usual sense of the term, others are less known works of doubtful importance; but all are there, present somehow in *Finnegans Wake*. To name a few, the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the 17 volumes of Burton’s *Arabian Nights* and the *Bible* would provide you with plenty of reading material.

About Q4: Explain more about the influence of *Bible* and *Arabian Nights* on FW.

I have not explored the influence of the *Bible* on FW, besides noticing quotes from the *Bible* or references to various characters or stories. A lot has been written about it; let me mention for example the book *A Wake Lock Picked*, where Harry Burrell highlights the presence of Genesis in FW. I have been working on the *Arabian Nights* and find that this work has an enormous influence on FW; in particular the edition by Sir Richard Burton that had some 17 volumes. Joyce greatly admired Burton, which he considered a fellow Irishman. Joyce was reading Burton’s *Arabian Nights* over the several years he was writing FW, and some passages he read 2 or 3 times as we can infer from his Notebooks. He was interested in many aspects of that work: the stories and the narrative strategies used, but also their religious background, and importantly the vocabulary of Richard Burton. I have included some of my findings in an article on Burton’s “Terminal Essay” that came out in *Joyce Studies Annual*, 2000, but there is a lot more to be said.

Q5: Is reading FW worthwhile or not?

I think it is absolutely worthwhile, not so much for the plot or the content, but for the way one reacts to it. It is a very funny book; to be sure, ask a child to read aloud a random passage and chances are they will burst into laughter. Other passages are very tragic and introspective. The *Wake* also provides numerous opportunities for the

thrill that those of us who like puzzles and riddles feel when coming across one; to give you a simple example the word “shirokuro” occurs in the *Wake* and means the Italian “chiaroscuro” which is a painting term meaning the juxtaposition of light and dark; but the same word is made of the Japanese terms “shiro” and “kuro” which mean white and black. It reminds one of Lewis Carroll but Joyce has a background so much more erudite than Carroll that it is much more challenging: he plays across languages and all kinds of references. Then of course, the *Wake* is a starting point for all kinds of research, into its sources or its techniques...

About Q5: *Are there any Arabic alphabet or words used in FW?*

There are a few Arabic words scattered in FW. They are mostly related to Islam, for example on page 5. Joyce also refers to the Arabic alphabet on pp. 121 and 366. I have included some of these findings in an article on Islam in FW (*James Joyce Quarterly*, 1998). Joyce also collected several words (Arabic and English) from Richard Burton’s *Arabian Nights*. They make up a big part of the section entitled “Words” in Notebook VI.A (Scribbledehobble). It is also interesting that Joyce had in his library a pamphlet entitled “Doughty’s English” published by the Society for Pure English. Doughty is the author of *Arabia Deserta*. In the pamphlet, the author argues that Doughty found in Arabic his model for “pure English”. This is something very interesting that I am currently working on.

Q6: *Do you think FW concerns with the sexual matter too much?*

I do not think so. Many passages definitely have sexual overtones, but themes I find at least as frequent are the act of writing and death for example.

About Q6: *Aren’t there several passages related to incestuous desire or dark side of human nature in FW?*

There certainly are incestuous desires evident in the book, towards the mother or among the siblings.

Q7: *Was reading FW interesting or not?*

I think it is absolutely fascinating. I started reading it in the early 1990s and since then almost everything I have read had to do with *Finnegans Wake*. I think that 3 things attracted me the most. First is how precise its language is. Language can be very

deceptive or very loose; in *Finnegans Wake* there is a ferocious precision of language; any change of even a single letter was probably deliberate and carried some kind of meaning. The other reason is the enormous amount of erudition that underlies it. When I was a child, my parents had very few books but one of them was a dictionary and I loved to read in it a lot; reading *Finnegans Wake* has a similar effect. Third I find it quite comfortable to have many languages mixed up; again this has to do with my upbringing and not having a defined “mother tongue”, not feeling absolutely comfortable in any language.

About Q7: *This might be a stereotype question. Is FW a book that has no censorship from the feminist viewpoint?*

FW is a very interesting field for feminists, because it attracts very varied responses.

Q8: *Does FW have a future to be read in the 21st century?*

As you know *Ulysses* was voted by Random House and many other surveys as the top book of the century. *Finnegans Wake* was on the “Top 100” list but not as high. I do think however that it will receive much more attention in the 21st century. At the first Joyce conference I attended (1992, Dublin) I had to look hard to find papers or panels on the *Wake*. This year’s conference (2001, Berkeley) seemed to have the *Wake* as its focal center. This probably had a lot to do with the fact that John Bishop, who organized the conference, is a pioneering Wakean; but also I think because more people are reading it. *Finnegans Wake* will probably be better understood if people can figure out what every word or reference means, and this will become much easier with computerized information exchange. To give you a simple example, if you are looking for the occurrence of a word, you can computer-scan a text and find in no time what you are looking for. I think also the new generation of readers familiar with computers may find *Finnegans Wake* less intimidating than previously; the *Wake* is definitely a “hypertext” where many words have their own story or history that is embedded somewhere between or within the lines, that one could decide to explore (by double clicking on a hot word) or ignore.

About Q8: *Would you comment your favourite books other than FW?*

Before discovering Joyce, my favorite writer was Marcel Proust and my favorite book *À la recherche du temps perdu*. When I read *Ulysses*, I realized Joyce had

accomplished everything I liked in the introspective narrative of Proust, but in a much more complex way. Obviously, *Ulysses* is another favorite book of mine. I also like the works of the French writer Marguerite Duras such as *Moderato Cantabile* and her script of the movie *Hiroshima my Love*; she takes psychological moments and expands them into enormous proportions, turning them into spaces you can inhabit. Other favorites that come to my mind are *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco, *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Tempest* by Shakespeare, *Confessions of a Mask* by Yukio Mishima. Of the books I recently read, a favorite is *Out of Place*, an autobiographical work by Edward Said.

Q9: *Can you learn something by reading FW?*

You can learn as much as you want. I have learned an enormous amount by reading books that have to do with the *Wake* one way or another. They include the *Bible*, Shakespeare's work, the *Koran* and many books about Islam and Mohammed, the *Arabian Nights*, books on African Exploration and the Discovery of the Nile, Irish life and politics... to mention a few. I think also that *Finnegans Wake* tends to bring people together: its readers have a very strong drive to understand or learn more about it, and therefore are eager to interact with other readers. This can be in reading groups or at Joyce conferences. In reading groups for example, many people have the intense and slightly anxious listening attitude you may see if a gypsy is reading your future in the palm of your hand or the grounds of your coffee. I have learned a lot for example from listening to presentations at the Joyce conferences, both about the topic the person was presenting and about the person presenting it. There is an enormous amount of humanity to these interactions. There is a group of people I really like that are my "Joycean friends" that I look forward to seeing once a year.

About Q9: *Do you think FW concerns with politics?*

FW is filled with references to various wars and historical events from Ireland and elsewhere. My particular interest is the British presence in Africa in the 19th century and the Sudanese war. There is no doubt also echoes of political events contemporary to the writing.

Q10: *Do you think that Lucia's madness affected Joyce's writing?*

I am sure it did, though I am not very knowledgeable about it.

About Q10: *Do you support the assertion that duality in female characters of FW reflect the influence of Lucia?*

This is not something I know first-hand about, but Carol Shloss has unearthed very interesting findings about Lucia (see *FW and the Daughter's Body* by Carol Shloss appeared in the *Abiko Quarterly* #17). Also Margaret McBride has published a lot about schizophrenia and FW.

Q11: *Which pages are most interesting?*

I particularly like Chapters I.5, I.7 and the last chapter. Chapter II.2 is probably the most interesting in its complexity.

Q12: *Can you find some literary techniques to learn from FW?*

The main one that I find interesting is the crossover of various languages as in the example I gave above. I also very much enjoy the punning and portmanteau words; when it is time for our evening meal, my children pretend to ring bells and call for "dinnerchime"! The most interesting technique I find in *Finnegans Wake* is the ability of a passage to relate some action in two totally different and parallel moods, with very different connotations.

About Q12: *Why did Joyce use these difficult techniques?*

Joyce certainly wanted to push language to its limits. Although the language of FW may seem chaotic, I rather think that it is extremely precise.

Q13: *Do you recommend for other people to read FW?*

I usually do not. I find myself sometimes recommending *Ulysses* very enthusiastically, but I do not think I ever encouraged anyone to read the *Wake*. It is difficult to start reading the *Wake*, but I think that at some point you may become engrossed in it and it becomes hard to read anything else.

About Q13: *Are there people who are interested in FW in Arabic countries too?*

I am not sure. I often find references to *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*. I know *Ulysses* has been translated into Arabic by Mr. Taha Taha (Egypt); we also met at the James

Joyce Symposium in London Mr. Darwish (Iraq) who is translating *Ulysses* now. The only extensive piece I have seen about *Finnegans Wake* is in *Maousou'at James Joyce* (James Joyce Encyclopedia) by Taha Taha, which was published in 1975.

Q14: *Why are quite a number of scholars or students interested in FW?*

I think the text is so rich that everyone finds something of their own interest in it. For example I am from the Middle East and I found a lot to do with the Arabic language or Middle Eastern religion which made reading much more interesting to me. People from very different backgrounds or varying interests can undig or discover something literary much like a "goldmine". If someone knows about heraldry or chemistry or hermeneutics or astrology... they are likely to stumble upon something that will be very much from their area of interest.

Q15: *If you think the reading difficult, what are the causes?*

The main reason I think is the amount of information that forms part of the text. It is so much packed in that the words become unintelligible and this is very frustrating. Another reason is that people are accustomed to a plot and a story line, or the description of something very visual, and these are rarely readily obvious in *Finnegans Wake*.

About Q15: *We have nostalgia for a hidden plot in FW even if its presence is denied. Why are there words without a plot?*

I think there are too many plots rather than the absence of one. The plots relate to the "storyline" of FW (the possible crime of HCE and the events happening in his household) but there are also innumerable embedded plots that come from fiction books, historical events, newspaper clipping, the lives of saints, myths and legends...

Q16: *How do you describe your experience of reading FW?*

When I tried to read it initially, I was totally baffled; two books helped me get in the mood of sorts: *The Finnegans Wake Experience* a small volume by Roland McHugh, and the cartoon version of the first chapter by Ahearn. I then read it in its entirety, trying to understand spontaneously as much as possible. I then got the *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* by Roland McHugh, mostly to check if my findings were correct and also to try and get enlightened on the majority of words or sentences or

passages that I did not understand. I still keep the *Annotations* handy when I read the *Wake*. At the Joyce Conference of 1992 in Dublin, I learned of the existence of the James Joyce Archive and the *Finnegans Wake* Notebooks, and that became a central starting point of my readings related to the *Wake*.

About Q16: *Would you explain what you wanted to describe in your article of the Abiko Quarterly #18?*

It attracted my attention that the central female figure ALP had component figures that had sinister connotations (Baudelaire's mistress Jeanne Duval whom he called the "vampire", the Biblical queen Judith who gruesomely beheaded Holophrenes, and Islamic deities), and therefore I wanted to report on this dimension. I also was fascinated by how a change in a couple of letters in a word brought in a whole story as a sub-plot in FW; ALP carries a "mealiebag" and this can be read as a "mailbag" since one of ALP's children is a mailcarrier, but also "meal" refers to the "foodbag" where Judith put Holophrenes' head. This is an example of what I was mentioning earlier: the precision of Joyce's language, as well as the "subplots" brought in by a word or sometimes just the substitution of a few letters. We try as readers to "correct" the words back, and McHugh's *Annotations* very often do that, but I wish we could rather unravel (possibly by the study of sources) what every letter that seems "wrong" in FW actually means.

Further Q: *Can FW be translatable to Arabic language?*

It would be beautiful in Arabic, because Arabic is a very rich language with an enormous vocabulary, and therefore the possibility of very nuanced renderings. Sometimes when talking to friends I realize we use different words for very common items such as "room" or "cloud". FW would be very rich material for someone with the time and erudition to translate it.

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Tatsuo Hamada

Reading the *Books About Finnegans Wake*
to Fortify the Previous Interviews.



Tatsuo Hamada

Introduction

“Framed by the dream-induced experiences of Dublin publican, *Finnegans Wake* (FW) recapitulates the cycles of Irish history, and in its multiple allusions almost reveals a universal consciousness. In order to present this new reality Joyce manipulated and distorted language that pushed the work to the furthest limits of comprehensibility. Because of the complexity FW is perhaps more talked about than read, and despite the publication of the manuscripts and drafts of the novel in 1939, probably will never be completely understood (from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, p.1431, 1993).”

The previous *Abiko Annual* #21 & #22 aimed to give the average reader a guide on how to read and understand FW through editor’s interviews to many distinguished Joyceans. In those interviews the following questions were asked.

Can we read through FW?
Can we understand FW?
How can we best read FW?
Is there a plot in FW?
What are the riddles or enigmas of FW?
Are there too many sexual matters in FW?
What did Joyce want to communicate in FW?
Why did Joyce invent tough, mighty words in FW?
Did Lucia’s illness affect FW?
What techniques are to be learned from FW?
Is FW translatable?
How do we evaluate our reading of FW?

The following are excerpts from the *books about FW*, which may fortify or supplement the previous interviews.

1. Can you read through FW from the beginning to the end? Are there many parts which cannot be understood?

Fritz Senn wrote ([*A Reading Exercise in Finnegans Wake*; pp. 48-58] in *Critical Essays on James Joyce's Finnegans Wake* edited by Patrick A. McCarthy in 1992; G.K. Hall & Co., New York)——

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The following remarks are an attempt to generalize from what is essentially a personal but continuous reading experience. The first effect to notice is a slowing down of the process. *Ulysses* cannot be rushed through. A leisurely, ambling pace is much more to the purpose; we do well to pull up from time to time for pauses that are, in both senses of the term, re-creative, and we are compelled to treat ourselves to a privilege that was forbidden to Lot's wife—to satisfy our curiosity by turning back. One of the recurrent phrases in the book, about a "retrospective arrangement", seems to hint at this demand. Events and relations arrange themselves for us if we look, or turn back, and this holds good in a much more retrospectacular way than it does in any traditional novel. But it is *Finnegans Wake*, really, that makes us aware just how inadequate normal consecutive reading can become, starting at the top of a page and going from left to right (or, in a different culture, starting at some other end, which comes to the same thing), unreeling a linear semantic thread. This we still do with *Finnegans Wake*; a book is not to be read—literally—backward. But the rewards of that kind of serial advancement are limited. The restrictions can be counteracted, up to a point, by reiteration, by a theoretically interminable circular progress. Joyce's conspicuous device is to make the end fold back into the beginning and to have the reader recursing, if his patience lasts, eternally along a Viconian spiral. This still amounts to traveling along one road that happens to form a closed circuit. From the very start the discerning reader of *Finnegans Wake* is aware that he finds himself traveling on two or more roads at the same time, roads that may or may not appear to be interrelated, but somehow always manage to coalesce verbally in the one typographical line, for

there cannot be anything except a single-track string of letters. There is, for a first example, a recognizable syntactical movement from beginning to end of: Now eats the vintner over these contents—(318. 20)

The sense may be a trifle odd, but not really baffling. If we are familiar with the opening line of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, however, we can hear an entirely different semantic development: "Now is the winter of our discontent..." We may not see the thematic connection of the two lines (the context would have to provide that). What matters here is that both of them can be followed independently, both are (syntactically, semantically) self-contained. We can learn to take them both in our (one) stride. Similarly, "Bacchulus shakes a rousing guttural" (365.6) does not in itself confuse us. A clumsy phonetic effort seems to be going on ("Bacchus," an overtone, may hint at the cause for the uncouthness of the speech). A reader who has worked his laborious way as far as p. 365 of the book will have little trouble to catch one more echo of what is perhaps the most frequent phrase to come across, a reference to an episode in the Crimean War (Joyce's version): "Buckley shot the Russian General." This reader will probably also see how the manifest meaning somehow tallies with the latent one; the surface version is, perhaps, an illustration that suits the context. Another variation, for instance, spreads an air of philosophical calm about it: "Berkeley showed the reason genrously" (423.32). A first-comer opening the book at random on this page would not suspect a war incident here. This is not so different from what happens to the reader of any novel. If I know the whole series of events leading up to any given episode it will mean more to me than to the casual onlooker. In *Finnegans Wake*, however, the words themselves have acquired a new, often *entirely* new, meaning to the initiated.

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Assuming that in *Finnegans Wake* several meanings are often just "there" simultaneously, and even granting their occasional transparency, we, the readers, will hardly experience the two or more meanings at the same time, right from the start. At one particular moment (or never) the mind is startled and begins to apprehend luminously that more is at stake than at first met the eye.

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A large part of the irritation about *Finnegans Wake* is the certainty that shall always remain deaf and blind to a great many potentialities of the text.

Fritz Senn also wrote (in Joyce's *Dislocutions* in 1984; The Johns Hopkins University Press)—

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Practically minded, I am going to illustrate the paradogmatic nature of the *Wake* by a last example. I am choosing the Eumaeian approach; in rambling qualifications. I will try to impose subjective sense on a relatively simple sentence, 19 out of 218,076 words arranged in a certain order. (This is to give some quantitative dimension to the probable relevance of the following speculations.) The aim is not any new interpretation, in fact the observations made will be commonplace, and the focus is on the dynamics of the uncertainty principle. Moreover, the context will be ignored and the passage treated as though it were a self-contained unit. It is taken from Jaun's sermon:

We may come, touch and go, from atoms and ifs but we're presurely destined to be odd's without ends (FW455.16).

Note that the first part is tentative, careful, and the second part, after "but," much more assured, with the emphatic word "presurely," the only one that is not standard English. And it is the reference to the origin, what lies behind us, which is expressed with caution: "We may...." The assurance extends to what is yet to come. Experience teaches us the other way: the past usually looks more certain than the future. In similar reversion of what might be expected, the language of the more doubtful proposition is reasonably clear, on the surface, but it is far less obvious what we are presurely destined to be—what is it to be "odd's without ends," mind you, with that disturbing apostrophe? So there are anomalies before the statement is even looked into. Something appears to be said about a general "us," about the human condition, the origin and goal of life. One account of it, the one that emerges almost of its own, looks like a popularized scientific view. It suggest probability ("may, odd's"), it proceeds from the observation of the (once) smallest perceivable particles, the atoms, and it is aware of the hypothetical nature of all deductions. It acknowledges the chaos of appearance and the oddity of a seemingly infinite kosmos. Human destinies may be ultimately determined by the atoms that constitute bodies, and the indeterminable movements of the atoms may resemble the couplings and separations of human beings. An element of randomness remains. The scientific mind is doing its best to impose some normative order on what it perceives. Evidently this view is colliding with an entirely different but simultaneous exposition of the human predicament, the traditional doctrine of the Church. In this rendering there is no doubt about the

origin: we descend from our first parents, Adam and Eve, whose doings also predetermined our fate. In this reading, “odd’s” resolves itself into “God’s,” and “odd’s without ends” can be anchored in the doxology: “world without end”—in *saecula saeculorum*. Salvation is somehow connected with predestination. The two views whose outlines have become visible are in conflict, or at least they were so at some stage in history (they remind us of controversies between the Church and Science in the nineteenth century). Here they are merged almost totally. It is as though—to change the ground—the voices of Bloom (with his scientific curiosity and materialist outlook) and Stephen (whose terminology remains saturated with Catholic concepts) were blended. (Remember how Stephen’s “soul... a simple substance,” of Augustinian origin, somehow became Bloom’s “simple soul” — U 633-34). In *Ulysses* a deceptive answer still had to follow a misunderstood question, or else the manner of the Telemachus chapter is retroactively corrected by attitudes emerging in Ithaca. *Finnegans Wake* can do away with succession: contradiction is immediate. We can (as I have tried) separate it into component dictions if we want to. But actually the two views that I dissociated are not simply *there*, they had to be extracted. It takes an act of interpretation to assemble the various textual stimuli into several homogenous systems. And it takes a bit of straining too. For the two overlapping accounts of life are not only subjective options but, moreover, incomplete and defective and literally—as a matter of letters—faulty. The transformation of “odd’s” into “Good’s” can be supported by lexicography, but even so it is a transformation. And, as the documents will tell us that it occurs in oaths and asseverations, it amounts to a somewhat irreverent way to prove the linguistic existence of God. The two statements are then defective in themselves and corrective of each other, as though, under the onslaught of each one, the other were cracking a bit. The meanings are there then by some ghostly presence. Eve is really absent and conditional, but “ifs” coupled with “atoms” makes her absence so obtrusive that she seems evoked. She and Adam are hidden, perhaps here in compliance with Genesis 3:8, but discernible. Why, anyway, should we undo Joyce’s handiwork and back-translate a Wakean item into what it is at such pains to evade? *Finnegans Wake* refuses to remain content with the habitual simplifications of language. Our minds, however, can only grasp simplifications. My own, in this case, were shaped by a desire to place the *Wake* within a tension between dogma and doubt, so I reduced the coexistent conflicts into one that suited my purpose. We extract what sense we can find to rearrange it according to our needs and our

categories. But let us by all means know that this is what we are doing and not confuse it with what *Finnegans Wake* “is.”

Clive Hart wrote ([The Elephant in the Belly: Exegesis of *Finnegans Wake*; pp. 1-8] in *A Wake Newslitter* No. 13 in May, 1963)—

(Page 2)

For the average reader—and all too often for the average student as well—the common standards have been replaced by a set of publicly announced critical views on FW which have been taken for granted as a basis on which to work. The highly flavoured dicta of the *Skeleton Key* have very often been accepted without question, while categorical statements about Joyce’s methods of word-formation and word-association have been reiterated for years without their being subjected to scrutiny by application to selected passages of text. One suspects, indeed, that a great many people have written about FW without devoting to it even as much time as they would to *Ulysses*. Many a false trail has been started, many a chimera hunted through the dense pages as a result. The danger is not, I believe, that incorrect readings will be offered (ultimately there is, I think, no such thing as an incorrect reading of FW) but that we shall lose our sense of proportion in assessing the relative importance of readings.

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Finally, I should like to set out in summary form my own present approach to this literary phenomenon. I think that Mr Atherton’s view of FW as a cosmos with its own laws and self-consistency has been demonstrated beyond the need for further comment. It is from this position that I start. The concept of correctness must, I believe, give way entirely to pragmatism. A reading is to be accepted if it provides answers. But we must take care: by this method it is possible to prove literally anything. Take any passage at random and you can demonstrate that it is about, say, the twenty-four golden umbrellas of the King of Thailand. Now, my point is that I believe that this apparently lunatic principle has a certain validity, and that anything in FW is indeed about anything else—but only in the last of an infinite regress of planes of meaning. The all-important question, in my view, is how to get these planes of meaning into the right order, and into the right perspective. I have no doubts, myself that Joyce intends all the planes to be there. But he does not intend the book to be a meaningless jumble—which is what it becomes if we do not keep the frames of

reference separated. To continue the analogy with the physical world: in the last plane everything is like everything else—a cricket cap is discovered to be identical with a cracked cup when the universe is an undifferentiated agglomeration of energy; in less remote planes various coherent configurations of world-material are stabilised and made apprehendable by the functioning of a variety of laws. In both the physical universe and FW chaos results if we do not distinguish between the laws of physics say, and the laws of society, or between the world-views of scientist and mystic. But this is all general theory; let me deal with some more specialised matters.

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I shall conclude, then, with a few propositions about the reading of the book: 1) Every syllable is meaningful. FW contains no nonsense and very little onomatopoeia etc. Joyce deals principally in semantemes. 2) An explication is lacking unless it accounts for every syllable. 3) Elements in an explication which are of widely disparate natures must—unless they can be seen to have hidden relationships—fit into a number of different but coherent planes of meaning. 4) If an element of explication does not fit into such a coherent plane, it is probably irrelevant except on that last plane where meaning dissolves because everything corresponds to everything else. 5) The most important task of the explicator is to sort out the planes of meaning into an order of precedence. 6) FW is, throughout, a work of imagination and should not be read as a biographical or factual record of any sort, except in so far as James Joyce is a part of the world it describes.

Clive Hart also wrote ([Afterword: Reading *Finnegans Wake*; pp. 155-164] in *A Starchamber Quiry* edited by E. L. Epstein in 1982; Methuen, New York)—

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I do not yet know how to read *Finnegans Wake*, but the more I can learn to read it simply, the happier I believe I shall be. Now that we have learned to understand a good proportion of the detail—and above all now that we have a reasonable grasp of the kind of materials from which it is built—I am inclined to advocate quite rapid reading. Unless one is willing to ignore local difficulties and to make the best of rather cursory attention to complexities, a grasp of the whole is, in my experience, very nearly impossible. For such a reading I suggest adopting the working hypothesis that, with the exception of three main kinds of phrase and a few other unclassifiable words, most of the text has a basic

English sense, or sometimes two parallel senses, as in everyday punning. This basic thread of English sense we should always try to hear as clearly as possible, since it usually supplies the primary meaning of the book. The three main exceptions are (1) phrases specifically written in a foreign language and often signaled by Italics (e.g. "*Hircus Civis Eblanensis!*" FW 215.27); (2) Proper names and initials; (3) some exclamatory words and phrases which lie, so to speak, outside the controlling syntax of the text (e.g. "Hou! Hou!" FW 11.35). Allowing "the linguistic phenomenon [to] affect one as such", one absorbs additional meaning *en passant*, but with the emphasis always on a consecutive reading. Two examples may help to make the point, one simple, the second more difficult to accommodate to my proposed method:

Liverpoor? Sot a bit of it! His braynes coolt parritch, his pelt nassy, his heart's adrone, his bluidstreams acrawl, his puff but a piff, his extremeties extremely so: Fengless, Pawmbroke, Chilblaimend and Baldowl. Humph is in his doge. Words weigh no no more to him than raindrips to Rethfernhim. Which we all like. Rain. When we sleep. Drops. But wait until our sleeping. Drain. Sdops. (FW 74.13-19)

In offering the following simplified version I do not wish to reduce this marvelously evocative passage to a flat paraphrase, but to propose that we attend to an underlying English utterance which holds the paragraph together:

Is his liver poor? Not a bit of it! His brains are like cold porridge, his pelt is nasty, his heart's droning, his bloodstream is crawling, his puff is but a "piff", his extremities are in extremis: he is fangless, broken, has chilblains and is as bald as an owl. Humphrey is in his dotage. Words weigh now no more to him than do raindrops to Rathfarnham. Which we all like: rain when we sleep. Drops. But wait until our sleeping train stops.

Much of what is omitted from such a version is obvious: the animals in "His braynes coolt parritch" (the donkey's bray, the pigeon's coo, the young salmon in parr-), not to mention Humphrey's itches; the role-call of Dublin place-names; the drain in which all ends; above all, of course, the play of vowel and consonant. Most significant for my present purposes is the priority I give to "nasty", in "his pelt's nassy" over the more directly relevant "damp" (German *nass*): his skin is clammy. For a moderately practised reader of *Finnegans Wake*

“damp” is the primary sense here. I nevertheless advocate trying to hear “nasty” first.

Richard Ellmann wrote (in *James Joyce* in 1982; Oxford University Press)—

(Page 716)

All human activities begin to fuse into all other human activities, printing a book into bearing a baby, fighting a war into courting a woman. By day we attempt originality; by night plagiarism is forced upon us. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce had demonstrated the repetition of traits in the first twenty years of one person's life; in *Ulysses* he had displayed this repetition in the day of two persons; in *Finnegans Wake* he displayed it in the lives of everyone. The language of the new book was as necessary to it as the verbal arrangements of his previous works to them. He had already succeeded in adapting English to suit states of mind and even times of day, but chiefly by special arrangements and special kinds of words in different chapters. Now, for *Finnegans Wake*, a polyglot language had to be brought, even more daringly, to its own making-house. To imitate the sophistication of word- and image-formation in the unconscious mind (for Joyce discarded the notion that the mind's basic movements were primitive), he took settled words and images, then dismembered and reconstituted them.

In his earlier books Joyce forced modern literature to accept new styles, new subject matter, new kinds of plot and characterization. In his last book he forced it to accept a new area of being and a new language. What is ultimately most impressive is the sureness with which, in the midst of such technical accomplishments, he achieved his special mixture of attachment and detachment, of gaiety and lugubriousness. He was no saturnine artificer contriving devices, but one of life's celebrants, in bad circumstances cracking good jokes, foisting upon ennui and miseries his comic vision.

(Page 589)

But now Miss Weaver's uneasiness about *Finnegans Wake* had grown to the point where she could no longer keep it to herself. During January 1927, she steeled herself to articulate her objections, and on January 29 began them a little timidly. Joyce had followed her advice to work a bit less hard, and she wished to take advantage of his amenability:

As the ceasework order was followed so promptly I feel encouraged to 'try my hand at it again' and give another and different order—but also for eyes and health's sake. As its subject matter is, however, not such as to present any very strong appeal to you (unless perhaps on the minus side of the line) and is indeed, as we read, an 'ungrateful' one, I shall await your express permission to mention it.... And perhaps when the present book is finished you will see fit to lend ear to several of your older friends (E. P. to be included in the number): but the time to talk of that matter is not yet.

Joyce was much disturbed. He answered by return mail on February 1:

Your letter gave me a nice little attack of brainache. I conclude you do not like the piece I did? I have been thinking over it. It is all right, I think—the best I could do. I will gladly do another but it must be for the second part or fourth and not till after the first week in March or so. Do you not like anything I am writing. Either the end of Part I Δ [Anna Livia Plurabelle] is something or I am an imbecile in my judgement of language. I am rather discouraged about this as in such a vast and difficult enterprise I need encouragement. It is possible Pound is right but I cannot go back. I never listened to his objections to *Ulysses* as it was being sent him once I had made up my mind but dodged them as tactfully as I could. He understood certain aspects of that book very quickly and that was more than enough then. He makes brilliant discoveries and howling blunders...

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Miss Weaver apologized for worrying him, but held to her position. She wrote on February 4, 1927:

Some of your work I like enormously—as I am sure you know—especially the more straightforward and character-analytical parts and the (to me) beautifully expressed ghost-parts (for instance the sentence in Shaun about the date and the ghostmark and the one about the waterworld's face before you, as I think, distorted it—though I confess it couldn't otherwise have been inserted where it was); but I am made in such a way that I do not care much for the output from your

Wholesale Safety Pun Factory nor for the darknesses and unintelligibilities of your deliberately-entangled language system. It seems to me you are wasting your genius. But I daresay I am wrong and in any case you will go on with what you are doing, so why thus stupidly say anything to discourage you? I hope I shall not do so again.

Joyce was now so upset that he took to his bed. Nora was not sympathetic. 'Why don't you write sensible books that people can understand?' she asked. But she went to tell Eugene and Maria Jolas that her husband was too disturbed to prepare the manuscript for their next number. After a day or two Joyce got up and went to consult McAlmon, a candid man. 'Do you think I may be on the wrong track with my *Work in Progress*?' he asked him. 'Miss Weaver says she finds me a madman, Tell me frankly, McAlmon. No man can say for himself.' McAlmon assured him he was not mad, 'just touched enough for genius in the James Jesus Joyce manner.'

