"Dear Reader" and "Drear Writer": Joyce's Direct Addresses to His Readers in *Finnegans Wake*

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No major literary work since medieval times has a reputation of being more difficult for the reader than Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Aware of the difficulty of his text, Joyce hoped and indeed expected that the "ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia" (120.13–14) would devote the time necessary to appreciate this book about the operations of the mind at nighttime (much as *Ulysses* focused on daytime streams of consciousness).[1] The fact that Joyce, like eighteenth-century novelists, frequently addresses his readers throughout the *Wake*—advising, cajoling, and mocking such industrious insomniacs—is a key aspect of the book that has received relatively little attention.[2] Considered together, Joyce's conversations with his readers function like a comic "user-friendly" reader's manual to the very complex "program" that is *Finnegans Wake*. "Herenow chuck english and learn to pray plain. . . . Think in your stomach" (579.20–22), the reader is advised at one point.

Early in the book, the narrator/author admits about his text, in a fairly typical comment, "What a mnice old mness it all mnakes!" (19.7–8). The narrator is confused, too, and thus the narrator and the reader are invoked together on several occasions in the first person plural: "Thus the unfacts, did we possess them, are too imprecisely few to warrant our certitude" (57.16–17). Or as we are told later, "We are once amore as babes awondering in a wold made fresh where with the hen in the storyaboot we start from scratch" (336.16–18). The narrator makes fun of readers, both male and female: "You is feeling like you was lost in the bush, boy?" (112.3). "So sorry you lost him, poor lamb!

Of course I know you are a viry vikid girl to go in the dreemplace" (527.4–6). Yet the narrator's equally frequent self-mockery establishes identification and sympathy between the narrator and the reader, who are lost together in the world of the *Wake*. Similarly, if I refer interchangeably in this essay to "Joyce" and "the narrator," it is because no clear distinction between the two (or rather, between an intrusive author and his various narrators) is maintained in *Finnegans Wake*.[3]

Among theorists and Joyceans, the knowledge that in revising the *Wake* Joyce deliberately sought to make its language increasingly dense, obscure, and elaborate has only encouraged the attitude that reading this book is an exercise in futility. Even so influential and insightful a critic of fiction and its relationship to the reader as Wayne Booth, in his pioneering book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), claimed that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are works that "cannot be read; they can only be studied" (325). As for students and other readers, the Joyce industry with all of its extensive guidebooks to understanding Joyce and his world has been perhaps more obstacle than aid. John Henry Raleigh, himself the author of a guidebook to *Ulysses*, admits that "such guides . . . can intimidate the beginning student of their subject" (10). He humorously imagines the conscientious student trying to wade through all of the Joycean guides: "What I have in mind is an ideal student with an ideal desire to use all the resources of the Master. . . . My hypothetical student sits down at his desk, the text of *Ulysses* open before his eyes, his reference books arranged about the text. . . . He can either engage a friend to turn the pages for him or, if he has some money, he can buy mechanical book-page turners" (9). If this is the case for *Ulysses*, the reader's task with *Finnegans Wake* appears even more overwhelming. For example, Frances Motz Boldereff does not consider the reader except as one who must learn Joyce's glossary, Ireland's history, and so on in order to even begin reading the book. In more recent years, the idea that reading the *Wake* is a playfully futile task was further encouraged, of course, by the rise of deconstruction, with its insistence that *every* text contradicts itself and eludes the reader.[4]

Yet what has been scarcely recognized is that *Finnegans Wake* is the only work in which Joyce chose to address his readers directly. Moreover, the many direct addresses to the reader in the *Wake* show that Joyce was well aware of his reader's difficulties, that he sympathized with his reader's plight, and that even when he makes fun of the reader, he does so only within a highly comic world in which author and characters are similarly mocked. In this respect Joyce draws from the eighteenth-century novelistic tradition of

authorial addresses to the "dear reader" and gives it a new spin, reflecting the influences of Fielding and especially Sterne in Joyce's bold new postmodernist world. After reexamining Fielding's and Sterne's influential invocations of the reader, as well as some relevant major critical statements about the reader, I shall consider authorial addresses to readers at various points in the *Wake*, and finally focus on a key section consisting of two successive chapters in which Joyce addresses himself more persistently and directly to the reader than he does anywhere else in his canon.[5]

