

Symphony and the Aesthetic in James Joyce's Finnegans Wake

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the aesthetics of James Joyce's Finnegans Wake make it more like a four-movement symphony than a novel, and that Finnegans Wake is, in fact, a symphony. In order to support this argument, I use Saussure's theories on language to show that the text Finnegans Wake is music. I then discuss the four books in Finnegans Wake as four symphonic movements, and point out the structural similarities between the text and a symphony. Melody and harmony as they are used within Joyce's work are then discussed, followed by a discussion on the leitmotifs in the work. These arguments establishing Finnegans Wake as music are then followed by a section on Kantian aesthetics.

The main purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, to highlight just how extraordinary Finnegans Wake is as an experimental work of art, and, more importantly, to offer an analysis focused on structure and form, rather than content, in order to discuss the text's universality and, in doing so, attempt to offer a sense of unity to Finnegans Wake criticism.

Perhaps the best way to begin an analysis of James Joyce's Finnegans Wake is with the introductory sentence of Harry Burrell's book Narrative Design in *Finnegans Wake*, which states that the book "is so controversial that even the meaning of the title is subject to dispute" (Burrell 1). Indeed, the attempts that have been made over the years to decipher Joyce's masterpiece are legion; they range from Burrell's opinion, to an effort by Joyce to rewrite the Bible, to a study of psychoanalysis. As John Bishop points out in his introduction to the book, Finnegans Wake "serves as something of a Rorschach test, revealing a reader's monomanias, differentialities, and peculiar little areas of expertise" (Bishop xi). According to Bishop, the reader's interpretations and knowledge of the text will change subject to what languages one speaks, to one's literary predilections, to one's preferred method of literary analysis, to one's area of interests, noting that author Robert Anton Wilson discovered within Finnegans Wake "both the formula for the hydrogen bomb and the molecular structure of the double helix of DNA" (Bishop xi-xii). Given these considerations, one can understand the opening lines to Joseph Campbell's and Henry Morton Robinson's Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake, which begins

[r]unning riddle and fluid answer [...] [i]t is a strange book, a
compound of fable,
symphony, and nightmare—a monstrous enigma beckoning
imperiously from the
shadowy pits of sleep [...] a dream which has freed the author from
the necessities of common logic and has enabled him to compress all

periods of history, all phases of individual and racial development, into a circular design, of which every part is beginning, middle, and end.

(Campbell 3)

That which causes frustration within the text may well also be accountable for the work's universality; Joyce's seventeen year writing process for the book, almost until his death, shows an extreme amount of care in a collection of words that some may dismiss as random or purposeless; however, Joyce's final work should not be handled so dismissively, for, as John Bishop notes, it may be "the single most intentionally crafted literary artifact that our culture has produced" (Bishop vii).

Bishop also notes that the average reader seems to have the capability to enjoy Joyce's last book much more than literary scholars, who are "accustomed [...] to understanding most words in every sentence of every prose work they read"; Bishop elaborates, though, to point out that when one refers to a reader that could be considered average, one refers to a wide range of readers, from the well-educated and academic to those who read only tabloids (Bishop viii). The text's highly connotative nature (what was referred to earlier as its ability to act as a Rorschach test) is, perhaps to some paradoxically, what allows it to be accessible to so many. Joyce himself sums up this accessibility while discussing Wake with Jacques Mercanton, saying

You are not Irish...and the meaning of some passages will perhaps escape you. But you are Catholic, so you will recognize this and that allusion. You don't play cricket; this word may mean nothing to you. But you are a musician, so you will feel at ease in this passage. When

my Irish friends come to visit me in Paris, it is not the philosophical subtleties of the book that amuse them, but my recollection of O'Connell's top hat. (qtd in Bishop ix)

As Bishop claims, this opens up the book to a range of readers that may not be as inclined to enjoy other challenging literary works, because it is not necessary "to comprehend it as a totality to profit from it or enjoy it" (Bishop ix).

Given its allusory nature and the range of interpretation available in reading the text, arguably more than one would encounter in a more traditional literary work, it seems a nightmare to attempt to arrive at any sort of academic consensus on what the book is even about, much less what it means, than, say, the works of Shakespeare. Though it is true that there have been many works that have attempted such a feat (naturally open to agreement or disagreement from the academic community based on textual evidence that at times can seem quite stretched), including Burrell and Campbell's books and John Gordon's attempt at a plot summary, it speaks to the difficulty in arriving at any concrete sense of narrative when there is in existence a six-hundred and twenty-six page book devoted simply to annotating Finnegans Wake. With the nature of the text in mind, in addition to contemporary notions of the interpretation of texts, it seems a nigh untenable position to attempt any solidified explanation of the work. Where, then, must the critic turn to if explication is both approaching the impossible and, in the opinion of this analysis, unnecessary?

More criticism on the work seems to answer this question by focusing its critical eye on the structure of the work and how the text operates rather than

following a more traditional approach to explication. Works such as “Originality and Repetition in Finnegans Wake and Ulysses” by Jennifer Schiffer Levine, “Riddles in Finnegans Wake” by Ward Swinson, “Nursery Rhymes in Finnegans Wake” by Mabel P. Worthington, and “Islam and the Koran in Finnegans Wake” by J.S. Atherton displays a criticism that has chosen to eschew the broad approach to the text, while the diversity in topic speaks to the qualities of the text already mentioned (that is, its accessibility). Interestingly, those who attempt to explicate the text seem also to approach the book with a sense of specificity, such as Marcel P. Hornik’s “A Page in Finnegans Wake Explained.” This criticism holds with the contemporary tendency to examine the structural, though clearly this examination, with its basis in a work so connotative, must be narrowed and defined. This study will work to explore the musicality of Joyce’s text, and examine how this music relates to the reader.