Richard Ellmann also wrote ([Foreword; pp. iii-v] in Adaline Glasheen's *A Census of Finnegans Wake* in 1956; Northwestern University Press)—

(Page iii)

Yet, even when we accept Joyce's methods, the difficulties of reading his book are not cleared away. It has been evident since *Finnegans Wake* was published in 1939 that it requires, much more urgently than *Ulysses*, a critical apparatus with which to board it. If Joyce had lived, he would have commissioned someone to perform for his last book the service which Stuart Gilbert performed for *Ulysses*. As it is, we have only *Our exagmination round his factification for incamination of Work in Progress*, a series of essays by friends published ten years before the book was finished. The work of subsequent scholars has been slowed by Joyce's absence. Harry Levin and Edmund Wilson have thrown light on the book, and so have other critics; but only one full-length explanation has been attempted, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* by Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson, published in 1944.

Since it appeared, many passages have been illuminated by the discovery of Joyce's sources, many clues to the interconnections of parts have been found, so that this work, indispensable as it is, is already a little out of date. Part of our difficulty in reading *Finnegans Wake* is suspending the whole intricate pattern in our heads. Some kind of index to its 628 large pages has obviously been needed. There is the precedent of Miles L. Hanley's *Word Index*

to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, but the complications of a word index to the *Wake* are so great that the mind boggles before them. It is Adaline Glasheen's distinction that she perceived the possibility of making a more specialized list which would require only half a decade to complete and would have uses that a mere index would lack. Her *Census* names all, or almost all, the characters in *Finnegans Wake*, tables their appearances in various distorted forms, and then proceeds to identify most of them.

Margaret C. Solomon wrote ([The Phallic Tree of *Finnegans Wake*; pp. 37-43] in *The Celtic Master* edited by Maurice Harmon in 1969; The Dolmen Press Limited)—

(Page 37)

A fair portion of the critical discussion of *Finnegans Wake* among Joycean scholars has consisted in speculation regarding the significance of several terms whose phonic affinity would, it seems to me, be a clue to their symbolic relationship; the understanding of these terms will, perhaps, pin down the meaning of that elusive 'letter.' Consonance and assonance, plus the familiar punning quality so typical of Joyce, constitute grounds for suspicion that 'three,' 'tea,' and even 'the' are all closely associated with the tripartite aspect of the letter 'T,' and that the examination of each of these terms will lead to a recognition of that capital letter as a major symbol of the book. Moreover, the sexual 'T,' rising and falling as it does throughout the novel, becomes a paradoxical token of man's looming importance—and yet his pitiful impotence—as the power historically represented by a father-god.

Joyce uses his peculiar version of synecdoche initially in the Prankquean story, which establishes a male trio—HCE, Tristopher, and Hilary—as composite parts of the whole man. The Jarl is the two-branched tea tree with dead leaves that must be wet by woman to become rejuvenated. In an advert fashion, Joyce's five characters may be regarded as representing members of the propagating family, namely, the penis and the testicles on the male side, and the labia of the vulva on the female side. Indeed, I am convinced it would be proper to say that the universe of *Finnegans Wake*, which is, from one point of view, as boundless as infinity, could also be reduced, from another point of view, to the area immediately surrounding and encompassing the human genitals.

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Closely related to the symbolic 'letter' applications pertaining to 'three,' 'tea,' and 'the' (applications which must be set aside for this particular study) are those which are associated with the image of the tree in *Finnegans Wake*. There can be little doubt that the 'tree' and 'stone' motif which threads through all of the chapters pertains to the sons, that the tree-stone combination is signified by the 'Tristan' spelling of Tristram, and that this dual threat to the old man eventually results in the father's replacement. And, since the three (father and sons) have already been defined as figuratively represented by the phallic 'T,' there is a strong temptation to suspect that 'tree' and 'stone' are names for the testicles on either side of the penis. As a matter of fact, certain passages do support that hypothesis.

The end of the Norwegian Captain story for instance, describes the unified family as pulling the boat together ('we'll pull the boath toground togutter') and refers to the five as 'testies touchwood and shenstone unto pop and puma... to whom she (anit likenand pleasethee!).' The whole story, elsewhere, is referred to as 'the tale of a Treestone with one Ysold.' In one possible reading, tree-stone signifies the amalgamation of the twins as the young Tristan, and links them with the eternal' temptress, Isolde. In another reading, tree and stone as the two sons accompany the one who is old, the father: the tale of the two (tree-stone) plus one is old. If one could accept this analogy the puzzle of shifting the Tristan role from one twin to the other would be solved. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the tree-stone relationship is fully explained by such an interpretation. I am convinced that the branches of the 'T' swing not only from side to side but also from front to rear. There is multiple evidence that 'stone' refers to the homosexual rear of the man, and that 'tree' is another phonic member of the group signifying the three-pronged 'T' in front. In this latter relationship, the twins are leaves or twigs of the tree. Shaun, in one place, describes himself as the 'most winning counterfeuille on our incomeshare lotetree,' whereas, in the 'games' chapter, the 'tree-grown girls, kings game... are in such transfusion just to know twigst timidly twomeys, for gracious sake, who [of the twins] is artthoudux from whose heterotropic.'

Louis O. Mink wrote ([Reading *Finnegans Wake*; pp. 34-47] in *Critical Essays on James Joyce's Finnegans Wake* edited by Patrick A. McCarthy in 1992; G.K. Hall & Co., New York)—

(Page 35)

When I began reading *Finnegans Wake* almost twenty-five years ago, very little had yet been written about the book; a long essay by Edmund Wilson and the *Skeleton Key* by Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson were about the only guides, and while they gave some idea of what goes on in its chapters they were of no help at all in decoding it page by page, sentence by sentence. So every reader could congratulate himself on discoveries; we were all prospectors in newly discovered territory, and every stream could be panned for gold. Since then the *Wake* has become a book for the amateur scholar rather than for the amateur reader. Clive Hart's *Concordance* to every word and symbol in the *Wake*, and Adaline Glasheen's *Census* of all the names in the *Wake*, together with James Atherton's book on Joyce's literary sources and a whole library of exegesis and lexicography, have mapped the area and worked all the rich lodes. Yet the book is such a fantastic anagram that it still promises discoveries to every reader. Reading *Finnegans Wake* is something like playing charades, with the mounting excitement that goes with the recognition that one is getting warm and the certainty and triumph when the answer is finally guessed. Every paragraph, almost every sentence, and most phrases and even single words rise from the page, signaling and gesturing, acting out a hidden meaning with body English, appealing to every resource to hint at some arcane allusion. From this standpoint, *Finnegans Wake* is a virtually inexhaustible game of solitaire charades, ready to play wherever you are. And as in other forms of inquiry, every success generates a number of new puzzles not noticed before. To give a couple of examples: There are five places in the book where the initials "V. P. H." are connected with Earwicker, usually so subtly that one would not notice them unless he were looking for them. One looks for them only because in one case HCE's cloak is described as bearing the initials V. P. H. on the tailor's tab, and two hundred pages later an otherwise inexplicable footnote says "V for wadlock, P for shift, H for Lona the Konkubine" (284.F4). So you look for other occurrences of "V. P. H." to help explain the connection between these two, knowing that such repetitions are never accidental in *Finnegans Wake*. But I haven't guessed this particular charade, although I have discovered that other students of the *Wake* have noticed it and are just as baffled. I have spent a fair amount of time looking out of plane and train windows turning over possible connections. Numerology, for instance: V. P. H. are the 22nd, 16th, and 8th letters of the alphabet. That adds up to 46, but 46 is not one of the important numbers in the book. Then there is the fact that those initials appear in contexts in which Earwicker is being hunted down as a man or as a fox; and

one thinks too of any other possible group of three such as the colors of the British or Irish flags. The most famous triple is of course the Trinity: and in German “V” could be “Vater” and “H” “[der] heilige Geist,” but “P” isn’t anything to complete that interpretation. And so on—every hypothesis seems to work for one or two of the initials but not for all three. So all that is left is serendipity. There is a 50-50 chance that some day, maybe tonight, I will read or hear something that will go *click* with “VPH,” and that particular guessing game will be over. But the supply of games is inexhaustible.

Edwin Muir (in 1939) wrote ([review, *Listener*; pp. 675-677] in *James Joyce, the Critical Heritage*, Volume 2, edited by Robert H. Deming in 1970; Routledge & Kegan Paul, London)—

(Page 677)

There is an exorbitant amount of this storytelling without any story, an endless eddying of words that return upon themselves... There are occasional flashes of a kind of poetry which is difficult to define but is of unquestioned power... There is rarely any sense of urgent compulsion, except at the end, where it is possible that Mr. Joyce is speaking his own thoughts... The cold mad feary father is the sea, but how many things the sea may mean in Mr. Joyce’s sleep-kingdom I should not like to guess. The end of this book, like the end of *Ulysses*, is the best part of it, and no one can read it, I think, without receiving an impression of a strange sorrow and mourning over life. It is curiously simple and direct. But as a whole the book is so elusive that there is no judging it; I cannot tell whether it is winding into deeper and deeper worlds of meaning or lapsing into meaninglessness. Anything can change into anything else... The book has the qualities of a flowing stream, sound and rhythm; the rhythm is sometimes beautiful, as can be tested by reading certain pages aloud. How much Mr. Joyce has concentrated on this, and how much he has given way to his mere intoxication with language it would be hard to say; for long stretches the book reads like a long private joke, the elaborate blarney of an insatiable linguist... There are parodies of the sagas, skits on almost every style of writing, enormous catalogues in the vein of Rabelais, snippets of folk-lore, echoes of music-hall songs, all slightly dissolved, all tending to flow into each other, and producing a continuous effect of storytelling while continuously avoiding the commission of a story. To dip into this flux for a little is refreshing, but to stay in for long is to be drowned, ‘with winkles, whelks and cocklesent jelks’, in Mr.

Joyce's enormous Baroque moat. A reader might well cry 'Lifeboat Alloe, Noeman's Woe, Hircups Emptybolly!'...

Harry Burrell wrote (in *Narrative Design in Finnegans Wake: The Wake Lock Pickled* in 1996; University Press of Florida)—

(Page 2)

It is safe to say that most people consider the novel unreadable, and yet a few persist in trying to discover a solution. Understanding some of the work's idiosyncrasies will help the unscrambling. The first frustration to overcome is the neologism. In his effort to reorganize the English language, Joyce invented thousands of new words, almost all of which are based on the same etymological principles as standard English. It is well known that he read etymological dictionaries for pleasure; his addiction to word derivation resulted in word synthesis. His artifices have been compared to Lewis Carroll's *portmanteau* words, which carry a briefcase full of meanings. Joyce's usage is slightly different, however. First of all, the sheer volume of them presents an overwhelming assault on the reader's comprehension. To pause to decipher an occasional word is stimulating, but to be confronted with page after page with no clue as to what is intended is exhausting. The neologisms are not frivolous or merely stuck in as decoration. They all have meaning that is directly connected with the subject matter. The problem, of course, is to discern the topic of discussion, and that is what this book sets out to explain. An example will illustrate the rewards of an effort to unravel the enigmas. "Painapple" is obviously not exactly a pineapple although its rough exterior could be imagined to cause pain if rubbed hard on the skin. As used at 167.15 it is compared to a bomb, so it might be considered a hand grenade, for which "pineapple" is a slang equivalent. But at 246.28-29, we find "the devil took our hindmost, gegifting her with his painapple," and here we can recognize that it is the apple with which the Serpent tempted the woman. In other words, sex. The gift resulted in the pain of God's curses and expulsion from Eden. But also, as the first usage reminds us, there is the pain of death that resulted from God's refusing access to the Tree of Life. Most of the problem words involve a far more complicated deciphering. There is a process of Wakean logic, which consists of a string of associations mirroring actual brain activity. Without intending a technical discussion, one can say that memory requires neuron connections which the mind records as association of ideas. Improper or false

connections are normally discarded by an acculturated screening process so that we usually strive for a logical mental image which projects the “real world.” When “unreal” associations remain, they may be labeled insane, creative, or artistic. Somewhere in this latter category the language of *Finnegans Wake* allows formation of an image which may be dream-like and unscreened by logic processes. Often the associations are only klang words—that is, words which when pronounced sound similar but whose meanings are logically unrelated. Common figures of speech involve simple one-step associations, but the Wakean figures require successive associations through several steps, each suggesting that which follows. An example of this is “The only man was ever known could eat the crushts of lobsters.” (624.35-36). This seems like a straightforward sentence except for “crushts,” which if it means that crusts are lobster shells does not express a likely behavior of the “man.” Now whenever eating or food is mentioned in the *Wake*, it is a reference to the forbidden fruit; and as will be shown in Chapter 5, a lobster is equated to an earwig, which in turn represents the biblical Serpent. The implication is that the Serpent “crushed” the fruit, despoiled it by having sex with the woman before the first man Adam did, as some old myths claim. Furthermore, eating crushed fruit seems somehow sinful and therefore results in the Fall. If all this sounds unnecessarily complicated and oblique at this point, it will become clearer as this book develops. To borrow a metaphor from the computer trade, the difficulty you experience in attempting to understand *Finnegans Wake* arises from the conventional programming of your brain. It is necessary to reprogram it with Joycean software. A word of caution must be offered regarding neologisms: Joyce’s vocabulary was so extensive that what often appear to be invented words are actually legitimate, although frequently they are rare or obsolete ones. Therefore unfamiliar words should advisedly be checked in an unabridged dictionary. For example, at 572.24, the phrase “practising for unnatural coits” would suggest that “coits” means “coitus,” but it is actually a dialect variation of “coat” and refers to the coats God made for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3.21). Another example is “awn” (154.05), which only a zoologist would know refers to a barbed appendage to a snake’s penis. A second obstacle to comprehension is the ubiquitous use of foreign words. They are usually chosen because they sound as though they might be neologisms or merely English. An example is “Malmarrriedad he was reverso- gassed by the frisque of her frasques and her prytty pyrrhique” (20.31-32). This clause uses the French terms *frisque*, *revergasse*, and *pyrriche* (all referring to dances); and *frasques*, which means “prank” or “trick.” An additional reference is to Pyrrha of Greek

myth, who, with her husband Deucalion, repopulated the world after the flood (thus a parallel to Noah and his wife). With these clues we can understand the sentence to imply that although “dad” (Adam, our first forefather) had an unfortunate marriage to Eve, she reversed his discontent by her pranks and dances, and together they populated the world. This example also illustrates the necessity of Roland McHugh’s *Annotations*, which translates many of the foreign expressions found in the *Wake*. A third frustration is the lack of quotation marks. Often we can tell that someone is speaking by the indented paragraph beginning with a dash, but only occasionally is the speaker identified. Sometimes the speech may be interrupted by a second speaker in the middle of a paragraph with no punctuation so indicating, as in the middle of ALP’s letter at 616.35 (see Chapter 8). At other times there is not even a dash as in Book I, Chapter 7, where Shem and Shaun and sometimes Joyce, the author, speak.

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With all these difficulties why should anyone be attracted to *Finnegans Wake*? Why do some of us spend a lifetime rereading, puzzling, and writing about it? Why has it occupied academics and scholars already for fifty years, and continues to do so, as Joyce predicted it would? The answer has to be that it is esthetically satisfying as no other form of literature has ever been. It is perhaps the epitome of twentieth-century artistic endeavor in all the fields of the arts. The key word of all twentieth-century art is ambiguity; Picasso, Kandinsky and a hundred other painters have changed the way we look at the world by making us wonder about, and pay attention to, what we are looking at. Brancusi, Caro, Cornell, and their contemporaries have replaced the imitation of nature in sculpture by invention of previously unconceived forms and juxtapositions. Stravinsky, Poulenc, and all those Americans who created jazz have introduced new pleasure into the way we hear sound. The one element common to all these art forms is uncertainty; an obfuscation of sense messages which engages our minds. No one will argue that *Finnegans Wake* is not ambiguous. It passes the twentieth-century esthetic test because it not only intrigues a serious reader but continues to delight and refresh with each rereading: never the same, always new, eternally seductive.

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Joyce created thousands of opportunities for esthetically satisfying epiphanies in the *Wake*. The neologisms, misdirections, puns, puzzles and

riddles, the obscurity of the characters, and apparent lack of cohesion and plot all set us up to search for known associations which we call meaning. The fact that they are deliberately obscure and ambiguous makes them all the more challenging and thus the more satisfying when solved. There is a legitimate question of whether all of the obscenity and blasphemy is necessary and productive. Modern readers can probably no longer be shocked, but the censorship and rejection *Ulysses* received in the 1920s and 1930s may have made Joyce cautious as well as defiant. We do not find the forbidden English four-letter words (with a single exception) in *Finnegans Wake*, but practically every foreign equivalent—as well as multitudinous puns and innuendos, and covert sexual descriptions—is there. It is heterosexual and blasphemous because both support the theology! The problem of enjoying *Finnegans Wake* arises because we do not have access to Joyce's mind from which to select his intended associations. He used the book as a storage disc for all the bytes of information he accumulated over a lifetime. Previous readers have slowly revealed a wealth of data and recorded it in the literature. McHugh's *Annotations* assembles a software windows to enter the *Wake* computer. The password is *Bible*.

Derek Attridge wrote ([Reading Joyce; pp. 1-30] in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* edited by Derek Attridge in 1990; Cambridge University Press)——

(page 11)

There is no need to begin *Finnegans Wake* at the beginning; let us imagine that our group of readers decides to start with a passage which seems less crammed with multiple meanings than most, and that one member volunteers to read it aloud:

We are now diffusing among our lovers of this sequence (to you! to you!) the dewfolded song of the naughtingels (Alys! Alysaloe!) from their sheltered positions, in rosescentery haydyng, on the heather side of waldalure, Mount Saint John's, Jinnyland, whither our allies winged by duskfoil from Mooreparque, swift sanctuary seeking, after Sunsink gang (Oiboë! Hitherzither! Almost dotty! I must dash!) to pour their peace in partial (floflo floreflorence), sweetishsad lightandgayle, twittwin twosingwoolow. Let everie sound of a pitch keep still in resonance,

jemcrow, jackdaw, prime and secund with their terce that whoe
betwides them, now full theorbe, now dulcifair, and when we press of
pedal (sof!) pick out and vowelise your name. (FW 359.31 -360.06)

The response is a mixture of frowns at the stretches of apparent nonsense and chuckles as gleams of sense—however absurd—shine through. Some sort of purchase on the passage is obtained when the group quickly agrees that there is a syntactic scaffolding which, though interrupted by parentheses and elaborations, is quite firm, presenting a speaker who uses the first person plural to make a statement and to issue a command to a hearer or hearers addressed in the second person: We are now diffusing... the... song of all these naughtingels... from their sheltered positions... whither our allies winged... to pour their peace... Let everie sound of a pitch keep still... and when we press of pedal pick out and vowelise your name. 'Syntactic stability is characteristic of the *Wake*, and it often helps in the unpacking of a passage to trace the bare trellis on which the luxuriant verbiage is hung. The second aspect of the passage on which members of the group quickly begin commenting is the clustering of related terms, some of which are half-concealed in puns and portmanteau words. The most obvious of these clusters concerns birds: everybody hears "naughtingels" as 'nightingales', and one person who has listened without looking at the text finds the same word in 'lightandgayle'. (When someone else is reading from the *Wake*, it is often helpful to put the book down, as the visual configurations can mask aural echoes.) With this lead to follow, one member of the group who speaks some Italian realizes that the strange word 'twosingwoolow' sounds rather like a badly-pronounced '*usignolo*', which translates into yet another nightingale. No decoding is necessary to add to the cluster the terms 'winged', 'swift', 'sanctuary' (as in 'bird sanctuary'), 'crow', and 'jackdaw'; and someone suggests that 'Hitherzither' could be a description of the hither-and-thither movement of bird flight, perhaps that of the swift. But the group agrees that the main emphasis is on the sounds which birds make, and that a number of the repetitive phrases are reminiscent of conventional representations of birdcalls: 'to you! to you!' echoes 'to whit! to whoo!' (suggesting the additional presence of an owl, another nightbird to join the nightingales), and 'twittwin' suggests a twittering call. Other phrases seem built on similar models: 'Alys! Alysaloe!', 'floflo floreflorence'. Someone points out that the passage contains both 'song' and, burried in 'twosingwoolow', 'sing', while 'nightingales' song is often said to 'pour'. The syntactic framework is now taking on a body of sense, though that sense is beginning to overflow

the rather limited possibilities provided by sequential English grammar. And each time a member of the group finds incomprehensibility suddenly yielding to meaning, or incongruity suddenly revealing a pattern, the discovery seems at once illuminating and ridiculous, satisfying and hilarious. After a pause, someone notices that 'Florence' leads to another 'Nightingale', and this is picked up by someone else who spots a reference to the famous nineteenth-century soprano Jenny Lind (here apparently transformed into a place, 'Jinnyland'), known in Britain as 'the Swedish Nightingale' (which has become 'sweetishsadlightandgayle'). The next suggestion, by a member with an interest in mythology, produces a discussion but no agreement: is 'terce' a reference to Tereus' rape of Philomela, who has subsequently metamorphosed into a nightingale? The cluster of birdsong references is rapidly expanding, it would seem: to human song, to women, perhaps to physical desire. Are the 'lovers' who are being addressed bird-lover, lovers of opera and other human song, or lovers in the sexual sense? Again there is no consensus, since all these interpretations can be defended with reference to the passage—yet there is no way of holding the various possibilities together in an organic whole. No subtle tone of voice, no imagined human situation, could make all these meanings valid at the same time: *Finnegans Wake* explodes the belief that language, to be meaningful, must be subservient to a singleness of intention and subjectivity. (So too, we may remember, does 'Eveline'.) Once the group is on the track of human song a new cluster of terms emerges. One member realizes that the initially puzzling 'rosescenery haydyng' introduces two of the most prolific of opera composers. Rossini and Haydn; another suggests that 'twosingwoolow' contains version of 'sing willow', a refrain associated with songs of lover's grief (she cites Desdemona's 'Willow Song' in *Othello* and—reverting briefly to birds—Ko-Ko's song about a suicidal tom-tit in *The Mikado*); and thrid, who is familiar with the traditions of the Western church, recognizes 'prime' and 'terce' as the names of the first two offices sung each day. He adds that 'vowelise' is close to 'vocalise', which as an English verb can mean to 'sing' and as a French noun is a singing exercise. As the discussion proceeds, human song broadens out to music and sound more generally: 'pitch' and 'resonance' obvious belong to this cluster, and someone who has picked up the dictionary informs the group that 'sequence' can mean 'a composition said or sung in the Western Church' as well as a melodic repetition, and that 'partials' are upper harmonics. Soon the group is picking out the instruments of a somewhat exotic orchestra in the passage too: a gong in 'gang', an oboe in 'Oiboe!', a zither in 'Hitherzither', a theorbo (a kind of lute) in 'theorbe', a dulcimer in 'dulcifair',

and, by implication, a piano in 'pedal (sof!)'. And a different kind of organized sound produced by humans emerges from 'Almost dotty! I must dash!': Morse Code. The proposal is made that the topic of sexuality should be followed up, to see if it also leads to a set of connected meanings. Several members comment together that 'naughtingels' contains not only 'nightingales' but also 'naughty girls' (or 'gels', if we imagine a certain kind of upper-class English accent), and soon other suggestions are forthcoming: 'waldalure' conceals 'allure' (and 'lure', perhaps, if sexual temptation is in the air) and 'twosingwoolow' contains 'woo'. Girls' names are a likely quarry for connotations of glamour and desirability, and the group may well pause on 'Alys! Alysaloel!', which, backed up by 'allies', implies the presence of an Alice. Someone recalls that the author of 'Alice in Wonderland' (the originator of the term 'portmanteau word') liked to entertain and photograph little girls, and an enthusiast of the theatre tells the group about a 1930s stage beauty called Alice Delysio and a French revue artiste named Gaby Delys. At this point, a sceptical participant objects that Joyce could not possibly have put all these meanings into the text, and two answers are forthcoming: one is that we cannot know for certain in any specific case that he did not, and the other is that even if we could, it need not make any difference, since Joyce has deliberately created a text with the power to generate more meanings than he had in mind.

Robert Anton Wilson wrote (in *Coincidence* in 1991; New Falcon Publications, Scottsdale, Arizona)—

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On page 313, III is "blown to Adams," dragging us back to Genesis a but foreshadowing nuclear war. On page 333, this comes back in the phrase "split an atam" (which again evoked Atum creating the universe by masturbating). On page 339, somebody speaks in "lipponene longuedge," which can only be Nipponese language, to say "Sehyoh narar, pokehole sann." If this is Japanese, it says "Sayanara, Pookah-sann" (Farewell, honorable Pookah) the Pookah being an ancient Celtic rabbit-god which, oddly, became Puck in Shakespeare. If one looks at the mixed Yiddish and Norse roots, of course, this sentence is also saying, "See the hunchbacked fool," which is also appropriate to the context in which a hunch backed sailor is in conflict with a greedy tailor, and I think the s-t transformation of sailor to tailor suggests Einstein's s-t (space-time) equations. On page 349 we have "the charge of the light barricade"

combining Buckley's adventures in Crimean War (the charge of the light brigade, which involved Brown and Nolan, remember?) with Einstein's $e = mc^2$ and the acceleration of particles in a cyclotron. The sentence just before this on page 349 contains "guranium" which is a flower, the geranium, with a heavy dose of uranium, the trigger of the atomic bomb. All of this is explicable on the basis of Joyce's study of what physicists were talking about before he finished his book in 1939, although the Japanese reference is distinctly spooky. What the Rationalist will find most annoying, however, is the reference, within this long atomic chapter, on page 315, to "nogeysokey." I don't know what that can mean except Nagasaki...

C. George Sandulescu wrote (in *The Language of the Devil* in 1987; Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross)—

(Page 14)

What you cannot tell the story of is not a novel. Within the frame of this only apparently negative definition, *Ulysses* is a novel. *Finnegans Wake* is not. Or not yet. The suggestion has already been made by James Atherton and Clive Hart that it is a universe simulacrum. I endorse that point strongly with the proviso that the statement excludes the possibility of it being at the same time and simultaneously a novel. A replica of the moon such as the one dished out symbolically by spacemen, Russian and American alike, is not the moon of course, but it is not the concept or the picture of the moon either. It is more than that. It is an abstraction and its opposite—hence a 'concretion'—at the same time. So with *Finnegans Wake*: it has the status of a replica of a possible world containable in 628 pages, more or less in much the same way in which the replica of the moon is 'containable' in a spaceman's palm. The palm is a pragmatic factor: held in the palm of his own hand it means 'I have been there!'. Held in his hand by any of the U.S. or Russian presidents it only means (or meant) 'He has been there' or, and, more precisely, 'I know that he has been there', by metonymy, that man of ours has been there. I am positing here the hypothesis that Joyce was such a spaceman. This point has been made, I repeat, twenty years ago by James Atherton, and then taken up a little later by Clive Hart. What I am concerned with here is to show the necessary inferences from a statement which has largely been made as a figure of speech and as a critic's metaphor, but the idea has never been properly developed to include the consequences.

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In reading *Finnegans Wake* it is another *reality* that we are contemplating, not a piece of paper. Not unlike perhaps what Beckett mirrors at *second* remove in *Imagination Dead Imagine*. In like fashion, what is written about it is by no means 'secondary', but rather something similar to the way an archaeologist or even a mineralogist is looking at and then describing his objects of study: they may be secondary in terms of the supremely primary nature of the reality that he is all the time dealing with, but they can never be said to be secondary in relation to a reality which is in its turn taken for 'secondary'. Such as the novel as a form of art. In that sense, and in that sense only, I do not take *Finnegans Wake* to be a novel at all. Novels *order* things for us far too much. The mature Joyce never stoops to conquer that way. It is quite possible that *Finnegans Wake* was intended by its author to be eligible as an outstanding monument on the basis of a criterion which is completely different from the one applied to the Bible or to Shakespeare. *Finnegans Wake* claims to be the so far missing member of a Trinity by changing the very nature of the reality it is supposed to be dealing with and, instead, becoming that reality itself. It is conceivable that in a process of most intensely holding the mirror up to nature, the lesser object vanishes. This is just another way of interpreting the phrase 'the word made mountain' or 'the word made flesh'. That latter phrase was the Christian claim that provided the starting point for this whole argument. It is a bold suggestion, a Luciferic suggestion, but I am inclined to think that Joyce, steeped as he was in his Sin of Pride, was simply making a similar claim: the only thing was that he was substantiating it differently. It was his idiosyncratic trans-substantiation that expressly required complete and total silence.

Geert Lernout wrote ([Joyce or Lacan; pp. 195-203] in *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth* edited by Bernard Benstock in 1988; Syracuse University Press)——

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My central concern in these remarks has been one of authority and power, not the abstract and subjectless power of Foucault or the *nouveaux philosophes*, but the concrete power we are confronted with, when we read, for example, Lacan on Joyce. Do we accept a statement on Joyce, on literature, language, or life because of the person who utters it or because it conforms to the facts? To be more specific, about *Finnegans Wake* for instance, which has

become a regular bible in some Lacanian circles (like the *Ecrits* themselves, which should have been published in English under the title *Scriptures*), if it is true Lacanians claim that every word in the *Wake* can mean anything at all, how is it that when they quote from the text, it only means one thing? The strange thing is that *Finnegans Wake* is *lisible*, it can be read: if the claim made by Lacanians were true, every reader would drown in the sea of floating signifiers even before reaching the bottom of page three. I hope you will excuse a temporary relapse into narcissism when I add an autobiographical note. When I was an undergraduate, my teachers were Lacanians and Derrideans. I started to read the *Wake* after I had read *Ecrits* and *De la grammatologie*, and, to use Morris Beja's description of Joyce's novels as tunnels, every time I came out of the tunnel, I found Lacan and Derrida. But at some point, and rather late I must admit, I began to get second thoughts: wasn't I supposed to find James Joyce at the end of the tunnel? Or, for that matter, why not Geert Lernout? I tried and, lo and behold, I discovered what every Joycean must have found at some point: that *Finnegans Wake* was about me. When I couldn't sell that theory to other people, I started to rethink Lacan and Derrida. What I discovered was that you can belong to only one primal horde and that I preferred Joyce's. My first experiences with this horde, these last few days at the Joyce Symposium, have confirmed my choice. As primal hordes go, this must be one of the most open and democratic. I would like to conclude by quoting from the end of Freud's *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*, which seems particularly appropriate in a discussion of Lacan's romantic and anti-rationalist theory: "No, our science is no illusion. But it could be an illusion to believe that we could find elsewhere what this science cannot give us."

Geert Lernout also wrote (in *The French Joyce* in 1990; The University of Michigan Press)—

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But the translations only intensify a problem that is not peculiar to the French interpretation of Joyce and that holds equally well for Joyce criticism in general. Even relatively short and simple texts such as *Dubliners* have given rise to completely different and even contradictory interpretations, and this is all the more true for the more complex texts such as *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Interpreting a difficult text consists precisely in supplying a coherence the text itself seems to lack. The result is that a critic will emphasize or even overemphasize some elements and neglect others that contradict his

hypothesis. The amount of pressure needed to accomodate the text to the interpretation, on the one hand, and the number of elements that are not accounted for, on the other, define value of an interpretation.