Since the time of Maria Edgeworth, the first major Irish novelist, eighteenth-century English novels have provided important sources and inspirations for Irish novelists.[6] In *Ormond* Edgeworth's hero, Harry Ormond, reads and reacts to Fielding's *Tom Jones* as a central formative influence on his own life.[7] Booth's influential notion of "Fielding" as a character in *Tom Jones* is useful in appreciating Joyce's strategies in the *Wake*: "Much of his commentary relates to nothing but the reader and himself. . . . If we read straight through all of the seemingly gratuitous appearances by the narrator, leaving out the story of Tom, we discover a running account of growing intimacy between the narrator and the reader, an account with a kind of plot of its own and a separate denouement" (216). More recently, Raymond Stephanson notes concerning Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* that "the reader's failure *as reader* can be an important form of education" (257)—also a useful idea in regard to the *Wake*. But neither Booth nor Stephanson considers the places of narrator and reader in the *Wake*. In a comic footnote Booth admits that he has not read the *Wake* and, interestingly enough, addresses and invokes the reader in that note himself, in the manner of Sterne and Joyce.[8]

Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* was a direct influence on *Finnegans Wake*.[9] While working on the *Wake*, Joyce wrote to a friend, "I . . . am trying to tell the story of this Chapelizod family in a new way. . . . Did you ever read Laurence Sterne?" (qtd. in Ellmann 554). This determination to write the *Wake* "in a new way" appears to be linked strongly to Joyce's direct addresses to his readers. Just as Fielding, Sterne, and other early pioneers of the novel were aware that they were experimenting with a new form, and therefore in need of the patience and understanding of their readers, Joyce was quite conscious of just how bold an undertaking was the *Wake*, a book about which even such loyal champions of *Ulysses* as Ezra Pound, and even Joyce's own brother Stanislaus, were skeptical and critical. Therefore, much as Fielding and Sterne had done in another age, Joyce speaks directly to his readers—not as part of an

effort to move them toward a clear understanding of truth, as Fielding wanted to do in *Tom Jones,* but as an invitation to join in the fictional, comic fun, much as in *Tristram Shandy.* Betty Rizzo's description of reading *Tristram Shandy* can be applied equally well to the *Wake*: "The game consists of following blindly without map or instructions through each advance, retreat, or digression while at the same time trying to savor fully each jest, double meaning, or allusion" (67). And John Preston argues that *Tristram Shandy* was the culmination of the eighteenth-century process by which the best novelists gave more and more responsibility to the reader. In a chapter on Sterne entitled "The Reader as Author," Preston declares, "The reader has to make up the novel" (159). For example, Sterne includes asterisks, Preston reminds us, that "spell out words which do not exist unless in the reader's imagination" (160). He even "leaves a blank page on which the reader can inscribe his own account" of Widow Wadman: " 'paint her to your own mind . . . please but your own fancy' " (Sterne 3:227). And Sterne even has his reader *talk back* to his narrator:

> —How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, *That my mother was not a papist.*
> —Papist! You told me no such thing, Sir. (1:94).

Elsewhere Sterne plays off one reader against another, and addresses not only readers, but also the "Gentle critick!" (e.g., 1:141).

It is worth reminding ourselves that direct addresses to the reader were not quite so common in nineteenth-century and early-modernist novels. Even in Joyce's own *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* Stephen famously proclaims that "the artist, like the god of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (215). The narrators of the *Portrait* and *Ulysses* are much more remote than that of the *Wake,* and the readers of Joyce's earlier novels are never so directly addressed. The barroom narrator of "Cyclops" could be interpreted as speaking to the reader, and the catecism of "Ithaca" could be viewed as a test for the reader much like the *Wake*'s quiz, but not even in those chapters does Joyce's narrator ever *directly* address the reader.