Musicality in Joyce is nothing new, however, as John Weaver notes in his book Joyce’s Music and Noise, “[critics belatedly] concede that he tried to approximate the forms and techniques of music[...]but many still prefer to believe only in the avidity of his interest” (Weaver 1). Weaver notes the focus on Joyce’s musicality in the works of Zack Bowen and Margaret Rogers, who both have written on the fugal structure of the “Sirens” chapter of Ulysses. Other writers, such as Timothy Martin, have noted Joyce’s references to Wagner throughout his work, as well as some use of techniques that “echo” Wagner (Weaver 2). Other critics have found traces of music in works from Dubliners to Joyce’s collection of poems, Chamber Music, on which the title seems self-evident (Weaver 4). In fact, as Weaver

finds, it is fairly easy to categorize Joyce's works by the type of music to which they are meant to allude ; that is, Chamber Music is a "diminuendo suite," Dubliners is "theme and variation," and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is "five-part rondo"; Joyce's later works, though not as simple to place into a specific musical category, are certainly no less influenced by Joyce's interest in the musical (Weaver 27).

Weaver's book itself is a fantastic starting point in examining musicality within Finnegans Wake and within the body of Joyce's work (excluding, perhaps, Exiles); certainly, it serves as one of the foundational texts for this endeavor. As Weaver notes, "Joyce [should be] admitted to the company of musical composers[...]if language can be defined as a 'systematized group of vocal noises', so can choral music[...]delet[e] the word 'vocal' [...]and] one has defined music" (Weaver 96). Weaver also brings his focus to bear on a part of the book that has not been without prior criticism, the one hundred letter words that Weaver refers to as "thunderwords," which he suggests could be formed into "visual wave patterns" and organized into "white noise" (Weaver 98). While Weaver's work will serve to aid in supporting the aims of this study (and as such will be elaborated upon in subsequent passages), despite its helpfulness in unlocking the music of Finnegans Wake, it still retains the same argument that its predecessors have made; that is, Finnegans Wake as being *musical* and not *music*. There are numerous efforts to find music within the text, even going so far as to prove that certain passages and words are approximations to musical notes, but the text as a whole tends to retain its status as a book featuring

music rather than music featuring language. It seems a logical step, once one concludes that certain parts of the text may be translated into music, that the entirety of the work is capable of being viewed as a musical composition.

With this in mind, coupled with the text's established universality and heavy reliance on connotation (being perhaps the only text so subject to subjectivity), it would not be far-fetched to suggest that the book could be engaged in the same fashion in which highly subjective music is enjoyed. It is important to note that by "highly subjective music," I am referring to instrumental music, and that I define "instrumental music" as music lacking human voices, and not necessarily music composed using traditional instrumentation; furthermore, it should be noted that the lack of human vocalization refers only to instrumental music as a traditional method of composition, and not to the text itself, which relies on, in my opinion, auditory reading in order to achieve its full effect and thusly be approximated to instrumentation. Given these foundations, my ultimate argument is that Finnegans Wake is a four-movement symphony, based on the premise that the text itself is music. Furthermore, the books in Finnegans Wake follow a traditional symphonic form, and the work contains leitmotifs, tempo, harmony, and melody. Because instrumental music is a highly subjective medium, that the purpose of the text is to be without a fixed, objective purpose,¹ to exist as an aesthetic creation that one would

¹ As Carl Dahlhaus writes in his book Analysis and Value Judgment, "[a] functional judgment that measures a musical work by the purpose it is meant to fulfill presupposes a cogent theory with firm norms concerning types of musical composition. Before the rise of the idea of an autonomous music in the late eighteenth century, types were grounded in functions [...] so that a judgment of the extent to which a work fulfilled the concept of a type coincided with a judgment of the appropriateness of the purpose it served [...] in the nineteenth century [there is a shift to a work that] bases its claim to

engage similarly to the works of a instrument composition by any other composer, which is to focus on the structure, rhythm, and melody of the work rather than on explication.²

This thesis perhaps requires some clarification. The interpretation of the text as music was chosen because I am of the opinion that music lends itself more readily to pure aesthetic enjoyment than other art forms (though this is not to imply that other forms of expression lack the ability to be engaged aesthetically); though this point will be addressed in further detail later in this text, suffice for now to say that music is thought to be more purely aesthetic because it lacks the tendency of the other art forms to align themselves by signs. That is, music, in my opinion, does not possess the visual component that may cause a work to have a more solidified, concrete meaning. That is, a painting of a landscape is the landscape. A novel is the story being told. Music, however, is only ever the notes it presents, and does not to point to anything beyond itself.

By four-movement symphony, a later development of the suite (which, incidentally, was what Joyce referred to Finnegans Wake as) as I rely on “symphony” as defined by Masters of Symphony, a “Sonata for Orchestra,” or a composition

be considered art on exactly the opposite, on individuality and originality” (Dahlhaus 13). Though Dahlhaus’ text tends to read as conservative, he makes an invaluable point in the preceding lines, challenging the notion that musical forms carry with them an inherent purpose (as in a sonata bringing with it some Platonic essence of Sonataness; furthermore, it operates under the assumption that musical forms have exceedingly specific definitions) rather than serving as a compositional template similar to an academic style-guide. An exacting definition, perhaps, but necessary to support the premise under which the thesis operates.