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The French critics accept the privileging of poetry and language over science and objectivity and radicalize this idealism in “textualist” terms. Maybe even more than Heidegger himself, they need witnesses who have escaped metaphysics and logocentrism, and with Heidegger they see Hölderlin as such an escapee. Against Heidegger they include a number of French symbolists and surrealist writers (Lautréamont, Mallarmé, and Artaud) and Joyce in the new canon. With Heidegger, the French critics find inspiration in different marginal systems of thoughts: the pre-Socratics, Gnosticism, negative theologies, mysticism. Against Heidegger, they stress the importance of Freud’s psychoanalytical theory of which they stress the antirationalist, antisystematic, and romantic element. The simple fact that quite a number of nonacademic Joyce critics whose work has been discussed in the preceding pages do not know English and know little if anything about the actual historical conditions in which Joyce lived and worked is not enough to explain their inability to offer an interpretation of specific text of *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*. Their problem is that their reading is always already established: Joyce, like Hölderlin, escapes, deconstructs, differs. The norm may be science, society, phallocentrism, or metaphysics, and the deconstruction feminist, masculinist, Marxist, or Freudian, but the a priori structure is always one of exception; in each case the attempt to describe the aberration is impossible by definition. No text could really (absolutely) escape, and if there were such a text, one could not write about it. The immense power and seductive quality of poststructuralist writing, especially Derrida’s, lies in the fact that it has managed to thematize this impossibility.

Robert M. Polhemus wrote (in *Comic Faith* in 1980; The University of Chicago Press)—

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All of this may seem pretentious and grimly labored, however, if we forget that interpretation of the *Wake* is a clownish process for a faithful foolish few. Oliver Gogarty, so often wrong about Joyce, was right in calling the book



“a great leg-pull.” Its readers inevitably become the butt of a joke that gives them the most ludicrous aspects of Shem and Shaun. Like Shem we appear to most of the sensible world to be misguided fanatics devoted to arcane, silly writing. Nearly all who study and write on the *Wake* sometimes feel ridiculous: for whom do we explain things and why? Like Shaun, we become critics analyzing another’s “root language” (424:17), knowing that we will never fully understand it and, like him, we are tempted to become zealots of orthodoxy, pretending to be priests of eternal imagination, whose mysteries we never really can know. No author has had more ingenious or industrious readers within the century of his life than Joyce, but Joycean scholarship and criticism sometimes do seem like Shaun’s revenge on his creator. Bad-tempered, sanctimonious attitudes stir in much of the commentary on the *Wake*, and the tone of Joyceans reviewing each other’s work often resembles the type of reception that infidels tampering with sacred scripture might expect. (Joyce, getting down both the religious impetus of the *Wake* and the humor inherent in presumptions of sanctity, refers to his book as “secret scripture” [293, n. 2].) Comic material can harden into dogma, and the dogmatic, proprietary pose becomes, in the wake of Shaun implicit satire. Explication can seem at times to analyze beauty right out of existence, and even the harmless, drudging Shaun-critic of comedy no doubt seems to be murdering humor to dissect it. One of the lessons of the comic gospel is that it can and will often be captured by jealous members of a cult devoted to graven images and idolatry. But Joyce’s ideal reader may also take on the best traits of his twins. The Shauns who explicate texts and compile the concordances, the lexicons, the lists of Lithuanian words, and the reader’s guides make it possible to read with the synthesizing power of a Shem. Moreover, the more we know analytically, the greater our pleasure when we put the parts together. For the whole of a pun, the whole of “Shem,” the whole of the *Wake* are all more than the sum of their parts: explicating a joke-word is not the same as experiencing the surprising jolt of humor any more than discussing religion is like seeing God. But the language of the *Wake* is one medium in which the pleasure is not permanently spoiled by analysis; analysis helps us in fact to find the synthesis from which the comic epiphany radiates. The more we know of the parts, the more frequent and powerful are the flashes of wit, the illuminating correspondences, and the stimulating creative bursts of energy of the *Wake* even if we cannot directly communicate them to others.

John Paul Riquelme wrote (in *Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction* in 1983; The John Hopkins University Press)—

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So far, I have focused on several related aspects of narration and narrative in *Finnegans Wake*: the character-as-artist, his letters, beginnings and endings, the title's implications, and the making of the texts through writing, printing, and reading. I have suggested that as readers we can compare our own activity to the author's because of the peculiar nature of the narration's structures and techniques. In the *Wake* the reader's engagement with the text is affected especially by the teller's linking of end to beginning, by his puns, and by his allusions. The effect of these elements, arising as it does from the large structure of the narrative, from the details of language, and from the rationale for the telling as mythic, can be nearly definitive for our experience as readers. By combining these aspects of his text in various ways, Joyce allows a complex kind of experiential order to emerge from the seemingly disparate details of his mannered prose. That order requires the reader's active engagement with the book, an engagement in which telling and reading involve one another. When we read *Finnegans Wake*, it is as if we are traveling with difficulty through a dark and brambly teller's relationship to the character, and they make evident our role as comakers of the text. In all Joyce's mature fiction (and it is *all* mature), not just in the *Wake*, opening and closing are linked. But the details of language vary as Joyce experiments in each of his books with different ways of involving the reader through style. In *Ulysses*, the style and the involvement achieve particular prominence and vigor when Joyce portrays consciousness (his own, his characters', and his readers') as implicitly mythic. In the *Wake*, Joyce's earlier casting of minds in a mythic mold for the making of art itself becomes a crucial element in the structure and style for creating the mythic artifact. The making of the mythic artifact turns out to be the making of the mythic artificer as well.

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In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce regularly directs our attention to origin, especially to the sources for his own text. Those sources include the various works and authors to which he alludes and the mechanical process of printing by which the book is made. As we read the *Wake*, we experience in mediated ways how the text was produced. And we encounter characters involved in producing documents. Joyce cannot give us in unmediated form the experience

of his mental processes that result in writing. Instead, he provides a finished document that becomes the raw material for us, to undergo analogous experiences. By walking the Phoenician, he provides his readers with the opportunity to wake the Phoenician. But for us, Joyce himself has become an avatar of the figure to be roused. Joyce represents himself in his writing through characters-as-artists and through styles of language. But this self-representation is not a purely egocentric venture. It includes Joyce's vision of the artist not just as a special person or even as a general type *among* humankind but as the general type of humankind. Joyce's portraits of the artist, especially in the *Wake* and in the *Ulysses*, tend toward the portrayal or the evocation of universal mental and social experiences. I make this assertion despite the mannered eccentricities of style in his late works. We cannot separate the large historical and cultural dimensions from the more narrowly aesthetic ones in his fiction. Joyce's writing makes available an "ancient legacy of the past" (614.36-615.1; my emphasis) that combines history with ALP as the source in human consciousness for humankind's story as history. As James Atherton has said, *Finnegans Wake* is "everyone's dream, the dream of all the living and the dead," emanating from Joyce's persona, the universal mind to which we all contribute.

Frank Budgen wrote ([Resurrection; pp. 11-15] in *Twelve and a Tilly* edited by Jack P. Dalton and Clive Hart in 1966; Faber and Faber)—

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But of what nature is the resurrection in *Finnegans Wake*? If I am right, and *Finnegans Wake* is the story of the twin eternities of spirit and nature expressed in the twin eternities of male and female then, as I see it, only one of the twin eternities suffers death and is reborn. That is of course Anna Livia Plurabelle—as woman, as man born of woman, as mother nature, as body, as anybody, as all things that appear and live and pass away. She is *das ewig Weibliche and also alles Vergängliche*. She has lain the life long night with her partner, but at daybreak they part company. She leaves his bed to go forth by day alone, and only she suffers the agony of parting. Meanwhile he the male, the spiritual element, indifferent to her agony—leaving, so to speak, the dead to bury the dead—is intent only upon meeting and mating with a daughter bride coming down to him from the hills. "Sonhusband" she calls him in her swansong between Chapelizod and the sea. Why "sonhusband" if both are twin eternities? It reverses in any case the priority given in the Book of Genesis.

It might express, probably does in a minor way, any wife's way of looking at any husband—as a boy to be cosseted and scolded and as a man to be looked up to as a provider and protector. There is also a slight hint of an Oedipus-Jocasta relationship, but I feel quite sure that this was not intended. Anyway, the parallel does not hold good. I think rather the explanation is that whilst *nous*, mind, spirit, the male principle is co-eternal with matter, it is, in the time-order of manifestation as self-conscious mind, a late arrival. Anna Livia, nature must die and be re-born continually. He renews himself through constant remarriage with nature renewed.

Bernard Benstock wrote ([Comic Seriousness and Poetic Prose; pp. 171-179] in *James Joyce: A Collection of Critical Essays* edited by Mary T. Reynolds in 1993; Prentice Hall, New Jersey)——

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Although definitions of poetry are not usually subjective—the basic elements of rhythm, meter, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and so forth, having been objectively outlined—no one attitude toward Joyce's poetic medium can necessarily be universally arrived at; the novelist who is many things to any readers is as individually various as a poet. Margaret Schlauch sees Joyce's poetic language in terms of philological awareness, and finds that Joyce's linguistic variants "can easily be classified by a philologist as examples of reduplication, alliteration, assonance, primitive types of apophony, assimilation, dissimilation, sandhi variants and the like." Harry Levin adds that the reader is "borne from one page to the next, not by the expository current of the prose, but by the harmonic relations of the language—phonetic, syntactic, or referential, as the case may be." Joyce's philological consciousness of words, the shifts of meanings within words, their etymological significances and semantic discrepancies add to the levels of meaning made possible by his skillful handling of language. The philological handling of entomological minutiae in the fable of the Ondt and Gracehoper is very much a case point. In fact, when asked why he hates his literary brother, Shaun replies, "For his root language, if you ask me whys" (FW 424.17), and the tenth thunderclap roaringly follows upon his answer, causing the comment: "The hundredlettered name again, last word of perfect language" (FW 424.23-24). But Shaun brags that he too can perpetrate "Acomedy of letters!" (FW 425.24). A handful of critics have cast an eye on the poetic effects of Joyce's language,

stopping along the way between the labyrinth of explication and the tower of elucidation, commenting on occasional phrases and sentences. Nor could anyone actually expect any major attempt at an over-all commentary on *effect*, when the most serious problems remain in the area of exegesis, especially when the value of Joyce's poetic techniques exists in the pattern of "sound-sense" created, not in sound alone. In the early *Exagmination* Robert Sage tackles a sentence in Anna Livia Plurabelle:

She was just a young thin pale soft shy slim slip of a thing then, sauntering, by silvymoonlake and he was a heavy trudging lurching lieabroad of a Curraghman, making his hay for whose sun to shine on, as tough as the oaktrees (peats be with them!) used to rustle that time down by the dykes of killing Kildare, for forstfellfoss with a plash across her. (FW 202.26-32)

Sage calls this "a sentence that is pool-like in its lucidity, that is supple and periodic," and goes on to analyze the poetic aspects of it:

The sentence opens—with fifteen one-syllable words, the first eleven being accented, the twelfth and thirteenth hastening the rhythm through their lack of accent and the final two returning to long beats. Through this Joyce suggests the weakness and uncertainty of the stream at its commencement (girlhood). Then comes the stronger three-syllable word *sauntering*, indicating development (adolescence) and leading by a short beat to the epitritus *silvymoonlake*, signifying full growth (maturity), the further associations with the latter stage being sylvan and the silver moon reflected in the lake. The male symbol is immediately introduced in the three ponderous trochees *heavy trudging lurching*, continuing to the molossus *forstfellfoss*, which balances *silvymoonlake* and suggests *first*, *forest*, *fell* and *waterfall*, the foss coming from the Scandinavian designation of waterfall. The latter part of the sentence, then, completes the introduction of the two symbols by describing the creation of the first cascade through the falling of the tree across the stream.

Vincent John Cheng wrote (in *Shakespeare and Joyce: A Study of Finnegans Wake* in 1984; The Pennsylvania State University Press)—

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Nevertheless, Joyce, foreseeing the way critics would mock and misrepresent the *Wake*, must have wondered (like Anna Livia): “A hundred cares, a tithe of troubles and is there one who understands me?” (627.15). Would such madness as *Finnegans Wake* ever be appreciated or understood? Perhaps the loveliest answer to the question appears in a passage in which Joyce made a prediction about *Finnegans Wake* and his own techniques:

But by writing thithaways end to end and turning, turning and end to end hithaways writing and with lines of litters slittering up and louds of latters slettering down, the old semetomyplace and jupetbackagain from tham Let Rise till Hum Lit. Sleep, where in the waste is the wisdom? (114. 16-20)

That is to say: literature (or letters) also has its *ricorsos* and falls its litters (as in births and risings) slittering up and its latters (later in life, and falling ladders) slettering down. Literary reputations might rise and fall in a seesaw fashion, shifting now to Shem (“see me to my place”), now to Ham (“tham”), and now to Japhet (“jap it back again”). Hamlet (“tham Let”), watching the fluctuations in the state of Denmark, soliloquizes on the meaning of life and death: “Sleep, where in the waste is the wisdom? (Where in the wait is the wisdom?—Hamlet’s recurrent dilemma; also, perhaps an echo of “Death, where is thy string?”). Joyce-Hamlet philosophically questions his own folios and their chances for acceptance in the literary world, knowing that the immediate rewards in the writing profession are few: there is “small peace in ppenmark” (189.06). He must wait for eventual recognition; but, he asks himself, where in such a wait does wisdom lie? It lies in the “waste,” in the middenheap; for the letter/litter (*Finnegans Wake*) is sleeping, resting in wait and in waste (“twixt a sleep and a wake”), listening until “the cock crows for Denmark” (192.21) and the time to be unearthed by some scratching scholar-hen (some “Misthress of Arths,” like Biddy in 112.29) is arrived, waiting until *Finnegans Wake* can rise from the ashes of the middenpile and be truly appreciated. Perhaps Joyce will eventually, like Shakespeare, have an appreciative Bankside audience. He shares, though, the question posed by Hamlet: to wait or not to wait, to be or not to be—is there wisdom in the waste of eternal sleep? Sleep, dreams, wakes, Hamlet, and *Finnegans Wake* are all thematically and inextricably interwoven here. *Finnegans Wake* did not find acceptance in Joyce’s lifetime; but like

Hamlet, Joyce learned to wait, believing his *Wake* to be a real sleeper: “From them Let Rise till Hum Lit.” Joyce must have often told himself to let the *Wake* sleep (“Let sleepth,” 555.01), until, like a ricorsing Phoenix, it will rise from its mound of ashes and be accepted, be recognized as a new Hamlet in the new Viconian cycle. Then it will, at long last, become Hum Lit: it will be read, enjoyed, and appreciated by lovers of the humanities and of literature.

Grace Eckley wrote (in *The Steadfast Finnegans Wake* in 1994; University Press of America)—

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Since the publication of James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* in 1939, the most elusive and enticing clue to its mysteries has been a single broken sentence which hold out a promise as yet unfulfilled: “The keys to Given!” (628.15). George Sandulescu maintains that the quandary is even murkier, that “there was an ‘empathy’ stance on the part of the author in relation to his sources,” and many questions regarding the *Wake* “will continue to remain unanswered until the readers and researchers are really able to understand the full implications of what Joyce literally meant by resorting to the *weapon of silence*, which he actually and entirely adopted from a date which strangely enough, lies somewhat between 1910 and 1914”. The *Wake* celebrates a “Great Sommboddy” (415.17) who died on the *Titanic* between 1910 and 1914. The journalist William Thomas Stead (1849-1912) was such a “great somebody” and the biographical original of Joyce’s hero. Stead published around a hundred monographs and thousands of articles. *The Pall Mall Gazette* in London, with which he startled the world while editing it (1883-1889), was absorbed by the *Evening Standard* in 1924; and Joyce barely disguises the fact that the PMG was subtitled *An Evening Newspaper and Review* when one of the mourners at the wake reads “her Evening World” (28.20). The international journal *The Review of Reviews*, which Stead originated in 1890, introduced its readers to more languages than those known to exist in *Finnegans Wake*; through its Language Bureau—the only one in existence—it provided Joyce with a French correspondent (Ellmann JJII 77). Each month Stead charted the “Progress of the World” from 1890 to 1912. The Review numbered approximately 30,000 pages through volume 45 in 1912; it ceased to exist with this title with volume 92 in 1936. In 1925 Frederic Whyte brought out his two-volume biography of Stead. This aided Joyce’s efforts greatly with *Finnegans Wake*; but, for much of the world, Stead had fallen into

the Great Silence. Both with and without Joyce's help, this one of the "keys" was buried in oblivion. Joyce repeatedly in the text indicates that he was deliberately sequestering the identity of his hero. Stead's birthday on 5 July 1849 differed by one day from that of Joyce's father. Stead's name and his nickname "Bedstead" could be hidden in a thousand puns. Taking the words of Thomas Carlyle about "that good man Stead," Joyce had already closed his first novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* with "in good stead"; and after the *Portrait* he spoke freely about his originating well in advance of finishing the works the significant last words of both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

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Bits of the text of *Finnegans Wake* indicate that Joyce researched the geography between Stead's office in London and his home on Hayling Island at the southern edge of England, and pieces of *Finnegans Wake* indicate that he not only read the Stead publications but also researched the Stead family history and connections after Stead's death. The A3 road from the sea at Hayling Island northward to London borders the basin called the "Devil's Punch Bowl," and Stead often journeyed in the last decade of his life as Earwicker does at the close of the *Wake* "between the devil's punchbowl and the deep angleseaboard" (582.6). A street in nearby Portsmouth is called Anglesea Road. Sailing from Southampton on the *Titanic*, Stead had a last view of England—his Hayling Islar home—by the deep angleseaboard. At the beginning of the *Wake* occurs a reminder that a member of Stead's family drove in a Cap-to-Cairo road trial that was aborted after another participant was killed by a leopard: "Death, a leopard, kills fellah in Fez" (28.22). By a commodious Steadway of recirculation, from the end circling back to the beginning, the stead empathy provides "Lots of" clarification for the "fun at *Finnegans Wake*!" With the cheerfulness of the children's "Nightletter" (308.20), a "passing," with its purpose the awakening, was not a death but a transition.

William D. Jenkins wrote (in *The Adventure of the Detected Detective* in 1998; Greenwood Press, Westport)—

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Holmes had a rare talent which made him especially worthy of attention in FW. He was an expert at reading codes and ciphers, and FW itself is a cryptogram written in an invented language called "Djoytsch." Basically



English, it employs bits and “etymys” of words from as many foreign languages as the Irish polyglot could include. Furthermore, they are frequently compounded like Lewis Carroll’s “portmanteau” words. Hence, for convenient reference, citations of passages from FW are identified by page and line number like this: (324.21), which means page 324 line 21: “Ellers for the greeter glossary of code, callen hom” (All for the greater glory of God, and for a glossary of this code, call in Holmes). Why are Holmes and Watson called Cox and Box respectively in FW? The answer may be found in the first two introductory sentences to *The Problem of Thor Bridge*, which help to identify the FW personalities of the detective and his biographer in two or three passages and also seem to relate directly to the structure of the book itself.

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Included in FW are allusions of varying clarity and significance to at least fifteen of the stories in the Holmesian canon. *The Sign of the Four* is structurally harmonious with FW, and references to this case are more frequent than to any other Sherlockian source. Among the supporting players in FW are Four Old Men who appear variously as the Four Evangelists, the Four Provinces of Ireland and other well known Fours, including the assignees of the Agra treasure. The Sholto twins make an appearance as Shem and Shaun, and the chart showing the hiding place for the Agra treasure has certain features in common with a mysterious letter from Boston, which is purported to provide a clue to understanding FW itself.

Hugh Kenner wrote (in *Dublin’s Joyce* in 1987; Columbia University Press)——

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Joyce tells us repeatedly that his ability to write *Finnegans Wake* depends on his having learned to “read” the things he puts into it: The prouts who will invent a writing there ultimately is the poeta, still more learned, who discovered the raiding there originally. That’s the point of eschatology our book of kills reaches for now in so and so many counterpoint words. What can’t be coded can be decoded if an ear aye sieze what no eye ere grieved for. F482. Furthermore, the traditional Two Scriptures are explicitly incorporated into the work. They are the letter and the barrow of rubbish, the Word and the World.

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And as *Ulysses*, finally, exploited analogies with the Greek epic, so *Finnegans Wake* is rooted in Greek drama. There is a tissue of reminiscence from the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus and the *Alcestis* of Euripides, but the central situation is that of the Sophoclean *Oedipus*, already transferred to contemporary axes by Freud. The *Oedipus* correspondence hasn't the episode-by-episode linearity of the Homeric ground-plan to *Ulysses*, and consequently isn't easy to summarize in a few pages. Without quoting masses of evidence, however, we can indicate the main resemblances with sufficient precision. Both works turn around the creation, fall, and redemption of the City: Thebes and Dublin. As HCE is the eponymous city-founder, so is Oedipus fourth in line of descent from, and as King the surrogate of, Cadmus founder of Thebes. "Creator ha has created for his creatured one a creation", F29. The city, however, lies under a mysterious curse: "What then agent-like brought about that tragoady thundersday this municipal sin business?", F5. And an agonizing enquiry proves Oedipus to be responsible: "he is ee and no counter he who will be ultimately respunchable for the hubbub caused in Eden-borough", F29. Each ruler has a symbolic deformity: Oedipus his swollen foot, HCE his hunchback. Oedipus has unwittingly slaughtered his father: HCE has mysteriously replaced Finnegan. Oedipus answered the Sphinx's riddle about four legs, two legs, and three legs. Joyce uses this motif in various ways. The riddle-motif runs the book from the moment of HCE's encounter with the Cad with a Pipe, F35; a whole section (1-6) consists of riddles and answers, and the Mime (II-1) turns on Shem's inability to guess a riddle; Shem however does, like Oedipus, know the answer to "the first riddle of the universe", F170, and delights in pestering his brothers and sisters with it. F432, the date of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland, receives continual salience, F486, and the numbers 4, 3, and 2 (four old men, three soldiers, two temptresses) are buried on virtually every page. Oedipus has inadvertently married his mother, and Anna chatters through Earwicker's dream as "our turf-brown mummy", F194, and near the end addresses her man as "sonhusband", F627. Oedipus thus became brother to his own daughters; Earwicker projects through his Shaun-self a lubricious spate of brotherly advice to his daughter Iseult. Oedipus when the truth is known blinds himself; HCE after an evening of embarrassment in the pub gets himself blind drunk and staggers up to bed, F 381. Oedipus leaves matters in the hands of his wife's brother Creon, a diplomat who parades his virtue, makes much show of his desire to hush the matter up, and becomes the tyrant of the *Antigone*. Earwicker's mantle descends on his go-ahead son Shaun. Oedipus in the sequel is mysteriously translated

into the other world; Earwicker/Shawn vanishes amid ambiguous glory, U471. This exceedingly sketchy survey takes no account of the thematic richness in which Joyce invests the Sophoclean materials. As in the Homer-parallel in *Ulysses*, he is exploring a situation not unwinding a plot. From this point of view, *Finnegans Wake* may be regarded as an immense allegorical commentary on the ideal tragic stasis manifested by Sophocles. One or two points about Sophoclean drama may be noted in this connection. The *Oedipus* is conceived, like *Finnegans Wake*, as a prolonged *agon* for one character.

Susan Shaw Sailer wrote (in *On the Void of to Be* in 1993; The University of Michigan Press)—

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Here is the sound of her voice as she begins the monologue:

Soft morning, city! Lsp! I am leafy speafing. Lpf! Foltly and folty all the nights have falled on to long my hair. Not a sound, falling. Lispn! No wind no word. Only a leaf, just a leaf and then leaves. The woods are fond always. As were we their babes in. And robins in crews so. It is for me goolden wending. Unless? Away! Rise up, man of the hooths, you have slept so long! (619.20-27)

What I hear in these lines is a slow, smooth flow of sound, induced at least in part by the predominance of soft consonants such as L, S, and R, a sound appropriate to a river's voice whose currents are calm and steady. The tone is personal, caressing, affectionate, marked slightly by the effects of Irish on English diction and syntax. And here is her voice toward the end of the monologue:

But I'm loothing them that's here and all I lothe. Loonely in me loneness. For all their faults. I am passing out. O bitter ending! I'll slip away before they're up. They'll never see. Nor know. Nor miss me. And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms.(627.33-628.04)

Again. I hear a smooth flow of sound, built at least in part on soft consonants as well as on the repetition of words and phrases. Now, though, the pace is somewhat quickened, as benefits the seemingly quickened pace of the river as it nears the sea into which it empties. Although the words speak of anguish, their softened sound cushions the impact so that the tone approximates acceptance rather than agony. Let us compare these sounds of Anna Livia's voice with some lines from book I, chapter 8, all of which are generally credited to the two washerwomen. I would claim, however, that based on sound, the middle section of the passage reproduced here should be identified as the voice of Anna Livia:

Are you meanam Tarpey and Lyons and Gregory? I meyne now, thank all, the four of them, and the roar of them, that draves that stray in the mist and old Johnny MacDougal along with them. Is that the Poolbeg flasher beyant, pharphar, or a fireboat coasting nyar the Kishtna or a glow I behold within a hedge or my Garry come back from the Indes? Wait till the honeying of the lune, love! Die, eve, little eve, die! We see that wonder in your eye. We'll meet again, we'll part once more. The spot I'll seek if the hour you'll find. My chart shines high where the blue milk's upset. Forgivemequick, I'm I'm going! Buby! And you, pluck your watch, forgetmenot. Your evenlode. So save to jurna's end! My sights are swimming thicker on me by the shadows to this place. I sow home slowly now by own way, moyvalley way. Towy I too, rathmine. Ah, but she was the queer old skeowsha anyhow, Anna Livia, trinkettoes! And sure he was the quare old buntz too, Dear Dirty Dumpling, foostherfather of fingalls and dotthergills. Gammer and gaffer we're all their gangsters. (214.33-215.15)

In this passage, I hear first the voice of the questioning washerwoman, followed by the answering washerwoman. Then the questioner asks a second question, but rather than the answerer responding to it, we hear the voice of Anna Livia, beginning with the words "Wait till the honeying of the lune, love!" and concluding with "Forgive me quick, I'm going! Buby!" In the words that follow we hear the voices of both washerwomen, who remind each other of the work they are finishing up, name their home destinations (Moy Valley and Rathmines), and acknowledge their own and others' relatedness to ALP and HCE, everyone's first parents. The sound of the voice that speaks in 215.3-7 differs from the voices that speak in 214.33-215.3 and 215.7-15. The Anna Livia

voice is marked by the presence of the same *sostenuto* consonants as we observed in Anna Livia's final monologue, L, S, and M, whereas the washerwomen voices show more end-stopped and *staccato* consonants, such as T, D, and K. At least in part because of the different prevailing consonants, the tempos of the two sets of voices contrast with each other, the Anna Livia pace rather slow, as heard for instance in the sequence "Wait till the honeying of the lune, love!" The pace of the washerwomen is faster, heard in "Ah, but she was the queer old skeowsha anyhow, Anna Livia, trinkettoes" The tones differ, too, the Anna Livia voice projecting a statelier, more personal quality than the gossiping, "fishwife" tones of the washerwomen.

Gerard Griffin (in 1938) wrote ([James Joyce; pp. 149-153] in *James Joyce: Interviews & Recollections* edited by E. H. Mikhail in 1990; The Macmillan Press)——

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Some seven years ago I witnessed a striking instance of Joyce's equanimity under a very unflattering criticism of the technique of *Work in Progress* in the late Harold Munro's Poetry Book Shop in Bloomsbury. 'To be perfectly frank with you, Mr Joyce,' said Munro with deprecatory embarrassment, 'I can't make head or tail of your *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. A friend of mine suggested that it was intended to be read backwards, starting from the end of the book, and that one day you would reveal this clue to the enigma for the benefit of your readers. And indeed it seemed to convey just as much sense—or rather as much nonsense when I tried this method as when I read it in the normal way.' I glanced sharply at Munro at this point, and realised at once that he was not being cruelly jocose at Joyce's expense. There was a pathetically bewildered expression on his face. 'Monro is an honest critic,' said Joyce after we had left the shop. 'At least he has tried to understand my work, and regrets that he has been unable to do so. He has not suggested that I am indulging in a colossal hoax.' That is Joyce as he is now—tolerant of all criticism, confident that he is right, yet sensitive to the last degree. The truculent, almost swashbuckling, hard-swearing, seedy-looking young Dubliner has merged into the mellow, genial, quiet, well-dressed man of poise and distinction. Aloof and frigid to gate-crashing journalists, he is the soul of hospitality and generosity to his personal friends.

Ed Jewinski wrote ([James Joyce and Samuel Beckett: From Epiphany to Anti-Epiphany; pp. 160-174] in *Re: Joyce'n Beckett* edited by Phillips Carey and Ed Jewinski in 1992; Fordham University Press)——

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The importance of the anecdote is that it emphasizes a confident control of language—nothing need disturb the “master’s” handling of it; even “coincidence” has its appropriate place in Joyce’s view of language. The notion, in fact, has been so powerfully projected that readers are still offering skeleton keys or prose paraphrases of the *Wake* to clarify the “vision” which underlies it. Michael Begnal, for example, bluntly states what underlies every effort to summarize or paraphrase or condense Joyce’s *Wake*: “The language is a kind of linguistic shell that surrounds the text.” Every desire for a skeleton key for *Finnegans Wake*, I would suggest, accepts Beckett’s particular form of *misreading*. Read “properly,” the text will become visible, the “apotheosis of the world” will occur, the shell will open to reveal its contents.

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Numerous critics have shifted from the emphasis on “understanding” the *Wake* in the terms Beckett suggested in *Exagmination* to an exploration of the infinite possibilities of the “text”. In fact, like Derrida, readers have come to look at the *Wake* as “the greatest power of meanings buried in each syllabic fragment, subjecting each atom of writing to frission in order to overload the consciousness with the whole memory of man: mythologies, religion, philosophies, sciences, psychoanalysis, literatures” (Derrida). The emphasis is on the intractability of language and the “unreadability” of the text. By overloading consciousness, the mind comes to a stage Derrida calls “aporia,” a stage of undecidability and indeterminacy, a stage of “impasses of meaning” (Eagleton).