In the *Wake,* however, Joyce invokes eighteenth-century formulae: "This, lay readers and gentilemen, is perhaps the commonest of all cases" (573.35–36). "It was in the back of their mind's ear, temptive lissomer. . . . So it was, slipping beauty" (477.18, 23). But Joyce goes a step further: he frequently subverts the traditional distinctions between narrator and reader, between producer and consumer, and between

writer and critic. At one point he alludes to *An Exagmination round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, the collection of essays organized by Joyce himself in celebration of his "Work in Progress" and published in 1929, ten years before the book publication of the *Wake*: "His producers are they not his consumers? Your exagmination round his factification for incamination of a warping process" (497.1–3).

An Exagmination round His Factification, whose contributors included Samuel Beckett and William Carlos Williams, was only one way in which Joyce left his mark on many of the major critics who then wrote about his work. As Derrida famously remarked at the 1984 Joyce Symposium, "Deconstruction could not have been possible without Joyce" (qtd. in Jones 77). Joyce's traces are also evident in other influential critical statements on the reader's role in fiction that shed light on our subject: Walker Gibson's 1950 essay on the "mock reader," Northrop Frye's remarks in *Fearful Symmetry* and *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Wolfgang Iser's *The Implied Reader*, and finally the poststructuralist works of Roland Barthes, Hélène Cixous, Derek Attridge, and Michel Foucault. A synopsis of these critical statements also serves to remind us how our understanding of the reader-writer relationship has changed over the past few decades, in ways that have been influenced by Joyce and are helpful to an appreciation of the reader in the *Wake*. Gibson, for example, argued in his classic essay "that the book we reject as bad is often simply a book in whose 'mock reader' we discover a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play" (268, qtd. in Booth 138). The notion of the "mock reader" is an especially useful one for a text that encounters as much resistance from the reader as the *Wake*. Indeed, Joyce's reader, "lost in the bush," does not want to be, and often rejects the *Wake* for this reason. Also writing in the 1950s, Frye called the *Wake* "the chief ironic epic of our time. . . . Who then is the hero . . .? . . . Eventually it dawns on us that it is the *reader*" (*Anatomy* 264).[10]

Also relevant to an appreciation of Joyce's conversation with his reader is Iser, who points out that the heightened attention to the reader in the eighteenth century is linked to the innovative nature of the period, particularly the "discovery" of the novel (xiii). Fielding called his novels "a new province of writing" (qtd. 29). As Iser helpfully writes, "For innovation itself to be a subject in a novel, the author needs direct cooperation from the person who is to perceive that innovation—namely, the reader. This is why it is hardly surprising that Fielding's novels, and those of the eighteenth century in general, are so full of direct addresses to the reader" (29). Iser never mentions *Finnegans Wake*

in *The Implied Reader*, however, and thus misses the similar connection between innovative self-consciousness and direct addresses to the reader in the *Wake*; instead, he gives detailed attention to parody and allusion in *Ulysses*. Iser sees the reader as *guided* by texts. Pieter Bekker notes that the *Wake* is partly "a burlesqued commentary on the Wakean text and on the reader's encounter with the text" (189), adding, "This is not the sort of thing Iser meant when he described reading as an activity guided by the text" (190).