² The skeptical may point to compositions that incorporate a storyline, such as Berlioz’s Symphony Fantastique, but such works are limited in their ability to tell a story because of their lack of denotation.

constructed from three (and later four) separate movements that elaborated upon the Italian Overture (Weaver 96; Goetschius 23-31). It is necessary here for a brief explanation as to why the specific musical form of the symphony was chosen over the multitude of other musical forms. The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines a symphony as “an elaborate musical composition for full orchestra, typically in four movements” (COED 1050). Compare this to the sonata, or “a piece of classical music for a solo instrument, often with a piano accompaniment”; the fugue, or “musical composition in which a short melody or phrase is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others”; a rondo, or “musical form with a recurring leading theme, often found in the final movement of a sonata or concerto”; an overture, or “an orchestral piece at the beginning of a musical work” (COED 988, 406, 895, 724). Clearly, given these definitions, Finnegans Wake does not fit any of those categories. What, then, of Joyce’s own statement that the book was a suite³? The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines a suite as “a set of pieces of instrumental music to be played in succession” (COED 1037). If one were to momentarily concede, for argument’s sake, that the book is a work of music, Finnegans Wake is clearly a suite. However, given the nebulous definition of suite, and the complicated and intricate nature of the book itself, I find it appropriate to identify the work as a symphony, which offers a more narrow definition for the thesis to operate under, while also not

³ Joyce certainly had enough musical background to have intentionally crafted Finnegans Wake as a musical form, as he began playing piano at the age of three, and began singing at the age of six. He later took piano lessons and performed in amateur musical theater productions, and at college he researched different types of music exhaustively. He even dabbled some with musical composition while he was at school. All of this background is, of course, in addition to his extraordinary appetite for reading and memorization, which probably also contributed to his vast musical knowledge (not to mention his knowledge of “a lot about almost everything”) (Weaver 1-3).

serving as too constrictive of a definition. Here one must again defer to Goetschius, who finds that the symphony traditionally contains three standalone movements: the first is rapid, the second slow, and the third rapid again (allegro, adagio, allegro). A fourth movement is written for the beginning of the symphony, and incorporates all of the themes of the subsequent movements (Goetschius 23-31). Those familiar with the symphony as a form will realize that Goetschius definition differs somewhat from the symphonies written by traditional composers, though it has its similarities.⁴ Finnegans Wake, however, is stylistically consistent with Goetschius definition, which is why I am relying on Goetschius. Fortunately, there is enough variation in the symphonic form that Finnegans Wake is able to remain a symphony despite its movements being slightly different from the classical form. Examples of experimentation with symphonic form are numerous; Tchaikovsky, for instance, shifted the slow second movement of his Sixth Symphony to the fourth movement (Goetschius 276-277). Sibelius' Third Symphony contains only three movements (Goetschius 287). Perhaps most similar to Finnegans Wake is Sibelius' Fifth Symphony, which is structured quite like Finnegans Wake, as the first two movements are rapid, followed by a slow third movement, and completed with a rapid finale (Goetschius 289-290).

“Follows a symphonic form” means to imply that the text specifically is a symphony as defined by Goetschius, and is a symphony by the manner in which it is arranged and by the tone and structure of the work as a whole and by the tone and structure of the four individual books from which it is composed. When I posit that

⁴ That is, a fast first movement, a slow second movement, a fast third movement, and a rapid finale.

the text is “without purpose, to exist as an aesthetic creation [subjectively],” I do not mean to imply that there is a purposelessness in either Finnegans Wake or in the instrumental compositions of musicians over the years. When I refer to something as being “purposeless,” the I mean that it is without purpose in a Kantian sense of purposiveness as will be explained later in this thesis. In other words, for Kant, the purpose of art is to be without purpose, so to the reader the work is highly subjective and that it is through the reader alone that any meaning is derived, not that the author or composer was without form or intent or careful attention in crafting the work, but rather that the intent of the creator is meaningless to the interpretation of the reader beyond the creator’s structure (for further clarification see footnote 1).

The argument offered in support of this thesis will come in three parts. First, language, and specifically Joyce’s use of language within his book must be shown to be, rather than simply musical, music in and of itself. Second, the structure of Finnegans Wake and its themes will be shown to be consistent with the construction and composition of a symphony once it has been established that the text can be perceived as music. Third, once both the language has been shown to be music by nature and the structure of the complete work reflective of the symphonic form, how to interpret the text aesthetically with these considerations in mind will be explored. In order to prove these points, I will rely on the field of semiotics (specifically Saussure) and on musical theory, as well as The Critique of Judgment by Immanuel Kant as a means to establish the text as a symphony and the aesthetic implications of this proof, respectively.

II. Musical Basis in Semiotics

Asserting that Finnegans Wake, through its use of language, is a work of music is not the same as stating that language is music. If one were to write about language as music, then all written texts that could be read aloud could be considered to be music within such an argument, and Joyce's work would hardly be special in that context. Since the assertion is that Finnegans Wake, and not all texts, is music, then logically Joyce must be using language in such a way that his usage differs from the common writer; this is perhaps an understatement for those who are familiar with the text, but it is still an important distinction.