2. Can you understand the plot while you are reading? What did Joyce want to describe in the book?

Walton Litz wrote ([The Making of *Finnegans Wake*; pp. 209-223] in *A James Joyce Miscellany* edited by Mavin Magalaner in 1959; Southern Illinois University Press)——

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Over a year passed after the publication of *Ulysses* before Joyce could muster the strength and determination to begin a new work. When *Finnegans Wake* was finally begun, in the spring of 1923, neither the structure nor the ultimate style of the book had been determined. Joyce had been preoccupied for years with many of the *Wake*'s major themes and motifs: a number of them are foreshadowed in *Ulysses*, most notably Vico's cyclic view of history and the story of "How Buckley Shot the Russian General." Nevertheless, the manner in which these ripening themes would be presented was not clear. Joyce's early work on the *Wake* was exploratory, a clarification of basic ideas and stylistic aims. During the spring and summer of 1923 he composed four short passages which reveal his concern with Irish history but contain no mention of the Earwicker family and no hints as to the shape of his new work. One of these early sketches deals with King Roderick O'Connor (FW, 380~6), and a third with the story of Tristan and Isolde (FW, II, iv). However, the most interesting of these four sketches is the one which describes an encounter between St. Patrik and an Irish arch-druid who turns out to be the Bishop Berkeley in disguise (FW, 611-12). Joyce once told his friend Frank Budgen that this passage was "the defence and indictment" of the *Wake* itself. The druid defends in obscure terms the language and design of *Finnegans Wake*, borrowing his argument from Berkeley's subjective theory of vision, but commonsense Patrik dismisses the druid's reasoning and with it the night-world of the *Wake*. It is significant that this passage, which ultimately found its place near the end of *Finnegans Wake*, should have been one of the first written. One might speculate that Joyce in composing it was debating with himself the advantages and disadvantages of the task he was about to undertake. After a brief flurry of revisions in the

summer of 1923 these four early sketches were put aside, only to be introduced into the text of the *Wake* fifteen years later during the last-minute rewriting of 1938. Joyce's work on these sketches evidently dispelled the depression which had followed in the completion of *Ulysses* and confirmed his interest in the new project, for in the autumn of 1923 he turned his attention to the Earwicker family and began to draft episodes with amazing rapidity. During the autumn and winter of 1923-24 six of the eight episodes which now comprise Part I of the *Wake* were begun, in addition to an episode concerning the Four Old Men ("Mamalujo"). The various members of the Earwicker family began to assume individuality, and the major themes associated with each were developed. Then in the spring of 1924, with the basic design of Part I already established, Joyce focused his interest on the figure of Shaun and began work on the "four watches" which were later to become Part III of the *Wake*. Although the drafts and revisions for Part I were far from satisfying to Joyce he preferred to start on new material, since it was his method to work on several sections at the same time, allowing the composition of one to illuminate the problems of the others and relying on later revisions to bring the whole work into harmony. Joyce never tried to force his preliminary sketches into a rigid pattern, but patiently waited for relationships to develop. In one of his letters to Miss Harriet Weaver he refers to these early pieces as "not fragments but active elements" which will "fuse of themselves" in time, and in a subsequent letter he speaks of the book as writing itself. During 1924 and 1925 Joyce worked assiduously on the four chapters or "watches" of Shaun, solving internal problems of structure and gradually developing the character of the blustering twin. Occasionally he would return to Part I in order to prepare one of its episodes for magazine publication, but Shaun remained his chief interest. However, the further Joyce advanced with his work on Shaun the more puzzled he became by the problem of the *Wake's* total structure. At first he may have thought of constructing the book in two major parts, but this plan soon had to be modified. The problem was how to effect a transition between the chapters of Part I already drafted and the "four watches" of Shaun. "I am boring through a mountain from two sides," Joyce told a friend. "The question is, how to meet in the middle." Finally, however, he began to see his way clear out of the maze he had created. In the spring of 1926 he could announce: "I have the book now fairly well planned out in my head." By this time he had arrived at a clear conception of the four-part structure which governs *Finnegans Wake*. He had visualized the four chapters of Part II, which form a bridge between the *Anna Livia Plurabelle* episode at the end of Part I and the first chapter of Part III. He had also foreseen

the role of Part IV as both beginning and end of the book's cyclic structure. Not only was the *Wake's* total structure now determined, but the disposition of material within the major sections was fairly clear. From 1926 onward the writing of *Finnegans Wake* entered a second phase, with Joyce laboring like a mosaic worker on a predetermined pattern, turning first to one part and then to another of his basic design. During 1927, '28, '29 he prepared most of the episodes already written for separate publication. By 1930 Parts I and III of the *Wake* had been printed in their preliminary forms, and at this point Joyce felt "a sudden kind of drop" in the impetus behind his writing. The shaping of Part II proceeded slowly and under great personal difficulties; Joyce was still laboring on sections of Part II and IV while Part I was entering galley proof in 1936 and '37. The entire work was not completed until 1938, with Joyce making last-minute revisions on the galley proofs. Joyce's method of composition, which might best be described as ceaseless elaboration upon a static pattern, was one he had followed during the last stages of the writing of *Ulysses*; as a result of it, his revisions were almost always expansive rather than selective. The obvious comparison to mosaic work (like that to the intricate elaborations of the *Book of Kells*) was one he encouraged, and one which emphasizes what I would call the "Imagistic" nature of his art. Ezra Pound defined the Image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time," and it is my belief that Joyce intended the whole of *Finnegans Wake* to be regarded as a single vast Image. The development of the *Wake* is pictorial rather than temporal, and an understanding of any one passage depends as much upon what follows it as upon what precedes it. Ideally the *Wake* should be read many times, since we must hold the entire work in our minds as a single image if any one element is to be fully understood. In effect, Joyce is demanding that the reader visualize the total structure of the book in the same manner as he did while writing it. But this heavy demand on the reader is not the only result of Joyce's aesthetic aims as revealed by his mode of composition. A process of constant elaboration has no inherent boundaries, and revision tends to degenerate into mere embroidery and lead the reader further and further from central thematic concerns. As Joyce progressed in his revisions his interest in details of texture often overshadowed and even permanently obscured major elements that appear quite clearly in the early versions. During the first and most important phase of composition, which lasted from 1923 to approximately 1927, Joyce not only discovered the appropriate structure for the *Wake* but developed its "final" style as well. The final sketches begun in 1923 and 1924 differ little from the more complex sections of *Ulysses* in their preliminary

versions, but in his revisions of them Joyce was clearly shaping a more intricate style. Their revisions reveal a process which he was later to call “stratification,” the expansion and thickening of the text through the addition of related themes and motifs. The ultimate result of this Process was the characteristic language of the *Wake*, in which a number of associated ideas are stated simultaneously by means of portmanteau words. Joyce’s revisions of the period 1923-27 reflect his desire to exploit what might be called the “musical” potentialities of language in two ways: (1) By creating an “orchestrated” prose which sounds a number of themes and motifs “in an instant of time”; and (2) by utilizing the “expressive” powers of language to their fullest extent, so that his prose embodies as many qualities of its subject-matter as possible.

Michael H. Begnal wrote (in *Dreamscheme: Narrative and Voice in Finnegans Wake* in 1988; Syracuse University Press)—

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Arguably, *Finnegans Wake* is the most experimental work attempted in prose fiction, and it will not yield to examination easily, but it need not remain a complete enigma. Though the book does not offer a conventional narrative, elements of a plot do continue to drift to the surface. Granted, nothing very much of a physical nature will happen, but as Ivy Compton-Burnett commented, “Real life seems to have no plots.” The *Wake*’s narrative proceeds vertically, rather than horizontally, as one separate incident after another is piled upon what has gone before. The reader must swivel backward and forward and around like the Joycean lighthouse. By concentrating upon these individual incidents, by locating them and analyzing them carefully, we can begin to understand what Joyce is doing with plot and narrative. There are delineated characters immersed in specific situations, whether they be Shem and Shaun, the Mooks and the Gripes, or Burrus and Caseous, and language, not at all simply gesture in Joyce’s hands, can help us to identify them. The critical need, then, is for the reader to penetrate into the text, to become accustomed to the various dialects of this night language, while remembering that this is a very funny book. Whether or not there is a single dreamer in *Finnegans Wake*, and I am fairly convinced that there is not, it is clear that there is an abundance of voices to be heard in this Wakean night. Their cadences and their thematic concerns will sooner or later give them away, if the reader looks and listens closely enough. Though individual scenes and situations are often

set up and structured by an unnamed narrational voice, this stylistic entity cannot ever exert total authority over what has once been set in motion. There is no controlling consciousness to which the character voices can be subordinated, so that occasionally they can take off on their own to discuss whatever it is they wish. It has often been written that one salient characteristic of these Earwicker speakers is their obsessive desire to hide the centers of their respective psyches from their fellows and from the reader, but instead it appears that in their long and meandering monologues, in their staccato question-and-answer sessions, they almost tell us more than we need or want to know. And they are not so difficult to discover behind their narrational masks since they always make their appearances in virtually the same combinations—brothers warring against brother when Shem and Shaun are on the stage, and the suitor looking for a wife when the turns come for Anna Livia and Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker. Unfailingly, when Issy comes forward at all, she will adopt the role of the supporting actress.

Michael H. Begnal also wrote ([A Skeleton Key to Campbell and Robinson; pp. 36-45] in *Re-Viewing Classics of Joyce Criticism* edited by Janet Egleson Dunleavy in 1991; University of Illinois Press)—

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When *A Skeleton Key to "Finnegans Wake"* was published in 1944, it was the first attempt at a full-length treatment of the narrative of *Finnegans Wake*, which had appeared in its final form only five years earlier. As might have been expected, the interpretation put together by Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson met with more catcalls than cheers, ranging from Harry Levin's opinion that "the collaborators 'render him no service' in making 'assertions which cannot withstand scrutiny'" to Edmund Wilson's conclusion that the study "'strips away most of the master's poetry.'" More recently, the critics may have changed, but in general their reaction of irritation and dismissal remain the same. Assessing his experience of *Finnegans Wake* as interpreted through the *Key*, Roland McHugh says that "Campbell and Robinson paint over everything they don't understand and they are followed in this by their weaker imitators." John Bishop fumes: "An example of coherent nonsense is what one will find elaborated in some of the commentary on *Finnegans Wake*, which explains, without irony, that the book is about a Nordic hunchback saddled with the improbable name of Humphrey Chimpden

Earwicker, who is married to someone even more improbably named Anna Livia Plurabelle, and who has committed an indistinct crime involving two temptresses, three soldiers, and unclear quantities of urine in Dublin's Phoenix Park." Yet *A Skeleton Key*, still in paperback, continues to be the first book of criticism read by the newcomer to *Finnegans Wake*. It is a fixture on every critical bibliography. Just how can this be? What Campbell and Robinson set out to discover is a traceable narrative line in the *Wake*, the hint of a plot that may help to codify the chaos. As they say: "Then the enormous map of *Finnegans Wake* begins slowly to unfold, characters and motifs emerge, themes become recognizable, and Joyce's vocabulary falls more and more familiarly on the accustomed ear." Their work was never intended as a trot, a paraphrase, or a substitute for Joyce's novel, but rather as a supplement and an encouragement to an understandably baffled neophyte reader of the *Wake*. The authors repeatedly declare that this or that observation is only a guess, that this or that reading may be palpably incorrect, but they constantly exhort the reader to forge ahead, much as do Joyce's own narrative voices. Most importantly, they are convinced that the *Wake* does make sense and that it is the reader's burden to catch up with the artist's expansion of the guidelines for what might constitute a contemporary work of art. Certainly, they are proselytizers, and certainly they occasionally demonstrate excessive zeal in their pronouncements, but they are sincerely confident that the novel is not a hoax and that, through dedication and effort, it will be revealed as a monumental reaffirmation of human existence. Consequently, the authors of *A Skeleton Key* begin in their "Introduction to a Strange Subject" to unveil the basic, underlying propositions that give a thematic form to the novel. They link Joyce's title to the Irish music-hall ballad, "Finnegan's Wake," and they introduce the concept of the Fall as essential to the evolution of all human history. In a single paragraph, they outline Giambattista Vico's theory of the four-part cycle of universal history (though they miss the fact that it is really a three-part cycle followed by a *ricorso*, or waiting period), and they indicate some parallels with Goethe; Spengler, and the Hindu Round of the Four Yugas. Their method is eclectic, inclusive, and quite Jungian in its emphasis, but it establishes their contention that Joyce's novel is a vast collection of histories and mythologies, allusions and references, which provide a vision of archetypal man and woman. It is in the introduction to *A Skeleton Key* that the foundation for a novelistic approach to the text is most directly laid. The body of this section is devoted to descriptions of the narrative's principal characters and to the trials and tribulations of the Earwicker family in their residence at

Chapelizod, just outside Dublin. Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker is a newcomer to Ireland, the successor to Tim Finnegan of a previous epoch, one of a series of the many earlier invaders of the Emerald Isle. His precursors are legion, ranging from, among a multiple of others, Thor, Manannan MacLir, Saint Patrik, and Oliver Cromwell. Yet Campbell and Robinson are insistent about one critical aspect of HCE: "He emerges as a well-defined and sympathetic character, the sorely harrowed victim of a relentless fate, which is stronger than, yet identical with, himself." Though it is not quite clear exactly what the last clause of their descriptive sentence means, the authors view Earwicker as a traditional character in an apprehensible plot. Though he can be seen as representative of all humankind, his individual characteristics and foibles allow us to follow him through a series of narrational happenings in something much like a conventional manner of reading. HCE is no Leopold Bloom but he is also not so elusive or sigla-like that we cannot get a reasonable understanding of what he does in his dream. Thus the *Key* fills in the background to Earwicker's guilty dilemma, his Sin in Phoenix Park, which causes him to dream the nightmare of the *Wake* and which the authors do indeed take as having been a literal transgression. "Briefly, he was caught peeping at or exhibiting himself to a couple of girls in Phoenix Park. The indiscretion was witnessed by three drunken soldiers, who could never be quite certain of what they had seen; from them it went out to the world." Continuing to transcribe an unfolding narrative whose basis is essentially cause and effect, Campbell and Robinson relate that secret comes to be public knowledge when HCE is accosted in Phoenix Park a day later by a certain Cad with a pipe who not so innocently asks for the time. Caught off guard (though why should he be on guard?), Earwicker blurts out a long defense of his actions, which the cad takes home to his wife, and soon the rumors are spread across Dublin and result in the satiric and insulting "Ballad of Persse O'Reilly." In the course of their account of the gossip's transmutations the authors touch on some of the peripheral characters, such as the Twelve drinkers at the pub owned by HCE, and the Four, whom they identify as senile judges who preside over the ill doings of the present. They are historians, the Four Masters of the Irish Annals as well as the Four Evangelists, and they drift in and out of these pages seemingly at will. Armed with this knowledge of what has been involved in Earwicker's past, the reader is now prepared to deal with the effects and consequences of the Sin. "In the last analysis the universal judgment against HCE is but a reflection of his own obsessive guilt; and conversely, the sin which others condemn in him is but a conspicuous public example of the general,

universally human, original sin, privately effective within themselves." The plot, then, revolves around the central figure of the Father.

Clive Hart wrote (in *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake* in 1962, Northwestern Univ. Press)—

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In common with all other Joyce critics I am greatly indebted to the pioneer work of Messrs. Campbell and Robinson, whose *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* was the first brave attempt to evaluate and explain the whole book, page by page. Remarkable though it is, however, the *Skeleton Key's* strong influence on Joyce studies has not been altogether salutary. Tentative, exploratory, and often ill-informed, as its authors were the first to admit, its analyses and judgments have nevertheless been accepted virtually without question by most later critics, with the result that a number of untenable interpretations have been perpetuated year after year. Such points are dealt with in this dissertation only when they impinge on my line of enquiry. My most radical departure from the interpretation of the *Skeleton Key* lies in my view of the horizontal structure, which I believe to be considerably more subtle than the neat Victorian outline on which Messrs. Campbell and Robinson base their study. In Chapter Three, in particular, I have made the first attempt at an extended analysis of the regressive pattern of dreams within dreams—an aspect of *Finnegans Wake* which is almost wholly ignored by the *Skeleton Key*.

Finn Fordham wrote ([Mapping Echoland, pp. 167-201] in *Joyce Studies Annual 2000* edited by Thomas F. Staley; University of Texas Press)—

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Finnegans Wake, as it cautions us here, is an "echoland," a resonant novel full of reverberations where every element has or is an echo, where everything is a response to something, and even, at over-whelming moments, to everything else. Though one paragraph does not always seem connected to its neighbor, a phrase on one page can echo with a phrase at a considerable distance. These uncanny echoes are unsettling for readers used to the forward movement of novelistic narrative. In terms of it being a novel, the extremity of this technique is something peculiar to *Finnegans Wake* which, skirting round

singular narrative linearity, famously avoids “goahead plot” (*Letters* III 146). On the other hand, though we may lose the thread of the narrative, certain figures, patterns, phrases, motifs and themes, recur to give us the curious sense of a continuous discontinuity. If the writing doesn’t resemble anything recognizable, at least it somehow resembles itself. The echoes are then reassuring for a reader frequently lost in the dense dark “woods” of dense dark “words.” It is a similar reassurance the detective feels on perceiving a connection in a tricky case. In this essay we will follow just such a thread, reconstructing a “vertical linearity” through elements in the manuscript archive. By vertical we mean reading down through the fabric of the text, rather than “going ahead” horizontally alongside (or above) it. This involves first choosing a “figure” or “motif,” then finding the appearances of its variations in the text, and then tracing their origins in amongst the manuscripts. The instances of the motif are then arranged chronologically, so a narrative of their evolution and development during the composition process can be reconstructed. The Garland Archive allows this since it provides textual and historical contexts, showing where and more or less approximately when the figure or a version of it was inserted or evoked. Approximate dating is a problem here, especially for the latter stages of composition. However, one use of the results is that they may help us to trace the timing of Joyce’s revisions, along the mapped paths of self-referential revision. The method is distinct from other genetic practices which are continuing to develop. With its attention to revisions in the drafts it refers little, unlike the majority of genetic work, to the notebooks or source-hunting. This refocusing qualifies in an important way how Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon, according to Joe Schork, perceive *Finnegans Wake*. Schork writes that they “insist... that almost everything in the *Wake* first appeared (in some form or the other) in the notebooks.” But, through Joyce’s acts of rewriting, scoring over one word and inserting another, many elements first appeared in the drafts themselves. Joyce’s processes (of notetaking-then-insertion and insertion-then-revision) need comparative evaluation. It is distinct also from the laudable work now in progress for “The Genetic Guide to *Finnegans Wake*” being compiled and edited by Luca Crispi and Sam Slote. Where their work treats each chapter of *Finnegans Wake* separately, our approach recognises that Joyce composed not simply chapter by chapter, but also according to an ever-expanding set of motifs which, after an initial display, reappear frequently, scattered throughout the work. This scattering sets up networks which seem to criss-cross and link up disparate sections. The method can be applied to different “figures” of course. Clive Hart

has written about the “skillfully varied organization of more than a thousand little leitmotifs” though his own index has some curious omissions including the motif we have chosen here.

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The method has several other uses, as we shall see: it gives us in-sights into the nature of Joyce’s composition methods, how they altered and what preoccupations prompted his additions. With the appearances of a motif linked together through time, a hidden narrative of its evolution appears. Micro-narratives of Joyce’s composition emerge, sequences located within the larger flow of the creative process. It is also a useful tool for detailed interpretation at the level of close-reading. Since the contexts can be read as prompts, coloring the significance of the inserted figure, then the method contributes to our understanding of the figure. In turn, we may understand the context of insertion too, since addition and context act as glosses for each other. Above all we come to see a text which was always porous if unevenly so. At different periods, different parts of the text were more or less capable of receiving new material. By revealing the moment of insertion, we come to see a text which has fault lines concealed in it, where, under certain kinds of pressure, it opened up, took in new matter, then reformed itself. The source of this pressure is both inside the text, where there is content which *invites* revision; and out-side the text in Joyce’s life, where events reformed the visions of his work, forming some of its revisions. That is the method and some of its uses put it simply. It will radically effect the way we conceive Joyce’s structure for *Finnegans Wake* and how he continually restructured it. Any general theory, however, will have to wait until there is comparative work on both other motifs in the text, and on how other authors make use of motif. But it will be useful here to locate “motif” besides some definitions. In addition we would like to formulate an initial notion of *intratextuality*.

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As a way then of situating motif, we can briefly use concepts from the work of one of the former generation of *Wake* scholars: Hart’s seminal *Structure and Motif in “Finnegans Wake.”* Extremely useful and provocative, it is also pre-structuralist and humanistically inflected, and so is now consequently overlooked. For Hart, motif ties “the sprawling cycles together with taut bonds stretched from point to point” and it “provides a skeletal grid-pattern” while the “ordering and unifying function of the *leitmotif* is probably its greatest

strength.” But is Joyce’s structure necessarily so schematic and static? What is it that the motifs are supposed to “order” and “unify”? The book as a whole, in its various parts? If so, how are they to do this especially given the multiplicity of its parts? Without necessarily establishing answers, this preliminary research will subvert some of Hart’s definitions.

James S. Atherton wrote (in *The Books at the Wake* in 1959, Southern Illinois Univ. Press)—

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There are too many real—or rather, fully realized—characters taking part in the action for the book to be anything except a novel of the naturalistic type. Joyce, who admired Flaubert and claimed to have read every word of Defoe, created as his hero H.C.E., whose ‘vitality is immense, his spirit unquenchable... no featureless abstraction labeled Everyman, but a real character, almost a Dickensian one, conceived in comedy, executed in admiration’; His supporting characters are almost equally vivid: A.L.P., ‘Anna Livia’, who is at once, mother, wife, and the River Liffey, grows old as the book progresses, and her final speech (619.20 et seq.) in addition to being a wonderfully beautiful piece of prose, contains a complete and coherent picture of a change in family relationships shown in full perspective. Shem and Shaun, the warring brothers, may be based upon Joyce and his enemies and friends who form what Kenner has called ‘his shadow selves’, but in *Finnegans Wake* they are characters in their own right. In fact, *Finnegans Wake* is, as M.J.C. Hodgart insists, ‘primarily a novel.’ This may seem to be establishing the obvious, but it is an important fact which must be borne in mind when considering two secondary questions that arise: what is the novel about, and what—if anything—is it besides a novel? Any attempt to answer these questions must take into account Joyce’s own attitude to his book. One of the certain facts about *Finnegans Wake* is the high and earnest sense of dedication with which Joyce wrote it. He saw himself as the *Vates*, the poet and prophet, and work as the sacred book of a new religion of which he was the prophet and priest. Without this sense of dedication he could never have continued so long at his self-imposed task. But he felt that if it could only be written down correctly it would have a power of its own. His attitude bordered, perhaps, on madness; he himself admitted that he was superstitious about the power of his words. As early as 1919 he wrote to Miss Weaver, ‘The word scorching has a peculiar significance for my superstitious mind not so

much because of any quality or merit in the writing itself as for the fact that the progress of the book is like the progress of some sandblast. As soon as I mention any person in it I hear of his or her death or departure or misfortune and each successive episode, dealing with some province of artistic culture leaves behind it a burnt up field.' In his introduction to Joyce's *Letters* Stuart Gilbert reports that 'on more than one occasion Joyce told me that certain incidents in his writings had proved to be premonitions of incidents that subsequently took place'; When the Russo-Finnish War broke out shortly after the publication of *Finnegans Wake* Joyce wrote, 'A foretold by the prophet, the Finn again wakes.' He adds 'I should not jest', but the next letter in the collection contains the passage, 'My daughter-in-law staged a marvelous banquet for my last birthday and read the closing pages on the passing-out of Anna Livia to a seemingly much affected audience. Alas, if you ever read them you will see they were unconsciously prophetic!' And the letter ends, 'I have received a number of foreign notices of my book... the most curious comes from Helsinki where as was predicated, the Finn again wakes.' In fact Joyce believed that his words were 'Words of silent power' (345.19). Eugene Jolas relates that Joyce once said to him, 'I have discovered that I can do anything with language I want.' Yet Jolas goes on to say that Joyce seemed to be constantly listening, constantly on the look-out for interesting or significant phrases which could be used in his book. The book was indeed his life and he believed that he was entrapping some part of the essence of life within its pages.

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The most detailed of Joyce's explanations are contained in his letters to Miss Weaver to whom he sent each section as it was completed, and often accompanied it with a note of explanation. Miss Weaver is always ready to help students of Joyce's work, and when I wrote to her some time ago to ask her opinion of the various interpretations of the *Wake* she replied, "I own that the *Skeleton Key*, though extremely useful in many ways, has its irritating features—at least it has to me. The authors seem to me to read unwarranted things into the book. In particular their ascription of the whole thing to a dream of HCE seems to me nonsensical... My view is that Mr. Joyce did not intend the book to be looked upon as the dream of any one character, but that he regarded the dream form with its shiftings and changes and chances as a convenient device allowing the freest scope to introduce any material he wished—and suited to a night-piece." Another account of *Finnegans Wake* was given by Miss Weaver to Professor Joseph Prescott, to whom she wrote, "In the summer of 1923 when

Mr. Joyce was staying with his family in England he told me he wanted to write a book which should be a kind of universal history and I typed for him a few preliminary sketches he had made for isolated characters in the book."

Roland McHugh wrote (in *The Finnegans Wake Experience* in 1981; University of California Press)—

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I now began the famous *Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* of Campbell and Robinson. This came out in 1944 and was the first serious attempt to do justice to its subject. It was clearly a more honest appraisal than *Our Exagmination*. Joyce had been dead three years and the authors were enthusiastic American amateurs. As I read the introduction I saw plenty of familiar landmarks: Vico, Tim Finnegan, Finn MacCool, Tristan and Isolde, *The Annals of the Four Masters* and so on. But the curiously literal nature of the interpretation seemed very questionable. Campbell and Robinson's FW was a novel with a plot:

But to return to HCE. He is a man who has won his place in society, a place not of high distinction but of decent repute. He is a candidate in a local election. Gossip, however, undoes his campaign and his reputation as well. It was in Phoenix Park (that garden of Eden), near his tavern, that he committed an indecorous impropriety which now dogs him to the end of his life-nightmare. Briefly, he was caught peeping at or exhibiting himself to a couple of girls in Phoenix Park. The indiscretion was witnessed by three drunken soldiers...

And so on. Now, most of this draws on I.2, which is written in a much simpler language than most of FW and is especially amenable to paraphrase. It is true that 034.12-30 gives roughly the same story as Campbell and Robinson: 'Slander... has never been able to convict... Earwicker... of any graver impropriety than that, advanced by some woodwards or regards, who did not dare deny... that they had... that day consumed their soul of the corn, of having believed with ongentilmensky [ungentlemanly] immodus opposite a pair of dainty maid-servants in the swoolth of the rushy hollow...' But the part about the local election comes from Book IV, and the reporters are not soldiers but 'woodwards or regards', an old term for forest officers protecting venison. (Phoenix Park was noted for its deer.) The soldiers are taken from the

page preceding, which states that Earwicker 'lay at one time under the ludicrous imputation of annoying Welsh fusiliers in the people's park' (033.25-7). Never mind the fact that the People's Park is in Dun Laoghaire, nowhere near Phoenix Park.

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But I could see no utility in the selecting of a particular combination of compatible elements to frame a 'plot'. The same naive realism was evident in Campbell and Robinson's treatment of III.4: 'It is the morning after the night of the winter solstice. A dry leaf still clinging to the tree outside the window has been scratching at the pane; and this sound has drawn the inexhaustible dream from the depths of the psyche.' I could see no evidence whatever for this kind of interference concerning phenomena outside the sleeper's mind. Campbell and Robinson paint over everything they don't understand and they are followed in this by their weaker imitators, such as Burgess and Tindall. In contrast to these 'popular' books—ultimately surrogates for reading FW—a different kind of study began to appear in the 1950s. I had with me in Paris Adaline Glasheen's *A Census of Finnegans Wake* (1956), James Atherton's *The Books at the Wake* (1959) and Matthew J.C. Hodgart and Mabel P. Worthington's *Song in the Works of James Joyce* (1959). The last-named is a fine and accurate collection of on-spot allusions, but as it says comparatively little about the mechanism of FW, I found most of my attention focussed on Glasheen and Atherton. Both these books continue to uphold the novelistic approach to a degree.

Roland McHugh also wrote (in *The Sigla of Finnegans Wake* in 1976; Edward Arnold, London)—

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Apart from Mr Hart's *Concordance to 'Finnegans Wake'* and the second edition of the *Census*, the most important products of the 1960s were language lists. The *Newsletter* published studies of various minor languages, and three extended linguistic analyses also appeared, *Scandinavian Elements of 'Finnegans Wake'*, *Gaelic Lexicon for 'Finnegans Wake'*, and *A Lexicon of the German in 'Finnegans Wake'*. Unfortunately, much published exegesis exhibits a depressing indifference to context and continuity, which results from the disproportionate acquaintance with the text possessed by most exegetes.

Chapters I.1 and I.8, for example, are more familiar to most of us than, say, the book II chapters. The cohesion of parts will be appreciated only when the reader has formulated canons for distinguishing them. I propose here to try to assist him. Ideally, we should try to remain conscious of the dual function of every word. There is a linear function, a contribution to the syntactic complex in which the word stands. We must be able to account for the position of any unit in FW as a transition between the units of either side of it. Secondly there is a systemic function a contribution to the tone of the section. Very common words are chiefly linear in function; names such as the thousand or so rivers mentioned in I.8 are chiefly systemic, in this case enhancing the watery quality of that chapter. But every word must be allowed its contribution to texture. Just as the eighteen chapters of *Ulysses* possess individual styles, moods and atmospheres, so each of the seventeen FW chapters has a private aura. It was very rare for Joyce to transfer any partly-composed material from one chapter to another. The only instance of any length which I can give is the paragraph 223.35-224.07, which if retained in its original place would have separated 369.05 and 06. The reader who has not recognized chapter unification may assume that, since almost any passage includes the main themes or obsessions of FW, he need only pick one at random and admit every allusion its words can be contorted to produce. The usual consequence is temporary fascination followed by loss of the faculty for drawing lines of exclusion, leading to conceptual over-load, psychic saturation. In the initial stages I consider familiarity to be more important than comprehension. Although in the present work I have tried to restrict the repetition of other exegetes' conclusions, I think that a reader lacking experience of other FW studies should be able to understand and benefit from the things I have to say. Painful as it may seem, I would urge the reader to make some attempt at reading through FW before beginning this book, if only to form some idea of the physical dimensions of the chapters. The distinguishing feature of my approach to FW is my concern with Joyce's *sigla*. These marks appear in the author's manuscripts and letters as abbreviations for certain characters or conceptual patterns underlying the book's fabric.

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We can recognize a balance between the inward-looking book II and the outward-looking book IV, and a further balance of book I against book III. So far the best analysis of the latter situation appears in the earlier parts of Clive Hart's *Structure and Motif in 'Finnegans Wake'*. Mr. Hart constructs several

schemas after the precedent of those made by Joyce for *Ulysses*. He subsequently declares:

Around a central section, Book II, Joyce builds two opposing cycles consisting of Books I and III. In these two Books there is established a pattern of correspondences of the major events of each, those in Book III occurring in reverse order and having inverse characteristics. Whereas Book I begins with a rather obvious birth (28-9) and ends with a symbolic death (215-16), Book III begins with death (403) and ends with a birth (509); 'roads' and the meeting with the King (I.2) reappear in III.4, the trial of I.3-4 in III.3, the Letter of I.5 in III.1, and the fables of I.6 earlier in III.1. In his correspondence Joyce implicitly referred to this pattern.

Further parallels might be easily conjoined, for example Shem's biography (I.7) balancing Shaun's (III.1) or the mention at the beginning of III.1 (404.01-3) of the laundry deposited by the washerwomen at the end of I.8 (213.21-9). I believe that the greatest priority for the beginner is to acquire enough familiarity with FW to see the simple equilibrium of two symmetrical half-arches supporting a keystone of greater complexity. Comprehension of the great balance of parts may be facilitated by acquaintance with the history of FW's composition. The first large section to be drafted was book I (omitting I.1 and I.6): this process occupied the latter part of 1923 and the earlier part of 1924. Joyce then composed the four chapters of book III, returning periodically to elaborate book I. I.1 and I.6 were begun in 1926-7, and by the end of the 1920s Joyce had published versions of all the book I and book III chapters in the magazine *transition*. At this point ill health and family problems provoked a season of despair in which the work lapsed. In the early 1930s Joyce began carving the four book II chapters with agonizing slowness. He had become very secretive and we accordingly possess less information concerning the genesis of this section. In 1937-8 Joyce revised his entire text and also assembled book IV. FW was published in 1939.