The reader's activity in the *Wake* is meant to be playful, partaking in the *jouissance* described and celebrated by Iser's contemporary Roland Barthes in several of his works during the 1960s and 1970s, such as *Writing Degree Zero* and *S/Z*. In terms of Barthes' oft-cited distinction between "readerly" texts, in which the author guides our reactions, and "writerly" texts, in which readers are invited to respond creatively, behaving like writers themselves, *Finnegans Wake* can be understood as the ultimate "writerly" text.[11] Similarly, Hélène Cixous has argued that Joyce's work "demands a 'lecture-écriture'—a simultaneous reading and writing" (Power 251). And as a Derrida-driven deconstructionist, Derek Attridge, in his essay on "Reading Joyce," argues that "in order to appreciate the *Wake*'s reader-friendliness . . . one has to abandon two assumptions about the act of reading which frequently exist side by side": "that reading is an act of mastery," and that "reading is a passive experience." Instead, we have to play along with the *Wake*, realizing that "the reader is affected by the text at the same time that the text is affected by the reader" (11).[12] In his essay "What Is an Author?" Michel Foucault advanced an important parallel idea that is key to our understanding of Joyce an the *Wake*: he claimed that the idea of the "author" provides for readers an important "principle of unity" in their reading of texts.[13] As readers we may not feel that we fully understand *Finnegans Wake*, but we bring to this text a strong sense of "James Joyce" that provides us with a crucial source of whatever understanding of the *Wake* we do achieve.

However, helpful as some of their ideas are to our appreciation of the *Wake*, these major critics do not systematically examine Joyce's own direct addresses to his readers. Just what does Joyce have to say to us, his readers and critics? Throughout the *Wake* Joyce collapses the traditional distinction between narrator and reader, with his direct addresses in the first person linking narrator and reader: "We shall perhaps not so soon see" (32.2); "We seem to us (the real Us!) to be reading . . . in the sixth sealed chapter of the going forth by black" (62.25–26). Joyce admits in a footnote that both author and reader are

"making it up as we go along" (268.n.2). He leaves it perhaps deliberately unclear as to whether he is talking about the reader or about himself (or both) when he remarks, "O, you were excruciated, in honour bound to the cross of your own cruelfiction!" (192.17–19)—and also when he calls his book an "Impassable tissue of improbable liyers!" (499.19), and asks, "What static babel is this, tell us?" (499.34). Moreover, Joyce deconstructs the author/reader polarity completely by addressing not only his "dear reader," but the "gentle writer" himself: "I can tell you something more than that, drear writer" (476.20–21). Joyce muddies his waters even further by appearing to interrupt his own narrator: "So you were saying, boys? Anyhow he what?" (380.6). He confesses his own ignorance in another footnote: "I'm blest if I can see" (273.n.2). "It's all deafman's duff to me, begob" (467.17–18). Concerning HCE's murky crime, which seems to lurk at the very center of the *Wake*, it is freely admitted that "little headway, if any, was made in solving the wasnottobe crime conundrum" (85.21–22). As for Joyce's readers, "They know how they believe that they believe that they know. Wherefore they wail" (470.11–12). What can we do with HCE, indeed with the entire book, except throw up our hands, question "the all-riddle of it?" (274.2–3), and read on?

Elsewhere Joyce intermixes first-person and second-person pronouns—first sympathetically drawing in, then comically abusing the reader: "We'll come to those baregazed shoeshines if you just shoodov a second" (69.12–13). On occasion his abuse of the reader is unmitigated and imperative: "If you don't like my story get out of the punt. . . . Here, sit down and do as you're bid" (206.21–23). Like Sterne, however, Joyce allows his reader to talk back to him: "Describe her! Hustle along, why can't you?" (207.21). To which the narrator replies, "Will you hold your piece and listen well to what I am going to say now?" (207.30–31), adding two pages later, "That's a good old son of a ditch! I promise I'll make it worth your while. And I don't mean maybe. . . . Spey me pruth and I'll tale you true" (209.15–17). Of course, the narrator's frequent promises to clear up matters soon invariably prove false; in Derridean terms, clarity and resolution are always *deferred* in the *Wake*. At one point, we are assured, "The worst is over. Wait!" (232.5)—and we wait for the rest of the book. As Joyce eloquently puts it at one point, "In the buginning is the woid, in the muddle is the sound-dance and thereinofter you're in the unbewised again" (378.29–30). Toward the *end* (which, of course, is also almost the *Wake*'s *beginning*, according to its avowed circular structure), we are told, "Don't forget! The grand fooneral will now shortly occur. Remember" (617.25–26).