Music without the written word, that is, instrumental music, is completely connotative; whatever the author of the score may have intended is completely irrelevant to the listener, who forms his or her own themes and narratives when listening to an instrumental piece. While it is true that the creator of a text is also in a sense superfluous to the reader's interpretation, musical notes are completely connotative in a way that is impossible for words. Black, for instance, whatever the connotations of the word may be within the context of the individual interpreter, is still to a certain degree relegated to its denotation; black can never be white, although both can mean different things to different interpreters. Similarly, rich, though the viewer may find there to be different kinds of wealth, is not the same as poor; particularly in these sorts of binary pairs, one is largely defined through the

connotations of the other, but, no matter what the connotations of a word, there is still a basic meaning that is merely expounded upon by the reader.

Joyce, then, is faced with a difficult task in using language as a means of creating music, given these constraints and the inherent difference between purely connotative musical notes and words that are rooted in connotation. On one hand, it might be tempting for Joyce to use a language foreign to the intended audience in order to force the reader to create his or her own associations with unfamiliar words; unfortunately, this is not a viable option because, as any scholar of Eliot or Pound could say, foreign languages can be translated. Even further difficulties abound in the explicit use of foreign language, as opposed to the multilingual puns deployed by Joyce. There exist in many languages, particularly in languages of the same linguistic family, cognates that could allow the reader to derive a concrete meaning from the text without even the aid of translation, depending on the simplicity of the vocabulary and the astuteness of the reader.

On the other hand, Joyce would not be able to use pure gibberish, either, to accomplish his goals. To begin with, there are commercial and critical considerations; early criticism of Finnegans Wake was divided enough on the techniques employed by Joyce without writing a book that was purely phonemic, and it would have been even more difficult to have had the book published and sell if it was something that could be readily dismissed by the reader and scholar alike as Joyce banging on a typewriter until there were enough pages to refer to the resulting work as a book. Because language and musical notes are not the same thing, even if the clever creator

can use them in much the same way, Joyce had to retain enough meaning to keep readers and academics interested in the text, while deflecting enough meaning away to keep the work grounded in the same kind of connotative purgatory that comes naturally to music⁵.

Joyce was able to solve this dilemma by embracing, rather than eschewing, the nature of language and force it into his design in a way that no other author has accomplished. He was able to push his text past denotative constraints into the realm of abstraction by deflecting meaning away from his sentences by manipulating the fact that the reader will tend to interpret text through his or her own experiences. By flooding the text with alternate meanings, contradictions, and a seemingly infinite number of connotative conclusions through his use of multiple languages, misspellings, puns, and other techniques, he was able to accomplish the goal of having a text with no inherent meaning, and thus with no limitations. He is able to pit the reader's own mind against itself in such a way that the limitless interpretations of Joyce's text cannot be resolved or reconciled, leaving the reader in a sort of abstract limbo that allows the viewer to operate within the text on the same abstract level as one would be able to operate within instrumental music.

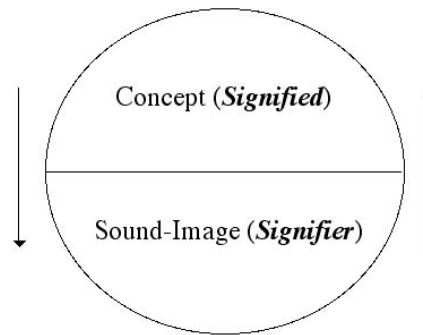
This conceptualization of Joyce's book as a work of music and his methods for transforming relatively concrete language into abstract instrumental music has a firm, tenable

⁵ Although it is important to recognize that music is capable of this feat simply because, for whatever reason, musical notes have never been, in mainstream society, used as a means of communication in the same way as language; the denotative origins of language, then, as well as the connotative nature of pure tone, is largely incidental.

rooting in linguistic theory. As Saussure wrote in his Course in General Linguistics, language is:

a well-defined object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts. It can be localized in the limited segment of the speaking-circuit where an auditory image becomes associated with a concept. It is [...] outside the individual who can never create nor modify it himself; it exists only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of a community [...] Whereas speech is heterogeneous, language, as defined, is homogeneous. It is a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meanings and sound-images, and in which both parts of the sign are psychological. (Saussure 961).

According to Saussure, this is predicated on the assumption that ideas exist prior to the existence of words, an approach that Saussure believes to be “simple” and “naïve,” correct only on the basis that it suggests the “linguistic unit is a double entity, one formed by the associating of two terms” (963). In Saussure’s belief, the “linguistic sign” is the unification of an abstract concept and a “sound-image” rather than an object and the name provided for that object (963). Saussure represents this concept through the use of the following drawing:



.(964)

Saussure describes this relationship as like “a sheet of paper: thought is the front and the sound the back; one cannot cut the front without cutting the back at the same time; likewise in language, one can neither divide sound from thought nor thought from sound; the division could be accomplished only abstractedly, and the result would be either pure psychology or pure phonology” (967). Given Saussure’s own arguments, however, one would be aware that “pure psychology” or “pure phonology” would both be meaningless constructs, stripped of any indicator that would allow the human mind to differentiate between the abstractions. Because of their indivisible nature, a sound that did not signify a psychological equivalent assumes a meaninglessness that is paralleled in a psychological component lacking either a written or spoken signifier. The thought would have to be assigned a signifier or else would either never be able to take form or could be only referred to through the use of less-adequate, pre-existing signs. Thus, Joyce’s technique of deflecting meaning from the text helps to remove the relationship between the signifier and the signified, or to make the signifier (in method similar to Lacan’s signifying chains)

point to so many signifieds as to weaken the relationship between all, and therefore push his language into the area of “pure phonology”.