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It is frustrating to know of the existence of the Buffalo Notebooks but to remain ignorant of their content. There are sixty-six notebooks, most of them possessing around two hundred pages. They have been catalogued by Peter Spielberg but little has appeared in print in the way of transcription. Apart from

the difficulty of interpreting Joyce's scrawl the great bulk of material involved makes complete publication an unlikely event in this decade.

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In reading the Buffalo Notebooks one acquires a feeling for the relative gravity of the principal themes of FW, because one observes the amount of notebook space they command. The conviction that FW is exclusively dominated by a particular discipline is very common amongst explicators today. Some persons experience a series of mutually contradictory obsessions: perusal of the notebooks is a good antidote. Despite all this I would stress the urgency of performing several basic exegetical tasks currently outstanding, which I consider of greater importance than further study of the manuscripts. The Italian and Spanish elements in FW are in great need of attention. If the reader is then to ignore the notebook, how is he to utilize their sigla in his own research? I consider the adoption of sigla concepts to be fundamental to the correct appreciation of FW. But beyond reinforcing the impression I have given I am dubious as to the utility of most notebook entries.

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It seems a pity to trail off in this way but of course the blurred margin is a predictable aspect of Joyce. My object in any case has been to increase the accessibility of FW to the reader rather than to dictate rules for exegetes. Exegesis is necessary, but it presents a danger of distracting from its subject: there is no substitute for direct contact with the text. I must also observe that to appreciate the book fully one needs to live in Dublin. I earnestly recommend *Finnegans Wake*, as a human experience unlike any other.

Margot Norris wrote (in *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake* in 1974; The Johns Hopkins University Press)—

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Joyce's fictional characters are always alienated from their worlds. In the paralyzed citizens of *Dubliners* and in Stephen's agitated defense against societal institutions in *Portrait*, the assault on the self is from without, and therefore defensible with silence, cunning, and exile, as Stephen concludes at the end of *Portrait*. Yet in Joyce's later works, the self becomes increasingly imperiled from within, as Stephen is gnawed by "agenbite of inwit," and Bloom

tormented by sexual guilts in *Ulysses*. Joyce exquisitely balances the psychological and social processes of guilt in *Ulysses*. Bloom's alienation is simultaneously sexual and racial; as the Wandering Jew, subject to forbidden fantasies, he reflects an exiled Odysseus, driven and delayed by sexual desire. But Bloom most perfectly fuses the psychological and social functions of guilt in the mythic analogue of Christ, the divine masochist. The fundamental difference between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is greater than the difference between day and night. In *Ulysses*, the differences between inside and outside, self and other, individual and society, are still clearly delineated. Ulyssean characters have stable identities, notwithstanding their mythical analogues, and a consistent and unitary consciousness through which they largely know who they are and who everyone else is. But Wakean figures, as figures in a dream, face the dilemma announced in a witty chapter title of Adaline Glasheen's *Second Census*, "Who's Who When Everybody is Somebody Else."

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Guilt is one of the prime movers in the dream world of *Finnegans Wake*. The theme of guilt in *Finnegans Wake*, and the interchangeability of characters are related in important ways. Interchangeability in the *Wake* is too easily dismissed as a stylistic flourish, as an instance of the kind of typological cross-identification found in Joyce's work as early as "Counterparts." Substitutions of personae, composite figures, disguises, and other instances of shifting identity have important specific functions in the dream, as we know from Freud's work, and as Joyce is certain to have known. Besides gratifying the subject's wishes, the unconscious can simultaneously communicate and conceal unpleasant or painful matters by using various disguises.

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The difficulty of distinguishing "self" and "other" makes the status of guilt extremely problematic in the *Wake*. Insofar as Wakean figures are often projections of themselves, the "other" can be regarded as the guilty self, and the characters' attitudes and comments toward others are often unconsciously self-reflexive. Joyce first suggests something of this sort in the description of Mr. Duffy in *Dubliners*. "He had an odd autobiographical habit which had led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense" (D, p. 108).

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The problem of guilt in *Finnegans Wake* necessitates defining the reality, or level of reality, in the work. It is all too easy to treat Wakian figures as though they were characters in a nineteenth century novel, characters in fiction who mirror characters in life. But if we assume that *Finnegans Wake* represents a dream, then Wakean figures become the creatures of the dreamer, figures that may represent persons in an offscreen waking reality, or the dreamer himself, or a camouflage for others, or composites of several figures, like Freud's friend R and his uncle. The great problem, of course, is that the reader is trapped inside the dream in *Finnegans Wake*. A dream can't be analyzed from the inside, because the dream is precisely the place where self-knowledge breaks down. The dreamer confronts a disguised message from his unconscious. He is unable to know his unconscious directly, and yet is utterly and truly himself. The confusion of the reader of *Finnegans Wake* is a fitting response to a kind of terror implicit in the world of the dream, a terror confronted by Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass* when Tweedledee suggests that she is merely a sort of thing in the Red Knight's dream. The extent to which we can explore the problems of guilt and the self in psychoanalytic terms is limited by the absence of the frame of a waking reality in *Finnegans Wake*. In *Ulysses*, the fabulous distortions of "Circe" are fully intelligible in light of all we know of the day's events. The sources of the fantasy of Molly in Turkish costume (U, p. 439-41) are wonderfully diverse: Bloom's dream on the previous night; his thoughts of Agendath Netaim; serving Molly her breakfast on bed; his fear, pleasure, and shame at Molly's adultery; the scent of lemon soap in his pocket; and so on. But without the waking events and conscious thoughts of the subject, it is difficult to make sense of Wakean events in terms of the feelings and relations between individuals. Many of the issues raised in *Finnegans Wake*, like those in Carroll's books, are finally metaphysical rather than psychological or social. The subject of guilt in particular, is most profitably pursued as an ontological problem. In other words, events in *Finnegans Wake* elucidate the human condition, particularly the relationship of the self and other, in an abstract and timeless way, rather than in the concrete specific terms of the earlier works. The problem of guilt, the interchangeability of characters, the pursuit of truth, and the source of guilt through gossip and meandering talk, all of these issues conspire to represent a self utterly dislocated and lost. In exploring these issues, reference to the works of philosopher Martin Heidegger is particularly helpful, since Heidegger, like Joyce, is concerned with "everydayness." Moreover, Heidegger, in his contemporary concern with the relationship of the self to

others, addresses himself to the ontological aspects of guilt in relation to the dislocated self.

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A major difference between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is the latter work's total submersion in idle talk. Stephen's cerebral musings on Sandymount Strand and Bloom's unflagging pseudo-scientific speculations are yet attempts at achieving a primordial grasp of one's world. But in *Finnegans Wake* the form and theme of every chapter is informed by a sham lust for knowledge, which degenerates all language into gossip, pedantry, tales, and slander.

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The condition of idle talk and the thrust toward publication in *Finnegans Wake* manifest a self that has lost touch with its authentic being, and that takes its opinions and feelings from a disembodied, soulless public. According to Heidegger, this is the ontological condition of inauthenticity that constitutes everyday Being-in-the-world. The characters of Joyce's *Dubliners* are engaged in various degrees of resistance to this enthrallment to otherness, yet even the sensitive, intelligent Gabriel Conroy is a somnambulant dispenser of idle talk. When his inane gallantries are punctured by Lily's bitter retort, he is shaken. His dinner speech is a triumph of empty, rhetorical flourish ("Those days might, without exaggeration, be called spacious days; and if they are gone beyond recall let us hope, at least, that in gatherings such as this we shall speak of them with pride and affection, still cherish in our hearts the memory of those dead and gone great ones whose fame the world will not willingly let die" [D, p. 203]). When Gretta's poignant memory of the dead Michael Furey invests his hollow words with sharply personal meaning, Gabriel is painfully awake from his burial in inauthentic existence.

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Heidegger speaks of the condition of the fall, *Verfallen*, not as a traditional moral lapse but as a falling away from one's authentic self into a state of "otherness" or inauthenticity. The questions of the fall of man, guilt, and the self, finally constitute a closed circle in the *Wake*. Primordial guilt prompts evasion and the search for guilt in the "other", which results in the inauthenticity of the self. Inauthenticity, in turn, itself continues the fall of man in the modern intellectual arena that has dealt the most serious blow to a cherished belief in the primacy of man's self-knowledge, and his consequent free will. The reader's difficulty

in “relating” to *Finnegans Wake* in identifying with its characters, stands in an inverse relationship to the ease and clarity with which we understand Joyce’s boy protagonists in “The Sisters”, “Araby”, “An Encounter”, and young Dedalus in *Portrait*.

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The quest in *Finnegans Wake*, like the quest in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, explores the problem of knowing and the nature of the truth that is accessible to man. Stephen Dedalus’s affinity for Aquinas in *Portrait* first suggests that Joyce understood epistemology to stand at the nexus of art and philosophy. The spectacular stylistic innovations of the later *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* respond not only to a holistic view of man’s everyday activities and thoughts, but also to a growing awareness of the complexity, as well as the limitations, imposed on human knowledge by our intellectual history, language, and man’s own unconscious.

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Questions of sincerity and authenticity are topics of discussion by Joyce as early as the conclusion of *Portrait*.—Did the idea ever occur to you, Cranly asked, that Jesus was not what he pretended to be?—The first person to whom that idea occurred, Stephen answered, was Jesus himself. (P, p. 242) Yet the sincerity and veracity of the narrator of *Portrait* is never an issue. In fact, the narrator has been so perfectly identified with Joyce that readers and critics alike feel at liberty to use *Portrait* as a biographical source. In *Finnegans Wake* the nature of the work as a resensation of a dream confirms the impossibility of truth in discourse (“Thus the unfacts, did we possess them, are too imprecisely few to warrant our certitude, the evidencegivers by legpoll too untrustworthy irreperible” [57.16]). The “evidencegivers” are indeed untrustworthy, as untrustworthy as the psychoanalytic patient telling the history that hides the oedipal trauma (“Be these meer merchant taylor’s fablings of a race referend with oddman rex? Is now all seenheard then forgotten?” [61.28]).

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As Joyce’s interest shifted from consciousness to the unconscious, he was increasingly forced to recognize the inauthenticity and self-delusion that the artist shares with the philistine. In the world of the dream, every individual is a demon and an angel, a pharisee and a holy man, a charlatan and an artist. The artist enjoys no corner on truth; he merely constructs more elaborate and

elegant myths and lies more convincingly than the man on the street. Only when he recognizes and exposes his own fakery, and, like Joyce, acknowledges the artistic creation as a “song of alibi” (193.30), does he arrive at some truth of the human condition: the paradoxical truth suggested by Heidegger when he writes “Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and in untruth.” Joyce comes to maturity when he replaces the artist’s epiphany as the moment of truth with the oedipal insight into his own blindness and hypocrisy. The question of knowledge in *Finnegans Wake* takes its most mythic and primitive form in the riddles that dot the book: the Prankquean’s “why do I am alook alike a poss of porterpease?” (21.18), Shem’s “when is a man not a man?” (170.5), the heliotrope riddle of the game of colors in II.1, and the question, “where was a hovel not a havel” (231.1). It is interesting that neither these riddles, nor ones found in Joyce’s earlier works, the Athy riddle in *Portrait* and the fox and grandmother riddle in *Ulysses*, are ever answered correctly. Riddles require no outside or new information. They generally deal with the familiar, the obvious, but they do require recognition. Oedipus easily guesses the Sphinx’s riddle as “man”; he does not recognize that the references to feet and walking have a highly singular meaning for him and that the riddle depicts his own past, present, and future. Perhaps Wakean figures fail to guess riddles precisely because they lack the power of recognition, or because they are blind to their own conditions. Shem/Glugg can only guess the heliotrope riddle if he recognizes his enemy twin’s dominance and sexual triumph, since Shaun/Chuff represents the sun whom the rainbow girls adore. The “home”, which is the answer to the hovel riddle, is associated with guilty sexual experiences and wishes, as Benstock points out. The self-awareness and self-recognition are too painful, and the questioned fail and err instead. The knowledge that is finally sought by all Wakean figures is the truth of their own being, the answer to the question that lies at the heart of the Oedipus myth: “Who am I?” Wilden writes of the oedipal question, “To pose the question at all is the subject’s way of recognizing that he is neither who he thinks he is nor what he wants to be, since at the level of the *parole vide* he will always find that he is another.” Like *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake* is a quest for the nature of the self—a quest conducted in error and doubt because the truth will not be comforting and reassuring.

Attila Fáj wrote ([Vico’s Basic Law of History in *Finnegans Wake*; pp. 20-31] in *Vico and Joyce* edited by Donald Phillip Verene in 1987; State University of New

York Press)——

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It is an illusion that the division of *Finnegans Wake* into four books is in strict correspondence with the Vichian stages, namely, that the Book of the Parents is analogous with the stage of gods; the Book of the Sons, with the stage of heroes; the Book of the People, with that of men; and that the Book of *Ricorso* makes us feel the imminent resumption of the cycle. Margot Norris observes, with reference to such a parallelism, that each Vichian stage is present in *every phase* of the plot of *Finnegans Wake*. Norris's remark is very proper indeed; only the consequence she draws from it, inferring that the Vichian law of history proves to be ineffective through the whole novel, lawlessness being the unique law in it, seems erroneous to me. The novel, in Norris's opinion is "the triumph of freedom over law!" And Anna Livia Plurabelle, the mother-river, embodies this "law as a lack." I think this rush statement springs from the scant knowledge the author of *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake* has about the stage of the new barbarism, the most critical stage of the Vichian periodization.

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It seems unquestionable to me that both the synchronic on the scene of all Vichian development-stages and the incessant change of the characters, what is more, their transition into one another, show clearly that the author of *Finnegans Wake* does not break with the Vichian law of history; on the contrary, he presents the epoch of the *barbarism of reflection* in perfect keeping with it. In this case too, Joyce used as pattern a famous literary work inspired by Vico, namely, Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Firmly convinced to live in the chaotical epoch of the new barbarism when all past stages of human history reappear simultaneously in a degenerated form, the great Russian writer, in harmony with the Vichian periodization, distributed the single stages as roles among the members of the Karamazov family. Fyodor Karamazov represents prehistorical barbarism; Alyosha, the age of gods; Dmitri, the ex-officer, the age of heroes; Ivan, the age of men; and Fyodor's illegitimate son Smerdyakov, the barbarism of reflection.

Dostoyevsky had in mind to proceed with the plot, but death prevented him from realizing his intention. Anyway, the gist of the second part of the novel is known from the author's plans. He proposed to show that at the climax of the second barbarism the past "epochs" with all their concomitant

phenomena necessarily reappear also in a single person's life. Thus, Alyosha, the angel of the Karamazov family, was to pass through all stages of human history; and at the end of his microcycle, after many delusions, he was to turn back to the monastery where once he had been a devoted seminarist, that is, to live the age of gods again. When Hermann Hesse became acquainted with this plan, he exclaimed, "It is a fortune, that Dostoyevsky did not bring his *Karamazov* to an end. Otherwise not only the Russian literature but Russia itself and the whole humanity would have blown up!" It is likewise a fortune that Joyce had time enough to carry out the plan his favorite writer could not actualize.

Northrop Frye wrote ([Cycle and Apocalypse in *Finnegans Wake*, pp. 3-19] in *Vico and Joyce* edited by Donald Phillip Verene in 1987; State University of New York Press)——

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Finnegans Wake was published in the year that I began continuous teaching; and within a few months I bought the copy that I still have, for ninety- eight cents from a remainder counter in Toronto. I was fascinated by the book but was preoccupied at the time with the Blake prophecies and was in no position to go into orbit around it. When the Blake book was off my hands and I started working on the *Anatomy of Criticism*, I had to account, so to speak, for the existence of *Finnegans Wake*. True, there was a popular fallacy at the time, which I kept hearing for the next twenty years, that all works of literature were "unique," and the critic should not try to detract from that uniqueness. The notion rested between criticism as a body of knowledge about literature and the experience of reading, which is central to criticism but not part of it. Every experience is in some sense unique but the unique as such cannot be an object of knowledge. So the task remained, as did, of course, the confusion.

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It was perhaps not until Jacques Derrida and his "deconstruction" techniques that the theory implied by *Finnegans Wake* really came into focus. The deconstructing critic tends to approach every text in the spirit in which Joyce approached the first drafts of his *Work in Progress* fragments. *Finnegans Wake* is a book in which practically every word provides, in addition to a surface meaning that may or may not be there, a great variety of "supplements" that

lend a number of further aspects to the meaning. Deconstruction implies a concept not far removed from Freud's concept of the censor, the process of achieving meaning by excluding unacceptable meanings; and Joyce's dream language, while the activity of censorship is certainly recorded in it, escapes, to a very unusual degree, from the kind of psychological gaps that mental censorship leaves in narrative-directed writing. Then again, *Finnegans Wake* is a book of "traces." The central character, Finnegan himself, is effaced by his "death", or falling asleep—the two things seem to be much the same thing at the opening of the book—what follows is a "differential" pursuit of echoes and reverberations into a world of words rather than a "logocentric" invoking of a presence. It is natural that commentators influenced by Derridean theories should be doubtful about the presence in the book of any continuous "story line" and regard the identity of the dreamer as an irrelevant question in a book where nothing has any consistent identity at all. I think however that Joyce, belonging to an older generation, was old-fashioned enough to prefer a set of narrative canons, however distinctively handled.

Kimberly J. Devlin wrote (in *Wandering and Return in Finnegans Wake* in 1991; Princeton University Press)—

(Page 17) Reading the *Wake* demands simultaneous attention to several textual dimensions: a vertical axis along which one finds multiple meanings and images in isolated words or phrases; a horizontal axis along which one finds threads of narrative; and a recursive axis along which one finds earlier parts of the dream returning in altered form. Michael Begnal suggests that the recursive dimension of the *Wake* is rooted in textual linearity and yet contributes to the vertical density of the dream:

We arrive at *Wake* meaning through a process of accrual, so that each new element or piece of plot makes sense only as it reminds us of what has gone before and as it restates a basic crux or situation. The repetition of theme or incident [along the horizontal axis] necessitates the building of vertical towers of information which require immediate reference back to their analogues.

Exactly how much "plot" can be found along the horizontal axis has been the source of critical disagreement. While stressing the obstacles to narrative

found in the techniques of digression, interpolation, and recurring leitmotiv, Begnal maintains nonetheless that “*Finnegans Wake* does have a plot, it does tell a story, if only a reader can bring new critical perspectives to bear upon the text.” Bishop, on the other hand, argues that “if one operates on the premise that *Finnegans Wake* reconstructs the night, the first preconception to abandon wholesale is that it ought to read anything at all like narrative or make sense as a continuous linear narrative whole.” Neither critic is absolutely wrong, for at points linear narrative does disappear in the *Wake* (as Begnal himself argues for certain parts of the text), and yet at others clear dramas and stories emerge. The *Wake* lacks “a plot”—multiplicity is one of its governing principles—but it does contain what Begnal more accurately describes as “a series of incidents or miniplots.” The logic of the dreamtext hinges upon several, textual axes that often compete with one another for our attention; while a reader may choose to concentrate on one dimension over others, none of them should be categorically dismissed or ignored. One limitation to both Bishop’s and Begnal’s different approaches to the *Wake* can be found in their shared elisions of the dream’s affective import. Bishop argues that Joyce’s “book of the dark” is embedded with representations that refer back to the somnolent body, that spring from somatic sources. In reading the *Wake*, he claims, “one [has] to become familiar with a set of representational mannerisms peculiar to the working of the night, one of which has to do with the latent omnipresence of the sleeper’s body beneath all the manifest appearances of his dream” (emphasis added). This thesis is convincing (if overstated), but it ignores the psychological sources of the *Wake*, the intangible wishes and anxieties the unconscious labors to articulate in dream representation.

Suzette A. Henke wrote (in *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* in 1990; Routledge)—

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It is with *Finnegans Wake* that Joyceans tend to divide into two separate camps—those who, like Joseph Campbell and Henry Robinson, attempt to extract from the text a recognizable narrative and those who celebrate the *Wake* as a post-structuralist *oeuvre*, free of character, story, or identifiable subjects. Although I recognize the need to suspend traditional notions of “go-ahead plot” in the *Wake*, it nonetheless seems fruitful to extrapolate tessellated, fragmented *personae* from the *Wake*’s labyrinthine prose and to interpret these

fabulated subjects in terms of mythic, sexual, psychoanalytic, and cultural productions.

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Characters in the *Wake*, says Margot Norris, “are fluid and inter-changeable, melting easily into their landscapes to become river and land, tree and stone, Howth Castle and Environs, or HCE. We find in the *Wake* not characters as such but ciphers, in formal relationship to each other” (*The Decentered Universe*, p. 4). In “*Finnegans Wake*”: A Plot Summary John Gordon seeks “to extract a coherent narrative form this least reducible of masterpieces (p. 8). Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon undertake a similar project in *Understanding “Finnegans Wake”*, as do Joseph Campbell and Henry Robinson in *A Skeleton Key to “Finnegans Wake.”* In contrast, post-structuralist critics like Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida have celebrated Joyce’s deconstructive “free play” with language for its unique qualities of indeterminacy and unlimited semiosis. In an essay entitled “Two Words for Joyce,” Derrida compares the *Wake* to a “1000th generation computer” and confesses that “every time I write, and even in the most academic pieces of work Joyce’s ghost is always coming on board” (pp. 147-9).

Grace Eckley wrote (in *Children’s Lore in Finnegans Wake* in 1985; Syracuse University Press)—

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Finnegans Wake offers endless fascination, and Stanislaus Joyce approximated recognition of this attraction when he called it a giant crossword puzzle. In this sense my position regarding criticism of it is that it can be appreciated and understood—and it is enjoyable—when sufficient information is gathered to improve comprehension of it. To that end, this study of children’s lore in the *Wake* is dedicated. My view almost diametrically opposes that of Margot Norris, who writes in the conclusion of *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake* (1974):

The greatest critical mistake in approaching *Finnegans Wake* has been the assumption that we can be certain of who, where, and when everything is in the *Wake*, if only we do enough research. The discovery that Maggie is ALP may be true enough, but it doesn’t mean anything. ALP is also Kate, the old slopwoman, and Isabel, the daughter, and

Biddie Doran, the hen, in a way that Molly Bloom is decidedly not Mrs. Riordan, or Milly, or Josie Breen.

The viewpoint that research will not pay off—that no one can know anything—seems to me extreme futile; moreover it blinds the vision. The Maggies are plural, although one at a time is sometimes referred to and—as the motif method shown here in appendix 3 makes clear—they certainly are not ALP; Anna Livia and Kate are not even present in the same incident, and their characters and occupations are distinctly different; ALP is not Isabel when both *are* present on the same page—as in Anna Livia’s comments on her daughter in the *Wake*’s last chapter; and the text indicates the distinctions between ALP and the hen. My view almost diametrically opposes this, because I find logic and order where Margot Norris finds chaos; but not quite. I believe the Prankquean motif, simplified as *why do I look alike a poss of porter peace* with its prominent variations, contains an element of mischief, such as child’s nonsense rhyme does. Like the fun of a pun, these elements do not require syllable-by-syllable breakdown and often do not profit thereby.

Margaret Mills Harper wrote (in *The Aristocracy of Art in Joyce and Wolfe* in 1990; Louisiana State University Press)—

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Finnegans Wake, with its extreme transformations of language and form, is designedly difficult to categorize. Wolfe’s last books which were posthumously compiled and heavily edited, even rewritten in parts, by an editor, are also difficult to regard as texts with a recognizable author or novelistic purpose, even though they were intended to be marketed and sold as such. Nonetheless, several of the prominent concerns and phenomena of these last books are derived from the issues of autobiographical fiction and social class that I have been considering in the previous chapters of this study. Even though the issues are not embedded in novels with necessarily linear plots, consistent characters, stable architectonics, or unified expression, *Finnegans Wake*, *The Web and the Rock*, and *You Can’t Go Home Again* have nevertheless inherited much from the books that preceded them in the close family of texts that autobiographical fiction makes of a writer’s *corpus*. In this chapter I intend to explore what is made of that inheritance. Despite the prodigious amount of criticism of *Finnegans Wake*, the distinguished Joycean Fritz Senn could complain as recently as 1983 about the widespread impulse to reduce the *Wake* to

“the formula ‘FW is X’”: it is, he asserts, “the prototype of the algebra that we are lured into using against better judgment” when we approach the book. We misjudge *Finnegans Wake* as we do Joyce’s other works, he maintains, when we insist on beginning any inquiry with pronouncements about what is, or is not, absolutely true about the texts. To eliminate doubt is to falsify, even if that doubt is over the simplest of matters, such as the genre to which the texts belong. As Bernard Benstock observed about another basic question that is equally difficult to answer (“But what is it all about exactly?”), with *Finnegans Wake* “it seems preferable to beg the question rather than beggar the work.”

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In the essay mentioned earlier, Fritz Senn calls the language of *Finnegans Wake*, which “tends toward instant contradiction” of itself, “the microcosmic verbal integration of doubt.” He correctly notes what such language allows Joyce to do with characters in this book: “Verbal options favor suggestive possibilities more than distinct identities. If we do not want to determine whether some person is a hunchbacked pubkeeper, or an English king, or a Shakespearan character, or the actor on the stage, in a pub, on a battlefield, or from a book or a nursery rhyme, there may be no more concise way than ‘when Dook Hookbackcrook upsits his ass boosworthies jeer and junket but they boos him oos and baas him aas when he lukes like Hunkett Plunkett.’”

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The phrase quoted by Senn illustrates an important aspect of the *Wake*, since we will not be able to read it well without recognizing its unusually direct references to contemporary events in the “real world.” The book is full of seemingly trivial references gleaned from newspapers, city directories, history books, atlases, and actual conversations among Joyce’s acquaintances. It is far from mimetic in the ordinary sense, since it deliberately avoids fabricating a literary facsimile of an intelligible world, but in another sense the book may be unsurpassed in the extent to which it draws upon the life outside its pages. Here, we recognize, is a new way to create art out of what Stephen Dedalus called “the reality of experience” (P.253). Unique as it is, *Finnegans Wake* is also recognizable as the successor to *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* in many ways, not the least of which is its preoccupation with the joining of literature and life.

Matthew Hodgart wrote (in *James Joyce, a Student Guide* in 1978;



Routledge & Kegan Paul, London)——

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Finnegans Wake is supposed to be a novel, with a plot and characters in the traditional sense. The chief character is one H. C. Earwicker, supposedly a publican of Chapelizod, a village near Dublin; and the book on one level is Earwicker's dream. He has committed some kind of misdemeanour in the Phoenix Park involving two girls and three soldiers; it is never clear just what he has done, but it seems to be exhibitionism, a common offense in parks. All night long his unconscious mind broods on this action, guiltily and obsessively: it is transformed, like everything else in the book, into a hundred different shapes. Earwicker dreams of the other characters: his wife Anna, his daughter Isabel, his twin sons Shem and Shaun, the servants and the customers of the public house, and so on. Again, the reader soon begins to recognise these personages, each of whom speaks in a different voice. Joyce uses the modulation of style for narrative purposes even more subtly than he does in *Ulysses*: there is no mistaking the dactylic, tumbling rhythms of Anna, the sleepy repetitive gossip of the four old men, or the unctuous sermonising of Shaun. The two sons are twins and rivals, Shem being a Bohemian artist, Shaun a successful man of the world, combining the roles of tenor, politician, and priest. But as the story is told with an infinite number of evasions, and ambiguities, it becomes clear, if clear is the word, that the basis of the Earwicker and associated plots is simply James Joyce's biography in a disguised form: the book is a confession, like those of, Augustine and Rousseau, in which the author accuses himself of various crimes or shortcomings—in Joyce's case mainly sexual malpractices which are more probably fantasised than real.

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Finnegans Wake is a book entirely suited to the modern universe, as revealed by scientists in the decades before and after Joyce's death gave a name to a fundamental particle, postulated by theoretical physicists only a few years ago: this is the 'Quark', taken from the seagulls' mocking cry at the beginning of Book II, chapter iv (383.01): '—Three quarks for Muster Mark!' True, that is only a whimsical choice of a meaningless word, without connotations, for an entirely new concept; but it is appropriate that it should be drawn from the verbal universe, which Joyce tried to make as mysterious and complex as the physical universe. Joyce evidently studied such popularisation of the latest physics as he could find, and makes allusions to Einstein and Relativity, and to

Eddington's 'expanding universe'. Joyce's world, with its continuous series of transformations, resembles the world of Lewis Carroll (one of his favourite authors) and both seem to be analogous to the post-Newtonian cosmos. On the level of biology, too, *Finnegans Wake* seems to be appropriate to the twentieth century, with its emphasis on the cycles of nature: the nitrogen cycle ('dust unto dust') and above all the water cycle.

Harry Burrell wrote (in *Narrative Design in Finnegans Wake: The Wake Lock Picked* in 1996; University Press of Florida)—

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Joyce, however, goes far beyond just incorporating the Bible along with all other literature. He actually rewrites it, creating a new text and a new theology. Furthermore the third chapter of Genesis, reinterpreted and repeated hundreds of times, is the narrative base of *Finnegans Wake*. All of the events are simply reenactments of the Fall story. There is no action which does not contain Adam and Eve's travail in the Garden of Eden. All conversation relates to it. All of the characters are united into the four mentioned in Genesis 3 except St. Patrick and the evangelists, who merely discuss the actions of the four. It has, of course, always been known that *Finnegans Wake* is "about" the Fall of Man. Joyce's admission from the beginning can be accepted as one of his completely true statements, although much of his explanation was misdirective and diminishing. What has not been realized is that that is all it is about. Virtually every page has the Bible story as its basic level of communication. To understand *Finnegans Wake* readers must maintain a mind set that what they are apprehending is fundamentally nothing but the Fall story with all the other levels of meaning and reference grafted onto and embellishing it. This approach allows us to understand who HCE and Earwicker are and why there are earwigs; the connection among the prankquean, ALP, Issy; and Kate; the relationship of Shem, Shaun, and the ass; and how the Greek fables of the ant and the grasshopper, and the fox and the grapes; and the episodes of Buckley and the Russian General, and the Norwegian Captain are related to the story of Adam and Eve. The rest of this book shows how this was done. *Wake* criticism has worked itself into a position of denying that there is a basic narrative but does not give up the plaintive hope that one exists. David Hayman, Bernard Benstock, John Bishop, and Margot Norris, for example, have all concluded that there is no underlying narrative and have evolved different systems of dealing

with the dilemma. Others, particularly those older scholars who have devoted a lifetime to *Wake* studies such as Fritz Senn, still yearn for some “unknown design, matrix, concept, blue-print, *gestalt*, configuration... some *germinal deep structure*.” Clive Hart pleads, “We are still in need of a satisfactory perspective which will allow us to respond more fully to the whole ... a thread of English meaning. ... I plead for a simple meaning because I should like to pay as much attention as possible to the surface ... its colour, wit and pathos, achieved through the immediacy of image and pattern.” Two other early commentators intuited the deep structure but were unable to bring it to full expression because they looked for the same pattern that Joyce had used for *Ulysses*. Adaline Glasheen said, “The story of our first parents in ‘Milton’s Park’ underlies all falls in FW. It does not, however, dominate FW as the *Odyssey* dominates *Ulysses*, making events assume a predetermined form and sequence.” Atherton ventured, “No single book serves the same purpose [as the *Odyssey* for *Ulysses*] in *Finnegans Wake*; perhaps the Bible comes nearest to it, but it is Joyce’s bible.” He further noted that even though “the parallels between sections of Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses* are also occasionally labored and doubtful we have Joyce’s authority for their existence.” Actually, any connections one can find with Homer are tenuous at best and provide but little help in understanding Joyce’s work. Nevertheless, no one has pursued these leads to *Finnegans Wake*. Furthermore, Joyce does provide the authority for the biblical parallel, but until now, it has not been recognized. Chapter 2 of this book details the evidence showing how the Bible was rewritten. Joyce carefully followed a series of structural parallels that call attention to the form of the *Wake* as being similar to the Bible’s. There is also a wealth of internal evidence supporting this proposition. A considerable portion of the *Wake* is devoted to asides to the reader, purporting to instruct him or her on the book’s content, structure, and intent, and to explain (or obfuscate) the stories. One group of such recurring asides points out that *Finnegans Wake* should be read as the rewritten Bible.