This tortuous but rich rhetorical triangle—the author/reader/text relationship—was important enough to Joyce that he devoted to it an entire section of the *Wake* consisting of two successive chapters: the last chapter of the first book (104–25) and the first chapter of the second book (126–68). The former is ALP's letter—a synecdoche standing for the whole *Wake*—and the latter is a quiz for the reader made up of a dozen questions and answers.[14] ALP's letter is a manual for reading the whole *Wake*, with a particularly concentrated collection of invocations of and advice to the reader that follow the patterns already noted as running through the entire book. "We must grope on till Zerogh hour" (107.21–22), the reader is assured toward the beginning of this chapter. "To this radiooscillating epiepistle . . . we must ceaselessly return" (108.24–25). Joyce wonderfully describes the letter, and indeed the whole *Wake*, as a "series of prearranged disappointments": "Our social something bowls along bumpily, experiencing a jolting series of prearranged disappointments" (107.32–34). "Where in the waste is the wisdom?" (114.20), he asks on our behalf. Indeed, "we . . . may have our irremovable doubts as to the whole sense of the lot" (117.35–36), for "every person, place and thing in the chaosmos . . . was moving and changing every part of the time" (118.21–23). It is this letter that contains the famous concept of "that ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia" (120.13–14), and his perhaps most pointed address to the reader: "You is feeling like you was lost in the bush, boy? . . . you most shouts out: Bethicket me for a stump of a beech if I have the poultriest notion what the farest he all means" (112.3–6).

The fact that we are "lost in the bush" is no excuse for giving up, however. At the same time that Joyce freely admits the confusion of his text, he assails those "naysayers" who deny the value of reading it or who despair of his work:

> Naysayers we know. To conclude purely negatively from the positive absence of political odia and monetary requests that its page cannot ever have been a penproduct of a man or woman of that period or those parts is only one more unlooked for conclusion leaped at, being tantamount to inferring from the nonpresence of inverted commas (sometimes called quotation marks) on any page that its author was always constitutionally incapable of misappropriating the spoken words of others.
>
> Luckily there is another cant to the questy. (108.29–36, 109.1)

Concerning the "naysayers," Joyce adds in ALP's voice, "No, assuredly,

they are not justified, those gloompourers who grouse that letters have never been quite their old selves again" (112.23–25). To the reader, the narrator says, "Let us now . . . talk . . . turkey" (113.23, 113.26), insisting, "We are not corknered yet, deadhand!" (116.11). Joyce memorably clarifies, concerning his book, "No, so holp me Petault, it is not a miseffectual . . . riot of blots and blurs and bars and balls and hops and wriggles and juxtaposed jottings linked by spurts of speed: it only looks as like it as damn it" (118.28–31). The *Wake* consists of "the steady monologuy of the interiors; the pardonable confusion" (119.32–33).

Of course, if "talk turkey" means that we will communicate clearly and simply, we will be continually frustrated, for "the eye . . . find it devilish hard now and again even to believe itself" (113.28–29). We will always be "hoping against hope all the while that, by the light of philosophy, (and may she never folsage us!) things will begin to clear up a bit one way or another within the next quarrel of an hour and be hanged to them as ten to one they will too" (119.4–7). Admittedly, "if the lingo gasped between kicksheets, however basically English, were to be preached from the mouths of wickerchurchwardens and metaphysicians . . . where would their practice be . . .?" (116.25–27, 29–30). As for our attempts as readers and critics to abridge, to underline, to select (just as I am doing in this essay) particular passages that we feel can help make sense out of the whole text, these are nothing more than "the innocent exhibitionism of those frank yet capricious underlinings" (121.19–20).