To step aside from Saussure for a moment in order to equate the pure phonology of Joyce’s text with the pure phonology of music, one must realize that the signifiers of music, too, are arbitrary. C0, for instance, refers to a note played at the frequency of 16.35 Hertz, which means that the vibrations cycle 16.35 times a second (Frequencies of Music; COED 474). Each note played at a higher octave carries with it a Hertz of double that of the note of the octave preceding it; for example, C1 has a Hertz of 32.70 (Frequencies of Music). A frequency of 16.35 Hz could just as easily be referred to as “K0,” “L0,” or simply just “P”; however, the accepted Western musical octave is composed of the notes A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. The difference, of course, between musical notes and language is that there is not a meaning inherent to the signifier of the former, while each signifier of the latter, while one can accept Saussure’s assertion that it is arbitrary, points specifically to a signified. One can reason, then, that musical frequency is equivalent to Saussure’s pure phonology, and as such is a meaningless construct, or abstract to the point of lacking any collective meaning. Musical notes are then entirely reliant on the listener to provide them with an abstract psychological meaning, and as they are ungrounded to any specific meaning, one can further conclude that this psychological meaning is highly susceptible to shift, not only from listener to listener, but to the same individual listener at different periods in time, or from listening to listening, in much the same

way as the reader's predilections and experiences with affect his or her interpretation of Joyce with each reading.

This basis for Joyce's text as a musical work differs from previous research on the subject, which has used a mathematical foundation for the argument rather than a linguistic one. Weaver suggests, in Joyce's Music and Noise, that, for example, Joyce's so-called thunderwords "approximate mathematical fractals" (Weaver 98). Weaver points out that in physics both the visual and the audible are constructed out of particles, and as such sound can be "seen" as wave patterns (Weaver 98). Weaver goes on to construct music from Finnegans Wake with the occurrence of musical terms throughout the text, such as the number of times the word "sharp" appears and the number of times "flat" appears, as well as the musical relationship between characters and notes in an octave. While this is in and of itself an interesting means of explicating Finnegans Wake in the same vein as this paper, it seems to me that relying on the language itself and upon abstraction as a basis for the argument that the text is indeed music is a much simpler method to achieving more or less the same goal (Weaver 105). Weaver's argument, though he himself does not state it, carries with it the implication that any work of literature, addressed in the proper mathematic manner, could be rendered as music, which of course leads the reader again to the conclusion that there is nothing inherently different between the musicality of Finnegans Wake and the musicality of another literary work reduced to wave patterns.

An example of this technique in use begins with the text, with the end of the first (and last, as the beginning of the work and the end of the work are two parts of the same sentence) sentence, as Joyce writes “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” (Joyce 3). The reader could be taking by the sentence a river-borne trip through Eden by (in this sense, ‘by’ meaning literally adjacent to) a useful provincial township, recirculating (or returning) to Howth Castle (just north of Dublin). Perhaps riverrun refers to *Erinnerung*, the German word for remembrance, and Commodus refers to the Roman emperor rather than the word “commodious” (McHugh 3). Or is the reader following a suitable circuit of cyclical time (within the context of Giambattista Vico’s views on the cyclical nature of history) through the Fall of Man (or the fall of Finnegan) in an Irish Eden (*Ibid.*)? Furthermore, who is the “us” to which Joyce refers? Is it the audience, a means of establishing a connection with the readers, a reference to “folksy” styles of writing in which the omniscient narrator places him or herself with the reader, a reference to humanity as a whole, or all at once (and therefore no single one alone)? Vico has already been said to possibly refer to the Latin word for village, or even Giambattista Vico, but what about Vico Road in Dalkey (*Ibid.*)? Does Eve and Adam’s refer to the fall, or to Eden, or to Adam & Eve’s Church, or the tavern next door (*Ibid.*)? Remember, however, that this is just the first sentence, a mere twenty-six words out of the entire work; this is not even attempting to explicate the sentence in the context of the other sentences, or even to make sense of an entire page.

The next sentence, which is considerably longer, reads:

Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea, had passencore
 rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of
 Europe minor to wielderfight his peninsolate war: nor had topsawyer's
 rocks by the streem Oconee exaggerated themselfe to Laurens
 County's gorgios while they went doubling their mumper all the time:
 nor avoice from afire bellowsed mishe mishe to tauftauf
 thaurtpeatrick: not yet, though venissoon after, had a kidscad
 buttended a bland old Isaac: not yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were
 sosie sesthers wroth with twone nathandjoe. (Joyce 3)

This one section alone contains references to Sir Amory Tristram, 1st Earl of Howth (and later Saint Lawrence), his birthplace in Brittany, as well as North America, a musical instrument, the Irish sea, Vico again, Tristan and Isolde, the German word for "to refight," the Peninsular War and the geography of Howth, and St. Patrick, just to name a few, without even trying to find meaning in them all, to link them together into some semblance of a narrative, or to attempt to translate the multitude of languages; add to this what the common reader will place into the text when processing it through his or her mind and the sheer immensity of the possibilities for interpretation become staggering (McHugh 3).