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Joyce’s rewriting the Bible does not mean that he reworks the entire text. Rather, taking the simple Fall story, and repeating it again and again with embellishments and interweaving fables, bits of history, jokes, and personal biography he rewrites it in the sense of creating a new Bible with its own theology and rules of ethics. Indeed he does not often take the whole Fall story in sequence from the creation of man and woman through the Temptation, their

confrontation by God, their being cursed by him, and then exiled. Most of the repetitions utilize the individual episodes either alone or in whatever order suits his purpose—as is demonstrated in Chapter 6 of this study. Furthermore, he uses ancient mythological sources or Gnostic variants of Genesis to support his New Theology.

John Bishop wrote (in *Joyce's Book of the Dark* in 1986; The University of Wisconsin Press)—

(Page 3)

Sooner rather than later, a reader of *Finnegans Wake* would do well to justify to himself its stupefying obscurity; for as even its most seasoned readers know, "*Finnegans Wake* is wilfully obscure. It was conceived as obscurity, it was executed as obscurity, it is about obscurity [Glasheen's *A Second Census*]." And to this one might add that nothing will ever make *Finnegans Wake* not obscure. Stories of the pains Joyce took to deepen the opacity of *Work in Progress* during its composition only intensify the impression thrown off by the finished text. Jacques Mercanton recalls finding Joyce and Stuart Gilbert "going over a passage that was 'still not obscure enough' " and gleefully "inserting Samoyed words into it"; Padraic Colum recalls "from time to time [being] asked to suggest a word that would be more obscure than the word already there," only to have Joyce reply "five times out of six," in what amounts to an admission that his designs were darkly principled, "I can't use it." The essential question one wants answered in hearing these stories and in probing the murkinesses of the text itself is whether this relentless obscuration was really arbitrary and wilful "sheer perversity," in Louise Bogan's phrase or whether it was leading somewhere that would repay the study, time, and labor which *Finnegans Wake* demands of its reader. Joyce himself was unevenly helpful; as he put it to Frank Budgen on the less baffling matter of *Ulysses*, "If I can throw any obscurity on the subject let me know" (L, III, 261). Not very expansively, he replied to the growing news that his readers simply were not following him by wondering out loud, with lamblike innocence, to William Bird: "About my new work do you know, Bird, I confess I can't understand some of my critics, like Pound or Miss Weaver, for instance. They say it's obscure. They compare it, of course, with *Ulysses*. But the action of *Ulysses* was chiefly in the daytime, and the action of my new work takes place chiefly at night. It's natural things should not be so clear at night, isn't it now?" (JJ, 590).

Typically, he defended his methods by displacing attention from his style to his subject, as he did again when replying to objections raised by Jacques Mercanton over the obscurity of a passage in *Work in Progress*: “It is night. It is dark. You can hardly see. You sense rather.” In Joyce’s view, all obscurity came with the terrain he surveyed, and not with his treatment of it: “If there is any difficulty in reading what I write it is because of the material I use. In my case the thought is always simple.” He was only pointing out in all these remarks that “obscurity” is “darkness” rendered verbal (L. *obscuritas*, “darkness”) and that the night, his subject, was intractably obscure. Only a little reflection, I think, will demonstrate that the systematic darkening of every term in *Finnegans Wake* was an absolute necessity, dictated by Joyce’s subject; and that *Finnegans Wake* has exactly what so cranky a critic as F. R. Leavis wished it had and of course judged it did not: “the complete subjection—subjugation—of the medium to the uncompromising, complex and delicate need that uses it.”

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It was Joyce’s lifelong rival Doctor Oliver St John Gogarty, who first reacted in exasperated disbelief to *Finnegans Wake* by calling it “the most colossal leg pull in literature since McPherson’s *Ossian*.” But even its most serious readers seem tacitly to have assumed that Joyce was only kidding when he said it was “about the night.” The real obstacle to our comprehension of *Finnegans Wake* since its publication, in my view, has been a reluctance on the part of readers to think seriously about the very strange literally unthinkable, and only apparently trivial material that it richly explores. As a consequence Joyce’s own many assertions about the book—his reconstruct[ion of] the nocturnal life” and “imitation of the dream-state”—have been dismissed as out-of hand as improbable, or else explained away either as “concerts” that Joyce found useful for his own eccentric purposes, or as impressionistic “devices” that in practice have licensed interpretative mayhem on the extreme hand and pedantic irrelevance on the other. As one consequence, the text perhaps most widely regarded as the great monolithic obstacle to our understanding of modernism has remained inaccessibly obscure since publication in 1939—and not simply to the interested lay reader but to many Joyceans as well. It is time that the putative bluff was called, and shown to be no bluff at all. *Finnegans Wake* is about “the night we will remember” (432. 1-2). “But we’ll wake and see” (375. 8).

Derek Attridge wrote ([*Finnegans Awake: The Dream of Interpretation*; pp 11-29] in *James Joyce Quarterly* Vol 27, No 1 in Fall, 1989)—

(Page 11)

My first proposition is this: a reader approaching *Finnegans Wake* without any prior assumptions as to its content and method would be unlikely to regard the text as the representation of a dream. I would guess that, since the publication of *Finnegans Wake*, the majority of those who have made an attempt to read it have had the idea of a dream somewhere in mind, whether as part of general cultural lore or as specific information received from a critical study or a helpful teacher. To test my proposition fully this interpretative context would have to be wholly erased and Joyce's words read without any extratextual presuppositions. But this is an impossible exercise, since we cannot simply clear the mind of its contents like a magic disk, and for most of us the idea of the dream has already become an inseparable part of the text we encounter.

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The second preposition, which follows directly from the first, is this: The importance of the idea of the dream to our understanding of *Finnegans Wake* in 1989 is a direct historical consequence of extratextual commentary by Joyce and by others. It ought to be possible to trace the history and to ascertain whether it proceeds from actual engagements with the text or, driven by needs other than accurate representation, in parallel with the text but at some distance from it. For nearly four years, from early 1923, when Joyce began work on his last book, to late 1926, by which time he had perfected his stylistic technique, completed versions of twelve of the seventeen chapters, and worked out an overall structure, there is very little evidence to suggest that he associated his laborious project with the night, sleep, or dreams.

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It might seem that my third proposition should be something like this: there is no internal evidence to support the use of the dream as the overriding interpretative context for *Finnegans Wake*, and no historical evidence to suggest that it was the major importance on the writing of the book, or that it arose from a close reading of the whole work; it should therefore be abandoned henceforth. But this is not the conclusion I wish to draw; in fact, such a conclusion would rely on precisely the kind of logic—the absolute separation of internal and external—that the *Wake* undermines. I would prefer to emphasize how

productive the idea of the dream has been, in spite of its inadequacies as an interpretative frame, in creating an audience for one of the most complex of all literary texts, and in allowing commentary to flourish in the face of a work that might have been greeted with silence. To show, as I did earlier, that standard interpretative procedures applied to the text in isolation from any specific preconceptions do not foreground the notion of the dream is not to dismiss the notion as useless or invalid. It may be that the standard interpretative strategies have no purchase on *Finnegans Wake*, and that we have to read in terms of some prior framework, derived from critics or from Joyce himself. It may be that what we think of as conventional interpretative strategies working on the text in isolation always make more use than we realize of already acquired schemata, and that what the *Wake* does is merely to render us conscious of this fact. If this is so, the concept of “correct” interpretation is complicated for every work of literature; different assumptions produce different readings, each of which may be perfectly correct in terms of a prior set of assumptions.

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How well particular approaches work is also a matter of time and place, since our interpretative practice is imbricated with all our other intellectual and social practices, which change as we change, and as our own historical and geographical contexts change... My third proposition, then, is that the notion of the dream as an interpretive context for *Finnegans Wake* is one among a number of such contexts which, though incompatible with one another, all have some potential value. Or to put it another way, *Finnegans Wake* is indeed, a “collideoscape”. The question of the relative usefulness of these approaches cannot be separated from the cultural history from which they arise and in which they are, and always will be, embedded.

Vincent John Cheng wrote (in *Shakespeare and Joyce: A study of Finnegans Wake* in 1984; the Pennsylvania State University Press)—

(Page 6)

Adaline Glasheen writes: “To my mind Shakespeare (man, works) is the matrix of *Finnegans Wake*: a matrix is the womb or mold in which something is shaped or cast.” We have grown quite familiar with the ways in which Joyce was such matrixes or models: in *Ulysses*, Homer, Shakespeare, and Joyce’s own life; in the *Portrait*, Daedalus-Icarus myth. These are scaffolds and skeletons

which Joyce adopts in order to flesh his own creation. By Glasheen's own definition of "matrix", then, the scaffolding in *Finnegans Wake* is in fact multiplex (as one would expect in a work dealing with universal history). Glasheen herself has composed thirteen pages of charts(entitled "Who Is Who When Everybody Is Somebody Else") which schematize the many scaffoldings analogous the archetypal family of HCE, ALP (Anna Livia Plurabelle) , Shaun, Shem and Issy. Nevertheless, she may be basically correct; I have come to believe that Shakespeare provides some of the central (perhaps the most central) mistakes in the *Wake*, and certainly the most important ones in terms of Shem-Joyce's vision of himself as an artist. Foremost among the Shakespearean matrixes is that of *Hamlet* which is undoubtedly on of the "books of the *Wake*." It is structurally an analogically important. There are by far more allusions to *Hamlet* than to any other play (Shakespeare or otherwise); and parallels are more frequent, precise, and insistent: HCE as King Hamlet, Shem as the Prince, Issy as Ophelia, Shaun as Laertes-Polonius. References to *Hamlet* are ubiquitous; and as in the case of *Ulysses*, the themes and motifs in *Hamlet* are structural counterparts to those in *Finnegans Wake*. The other Shakespearean plays most alluded to are *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*.

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James Joyce's mind is that of the essential poet: it works by analogy. A defecator, a lover, a father, a poet, and God are all, by analogy, equivalent—because they each create, or produce, something. Therefore, those somethings are also, by analogy, equivalent; *Finnegans Wake*, like the letter unearthed by Biddy the Hen, is a creatio ex shitpile, a "letter from litter" (615.01). Joyce—who, unlike his predecessor and fellow creator-defecator-poet Shakespeare, knew much Latin and some Greek ("he had have only had some little laughings and some less of cheeks" in 125. 14-15)—was aware that the Latin word for, at once, letters of the alphabet, epistolary letters, and belles-letters, was litterae, a felicitous correspondence to the English word "litter" and its connotations of shit an birth. Thus, to the Joycean mind, poetic creations in English "litterature" are at once bilabial speech, biological offspring, and biodegradable waste. Each implies the others; the part reflects the whole. A poet is the god and creator of his own worlds—"After God, Shakespeare has created most" (U, 212)—while God is but a major poet, "the playwright who wrote the folio of this world" (U, 213). HCE, the archetypal father who "Haveth Childers Everywhere" (535.34-35) and who thus also creates and populates the world, is but another version of both poet and god—of "Great Shapeseape," as Joyce "puns it" (295.04). Joyce

himself, of course, is all of these things: like Stephen Dedalus's Shakespeare, he is "all in all" (U, 212). As a god and an artist, a poet triumphs over confining reality by creating worlds through the imagination—and each of his works is an exploration into the possible "history" of such worlds.

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In a sense, all of *Finnegans Wake* deals with the basic question, "What did happen to HCE?" What happened in the Park by the Magazine Wall? What was the crime? Was there a crime? What took place in the encounter with the Cad? Nothing is certain, though there are many versions of stories bantered about: "aither he cursed and was everseen doing what your fourfootlers saw or he was never done seeing what you coolpigeons know" (29.09-11). Like the question that worries Hamlet, the question of *Finnegans Wake* centers about the fact that we are dealing unsimple truth, that we are in the dark ("as any camelot prince of dinmurk" in 143.07) and do not quite know what happened. As with some of Shakespeare's plays, this "drauma" (115.32), the gossip about HCE, is a tale of dubious accuracy and questionable authorship that has a great need for scholarship and critical interpretations; one way of looking at the *Wake* is to see it as a scholarly casebook on the HCE tale, including all the variant versions and interpretations thereof.

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Finnegans Wake is Joyce's attempt to compile these error-possibilities of HCE's comedy of errors—in other words, all history. A problem play has purple passages which engender much critical speculation and scholarly research; in this sense, *Finnegans Wake* is, like the letter unearthed by Biddy the hen, an attempt to dig into the middenheap and find the "gossiple" truth. Resonant with the pun of *litterae*, the "letter from litter" (615.01) is broadly symbolic; as Tindall puts it, "Plainly more than life from Alpha to Omega, the letter represents all literature as well especially *Finnegans Wake*."

Susan Shaw Sailer wrote (in *On the Void of to Be* in 1993; The University of Michigan Press)—

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The characters and "plot" of *Finnegans Wake* inhabit the condition of being "always already." We meet The Four, for instance, on page 13, where rather

than presenting a sense of their physical appearance or their primary roles in the text, a narrator thrusts upon us their multiple roles and associations, overwhelming us with their bewildering fragmentation. Not until page 368 does a narrator give readers a sense of the physical appearance of The Four; but this, like their introduction, serves to enforce our sense of their fragmentation. They are treated as always already existing as traces incapable of assuming presence. As new readers of *Finnegans Wake*, we may approach the text with the expectation that its realms would swallow us, at least temporarily, during which time we would develop a strong sense of presence of its characters, setting, plot. This did not happen, of course. Instead, we find that though the narrators continually suggest places and times—the Willingdone Museyroom, the midden heap, Shem's room, 1132, 566, dusk, dawn—the continual destruction of continuity by the insertion of overlapping and juxtaposed fragments of varying lengths subverts and thwarts our orientation to seek textual presence.

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Movies, movement, time, duration, whole: this is the *mélange* through which we are approaching desire. But we have not yet arrived, Wakean desire exhibiting several components not yet identified. The movement of movies is time; movies move time for their duration, and the “whole” we experience in viewing them is duration. That whole-as-duration we experience as affirmation, even in painful reconstructions of human interaction as, for example, representations of the horrors of the Holocaust. Such affirmation affirms in several senses: in enunciating an historical or fantasized event, the film proclaims its possibility, against which we as viewers measure our responsibility, accepting or rejecting our role in the possibility. But in addition to such affirmation, a very different kind exists, which Michel Foucault describes in the context of discussing the role of transgression; to measure the excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit to trace the flashing line that causes to arise. Transgression contains nothing negative, but affirms being—affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time. But correspondingly, this affirmation contains nothing positive: no content can bind it, since, by definition, no limit can possibly restrict it. (*Language*, 35-36).

An affirmation containing nothing negative or positive but instead affirming the possibility resulting from the erasure of discarded limits: this is very much the kind of affirmation that *Finnegans Wake* makes. Like movement,

time, duration, and a sense of the whole, affirmation is part of Wakean desire. Throughout *Finnegans Wake*, affirmation and chaos chase each other's tails, forming another of the giant polarities that move the text. Rather than "durable" knowledge, what the text shows us is a multitude of perspectives that compete to the point of chaos. But when readers reach that point, we begin to discover/create patterns connectedness. The dynamics is similar to a position Nietzsche describes: "It is not the object perspectives to know but to schematize—to impose upon chaos as much regularity and form as our practical needs require." Joseph Valente maintains that both Nietzsche and Joyce wanted to discredit static, universal form and to reanimate the play of appearances, of style, which they associated with the ancient Greek artificers, Homer and Dedalus. To accommodate contingencies with dynamic and always provisional or self-deconstructing systems was, they believed, to affirm the life process itself. Paradoxically, Nietzsche's philosophy of the "dangerous maybe" and Joyce's aesthetic of incertitude both culminate in an exuberant "yes". This yes, embracing the absence of absolute meaning or value, becomes its own bond, taking all meaning and value upon itself. Concerned especially with *Ulysses*, Valentine is referring to Molly's yes ending the text, but the yes of *Finnegans Wake* is closely related. Molly's yes is the nonpositive and nonnegative affirmation of the process of becoming: the *Wake* says yes through its version of the eternal return, manifested in so many ways, as for instance its "end" recycling to "begin" again and its play with variations on motifs, which in their returns are always 'the seim' and always "anew".

Alan S. Loxterman wrote ([“The More Joyce Knew the More He Could” and “More Than I Could”: Theology and Fictional Technique in Joyce and Beckett; pp. 62-82] in *Re: Joyce'n Beckett* edited by Phillis Carey and Ed Jewinski in 1992; Fordham University Press)—

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Historically considered, Joyce and Beckett have become two of the most influential writers of our century through their inclusion of problematic interpretations as part of the aesthetic experience, a degree of complexity that requires readers to acknowledge their own complexity in making meaning out of what they perceive. Joyce pioneers the inclusion of indeterminacy in his narrative, first in the opening of *Portrait* and next in those later chapters of *Ulysses* where his method of narration takes precedence over who and what are

being narrated. *Finnegans Wake* represents the culmination of a language and style which pre-empts the narrative guidance through a story line which has traditionally been central to the reading experience. Here readers must puzzle over each syllable of the language from beginning to end, being perhaps more consistently aware of their own attempts to interpret what is being said than of anything else. (Some would deny this account by concentrating on the organization of *Finnegans Wake* rather than on the chaos that is being organized. But the reader's concrete experience of interpreting the language itself, word by word, is far removed from the critic's delineation of whatever overall abstract schemes the symbolic plot comprises. In *Finnegans Wake* the totality of the reading experience is that there can be no totality, only a multiplicity of proliferating alternatives.)



Tatsuo Hamada

(1) Reading the literature about the close of ALP's final monologue in FW

Here is the closing passage (627.34-628.16) of FW:

I am passing out. O bitter ending! I'll slip away before they're up. They'll never see. Nor know. Nor miss me. And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms. I see them rising! Save me from those therrble prongs! Two more. Onetwo moremens more. So. Avelaval. My leaves have drifted from me. All. But one clings still. I'll bear it on me. To remind me of. Lff! So soft this morning, ours. Yes. Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair! If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he'd come from Arkangels, I sink I'd die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup. Yes, tid. There's where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the

Jacques Mercanton (1963) recollected Joyce in *Portraits of the Artist in Exile: Recollections of James Joyce by Europeans* edited by Willard Potts (A Harves/HBJ Book, 1979) as follows:

(p. 244) Suddenly, in a low voice, he began to recite from the concluding pages of the book. Its tonality is tragic, he said, yet it has its comical side. His face, austere, grown thin from the worries of these last months, shone with delight and his voice vibrated on certain words.

And it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms. [FW 627. 36-628.4].

Then he went on:

A hundred cares a tithe of troubles, and is there one who understands me? One in a thousand of years of the nights? All me life I have been lived among them but now they are becoming lothed to me [FW 627.14-16].

With angelic tenderness, so moving in the rebellious angel, and a tone of confidence and wonder, Joyce evoked the last voyage of his heroine. She wears her most beautiful gown, all leafy; but, behold, little by little, the fiancée's moving dress is coming apart: one leaf and then another flees toward the sea on the fugitive waters; one leaf glides on a wave that goes to mingle its foam with eternal waves.

a leaf, just: a leaf, and then leaves [FW 619.22-23].

Here she murmurs again:

I only hope whole the heavens sees us. For I feel I could near to faint away. Into the deeps. Annamores leep... [FW 625.36-626.2]

Joyce murmurs with her, softly and more softly, his delicate hand caressing the fleeting robe of the waters. Across his leaning face passes the irremediable shadow of farewell.

William York Tindall (1969) wrote in *A Reader's Guide to Finnegans Wake* (Syracuse University Press):

(p.328)

"I am passing out. O bitter morning!" (627.34) begins a page that has few rivals in the works of Joyce. This page, last of the book and, in a sense, his last—is one of his best poems, all of which are in prose, and Katie Wales (1992) in *The Language of James Joyce* (Macmillan, London) wrote: (p.154) At the close of his career, he (James Joyce) is a poet still. I have avoided calling the *Wake* a 'novel', for it seems to me that the kind of competence the 'ideal reader' ultimately needs for the *Wake* is drawn not from the experience of reading fiction but from that of reading poetry. FW is an epic prose-poem.

According to **Adaline Glasheen** (1956) in p. xvi of *A Census of Finnegans Wake* (Northwestern University Press), FW is willfully obscure. It was conceived as

obscurity; it was executed as obscurity; it is about obscurity, the “the fog of the cloud in which we toil and the cloud of the fog under which we labor.”

In my first paper ‘Lucia Joyce’s Lamenting Calls to Her Father in *Finnegans Wake*’ which appeared in *Abiko Quarterly* with *James Joyce Finnegans Wake Studies* #19: 38-42 (2000), I wrote:

(p. 48)

In the closing passage of FW quoted before, Anna Livia slipped slowly away, drifting sad and weary, down the dark sea. Here Lucia seems to be calling to Joyce, “**My cold mad father, my cold mad feary father.**” Here it might be the lamenting voice of Lucia mingling with the voices of Anna Livia and the river. The tone is sad and beautiful, but there is also hope of resurrection. It’s Joyce’s prayer for Lucia’s future.

However, concerning ‘who speaks to whom about what’ in the end of the closing passage, there are many different interpretations and opinions as shown below and the riddles remain to be solved.

1) **James S. Atherton** (1959) in *The Book at the Wake* (Feffer & Simons, London) suggested the influence of W. G. Wills’s once popular play *A royal Divorce* on as follows:

(p.162)

The play is about Napoleon’s divorce from Josephine and marriage to Marie Louise. But it follows Napoleon’s career to its end and concludes with a long monologue by the dying Josephine in which the audience is given to understand that Napoleon also is dying at the same moment, and the two are reunited in death and ‘begin again’. The final monologue of FW owes something to Josephine’s speech with its visionary journey across the white-topped waves to her husband, and the rhymes of the two speeches have much in common. As far as Joyce was concerned it would be this last speech that was most useful. But Joyce’s prose completely transforms the somewhat depressing monologue. Probably it was good thing that he never read the play but based his final passages on his memories of a stage performance to which glamour was given by the glitter of the footlights and the beauty of the actress.

2) **Clive Hart** (1962) in *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake* (Northwestern University Press) suggested the influence of 'Eveline' in *Dubliners* as follows:

(p. 53)—

This is the chapter that brings forgetfulness; Anna, as she passes out to her cold, mad father, is losing all remembrance of her past joys and sorrows. Joyce, so Mr Budgen assures me, prized memory above all other human faculties, and the inevitable dissolution of memory into the formless sea is much the most bitter part of Anna's 'bitter ending' (627.35), for if she could be brought back to meet her lover among the rhododendrons of Howth Castle and Environs with her memories intact, she might avoid the Fall and so escape from the eternal circle in which she is condemned to run. As things stand, however, she must eventually revert to the same old way of life, like the girl in the superb little story 'Eveline', the closing scene of which is closely paralleled by the last passages of *Finnegans Wake*.

(As this important parallel with 'Eveline' does not seem to have been noticed before, I shall digress for a moment to discuss it briefly. Eveline is standing at the 'North Wall'—that is, on a wharf at the mouth of the Liffey—preparing to leave for Buenos Aires with her sailor friend. She sees the 'black mass' of the boat, bearing the same diabolical overtones as the '**therrible prongs**' which rise from the sea before helpless Anna. In its personification as the sailor, the sea calls to Eveline, but she holds back and allows love to be overcome by fear of annihilation in the unknown: 'All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her'.—(P.55) Eveline is yet another victim of Irish paralysis; her spiritual cycle will henceforth be bound by the appalling routine life entailed by her refusal to become a new person. Although Anna's ultimate return to drudgery may be no less certain, she submits instead to cosmic paralysis in the sea, giving herself half involuntarily, and with a tragi-comic resignation that is characteristic of the more mature book, to the spiritual annihilation which must precede rebirth.)

On p. 54, **Clive Hart** showed the following quotations from the last page of 'Eveline' and italicized the words and phrases echoed in *Finnegans Wake*. The corresponding echoes in FW are placed in parentheses:

She answered nothing (dumbly; 628.11). She felt her cheek pale and *cold* (my cold father; 628.01) to God to direct her, to *show her what was left duty* (I

done me best; 627.13). The boat blew a long mournful *whistle* (Whish!; 628.13) into the mist. *If she went* (if I go all goes; 627.14), tomorrow she would be on the *sea* (seasilt; 628.04) with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their *passage* (passing; 628.34) had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress *awoke a nausea* (seasilt saltsick; 628.04) in her body and she kept moving her *lips* (Lps; 628.15) in *silent fervent prayer* (humbly dumbly, only to washup; 628.11).

A bell clanged (Ho hang! Hang ho!; 627.31) upon her heart. She felt him *seize* (seize; 627.29) he hand:

Come! (Coming, far!; 628.13)'

All the seas of the world tumbled (moyles and moyles of it—seasilt—dumbly; 628.03-11) about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing. '*Come!* (Coming, far!; 628.13)' *No! No! No!* (No!; 627.26) It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in *frenzy* (mad feary; 628.02). Amid the *seas* (seasilt; 628.04) she sent *a cry of anguish* (our cries; 627.32).

'Eveline! Evvy! (Avelaval; 628.06)'

He rushed (I rush; 628.04) beyond the barrier and *called* (Far calls; 628.13) to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on, but he still *called* (Far calls; 628.13) to her. She set her *white face* (whitespread wings; 628.10) to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him *no sign of love or farewell or recognition* (A way a lone al last loved long the; 628.15)

Leo Knuth (1975) wrote in 'The Last Leaf' which appeared in *A Wake Newslitter* XII, No. 6, pp. 103-107:

(p. 103-104)

The passage from 627.36 to the end clearly shows the strange organization of tones that is characteristic of Joyce: precision and conciseness contend with mysterious vagueness and chaotic profusion. If a dream works on planes of reality different from those of daylight reality, it has nevertheless a reality, which Joyce, I think, has succeeded in capturing. The scene of action, for all its diffuseness, can be accurately pinpointed. The Liffey is dying ('**Lff!**'), losing itself in the sea; the water is becoming brackish ('**makes me seasilt saltsick**'); beyond the breakwaters the threatening caps of the rising waves drown the rivers lower course ('**I see them rising! Save me from those therrble prongs!**' '**Avelaval!**' contains French *l'aval*); the tide is washig up along the shore as far as the marsh grass ('**to washup. Yes, tid... through grass behush the bush to**').

There are references to St George's Channel and the Irish Sea (Moyle, Irish *Sruth na Maolie* in '**moyles and moyles**', and *Muir Meann* in '**moremens**').

About to be devoured by the ocean of eternity, the river yields ('**Take**'), yet clings to her identity ('**mememormee!**': me, me, more me!). The identity she clings to is that of water (Hebrew *mem*). The hope she clings to is the hope of rain: '**Till thousandsthee**' has, for one of its stands, the thou/thee reflexivity and tautology which is the book's axiom (The same again!): till thou sendest thyself a thousandfold. This idea is echoed in the opening word 'riverrun' (Italian *riverran* = they will come again) and in 'recirculation' in the next line. Story words that over-explanation mutes.

Images of death come thick and fast. On the most obvious level '**A gull. Gulls**' evokes a picture of the wheeling birds over Dublin Bay, but a gull is also an orifice, a throat, and to gull means to swallow (*NED*); realizing this changes the scene into an image of a devouring mouth. This notion is reinforced by the meaning of the French *avaler* (to swallow) in '**Avelaval**'.

Allusion piles upon allusion. Inevitably, Christ functions as a paradigm of the sacrificiaal victim. '**Take**' echoes the *Accipite* of the consecration formula; '**mememormee!**' (remember me!) is a recall of the *in mei memoriam* of the Last Supper, as well as of the good thief's *memento mei* (Luke 23:42) and of Hamlet's father's ghost's adieu (*Hamlet*, 1.5.91; note 'But soft, methinks I scent the morning air', *Hamlet*, 1.5.58, and compare '**Bussoftlhee**' and '**So soft this morning**'). An earlier occurrence of 'take' confirms the validity of the liturgical associations: 'Take. And take. Vellicate nyche!' (FW 563.335; Slovenian *Velika noc*, Czech *Velikonoce* = Easter)

If death is a rite of passage, so is birth. In fact, Anna Livia's death is like a forceps delivery: '**Save me from those therrble prongs!**' (For a moment the sea-god's son, Mananaan MacLir, who is discernable in '**moananoaning**'—the moaning harbor bar and 'the waters/Monotone'—seems armed with Neptune's trident.) Time is running short: '**Onetwo moremens more**' (one, two moments more). Simultaneously, time is reeled back, showing primal scene flashes. Embedded in the text there are words which function as subliminal cuts designed to facilitate associations that tie the death scene together with an experience of orgasm: sex is another *rite de passage*. Anna Livia's swan song appropriately includes the story of Leda and the swan: '**If I seen him bearing down on me under whitespread wings...**' ('seen' puns on French *cygne*). the scene of Leda and the swan coalesces with the Annunciation. We approach the point of no return ('**Onetwo moremens more**'). '**Coming**', '**again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps**'. The iambic throbs

which reiterate Anna Livia's initials (note, incidentally, that there are eleven syllables—the number of renewal) explode in the orgasmic opening word. Here is Anna's exit line:

A way a lone a last a loved a long the

Here is where the serpent-tail is bit: 'riverrun,...': they'll come again.