In his next chapter, the quiz of twelve questions for the reader, Joyce acknowledges that his text "moves in vicous circles yet remews the same" (134.16–17). It is "a collideorscape!" (143.28). His quiz is clearly aimed at his readers, at us. It begins, "So? Who do you no tonigh, lazy and gentleman?" (126.1–2). The first item is a thirteen-page question (126–39) about the hero of the book, with a two-word answer: "Answer: Finn MacCool!" (139.14). However, any resulting temptation to identify Finn as the center or solution of the *Wake* is frustrated by the continual identification and merger (in the thirteen pages leading up to this answer as well as throughout the whole book) of Finn with dozens of other characters, including HCE in all *his* various manifestations.

Conversely, the second question is a one-liner ("2. Does your mutter know your mike?" [139.15]) whose answer takes up a full paragraph. After a series of questions and answers of more typical length (but not simple content), number 11 is a verbose question with an answer that appears to be quite to the point ("Answer: No, blank ye!"

[149.11]) but has appended to it a twenty-page explanation (149–68) including the exemplary fable of "The Mookse and The Gripes" (152–59). The early part of this long "answer" includes the deliciously false parenthetical promise, "(I shall explex what you ought to mean by this with its proper when and where and why and how in the subsequent sentence)" (149.30–32). The subsequent sentence, needless to say, does anything but clarify matters. At the end of "The Mookse and The Gripes," we learn that we have been listening to a schoolteacher who permits us only occasional bathroom breaks: "Nolan Browne, you may now leave the classroom" (159.22).

Indeed, Joyce is a demanding, but also thoroughly entertaining, taskmaster who assumes many guises in the course of the *Wake*. One could also explore the tour of the museum at the beginning of the book (8–15), the washerwomen's discourse (196–216), and the racy speech of Jaun/Shaun to the schoolgirls (429–73) as further illustrations of Joyce's conversations with his readers. These are just a few of the passages that seem calculated partly to remind us that *Finnegans Wake*, perhaps like all narratives, is a tale told by its teller to a particular audience. Throughout the *Wake* Joyce invites us (as Mr. Finnegan/Finnimore is advised by his attendants) to "take your laysure like a god on pension" (24.16–17).

NOTES

[1] All quotations from *Finnegans Wake* are cited parenthetically by page and line numbers from the standard edition as listed below. I want to thank Margery Vagt, my (1993–1994) graduate assistant, who helped me track down many of the secondary sources cited in this essay, and was an "ideal reader with an ideal insomnia" during my doctoral Joyce seminar during the Fall 1992 semester, joining all the members of that seminar in contributing to my thinking about the *Wake*. My thanks also go to Richard Higgason and Merri-Ann Higgason, both of whom helped me correct a couple of my citations.

[2] Among previous considerations of reading *Finnegans Wake*, Manfred Pütz's 1974 article is the most useful. He notes that often "we hear someone's voice poking fun at an imagined reader who grows more and more confused" (389), and sees the *Wake*'s reader as not only confused, but fragmented, just like the book's characters. Pütz realizes that in addressing a "gentlewriter," Joyce was echoing the "gentle reader" of such earlier writers as Fielding (393 n. 5). But he does not indicate that Joyce's echoes of these eighteenth-century writers are linked to their similar positions as novelistic innovators, nor does he recognize that intermixed with Joyce's mockery of the reader is a good bit of sympathy and identification. Joyce's ideal reader with the ideal insomnia is simultaneously a tired fool and a hero of sorts. And if Joyce makes fun of his readers, he also frequently derides both himself and his various narrators.

[3] It is also virtually impossible to tell the difference between Joyce's narrator(s) and his characters in the *Wake*, at least in any consistent way. Trying to make a clear distinction between narration *per se* and characters' speech and thoughts is a task separate from my focus in this essay—and probably a futile task. I do assume that Joyce speaks to his readers through his various narrators as well as his myriad characters; in the *Wake*, Joycean narrators, characters, and "author" all frequently overlap and blend together.