There are passages, of course, that on first glance would not appear to lend themselves as readily as the longer sentences of the work. One example is the dialogue between Mutt and Jute that takes place beginning on page sixteen of

Finnegans Wake and continuing to page eighteen. The section is arranged in much the same manner as a play would be written, with the two characters alternating between speaking. However, this passage too lends itself readily to multiple layers of interpretation that ultimately serve to eliminate the possibility of a clear, discernable interpretation⁶. The characters of Mutt and Jute invoke Mutt and Jeff, a duo of American comic-strip characters that Jute puns upon when he asks Mutt “Are you jeff?”, though the pun also is an inquiry as to whether or not Mutt is able to hear (McHugh 16, Joyce 16). This punning continues as Jute asks Mutt is he is a “jeffmute,” to which Mutt replies that he is merely “an utterer”; the naming of course (jeffmute) continues to reference the American comic, as well as inquiry as to whether or not Mutt is a “deafmute,” which Mutt responds by saying that he is an utterer, implying that he cannot hear but he can still speak (although the fact that the two characters are having a dialogue brings this fact into question); an utterer, McHugh notes, is also a person who uses counterfeit coins, which could bolster the idea that Mutt is not being entirely truthful about the state of his hearing impairment, if it exists (*ibid.*). Jute continues to pun upon Mutt’s⁷ name, asking him “Whoat is the mutter with you?” in response to Mutt’s utterer comments, during which Joyce manages to slip in an allusion to Noah, according to McHugh (*ibid.*). Mutt replies that he has “became a stun a stummer,” which both serves to mimic the manner in which

⁶ It must be noted that, although academia tends to point out the multitude of interpretations of a text, usually one interpretation of a work will gain intellectual credence over the years and will dominate that particular area of study until debunked or replaced by a new academic fad; Joyce could not have been ignorant of this reality, and as such endeavored to create a work that would not conform to such practices.

⁷ mute’s

an individual with a stutter (or stammer) may speak, as well as punning off of the German word “Stummer,” meaning one who is mute (*ibid.*). The dialogue continues as follows, with annotation in brackets:

Jute. –What a hauhauhauhaudibble [clearly a play on the word audible] thing, to be cause [coarse/to be sure]! How, Mutt?

Mutt. –Aput [from the Latin for “with”] the buttle, surd [from the Latin *surdus*, to be deaf, with an alternate meaning equivalent to stupid].

Jute. – Whose poddle [river in Dublin]? Wherein [Erin]?

Mutt. –The Inns of Dungtarf [battlefield of Clontarf (in Dublin) where Danish invaders are turned back; translated as “bull meadow”, which means that Dungtarf means “bullshit”] where Used awe to be he [where you ought to be].

Jutt. –You that side your voise are almost inedible [inaudible] to me. Become a bitskin [German a bisschen, or a little; also, archaic for “little bit”] more wiseable [visible], as if I were you.

Mutt. –Has? Has af? Hasatency? Urp, Boohooru [Brian Boru, leader of the army at Clontarf]! Booru Usurp! I trumple from rath in mine mines [wrath in my mind/ Rathmines district of Dublin] when I rimimirim [remember him/ Italian mi rimiro (I look at myself)]!

Jute. –One eyegonblack [German Augenblick, “moment”]. Bisons is bisons [slang for American nickel/ bygones are bygones/two sons]. Let

me fore all her hesitancy cross your qualm with trink gilt [the phrase “cross your palm with silver”/ German Trinkgeld, “tip”/ gilt trinket]. Here have sylvan coyne [coyne and livery, Irish custom of “free entertainment at dependents’ expense”], a piece of oak. Ghinees [guineas] hies good for you [Guinness is good for you, a phrase]. Mutt.—Louee, louee [French l’ouie, hearing/ Italian lui, lui, it’s him/louis, or coins]! How wooden [Wotan] I not know it, the intellible greytcloak of Cedric Silkyshag [Harald Graycloak, tenth century ruler of Western Norway/ Sitric Silkenbeard, leader of the Danes at Clontarf]! Cead mealy faulty rices for one dabblin bar [Irish céad míle fáilte romhat, 100,000 welcomes to you/ Dublin bar]. Old grilsy growlsy [“salmon after smolt stage”]! He was poached on in that eggtentical spot [poached egg/ poached salmon]. Here where the liveries [coyne and livery/ Liberties district of Dublin], MonoMark [Greek monomachos, gladiator]. There where the misers moony, Minnikin passé [Manneken-Pis, a statute of a child urinating, located in Brussels]. (McHugh 16-17, Joyce 16-17)

It should be noted that the section quoted here is approximately three-quarters of a page of text in Finnegans Wake, and less than half the total conversation. The conversation drifts back and forth between commenting on hearing and deafness, allusions to the battle of Clontarf, references to food, puns involving money, and (as always with Joyce) various locations in and around Dublin. Anyone attempting to

construct a coherent narrative out of this passage, or, indeed, out of the conversation as a whole, would be hard-pressed to arrive at a conclusive thesis or a textually supported argument that did not in some way ignore a large portion of the rest of the text, and it is quite likely that the argument presented would have to do more with the various prejudices and predilections of the critic or reader (the Rorschach test that Bishop describes) rather than having to do with attempting to force the text to conform to something resembling coherent thought.

Because one is not to force the text to conform to a singular, coherent narrative, meaning is ultimately deflected and the only way to engage the text is from the premise that it is without a singular, coherent narrative; in short, purposelessness as defined earlier. It should also be noted that the annotations listed are merely one scholar's interpretation of what Joyce could be alluding to in the text, and that it is not a "translation" of Joyce's words; with that consideration in mind, there is the possibility of multiple sources of annotation, which serve to even further fracture the work into different possible meanings; if Joyce's intentional deflection is extrapolated (given the fact that even a portion of a page cannot be conformed to single narrative) to the work as a whole, it becomes a monumentally impossible act to interpret the text on a textual basis and not on the basis of what the critical author wants to find in the text, which inevitably leads to a glossing over of parts that do not conform.