4) **Mathew Hodgart** (1978) wrote in *James Joyce: A Student's Guide* (Routledge & Kegan Paul):

(p. 188)

Everything that is good and bad about Joyce appears in the final pages. On the debit side is the excessive ingenuity, which makes him continue to pun in obscure languages; his self-centered obsession with his autobiography; his fondness for trivialities. On the credit side, there is first of all his sense of form. All the motifs and themes of the book are sounded for the last time in a manner that gives the illusion of a completed musical coda. Joyce is more successful than any other writer with the exception of T. S. Eliot, at imitating musical structure in words. Second, there is his sense of history. As the characters of the book make their final appearance there is a strong feeling that we are coming to the end of a cycle of history. Finally Joyce has attained the epic sweep at which he had been aiming from his earliest days as a writer. The cycle of history is also a cycle of nature: there is a beautiful sense of movement in the passage, an invocation of the river running out to sea, 'dying' as it loses its individuality as a river and coming to life again as rain. As Joyce tells this he is not only using myth but he is *creating* a myth, with the enduring poetic force of the greatest myths. Anna Liffey, river-goddess, mother-principle, is a truly convincing divine figure. Yet at the same time she is equally convincing as a dying old woman of the Dublin lower middle class. Joyce has solved the problem of combining myth and reality, and has shown how the humblest human being can process universal significance. Anna is a more sympathetic and more powerful creature of the imagination than Gabriel Conroy, Stephen Dedalus or even Molly Bloom whose monologues and figurative deaths and Joyce's previous three books. Her simplicity is suggested by the folktales and pantomimes scattered through her monologues; it is easy to accompany her on her journey back into childhood; and yet she epistomises the whole FW. The pathos of the end is intense, but the humour, as always in Joyce at his best, is

equally marked. It may be true that Joyce failed in his attempt to write a universal epic, and that he thought he had failed; and FW may have collapsed under the weight of its symbolism. But it is a glorious failure.

5) **Richard Ellmann** (1983) wrote in *James Joyce* [Revised edition] (Oxford University Press):

(p.712-713)

The Phrase, 'Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair,' was inspired by a memory of carrying his son George through a toy fair in Trieste to make up for not giving him a rocking horse. But Anna Livia is the Liffey as well as the human heroine, and Joyce, as John Kelleher points out, bore in mind the topography of Dublin Bay; as she passes towards the bitter salt sea she must first go between those 'terrible prongs', the North and South Walls of Dublin. As for the last word of the passage, Joyce pondered it a good deal. He said to Gillet in announcing what he had found, '(English translation from original French) In *Ulysses*, to depict the babbling of a woman going to sleep, I had sought to end with the least forceful word I could possibly find. I had found the word "yes," which is barely pronounced, which denotes acquiescence, self-abandon, relaxation, the end of all resistance. In *Work in Progress*, I've tried to do better if I could. This time, I have found the word which is the most slippery, the least accented, the weakest word in English, a word which is not even a word, which is scarcely sounded between the teeth, a breath, a nothing, the article the.'

The character of Anna Livia was like that of Molly Bloom, but more emphasis on ultimate attachment if not on fidelity. The words which Joyce had applied earlier to woman, 'untrustworthy' and 'indifferent,' were scarcely adequate to convey thirty-four years. Anna has seen through her husband, yet she is full of submission, if not precisely to him at least the male principle. Whether the man coming down on her from Archangel is her husband or her father or both doesn't greatly matter, nor does her grammar. She dissolves into a force of nature, eternally constant in spite of inconsistencies, tied indissolubly to her image of man.

6) **Vincent John Cheng** (1984) wrote *Shakespeare and Joyce: A Study of Finnegans Wake*, (The Pennsylvania State University Press):

(pp. 191-192)

627.28-30 How she was handsome, the wild Amazia, when she would seize to my other breast! And what is she weird, haughty Niluna...:

Hodgart has suggested that, in the final pages of the *Wake*, in Anna Livia's tragic monologue as she flows into the sea and dies, we find, appropriately, allusions to the final words of Shakespeare's tragic heroines. A watery death, of course, recalls Ophelia. Perhaps Desdemona is pleading here, like Marlow's Faustus, for time—"But half an hour!... But while I say one prayer" (Oth V. ii. 81-83): "That I prays for" (623.30) and "**moananoaning**" (628.03 -Desdemona). [Faustus's own last speech may be here in "Sea, sea!" (626.07): "See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!" (V.ii.143).] Dying, ALP cries out, Faustus-like: "**I see them rising! Save me from those therrible prongs!**" (628.04-5). Practically the last words of Lady Macbeth are "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!... All perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!" (V.i.47.48); in 624.24, ALP refers to her "perfume... with a spot of marashy" (perfumes of Arabia; damned spot), and later says, "No! Nor for all our wild dances in all their wild din" (627.26-27).

The most apt analogy to HCE and ALP in these final pages, however, is to the aging lovers, Antony and Cleopatra. Dying and flowing to sea, ALP addresses her husband as Cleopatra did in her final speech ("Husband, I come"—V. ii. 286). Cleopatra apotheosizes the dead Antony, describing him as a Colosus: "His legs bestrid the ocean: his reared arm/ Crested the world" (V. ii. 82-83); so also Anna Livia addresses Humphrey: Steadyon, Cooloosus! Mind your stride or you'll knock" (625.22). Earlier in the play, Cleopatra had called Antony "The demi-Atlas of this earth" (I.v.23); ALP now refers to HCE as an "atlas" (626.13). Cleopatra's final words, as she applies a second asp to her breast, are, "Dost thou not see my baby at my breast/ That sucks the nurse asleep?... As sweet as balm, as soft as air, so gentle—/O Antony! Nay, I will take thee [the asp], too" (V.ii.309-11). In ALP's final monologue is found "Softly so" (624.21), "Gently" (627.12), "**Bussoftlhee**" (628.14—practically the last words of the *Wake*); "as soft as air" is echoed in 628.08, "So soft, this morning, ours [air]." Lines 627.28-30 seem a clear reference to Cleopatra with the asp at her breast: "How she was handsome... when she would seize to my breast! And what is she weird, some haughty Niluna..." (Antony had called Cleopatra "my serpent of the Nile" in I.v.25). Both women's deaths have a sad but noble grandeur. See entry for 628.13-14.

Anna Livia, as the Liffey, is a river; the Nile (along with the moon, "luna") and the Amazon ("the wild Amazia") are mentioned here. Glasheen further suggests (p. 8) that in FW, the Nile and the Amazon are Shakespeare's queens, Cleopatra and Hippolyta. Amazon is usually derived from 'without breast' or from Circassian word for moon."

628.13-14 End here... . Bussoftlhee, mememormee!: as Anna Livia flows out to the sea, more Shakespearean heroines surface (see entry for 627.28-30). Leo Knuth wrote in his "Last Leaf"—in AWN, XII, 6 (Dec. 1975): 103-5—that "Anna Livia's '**End here**' echoes Marina's [Marina, the heroine of *Pericles*, "Called Marina / For I was born at sea" — V.i. 157] 'I will end here' (V.i.154). Another Shakespearean heroine... Juliet uses these words to express her despair: '...end motion here' (*Romeo and Juliet*, III. ii. 59). It is the sight of Juliet at the window that inspires Romeo's soliloquy, 'But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?' Compare '**Bussoftlhee**'... The last words of Isabella's [Isabella, heroine of *Measure for Measure*] instructions to Mariana, her stand0in, '...but soft, and low, / Remember now my brother' (IV.i.68-69) are echoed in '**Bussoftlhee, mememormee!**'" See entry for 628.14-15.

Knuth maintains that the Ghost's "But soft, methinks I scent the morning air" (Ham. I. v. 58) is also in "**Bussoftlhee**" and "So soft this morning, ours" (628.08). "**Lff!**" and "**mememormee!**" on this last page refer to more of the Ghost's lines from the same scene in *Hamlet* (see entries for 619.2.22 and 628.14-15)

See also entry for 627.28-30

628.14-15 ! Take. Bussoftlhee... . Lps. The keys to. Given! A way: "Lps" is both "List!" and Lips. Knuth—in AWN, V, 2 (Apr. 1968): 28—has observed that "Lips" are Dutch keys (in a popular Dutch commercial advertisement)—"**The keys to. Given.**" Taking and giving lips (and soft kisses—"bussoftlhee," perhaps) at the dawn of ricorso and rerising to have led Werner Morlang—in AWN, VII, 6 (Dec. 1970): 95—to compare these final words with Mariana's song in *Measure for Measure*.

Take, O take those *lips away*,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the *break of day*,
Lights that so mislead the morn;
But my kisses bring again, bring again...

(IV. i. 1-5; my italics)

Morlang further notes that in a letter to Giorgio and Helen (28 Dec. 1934), Joyce called this Shakespearean lyric his “own favourite” song.

628.14 mememormee!: Anna Livia Plurabelle’s parting words to her husband, HCE, as she passes away into the ocean, are a poignant echo of the same words HCE himself, in a previous Viconian incarnation as King Hamlet, had uttered, fading at dawn, to his son: “Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me!” (I. v. 91).

7) **John Gordon** (1986) wrote in *Finnegans Wake: A Plot Summary* (Gill and Macmillan):

(pp. 277-278)

With the arrival of the book’s last leaf and the departure of the gown’s last leaf, she lies naked and amazed under the imagined/remembered onrush of her cold father/lover: ‘**If I seen him bring down on me now under whitespread wings like he’d come from Arkangels, I sink I’d down over his feet, humbly, dumbly, only to washup.**’ ‘**Bearing**’ sounds the ‘Goldilocks’ story; ‘**Arkangels**’, far to the north-east, is the source of the icy polar wind sweeping her away, plus the Russian bear/general over whom there was such a pothor. But as McHugh says, the vision unquestionably contains as well Noah’s dove, bringing promise of refuge from this flood, and the dove of the Annunciation.

The reflection on FW, now losing its last leaf, is similarly double-edged. Doubtless we ought to hear the author here scattering and drowning his book, like Prospero at the end of Shakespeare’s swan song (see *Ulysses* 212). But there is another literary tradition at the work here as well, the tradition of the *envoi*, sending the completed book out the waters of circulation like a letter in a bottle, and wishing like King Hamlet’s ghost that its readers may ‘**mememormee!**’

There is I think in this last appeal an echo of the infant Joyce remebered by his brother:

Stories were told... of his habit, at a still earlier age [than four], of coming at desert time down the stairs from the nursery one step at a time, with the nursemaid in attendance, and calling out from the top of the house until he reached the dining-room door, ‘Here’s me! Here’s me!’ (Stanislaus Joyce; *My Brother’s Keeper*, pp6-7)

Thus, on the verge of extinction, the same cry as at the beginning of life: 'Me! Me! More me!' And the end is also the beginning, of a life and of a book. The flood of page 628 will befollowed immediately by the rainbow of page 3, the waters of drowning are also the waters of birth, and our crafty old maestro is cracking up to run his 'hornemoonium' once again.

Books III and IVround out the seven-stage sequence which structures the whole book. Under the inquisition of Shaun has paid 'himself off in kind remembrances', summoning up his past like the Joyce who when convalescing after his eye attacks 'saw before his mind's eye a cinema of disagreeable events of the past', killing 'his hungry self in anger as a young man' as he conjures and exorcises Shem. With that we are ready for the recirculating flood of Stage 7—that flood which carries ALP out of the book and us back to the ocean voyage with which it begins again.

8) **Margot Norris** (1987) analyzed the end of FW as Stephen's dream in 'The last Chapter of *Finnegans Wake*: Stephen Finds His Mother' which appeared first in *James Joyce quarterly* 25: 11-30 and then was reprinted in 1992 in *Critical Essays on James Joyce's Finnegans Wake* edited by Patrick A. McCarthy, pp. 212-230 (G. K. Hall & Co, New York). She wrote:

(p. 212)

James Joyce was a master of endings, and the metaphysical crescendo that lifts the banal life of his fingers into ontological realms of loving and dying and transcendence is perhaps the most distinctive signature of his style. With the last chapter of FW, Joyce produces an ending—not just to his work but to his *oeuvre*—that not only recapitulates but surpasses the endings of all his earlier works in its metaphysical aims. Using the device of *anastomosis*, Joyce attempts, in the last chapter of his last work, to bridge all great ontological chasms: between time and space, between life and death, between male and female. And he does so without sacrificing the narrative and psychological particularity that characterizes his earlier works. At the same time that the last chapter of FW demonstrates how dying can also be rejuvenation, how male is also female, and female, male, and how time and space are versions of one another, it also dramatizes Stephen Dedalus' *rapprochement* with his mother, resolving logically and psychologically the conflicts that torment him both in infancy and, more painfully, in adulthood at her death.

(p. 228)

Thus it is that Stephen, by imaginatively enacting his intellectual musings in dream, is reconciled with his mother, immersing himself and disappearing mystically into the lake that is her figure, only to become part of her own regression into childhood, through the kiss that initiated his engendering, or her engendering, reabsorbed into the oceanic semen of her father, until *anastomosis* carries him, “reiverrun, pat Eve and Adam’s’ to the beginning, the origin, of the generations and the book, that is the destination of the Eden telephone. By the end of FW it has all become reconciled; dying has become being born and gestation, male has become female, who in turn becomes male, for every son was once a mother, and every mother was once a father, and space has become time as the present retrieves all the past it embodies. The Joycean families ultimately all fold into each other, moving backwards “by a commodius vicus of recirculation,” because their stories all enfold each other in a hypostatic union of the family’s discourse. Perhaps ALP’s words, as they are lost in her father, reemerge not at the beginning of FW, but at the beginning of *A Portrait*, which begins with the voice of the father, embedded in the voice of the child repeating “Once upon a time and a very good time it was.” retelling its own beginning.

9) **Kimberly Devlin** (1989) wrote in ‘ALP’s Final Monologue in *Finnegans Wake*: The Dialectical Logic of James Joyce’s Dream Text’ (in *Coping with Joyce*: Essays from the Copenhagen Symposium edited by Moris Beja and Shari Benstock, pp. 232-247, Ohio State University Press):

(p. 243)

At first ALP addresses the father himself (as a “you”), but then after envisioning his increasingly threatening mien, she suddenly refers to him more distantly, in the third person (“**the mere size of him**”), so that she is now imagined talking about the father to someone else. The second addressee is the lover to whom she ultimately turns for a saving embrace (“**I rush, my only, into your arms... Save me from these therrble prongs!**”), like Eveline fantasizing about Frank before she leaves home (“Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her” [D 40]). At the end of the earlier short story, the lover is associated with the sea, envisioned as the element that will drown the self (“All the seas of the world tumbled about the heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her” [D 41]); at the end of the *Wake* the

father himself plays the annihilating role, cast as he is as “Old Father Ocean” (U 50), as both the Irish and Greek sea gods, Mananaan (“**moananoaning**”) and Poseidon, the latter’s threatening trident providing a rough imagistic variant of Mr. Hill’s threatening blackthorn stick.

The frightening image of the violent father reverses itself in the subsequent image of the protective father gently carrying the daughter along as he did when she was a child (“**Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair!**” [FW 628]). The dialectical structure of this mediated self-image is anticipated when ALP’s envisioned remembering her father ambivalently (“I’m sure he squirted juice in his eyes to make them flash for frightening me. Still and all he was awful fond to me” [FW 626]), like Eveline recalling both her father’s violence and his kindness. the double resonance of the phrase “**Far calls. Coming, far!**” (FW 628) reintrojects into the dream text the uncertainty of ALP’s imagined response to the patriarch, the ambiguity of her nature—either fond, submissive, and childlike, or fearful, mistrusting, and defiant: she may be responding dutifully to the voice of the “far”, the distant unknown Eveline is tempted by but ultimately rejects. In his mapping of the verbal correspondence between the end of “Eveline” and that of the *Wake*, Hart juxtaposes one of Frank’s last words to Eveline—“Come!” (D 41)—with this “Coming, far!” spoken by ALP (54). The two cries make sense, though, not as verbal analogies or parallelisms but as entreaty and a response, as a plea and an answer.

Kimberly Devlin (1991) also wrote in *Wandering and Return in Finnegans Wake* (Princeton University Press):

(pp. 179-180)

At the end of the monologue ALP embraces the sexual, imagining her own erotic surrender: “**If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he’d come from Arkangels, I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly, dumbly, only to washup**” (FW 628). The image stands in opposition to one of Eveline’s closing visions at the station, her “glimpse of the black mass of the boat” (D 40), inverting color (black/white), religious association (Black Mass/Annunciation, demonic/angelic), and implicit emotional affect (fright/acceptance), while maintaining the linking impression of massiveness. The “black mass of the boat” may embody a vague sexual threat and contribute to Eveline’s distress and hesitation (in the *Wake* boats often become explicitly phallic—“with his rungate bowmprints he roade and

borst her bar" [FW 197]); at the end of the dream, however, the daughter is represented overcoming her sexual fears, envisioning not only her sexual surrender but also her survival, seeing erotic "death" leading inevitably to self-renewal, resurrection ("**I sink I'd die down over his feet, humbly, dumbly, only to washup**") . The man ALP gives herself to remains characteristically ambiguous, the resonance of the Annunciation suggesting the father-lover, but allusion to "**Arkangels**" suggesting the younger lover as well: as B. J. Tysdahl points out, the conclusion to the *Wake* enfolds a reference to Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea*, the lover from Archangel being the Stranger in the play, the young sailor-lover who, as in "Eveline," serves as the father-lover's rival.

In "Eveline" the death of the mother/wife and the possible flight of the daughter are separate narrative events; in the dreamworld they are conflated, intermingled, recognized as analogous departures with similar casualties—weariness over female roles within the patriarchal family. ALP's overdetermined status as dying mother/wife and fleeing daughter leaves the ultimate vision of female journeying and bequeathal of keys ambiguously suspended. Although there is a logical critical tendency to interpret ALP's keys symbolically, their more literal and mundane significance should not be forgotten—they may simply be house keys, like those in anyone's pocket or purse. On one level these keys left behind at the final decision to depart ("**Lps. The keys to . Given!**" [FW 628]) are perhaps passed from ALP-as-mother to Issy-as-daughter, in a wishful vision of dutiful female succession; but in her capacity as a daughter, ALP may be returning those keys of the house back to the master himself—they are the keys that may have logically accompanied Eveline's farewell letter, keys perhaps associated with domestic responsibility.

What happens after the female return in "Eveline" can be imagined and is indeed explored from a new perspective in the final vision of the *Wake*; what happens after the female wandering projected within this dream vision on the other level of the dialect cannot, in contrast, be so easily conjectured. In an ending that resonates unmistakably of Ibsen's *Doll House*, the departing female relinquishes the keys of her safe but oppressive domestic position to embrace an unknown that defies conception, resist articulation, arrests the flow of the dream language in mid stream. When Joyce return to "Eveline" in the last pages of the *Wake* and revises it from its inherent male point of view, he adumbrates its abyss, the region beyond envisioning: that region is surely death itself but also the female other who eludes the dreamer both physically and psychically, perhaps coursing fatalistically toward "that other world," perhaps ecstatically towards freedom.

When I read the end of the *Wake*, I cannot help but think of two contrasting anecdotes from Ellmann's biography of Joyce. Writing about the demands that the artist made on Nora during the early years of relationship, Ellmann reports that one was total and unqualified acceptance of him, another total honesty and openness on her part. "Joyce made a final trial of her: she must recognize all his impulses, even the strangest, and match his candor by confiding in him every thought she found in herself, especially the most embarrassing. She must allow him to know her inmost life, to learn with odd exactitude what it is to be a woman. This test, the last Nora passed successfully later in 1909." Writing about the artist's life in 1929, twenty years after this final "test" Ellmann recounts that Joyce once proudly showed his friends a letter from Jung in which the psychoanalyst praised the artist's penetrating representation of the female psyche in "Penelope." In response Nora reputedly remarked of her husband, "He knows nothing at all about women." Like their creator Joycean males are often curious about what women think and feel—although they often want to know simply what women think and feel about them. The end of the *Wake*, I think, records the difficulty inherent in this venture of wanting "to learn with odd exactitude what it is to be a woman," in its instance on the other's ultimate otherness, her final inaccessibility. If *Ulysses* closes with Molly's memory of her union with Bloom, with a revised and reaffirmed moment of tacit understanding, the *Wake* closes with a vision of the limits to such mutual comprehension.

10) **Suzette A. Henke** (1990) wrote in *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (Routledge; New York):

(pp. 203-204)

Anna acknowledges that as a young child/bride, lilying in her loyalty and oblivious of faults, she romantically exaggerated her husband's mythic stature: "I thought you were all glittering with the noblest of carriage. You're only a bumpkin. I thought you the great in all things, in guilt and glory. You're but a puny" (FW 627.27-32). And so she turns home to her wild, primitive ancestors, a Celtic race of lesbian sea-hags that celebrate life through wild dances and ecstatic din. "I can seen meself among them, allaniuvia pulchrabelled. How she was handsome, the wild Amazia, when she would seize to my other breast! And what is she weird, haughty Niluna, that she will snatch from my ownest hair! For 'tis they are the stormies. Ho hang! Hang ho! And the clash of our cries till we spring to be free" (FW 627. 27-32) Already, she

envisions herself transformed, singing hymns of freedom with her sister-waters the “stormies.” Although Anna has served as an archetypal figure of the altruistic, nurturant mother, her thoughts before death cast off the emotional ties, as well as the stereotypical female roles, that have shackled her for so long. She retains a female identity that is ever elusive and that dares, in the end, to question a lifetime of dedication and self-sacrifice. At the close of her life, love and loathing are fused, and both are lost in the “bitter ending” of mortality.

Weaned now, and “**moananoaning**” with anguish, Anna rushes to embrace her “**cold mad feary father**” in the ultimate bond of an Oedipal union that proves both terrible and annihilating. This “**therrible**” sea-god “**bearing down on me now under whitespread wings**” is a composite of Thor, Poseidon, Zeus, the Holy Spirit, and Anna’s first seducer Michael “from Arkangels” (FW 628. 2-5 9-10). At the climactic moment of personal extinction, Anna heroically leaps into the waiting arms of her immortal father/lover. Engulfed by old father Ocean, the river Anna Liffey will nonetheless rise as cloud-vapor and begin again the endless cycles of biological renewal. At the conclusion of FW, womb flows into tomb, bearing on her tumultuous river-waters a solitary leaf “a way a lone a last loved long the” (FW 628. 15-16) river-run of cosmic life.

Joyce gives the last (and the first) word in FW, “**the**” (French, “tea”) to a woman. At the final sounding (or scripting) of this single syllable, the book turns back upon itself and, like a resurrected Finnegans, refuses closure and begins again—but with a difference. It is with the fading utterance of ALP’s definite article that we realize the endless, indefinite semiosis of FW. In a moment of epiphany that brings us back to the book’s beginning, tracing, as it were, the infinite structure of a Möbius strip, we are implicitly commissioned to re-read the entire text as an explosive extension of Anna’s lyrical river-run. Having taken for granted the socially sanctioned assurance of a male narrative voice, we must climb aboard the “bisexcycle” of reader-response and circle through the book once more, with a paradoxically belated foreknowledge of a work ubiquitously inscribed with the provocative iterations of feminine writing.

11) **Sheldon Brivic** (1991) wrote in *The Veil of Signs: Joyce, Lacan, and Perception* (University of Illinois Press):

(pp. 177-178)

ALP often remembers HCE in conventional phallic terms: "That was the prick of the spindle to me that gave me the keys to dreamland" (615.27-28). While his phallus gives her power to dream, it also takes away her consciousness, putting her in the passive position of Sleeping Beauty. But ALP can give the key herself, for she is associated with Arrah-na-Pogue, the heroine of Dion Boucicault's play of the same name. Arrah frees a man from prison by passing a message through a kiss. Issy, the younger, more aggressive version of ALP, says, "you can eat my words for it as sure as there's a key in my kiss" (279, lines 7-8 of note). A woman can easily be teaching a man, and therefore taking the active role in kissing, whether or not her tongue goes forward.

In II.4 the four old men remember kissing ALP in terms of passing into an Egyptian afterlife "in Arrah-na-pogue, in the otherworld of the passing of the key of Two-tongue Common" (385.3-5). The oral fusion of kissing here becomes a model of the linguistic circulation that forms the subject. The sharing of languages conveys the world of the Other.

Like the mother in the poem Stephen writes in "Proteus," ALP dies kissing her deity, for "**Lps. The keys to, Given!**" indicates a kiss on the last line of the book. This Oedipal image of God gains power if we remember Stephen's preoccupation with kissing his mother in the first chapter of *Portrait*. But on the level on which Joyce takes the place of God, ALP is kissing the Other of her author as the narrative sinks back, at the end, into the oceanic mind it came from. One of the beauties of ALP's final gestures lies in her repeating the act around which her life has centered, the giving of her self. She says that although HCE told her earlier that he'd give her the keys of her heart, "... now it's me who's got to give" (626.32). The keys she gives seem to hold the power to create the *Wake*, for the word "Given!" is followed by the sentence that opens the book:

Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs. (628.15-3.3)

Sheldon Brivic (1995) also wrote in *Joyce's Waking Women: An Introduction to Finnegans Wake* (The University of Wisconsin Press):

(p.114)

She is probably attempting to leave them behind with "**Avelaval**" (FW 628.6), which, as McHugh points out, includes the Latin *ave et vale*, "hail and farewell."

ALP deflects her mind from the threatening, pronged father to the gentler one who carried her at **“Carry me along, taddy...”** (FW 628.8). This may be seen as the pitiful delusion of a dying woman who sees father death coming for her; but it can also be read more positively as a sign that she is controlling her vision, that she can focus on the aspect of the father that is useful. She does not see him as a goal, but uses him to support her as she pursues her own womanly aim.

(pp. 116-117) Putting **“taddy”** into service beneath her, ALP generally sees herself on land in the nine last lines, carrying on the quest that I see finally aimed at the lost chapel of her womanly being: **“There’s where. First, We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far!”** (FW 628.12-13). Here the sound of the wings of the gulls, **“Whish,”** corresponds to wish fulfillment because this and other bird sounds that echo through the soliloquy are parts of the song of dawn. This sound emerges from a landscape that seems to be filled with soft sounds: **“pass... grass... behush... bush”**. And **“Whish”** appears as the object of the quest by following **“to”**. The noises of the gulls signal that something is **“coming,”** though it is **“far”**. And this power in the sky that the gulls announce is not a father but a mother.

In a notebook for the *Wake* Joyce wrote this version of part of the ending:

And it's old
and old it's
weary I go
back to you
my cold father,
mother
and old it's sad
and old it's sad
& weary mother
I go back to you,
my cold father
my cold mad
father, my cold
mad bleary
father, yet the sight
of him makes me
saltsick and I
rush into your
arms. (JJA 40.261)

The last dozen lines of this can be read as turning from father to mother with the following sense: Mother I go back to you — my cold father makes me sick and I rush into your arms. But this reading is strained and probably only a secondary suggestion. What is clearer is that Joyce originally intended ALP to rush into a sea that combined both parents, and perhaps the reason he removed the references to mother is that he decided to make her a separate goal.

When ALP was a child she was carried by a mountain, and now she will be carried by the sea; but this is not her goal or where she wants to stay. The terms of the last pages make it clear that ALP is bound to pass beyond the ocean she enters with such anxiety. Even the version of the father with “**whitespread wings**” on the last page will not hold her. He comes from “**Arkangels**” because as an angel he represents the Christian structure of heaven; but there is an alternative, maternal structure that is bound to replace this paternal one in ALP’s mind. She will reach the body of the creative mother, though she can do so only by disintegrating. This mother is the sky goddess Nut. Before I show how ALP’s flight up to Nut, the final stage of her journey, is portrayed in the *Wake*, I will prepare for it by explaining through Lacan’s theory of tragedy the moral basis of ALP’s final situation.

(p.131)

ALP’s final union is not with her father, but with her mother. The ultimate aim of her desire combines the freedom of the female body with the loss of symbolic identity and the flight toward the mother. The leap is tragic, but it is supported by the circular dream structure of the *Wake* so as to indicate that on one level it is simply waking up, which is dying to the identity that one dreamed of and its network of imaginary social connections. In this sense ALP is only being herself as she leaps into the sky to overturn the phallogentric cosmography, and being herself is all the more real for being so strange and unlikely.

12) **David Pierce** (1992) wrote in *James Joyce’s Ireland* (Yale University Press):

(pp. 206-209)

The ending to FW is normally seen in terms of Anna Livia Plurabelle and her final thoughts on life as she passes out to sea, but to my mind it is at least as much to do with the son-father, father-son relationship. Joyce goes back to his father, to “corksown blather” (FW 197.5), and he rushes into his arms. ‘**Avelaval**’: Ave et Vale, Hail and Farewell. All kinds of memories are stirred

for him, both as a son and as a father. '**Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair!**' This is inspired by a memory of his own days as a father carrying Giorgio through a toy fair in Trieste to compensate for not giving his son a rocking chair. It is mixed with a wish to see his own father again. The distant past calls; he thinks the memory is coming back to him, but it is stopped short by the thought that the relationship with his father is at an end: '**End here.**' No further developments are possible. '**Us then.**' The portrait is complete. But then the thought of Finn '**again**', the *ricorso*, the resurrection, the encouragement to be drawn from Ireland's playful and ubiquitous mythological figure. '**Take.**' His childhood memory and language returns, movingly captured through ALP's hushed Irish voice: '**Bussoftlhee**' — But softly. But soft Lee — we are back in his father's city. Ever since Mutt's 'Bussave a sec' heard in the opening chapter of FW, this tender moment has been coming: "Bussave a sec... **Bussoftlhee**'. It is a '**soft morning**', too, an Irish expression that Joyce, in common with most Irish emigrants, must have missed hearing in exile. '**ours**'. The word '**mememormee!**' prompts another chain of associations: memory, me, me, more me as the child presses his father to pick him up. Remember me, Joyce says to his father, till '**thousandsthee**', till thousand years, till thou sends for me in thy kingdom. '**Lps**' — more tender now even than lips, kiss. '**The keys to**' — the keys to my heart, the keys to Heaven, in the words of Jesus's farewell to St. Peter. '**Given**'. And then the *ricorso*: 'A way a lone a last a loved a long the' back to riverrun, past Eve and Adam's and the whole cycle of the Fall of Man again. 'They lived und laughed ant loved end left' (FW 18.19-20): und, ant, end; lived, laughed, loved, left. This is Joyce at his most lyrical and his most profound, the story of the human race here at one with the history of Joyce and his father.

This is Joyce's farewell to his father, to Ireland, and, as it turned out, to writing. *Ulysses* begins with the death of his mother; FW ends with thoughts of his father. Nora, too, is never far away in this final passage. The question — 'is there one who understands me?' — is reminiscent of a pleading tone Joyce adopted in his early courting letters to Nora. In August 1904, for example, he asks her: 'Can you not see the simplicity which is at the back of all my disguises?' (Letters II. 49). In *Ulysses* there is answer to this question, for, as Molly declares, 'nobody understands his cracked ideas but me' (U 18.1407). In this mixing of voices and contexts, Molly/Nora is both addressee and solution. In another letter to Nora, this time in October 1909, Joyce speaks of loathing Ireland and the Irish (Letters II. 255). The thought too is repeated here in this final sequence: 'All me life I have been lived among them but now they are

becoming loathed to me.' Nora can also be heard in moments of self-accusation on Joyce's part as when he writes 'I thought you were great in all things, in guilt and glory. You're but a puny.'