[4] For example, Susan Shaw Sailer groups the *Wake* among other "unreadable" texts, suggesting that different strategies of reading are required. On the other hand, Raleigh concludes his description of the ideal student lost among all of the Joycean "aids" with the hope that "bright, inventive, energetic, purposive students can always exorcise that nightmare and map out new destinies" (10). And the influential senior Joycean Clive Hart has reacted against the deconstructionists: "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" (158).

[5] If we approach the *Wake* as a work "which has important continuities with other novels," as Daniel R. Schwarz argues about *Ulysses*, "we discover that its meaning and significance depend—like all literary works—on the relationship among the three basic ingredients of literary criticism: author, work, and audience" (25).

[6] See Cahalan *Irish*, especially "Historical and Literary Backgrounds of the Early Irish Novel" and "Irish Novels before 1800," for more information about the influence of the eighteenth-century English novelists.

[7] See Tobin "Power."

[8] Booth writes, "I could no doubt leave some readers convinced that I have read *Finnegans Wake*. But I must confess that I have not; I do read *in* it, from time to time, with great delight until boredom sets in. Will someone, by the way, someone who *has* read this unreadable work, tell me whether that first 'm' in the first 'brimgem' is a typographical error? You don't know? Or care? We are in trouble, you and I" (301 n. 26). This note, cited here from the 1961 edition of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, recurs verbatim in the 1983 edition.

[9] As Loretta Lampkin notes, "Since the 1940s the names of Laurence Sterne and James Joyce have regularly appeared together in indexes and footnotes of scholarly publications," often with "Joyce as indebted to Sterne" (137). One of the earliest scholars to note the uses of Sterne in the *Wake* was James Atherton, who lists (282) a dozen direct references by Joyce to Sterne in *The Books at the Wake* (1960). Ann Ridgeway explores similarities between *Tristram Sandy* and *Ulysses* but has to admit that in *Ulysses* "the reader is never directly addressed by Joyce as he is by Sterne" (47). Ridgeway does not recognize that it is *Finnegans Wake* in which this Shandean task is taken up. In his essay on "Joyce's Precursors" A. Norman Jeffares calls Sterne "the greatest of Joyce's precursors," writing that Sterne seeks "to shock the reader with surprises. (Joyce does the same.) He seems to say to his readers, 'Your Worships, look, you appear to think logically, as if your mind is a machine; *but it is not*. . . . Sterne overflows, like Joyce" (274).

[10] Frye made this point within his focus on the "quest" theme in literature: "Who then is the hero who achieves the permanent quest in *Finnegans Wake?*" (323). "It is the *reader* who achieves the quest" (324). He noted the remark about Jakob Böhme that "his books are like a picnic to which the author brings the

words and the reader the meaning" (*Fearful* 427)—in Frye's words "an exact description of all works of literary art without exception" (428).

[11] As Mary-Elisabeth Tobin writes, in Barthes' terms "the plaisir (pleasure) that comes with reading readerly texts loosely corresponds to the eighteenth-century reading experience, and the jouissance (ecstasy) that comes from writerly texts is what many contemporary critics desire in their reality. . . . The reading experience Barthes values is one that unsettles the reader, jarring him out of cultural assumptions, bringing her to the brink of the abyss" ("Bridging" 213).

[12] Of course, similar arguments predated the rise of Barthes and Derrida: Katherine Lever in her 1960 manual *The Novel and the Reader* began her chapter "What Is a Reader of Novels?" with the answer, "The reader is himself a novelist" (44).

[13] Jerry A. Varsava stresses that the idea of the "author" in Foucault's sense "allows the reader to dissolve (or ignore) contradictions and incompatibilities that exist within and between texts by a given individual" (51).

[14] Since at least the time of Clive Hart's 1962 book *Structure and Motif in* Finnegans Wake, it has been recognized that ALP's letter is an image of the whole book (see 200). More recently John Paul Riquelme, noting that "the notion of synecdoche . . . is introduced early in the *Wake*," reiterates that "several pieces of evidence suggest that this particularly enigmatic letter can stand for the whole text" (11).

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