Even the thunderword on the first page⁸ defies any sort of singular definition, as it is a mixture of the onomatopoeic and the word for “thunder” in Japanese, Hindi, Greek, French, Italian, Swedish, Irish, Portuguese, Old Romanian, Danish, and is imitative of the rolling effect of thunder while also referencing the Wall Street crash of the 1930s; suffice it to say, then, that there is not a line in the text that lends itself to a single interpretation, or even to a few interpretations (McHugh 3).

Even if one is to believe what some critics have said, that the first book of Finnegans Wake is much more difficult than the following three books, it does not take much reading to find that the difference is negligible, as this deflective style of writing is consistent throughout the work. Take, for example, the opening paragraph of the second book:

Every evening at lighting up o'clock sharp and until further notice in Feenichts Playhouse. (Bar and conveniences always open, Diddlem Club douncestears.) Entrancings: gads, a scrab; the quality, one large shilling. Newly billed for each wickeday perfumance. Somnzdoze massinees. By arraignment, childream's hours, expercatered. Jampots, rinsed porters, taken in token. With nightly redistribution of parts and players by the puppetry producer and daily dubbing of ghosters, with the benediction of the Holy Genesius Archimimus and under the distinguished patronage of their Elderships the Oldens from the four

8

Bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronntonneronntuonnthunntrovarrhouanawksnkawntoohoo
hoordenenthurnuk (Joyce 3)

coroners of Findrias, Murias, Gorias and Falias, Messoirs the Coarbs, Clive Sollis, Glaroius Kettle, Pobiedo Lancey and Pierre Dustory, while the Caesar-in-Chief looks. On. Sennet. As played to the Adelpi by the Brotehrs Bratislavoff (Hyrcan and Haristobulus), after humpteen dumpteen revivals. Before all the King's Hoarsers with all the Queen's Mum. And wordloosed over seven seas crowdblast in certelleneteutoslavzendlatinsoundscript. In four tubbloids. While fern may cald us until firm make cold. *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies*, adopted from the Ballymooney Bloodriddon Murther by Bluechin Blackdillain (authorways 'Big Storey') featuring: (Joyce 219).

Even though much of the intentional misspelling found in earlier sections has been toned down to an extent in the section quoted above, it is still clear that Joyce's unique technique remains consistent throughout the work. The exact meaning of the passage still manages to elude the reader, or rather the meaning manages to elude consensus by multiple readers; while it is true that the passage itself can be seen to have something to do with the theatre (and in that sense is theatrical), a section of a musical score could also be said to have a certain theatricality to it while preserving the ability for each listener to decide for his or herself what specifically in that particular work is theatrical; in short, the subjectivity of Joyce's text is preserved consistently, no matter what the theme of a particular passage may be (an easy example of this principle at work is in the multiple allusion-filled Jute and Mutt

section). This intentional, meaning-defying density is consistent throughout books three and four, as well.

Through the repeated attempts to interpret the text, the reader is required to further focus on the words, which in turn begin to weaken the relationship between the language and one single signified, which ultimately allows the reader to focus purely on the words themselves as phonological abstractions, which naturally does require the reader to eventually read the words aloud, much in the same way that a wave pattern carries with it no special meaning for the listener until the wave pattern is once again made audible. Once the connection between the pure phonology of Joyce's language and the pure phonology of instrumental music is solidified, it can be established that Joyce's work is symphonic in form. I will do so by relying on Joyce's use of leitmotifs, the four books of Finnegans Wake representing four symphonic movements based on their content and tempo, and an examination of harmony and melody within the text.

III. Four Symphonic Movements in Finnegans Wake

Of course, leitmotifs are not purely musical phenomena, and therefore there must be more similarities between Finnegans Wake and a symphony, or any musical form, for the comparison to be made. It is also necessary to establish, beyond consistent themes or the presence of music in the first place, that there is melody and harmony. Before delving into a discussion of melody and harmony, however, I will

begin by discussing tempo and the existence of four symphonic movements in Finnegans Wake, as melody and harmony are irrelevant to the thesis of this essay if one cannot show that the books within Finnegans Wake are consistent with symphonic movements. In order to accomplish this task, it will be necessary to look, in turn, at each book, beginning with book two, followed by books three and four, then ending with book one.

Book two of Finnegans Wake is quite busy, as the astute reader will soon realize. A host of characters are introduced in quick succession in this section, including GLUGG, the Floras, IZOD, Chuff, Ann, Hump, the Customers, Saunderson, and Kate, and the text is populated with either long sentences, lengthy lists, or both. The broken, staccato nature of the writing, in sentences such as “On. Sennet. As played to the Adelphi by the Brothers Bratislavoff (Hyrcean and Haristobulus), after humpteen dumpteen revivals,” provides an air of urgency and rapid motion. This is further supported by the sudden presence of one of Joyce’s thunderwords⁹ before the first paragraph has finished. Sentences such as this populate the second book:

Since the days of Roamaloose and Rehmoose the pavanos have been strident throughout their struts of Chapellidiseut, the vaulsies have meed and youlded through the purly ooze of Ballybough, many a mismy cloudy has tripped taintily along that hercourt strayed reelway and the rigadoons have held ragtimed revels on the plautplain of

⁹ certeenetutoslavzendlatinsoundsript

Grangegorman; and, though since then sterlings and guineas have been replaced by brooks and lions and some progress has been made on stilts and the races have come and gone and Thyme, that chef of seasonors, has made his usual astewte use of endadjustables and whatnot will be isnor was, those dancedeils and cancanzanies have come stimmering down for our beyagment through the bedeaftdom of po's taeorns, the obcecity of pa's teapucs, as lithe and limbfree limber as whne momie mumbed at ma. (Joyce 236).