From exile in Europe in the inter-war years, Joyce looked back to the Land of Youth where he had spent his childhood. In this regard the word '**moyles**' is especially suggestive. When Yeats's Oisín, the son of Finn, arrives on the Island of Forgetfulness, the 'moil' of his centuries filled him:

Wrapt in the wave of that music, with weariness more than of earth,
The moil of my centuries filled me; and gone like a sea-covered stone
Were the memories of the whole of my sorrow and the memories of the whole of my mirth,
And a softness came from the starlight and filled me full to the bone.

The word '**moyles**' possibly also recalls a stanza in Francis Fahy's 'Galway Bay':

A prouder man I'd walk the land in health and peace of mind,
If I might toil and strive and moil, nor cast one thought behind;
But that would be the world to me, its rank and rich array,
If memory I lost of thee, my poor old Galway Bay.

It would be appropriate in the closing moments of FW for Joyce to remember the birthplace of Nora, and to invoke a song that is unashamedly nostalgic direct and that begins with the line; far away I am today, from scenes I roamed a boy'. Wherever Irish emigrants traveled they carried with them in their songs a reassuring internal rhyme scheme and the vowel-ing in and out characteristic Gaelic verse ('memory... lost... thee... poor old Galway Bay'). Joyce deploys a similar technique in this final passage: '**<moananoaning><seasilt saltsick>
<Two more... moremens> <Avelaval. My leaves>**'. And 'Galway Bay' ends, like the final passage of FW, with a blessing and a wish:

The blessings of a poor old man be with you night and day,
The blessings of a lonely man whose heart will soon be clay;
'Tis all the Heaven I'd ask of God upon my dying day —
My soul to soar for evermore above you, Galway Bay.

But the strongest association of the word '**moyles**' is with Moore's 'Silent, O Moyle! Be the Roar of Thy Water'. Fionnuala, whose name is related to Fionn, was transformed into a swan and forced to wander in exile from Ireland until the coming of Christianity, until Christ's return. She is Lir's

daughter, 'murmuring mournfully' (**mememormee**). 'When shall the Swan, her death-note singing, Sleep with wings in darkness furl'd?' 'When will that day-star, mildly springing, Warm our Isle with peace and love?' It is Joyce's hope for his country: **'I see them rising!'** The Easter Rising, Tim Finnegan waking from the dead, his father's arms rising, the **'moananoaning'** giving way to the 'riverrun' that begins the whole human saga again, from the indefinite stutter of the series of 'a's in the last sentence — **'A way a lone a last a loved a long'** — to the hope that is contained in the definite article, ironically by itself one of the least definite words in the language.

13) **Robert M. Polhemus** (1994) wrote in 'Dantellising Peaches and Miching Daddy, the Gushy Old Goof: The Browning Case and *Finnegans Wake*' which appeared in *Joyce Studies Annual* 5: 74-105:

(pp. 100-101)

At the end of FW we read: "Salterella come to her own... Now a younger's there" (627.5-6), and **"it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father..."** (627.36-628.2). Joyce tried in the *Wake* to give the daughter a new voice in literature that could express all kinds of desire and break through traditional repressions. The voice of the mother becomes the voice of the daughter in the last lines of the *Wake* and the two voices and family-roles and their relation to the father merge ("reamalgamerge" [49.36]) and oscillate, as they do in the *Lot* Scripture and complex. In Joyce the voice of the daughter, the "jungerl" (Lucia Joyce was treated by Carl Jung in 1934) is heard in the land as never before. Nevertheless, it can also be heard drowning, the breath quietly dispersing in a still recirculation mode of sacrifice for the renewal life and letters: **"A gull** ["Gull" brings together both "bird" and "girl"]. **Gulls. Far calls.** ["Far" is the Danish word for "father"]. **Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take.... mememormee!.... Given! A way a lone a last a loved the"** (628.13-16). From a Joycean point of view, we can see that out of Peaches came the juiciest scandal of the decade, out of the Issy-daughter figure in the *Wake* came letters and libido driving the human text, out of Lucia's suffering came, FW, and out of Lot's daughters came Scripture. For Joyce these various written subjects all somehow mesh.

The admonition of the girl's voice is to *remember me*, to keep alive domestic and historical memory, and to identify *me* with *memory*. But, as Joyce

makes literally clear in an earlier passage featuring the daughter-girl's voice, memory always has gaps, is always a matter of give and take, is always deceptive and always must be reconstituted; "Everyday, precious, while *m'm'ry's* leaves are falling deeply on my Jungfraud's Messonge-book I will dream..." (460.19-21, emphasis mine). Just before the last lines of the *Wake*, the daughter's voice pleads "**Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair!**" (628.8-9). These words recall and pun on those of the daughter footnote-girl "Yes, there, Tad, thanks, give, from, tathair.." (273.F8)—words whose rhythm also touches that final regenerating line of the book, "**A way a lone a last a loved a long the**" (628.16). But "**Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair!**" also recalls Daddy Browning, the teddy bear he gave Peaches, and his toy fairs. In that context they offer a much needed perspective to keep us from sentimentalizing Joyce's great conclusion to FW. After the call to "taddy" this follows: "**If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he'd come from Arkangels, I sink I'd die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup**" (FW 628.9-11).

14) **Carol Shloss** (1997-98) wrote in '*Finnegan's Wake and the Daughter's Body*' which appeared in *Abiko Quarterly with James Joyce Finnegan's Wake Studies* #17: 118-137:

(pp.130-131)

I suggest that we have missed the modulation of voice at the end of *Finnegans Wake* and failed to hear the dialogic nature of Joyce's final communication with the world. Whose voice is it that says "'All me life I have been lived among them but now they are becoming lothed to me. And I am lothing their little warm tricks. And lothing their mean cosy turns. And all the greedy gushes out through their small souls" (627:16-19)? Were these not the words of Lucia when she described her experience with C.G. Jung? "To think," she said, "that such a big, fat materialistic Swiss man should try to get hold of my soul." Who would have been most "Loonely in me loneness" (627:34) or need secretly to "slip away before they're up" (627:35)? if not the young girl who disappeared from the homes of well-meaning people in France, England and Ireland who supervised her at an age when she felt supervision to be inappropriate? Who needed to be saved from "**those therrble prongs**" (628:5) if not the person who had been incarcerated in Les Rives de Prangins? Who would have most worried in 1938 that "**my leaves have drifted from me,**"

(628:6) needing to be reassured **“But one clings still....Yes. Carry me along, taddy”** (628:7~8)? **“Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again!”** (628:13-14) unless it was the one left in the wake, the one whose entire adult experience could be described as a threat of extinction in the seas, in the great father, the **“cold mad feary father”** (628:2).

If at the end of the *Wake*, Joyce could write **“memomormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps”** (628:14-15), we might see it not only as an old woman's solitary resignation at death but also as a family's dialogue of anxiety and reassurance. For if we understand Lucia to be the interlocutor as well as one of the subjects of this book, we can think of Joyce ending his writing career with a promise that does nothing to hide his knowledge of the expropriations involved in that writing. FW might then be considered to derive from double motion which is both an expropriation of a child's experience and at the same time, an act of atonement for that expropriation; a work whose progress contributed to the illness of a child and left as a monument to its creator's desire to assure her that she was not **“a way a lone a last”** (628:15). “Lps” are lips without the “i” or without the ego. It could thus be imagined as a way to represent the discourse of the unconscious, and the key to understanding these “lps” is repetition. If unresolved conflicts return to haunt the person who has repressed them, the way to break that haunting, to lose the effect of their wake, is also repetition. The interpreter “undoes” the dreamwork by interrogating the dream until it yields up its latent content. It will remain hidden until, by going over and over the same ground, the dreamer recognizes its origin. Another way to say this is that until a progenitor is recognized, recirculation is one's only course.

When Joyce began writing FW in 1922, he understood himself to be undertaking a “penisolate war” (3:6). By the time he approached its end, I imagine that the meaning of his singlehanded battle has shifted considerably. To approach the boundary between conscious and unconscious life is one kind of project if it is undertaken from the position of consciousness. Its significance changes at the point when one understands that the enticements of the unconscious life are not always undertaken voluntarily. **“The keys to. Given!”** (628:15) can mean to open a door, to make free, to end imprisonment. **“The keys to. Given!”** can be to comprehend. If one's daughter is the one who is imprisoned, such keys are urgently needed. Locked as she was in a realm of excommunication, trapped in a gestural language that no one else could decipher, Lucia needed to be reassured of her father's persistence in speaking and listening to her words—over and over again until they were understood.

It is a challenge that is extended to us and it involves facing another urgent and more civic goal: the need of culture to reach a place where the Other is recognized as within the self and not cast out into asylums. If we think of disease as the body's pain, and of culture, in a phrase from Elaine Scarry, as "perceived-pain-wished-gone", then we can begin to see Joyce and Lucia not as the genius and the disrupter of genius, but as impulse and answer within a mutually responsive system. Seen in the light of this dialogue between madness and modernism, FW, tells us that if there is any dream within it, it is the dream of a common language.

15) **Finn Fordham** (2000) wrote in 'Mapping Echoland' which appeared in *Joyce Studies Annual*, pp. 167-201:

(pp.194-195)

20. FINN, AGAIN! TAKE. (628.14)

The title-motif had one more appearance in Book IV, in the serene and weary climax of Liffey's monologue. But it worked its way in without much deliberation, was formed gradually, growing in its early stages, as if by accident. Joyce's crafting here is very careful, tiny adjustments being made over several drafts. The two units were not originally written at the same time: first came "Take" and in a subsequent draft "Finn, again." "Take" is inserted when Joyce rewrites the end of the third typescripted version, elaborating and improving the bathetic final sentence that he'd written in the first draft:

a bit beside the bush and then a walk along the

This is expanded into:

So soft this morning ours. First. We pass through grass behush the bush. So. But I'm taller now — stud there. Softhee, mememormee! Lps. Take. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a lost a last a loved a long the (47488-148v; JJA 63 p.23 l)

"Take" seems determined by the context of the "keys" — (front door? heaven? text?) rather than as a rhyme for "wake". This was all typed up for the fourth typescript and barely changed, but then typed up again and changed considerably, incorporating a "Finnegan" to help echo with the title at this crucial location (but, incidentally, losing "a lost"):

And there. As then. Λ ^{Finn,again!} Bussofth/'ee, mememore mee! Lps. Take. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the (47488 -178; JJA 63 p.262)

The squeezing of "Finn, again!" onto the last page of FW, brings with it a note, in the exclamation mark, of weary surprise — "not *again!*" This note glosses of course the very technique of motif — *again but different*, and reminds us that the motif of "Finnegan's Wake," with its themes of resurrection, repetition, reappearance, surprise, stands for motif — as an agent of recurrence and revival — generally.

On a facing page, Joyce writes this ending out again for clarity, incorporating other revisions and significantly shifting "tale" back to be more snug and produce a stronger chime with the title-motif:

End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussofthee, mememoree! Till thousandthee. Lps. The keys of etc [sic] (47488-177v; JJA 63 p. 261)

This moves into the familiar final version. The motif is allowed to seem vigorous, even at the end, despite its long journey passing through occasional diagnoses of weakness. At the end it is a pre-echo of the beginning, coming close to its biggest avatar, the big bold title on the cover.



(2) How to understand ALP's final monologue

1) When was ALP's final monologue written?

Walton Litz wrote in "The making of *Finnegans Wake*" (pp. 209-223 of *A James Joyce Miscellany*, edited by Mavin Magalaner, South Illinois University Press):

(p. 209)

When FW was finally begun, in the spring of 1923, neither the structure nor the ultimate style of the book had been determined. Joyce had been preoccupied for years with many of the FW's major themes and motifs.—In the spring of 1926 he could announce: "I have the book now fairly well planned out in my head." By this time he had arrived at a clear conception of the four-part structure which governs FW. He had visualized the four chapters of Part II, which forms a bridge between the Anna Livia Plurabelle episode at the end of Part I and the first chapter of Part III. He had also foreseen the role of Part IV as both beginning and end of the book's cyclic structure.

After the early confident years of writing FW in 1923-1930, Joyce experienced the physical and moral collapse in 1931. Until that time most of parts I and II of FW had been printed in their preliminary forms in *transition* and other publications. Then he wrote Parts II and IV in subsequent years. The shaping of Part II proceeded slowly and under great personal difficulties. He suffered from Lucia's madness in addition to his own blindness.

According to **Paul Léon** who was the most loyal and devoted and understanding friend of Joyce, Joyce made no distinction between actual life and literary creation; his work is one long-confession; and all writing, even the most objective, is self-revealing (p. 287 of *Portraits of the Artist in Exile*, Edited by Willard Potts, A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1979).

While Joyce wrote about Parts II and IV of FW in 1931-1938, Lucia must have been the first priority for him, and FW must reflect this struggle of mind. **David Hayman** (1990) wrote in *The Wake in Transit* (Cornell University Press):

(p.14)

— in 1932, at a time when he was plagued by renewed eye problems,* when he was discouraged about his book's reputation, and when he was finally forced to accept Lucia's mental deterioration, he had great difficulty drafting the opening for II.2.

* It is not unreasonable, or particularly insensitive, to relate the condition of his eyes at that time to the worsening climate at home, especially since the chapter in question, II.2, treats the adolescent Issy/Lucia. Lucia Joyce's schizophrenia could no longer be ignored in 1932; the tension between Lucia and Nora was mounting; and we may even speculate that the much-tried Nora was in the midst of her menopause.

Finn Fordham (1997-98) also wrote that Joyce returns to the biblical myth of Jephthah to find an analogy with his own, and incorporates it into II.2, where Joyce is hardest at work sorting out his sense of guilt towards Lucia (p. 37 in *Abiko Quarterly with James Joyce Finnegans Wake Studies*, No. 17).

Once Joyce had conquered the writer's block, Joyce was able to compose and assemble the remaining chapters. Between 1936 and 1938, he wrote and revised II.3, II.4 and Part IV. **Danis Rose** (1995) wrote in *The Textual Diaries of James Joyce* (The Lilliput Press, Dublin):

(pp.133-134)

Joyce wrote Anna Livia's final monologue, her farewell and his, in a short, last burst of creative energy in the winter of 1938; and the Notebook N57(VI.B.47) was compiled specially for this section and one particular passage in the notebook tells us that while ostensibly the piece describes a young girl rushing into the arms of her father, it was also James Joyce, after so many years, reaching out for his mother: *and old it's sad/ and old it's sad/ and weary mother/ I go back to you.*

Nearly sixteen years had passed since Joyce had begun to write FW. At the birthday party of Joyce, on February 2, 1939, the first bound copy of FW was displayed. **Herbert Gorman** (1941) wrote in *James Joyce: A Definitive Biography* (John Lane Bodley Head, London):

(p. 347)

It is the time for dancing. No one who has not seen Joyce dance can have any idea from a brief description what his terpsichorean talents are like. To

enlivening music he breaks into a high fantastic dance all by himself, a dance that is full of quaint antics, high kicks and astonishing figures. He dances with all his body, head, hands and feet and the evolutions through which he goes, eccentric but never losing the beat of the music, are calculated to arouse a suspicion in the beholder that he has no bones at all. Others join in the dances and he weaves wild and original patterns with them. When the music stops he sinks contentedly into his chair. The festival has been a success. It is after midnight when the moment for parting (delayed as long as possible) comes. Joyce stands by his door bidding good night to his guests, and as they depart down the stairs and into the night they glance back and see standing above them the tall lean figure of a great gentleman and a great writer.

2) How did Joyce suffer from Lucia's illness?

In 1907, Lucia Anna Joyce was born at Trieste hospital. In 1926, Lucia was described by Thomas Wolfe, "rather pretty a little American flapper." In 1926-29, she received dancing lessons to become a professional dancer in Paris. But Joyce wrote in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver (19 October, 1929): "Lucia turned down the Darmstadt offer and seems to have come to the conclusion that she has not the physique for a strenuous dancing career the result of which has been a month of tears as she thinks that she has thrown away three or four years of hard work and is sacrificing a talent."

In 1927, Lucia was distressed by Giorgio's increasing distance. In December 1930, Giorgio Joyce who was two years older than Lucia married with Helen Fleishmann. On 2 February 1932, Lucia threw a chair at her mother Nora and was taken by taxi to *maison de santé* by Giorgio. In May 1932, Samuel Beckett bluntly told Lucia that he came to see her father and had no intention to marry her, and Joyce family banned him to visit Joyce a year. In October 1932 Joyce rejected Maria Jolas's advice to take Lucia to Jung and sent Lucia to Vance with her nurse. Joyce bought fur-coat for Lucia at 4,000 frs as supposed therapy. In March 1932, Paul Léon's brother-in-law, Alex Ponisovsky, half-heartedly proposed marriage to Lucia and she accepted it but Giorgio objected on the ground of her condition. However, after engagement party Lucia fell into catatonia. Thereafter she was hospitalized at many psychotic hospitals. On 15 September, 1934, she was transferred to Jung's clinic in Zurich.

According to **Richard Ellmann** (p. 676 in *James Joyce*, Oxford University Press, 1982), Lucia wrote her father a letter (in October, 1934) in Italian which Jung, who did

not know the language, asked Joyce to translate, and it said, "Father dear; I am very fond of you. Thanks for the pretty pen. Zurich is not the worst place in the world is it? Maybe one day, you can come with me to the museum, father. I think that you are spending a lot of money on me. Father, if you want to go back to Paris you would do well to do so. Father dear, I have had too nice a life. I am spoiled. You must both forgive me. I hope that you will come again here. Father, if ever I take a fancy to anybody I swear to you on the head of Jesus that it will not be that I am not fond of you. Do not forget that. I don't really know what I am writing Father."

In Joyce's letter to Lucia (27 April, 1935), he wrote, "We are fairly well and hope that your health is improving. Do not give way to moments of melancholy. Some day or other everything will change for you. And sooner than you might believe."

In Joyce's letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver (1 May, 1935), he wrote, "She behaves like a fool very often but her mind is as clear and unsparing as the lightning. She is a fantastic being speaking a curious abbreviated language of her own. I understand it or most of it. —So long as she was within reach I always felt I could control her and myself. And in fact I could. But now though I have the faithful support of my wife and Léon's loyal friendship and that of some others here to say nothing of your patience and sympathy there are moments and hours when I have nothing but rage and despair, a blind man's rage and despair."

Jacques Mercanton with whom Joyce seems to have discussed FW in more detail than he did with anyone else but Miss Weaver wrote about the conversation with James Joyce in *Portraits of the Artist in Exile* (Edited by Willard Potts, A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1979) as follows:

(pp. 213-214)

"Why should I regret my talent? I write with such difficulty, so slowly. Chance furnishes me what I need. I am like a man who stumbles along; my foot strikes something, I bend over, and it is exactly what I want." He mimed what he said to make it sound funny. But he spoke again of the many operations on his eyes, to which he had submitted over those long years of work, and of the state of his daughter's health. He no longer knew what to do for her. "Let us talk about something else. Nothing we can say will help her." Yet there were tears in his voice, he couldn't talk about anything else. In that night wherein his spirit struggled, that "bewildering of the night", ("Wildering of the night" in FW 243.33) lay hidden the poignant reality of a face dearly loved. He gave me details about the mental disorder from which his daughter suffered, recounted a painful episode without pathos, in that sober and reserved manner he

maintained even in moments of the most intimate sorrow. After a long silence, in a deep, low voice, beyond hope, his hand on a page of his manuscript: "Sometimes I tell myself that when I leave this dark night, she too will be cured."

According to **Richard Ellmann** (p. 743 in *James Joyce*, Oxford University Press, 1982), when Lucia was notified of her father's death, she said, "What is he doing under the ground, that idiot? When will he decide to come out? He's watching us all the time."



3) How do I read or interpret the last pages of ALP's final monologue?

In the closing passage of FW (627.34 - 628.16), who addresses whom as the "cold, mad, feary father"? The whole story of 619.20—628.16 was called "Anna Livia Plurabelle's final monologue or soliloquy."

Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson (1944) wrote about the final monologue (in *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, Penguin Books):

(p. 355)

The night of HCE is far behind. The letter-memoirs of the widow let us know that all is past. With the approach of the day the mystical sleep identity has been sundered; each remains only himself, separate, three-dimensional and alone. The man form has rolled over; the woman now flows rapidly away from him. Her final monologue, one of the great passages of all literature, is the elegy of River Liffey as she passes, old, tired, soiled with the filth of the city, through Dublin and back to the sea.

The most important feat of Joyce's writing is the fusion of more than two characters. **Michael H. Begnal** (1988) wrote in *Dreamscheme: Narrative and Voice in Finnegans Wake* (Syracuse University Press):

(p. 113)

As a final note, it should also be stated that the last few pages of FW demonstrate a coming together, rather than a sundering. If nothing else, there is fusion and form. To be sure, Anna Livia is more than aware of her husband's foibles and faults, as is Molly Bloom, but there is no reason to take literally ALP's fear that she may soon be replaced by "a daughterwife from the hills again" (627.02). Such behaviour would be heavily frowned upon by the Catholic Church in Ireland. Actually, in her dream monologue Anna Livia is becoming that very "daughterwife" herself, as Earwicker metamorphoses in her mind into both father and husband. In what is almost in her statement, this change and fusion becomes clear to the reader.

The closing passage also suggests an invocation of the river running out to sea, dying as it loses its individuality as a river and coming to life again as rain. ALP is not only Anna Liffey, river-goddess, mother-principle but also becomes daughterwife Issy. Thus ALP shows status as dying mother/wife and fleeting daughter/wife. According to Adaline Glasheen (p. 6 in *A Census of Finnegans Wake*, Northwestern University Press, 1956), Issy is her mother's past and future—at once the temptress Eve who preceded Mother Eve, and the "daughterwife" from the fills, who supplants the aging mother. Thus, Anna Livia and Issy are the same and distinct woman.

FW is made up of bits and pieces that Joyce took from a wide variety of sources, including reviews and criticism of his works (**Ingeborg Landuyt**; p. 141 in *European Joyce Studies* 14, 2002). FW represents a culmination of a language and style which pre-empt that narrative guidance through a story line which has traditionally been central to reading experience. Here readers must puzzle over each syllable of the language from beginning to end, being perhaps more consistently aware of their own attempts to interpret what is being said than of anything else (**Alan S. Loxterman**; p. 62 in *Re: Joyce's Beckett*, edited by Phillis Carey and Ed Jewinsky, 1992).

At first ALP addresses HCE himself (as a "you"), but then she refers to him more distantly as "father". Then the father becomes not only father/husband, but also Irish and Greek sea gods.

the moyles and moyles of it: miles and miles. Moyle: sea between Ireland and Scotland

moannaoring: endlessly moaning. Mananaan: Irish sea god

seasilt: seasick

therrble prongs: terrible pangs. Treble: Neptune's trident

moremens: moments

avelaval: Hail and Farewell.

"My leaves have drifted from me. All. But one clings still." One leaf that clings to ALP is supposed to be Issy (daughterwife)/Lucia. On 13 Nov. 1938, Joyce completed FW with "the", expanding the last two pages to ten. At that time Lucia was the largest concern for him. The Munich Pact was signed on 29 September 1938. Lucia's hospital was no more safe from the possible German invasion in the World War II. Joyce visited La Baure on 30 Sept. 1938 and tried to evacuate Lucia to a safer place from her hospital at Pornichet (near La Baure in France) in vain.

Carol Loeb Shloss (2003) wrote in *Lucia Joyce to Dance in the Wake* (Farbar Strauss and Giroux, NY):

(p.390)

Lucia haunts the final pages, both as a speaker and as someone who listens to the voice of father/creator.

Lff!: Liffey and life. It is connotative of Lucia.

“So soft this morning, ours.” (morning: mourning). The end of ALP’s speech. After this sentence (from “Yes.”) the speaker (addresser) would change from ALP to Issy/Lucia. Then the father (addressee) would change from HCE/Sea God to Taddy/Humpty-Dumpty/Joyce. This might be an example of *provection**.

*Fritz Senn called “provection” when Joyce came to write the way he did in a process of rapid escalation (excerpt from: *Abiko Annual with James Joyce Finnegans Wake Studies*, 21, 162, 2001).

As ALP flows into the sea, only one leaf remains on her. That must be Issy/Lucia. And Issy/Lucia addresses her father-lover as taddy. **Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair!** This is inspired by a memory of her own days as a father carrying Lucia through a toy fair. **If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he’d come from Arkangels, I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup.** This is Issy/Lucia’s appeal to her father/Joyce, which might suggest father-lover (an incest motif).

Arkangels is a composite of Thor, Poseidon, Zeus, the Holy Spirit, and also suggest Anna’s first seducer Michael.

Humbly dumbly is Humpty-Dumpty.

Adaline Glasheen (1956) wrote (in *A Census of Finnegans Wake*, Northwestern University Press):

(p. 59)

In FW, Humpty-Dumpty is almost always HCE, who had himself a great fall, is named Humphrey and has a hump on his back.

“To washup” is to worship and to wake up (resurrection). “I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to washup” suggests that the daughter is envisioning not only her sexual surrender but also her survival, seeing erotic “death” leading inevitably to self-renewal, resurrection. (sink: think)

Tid: time

Whish!: wish. Read “Whish! —— End here.” (Wish to end here.)

“A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far!” Daughter (gull/girl) and father (far) are calling to each other.

gull: bird and girl. Far: the Danish word for “father”
Finn: Finnegan or Finnegans Wake
“Us then. Finn, again! Take.” Then take us Finnegans Wake again.
Bussoftlhee: But softly. Softly kiss you. (Buss: kiss)
Mememormee!: To remember me. To identify *me* with *memory*. Memory, me,
me, more me as the child presses her father to pick her up.
Till thousandsthee: Till thousand years
Lps.: kiss; more tender now even than lips. Lips without the “i” or without the
ego.

The keys to. Given!: Keys are passed from ALP-as-mother to Issy-as-daughter.
A way a lone a last a loved a long: The first letter ‘L’ in each word (lone, last,
loved, long) alludes Lucia’s L too. Joyce removed ‘a lost’ in his final revision (see the
previous article by Finn Fordham). Joyce would not think Lucia as ‘a lost’. It’s Joyce’s
prayer for Lucia’s future. It also suggests the secret motive of incest between the father
and the daughter. FW might be a book of Joyce’s guilt to Lucia.

the: The final word “the” suggests female sex who will return to a new life of
riverrun in the beginning of FW. **Margaret C. Solomon** (1969) wrote in ‘The Phallic
Tree of Finnegans Wake’ which appeared in pp. 37-43 of *The Celtic Master* (edited by
Maurice Hamon, The Dolmen Press Limited):

(p. 37)

Consonance and assonance, plus the familiar punning quality so typical of
Joyce, constitute grounds for suspicion that ‘three’, ‘tea’, and even ‘the’ are all
closely associated with the tripartite aspect of the letter ‘T’, and that the
examination of each of these terms will lead to a recognition of that capital letter
as a major symbol of the book.

Here is the closing passage (627.34-628.16) of FW again:

I am passing out. O bitter ending! I’ll slip away before they’re up. They’ll never see. Nor know.
Nor miss me. And it’s old and old it’s sad and old it’s sad and weary I go back to you, my cold
father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of the mere size of him,
the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into
your arms. I see them rising! Save me from those therrble prongs! Two more. Onetwo
moremens more. So. Avelaval. My leaves have drifted from me. All. But one clings still. I’ll bear
it on me. To remind me of. Lff! So soft this morning, ours. Yes. Carry me along, taddy, like you
done through the toy fair! If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings
like he’d come from Arkangels, I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly dumbly, only to
washup. Yes, tid. There’s where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A
gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee,

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mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long
the

[These studies were published in *Abiko Annual* 24, 7-48 (2004).]



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About Tatsuo Hamada:

After he had read *Ulysses* (U) with Laurel Willis at Abiko-shi, they began to publish the *Abiko Quarterly (Annual) with James Joyce Finnegans Wake* (FW) *Studies* (in 1989), because FW must be more interesting and difficult than U. Then he began to challenge to read FW.

He asked Fritz Senn (Laurel's teacher at U of Hawaii) at first and then almost 30 Joyceans about how/why to read FW. Now he translated all FW to Japanese, and published "*Finnegans Wake; Part 1 and 4*" (Abiko Literary Press (ALP), 2009) and "*Part 2 and 3* (ALP, 2012)." He also published the translation of *Shorter Finnegans Wake* (edited by Anthony Burgess) with citation indexes of names and matters of Joyce's usage (ALP, 2013).

It is a fun to think what FW is. Reading of FW may not be different between foreigners and native speakers, because for any person it is necessary to consult with dictionaries or reference books. In this regard he especially thanks Fweet (in net) and Glasheen's Census.

He was a research worker at National Institute of Animal Industry at Tsukuba and later a professor of graduate school in ruminant and trace element nutrition (BS at Hokkaido U in 1957, MS at Kyoto U in 1959 and Doctor at Tohoku U in 1977, and studies abroad at Cornell and CSIRO), but after retirement he became an editor of *Abiko Annual*. In 2013 he published *Poetic Reading/understanding Finnegans Wake* in Japanese from ALP.

Now he lives in his home town of Kochi prefecture.

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Back cover

James Joyce completed *Finnegans Wake* in 1939, in Paris 17, years after the publication of *Ulysses*. FW is a sad, impressive and funny story of five family members who were worried, quarrelled with each other and sought in vain the origin (god?) at the coordinate axes of 'time' and 'space' in a night world of Dublin.

This book contains the interviews by the author (editor of the *Abiko Annual*) with famous Joyceans about how, why and what to read in FW.

Basic questions are: 1) Can you read the book through from beginning to end? 2) Is there a plot in it? 3) Is there too much sexual matter? 4) Is the book worth reading in the 21st century? This book also shows the author's studies on the final monologue of ALP, the most beautiful, poetic part in FW.

In the interviews, Fritz Senn had said, "FW is antidote to dogmatism. It may also teach that all is vanity, but somehow must go on." Sam Slote said, "In fact, being wrong about FW is more enjoyable than being right about many other things."

After the interviews, the author—Tatsuo Hamada—had successfully translated all FW into Japanese as a practice to read it. And then he compiled and published *Poetic Reading/Understanding FW* (a kind of Shorter FW) in Japanese, at the same time with this book.

We have so far published in this James Joyce Lexicography Series:

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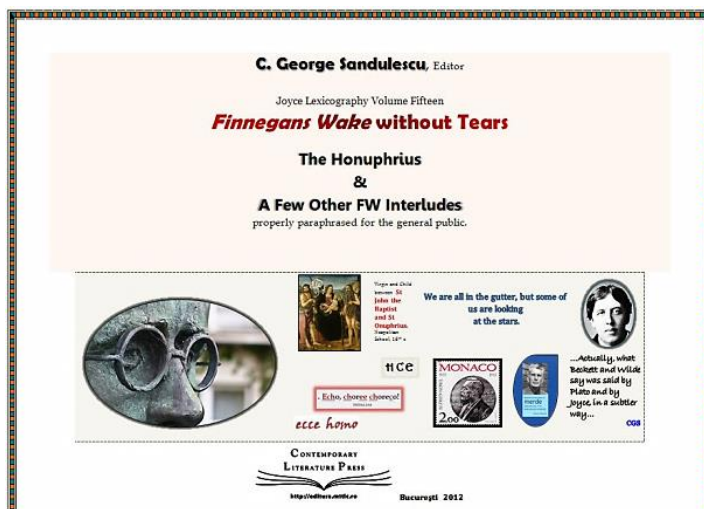
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