Sentences similar to the one above are the rule rather than the exception through book two, and are combined with shorter, choppier sentences to achieve an effect reminiscent “Dies Irae” section of Verdi’s Requiem. Interestingly, book two actually has musical notation written in a section of it, although this is a multimedia pun by Joyce, as the notes on the staff are B,C,A, and D, and the text adjacent to the notation mentions both the B.C. and A.D. methods of dating.

Book two also relies on lists and infrequent or overly frequent punctuation to convey its rapid delivery. One often encounters, in book two, the appearance of lists such as:

Mr G.B.W. Ashburner, S. Bruon’s Toboggan Drive, Mr Faixgood, Bellchimbers, Carolan Crescent, Mr I.I. Chattaway, Hilly Gape, Poplar Park, Mr Q.P. Dieudonney, The View, Gazey Peer, Mr T.T. Erchdeakin, Multiple Lodge, Jiff Exby Rode, Mr W.K. Ferris-Fender, Fert Fort, Woovil Doon Botham... (Joyce 369).

Similarly, book two is full of lines such as “Knocknock. War’s where! Which War? The Twwinns. Knock Knock. Woos without! Without what? An apple. Knock knock.” (Joyce 330). These choppy, fragmented sentences provide the reader with a sense of urgency and do not allow the reader to slow or become too comfortable in his or her reading.

The fast-paced style of book two is in stark contrast to book three, although the change may not be readily apparent, in much the same way that one who is not familiar with musical notation would not notice a tempo change as readily as a professional musician. Long sentences are still present, but the frenetic style of the text has evaporated. It has been replaced with sentences that are more fully developed and less staccato than the sentences of book two, which as a result provides a less hectic, more relaxed atmosphere for the book. The first lines of book three

Hark!

Tolv two elf kater ten (it can’t be) sax

Hork!

Pedwar pemp foify tray (it must be) twelve

can be seen as a musical bridge of sorts, connecting the movement of book two to the movement of book three before transitioning into the style that dominates the latter (Joyce 403). The first paragraph of book three sets this tone:

White fogbow spans. The arch embattled. Mark as capsules. The nose of the man who was nought like the nasoos. It is self-tinted, wrinkling, ruddled. His kep is a gorsecone. He am Gascon Titubante of Tegmine

– sub - Fagi whose fixtures are mobiling so wobiling befear my remembrandts. She, exhibit next, his Anastashie. She has prayings in lowdelph. Zeehere green egg-brooms. What named blauthoothdmand is yon who stares? Gugurtha! Gugurtha! He has becco of wild hindigan. Ho, he hath hornhide! And hvis now is for you. Pensee! The most beautiful of woman of the veilch veilchen veiled. She would kids to my voutl of my palace, which obscidian luppas, her aal in her dhove’s suckling. Apagemonite! Come not nere! Black! Switch out! (Joyce 403).

Although the character moods in Finnegans Wake are unavoidable, book three seems to have far fewer different personalities introduced than the chaotic book two, and the prose itself is markedly different. The style lends itself more to the reader taking a slower reading and becoming enveloped in the text compared to book two, and a reading of the text is further slowed by instances such as what appears to be a conversation on pages 409-428 (Joyce). It would seem logical that most readers would slow their pace when reading dialogue, as generally dialogue is much more central to understanding than exposition, although of course that is a generalization. What the reader makes of the dialogue is not as important as the dialogue itself (given Finnegans Wake’s connotative style), which Joyce uses to intentionally slow the reader merely by the indication that the text is dialogue. This notation is used in much the same way that a composer would make the appropriate notation on a score in order to inform a musician to slow his or her pace during a particular section. It

should also be noted that a slower movement does not necessarily mean a lifeless one, and indeed there is motion both within book three and within the third movement of a symphony; it is only slow in comparison to the preceding movement.

The pace, in keeping consistent with the symphonic form, quickens significantly in the fourth and final book/movement, whose brevity (compared to the other books) also serves to give a sense of urgency. The style is markedly different from the preceding movements, and Joyce utilizes vast, unbroken paragraphs of continuous notes to give provide the reader with a sense of tempo. Take, for example:

The child, a natural child, thenown by the mnames of, (aya! aya!),
 wouldebwas kidnapped at an age of recent probably, possibly remoter; or he
 conjured himself from seight by at hand; for which thetheatron if a
 lemoronage; at milchgoat fairmesse; in full dogdhis; sod on a fall; pat; the
 hundering blundering dunderfunder of plundersundered manhood; behold, he
 returns; renascenent; fincarnate; still foretold around the hearthside; at matin a
 fact; hailed chimers' ersekind; foe purmanant, fum in his mow; awike in wave
 resurging into chrest; *victis poenis hesternis*; fostfath of solas; fram choicest
 of wiles with warmen and sogns til Banba, burial arranging; under articles
 thirtynine of the reconstitution; by the lord's order of the canon
 consecrandable; earthlost what we thought himl pesternost, the noneknown
 worrier; from Tumbarumba mountain; in presence of whole landslots; forebe
 all the rassias; sire of leery subs of dub; the Diggins, Woddenhenge, as to
 hang out at; with spawnish oel full his angalach; the sousenugh;

gnomeosulphidosalamermauderman; the big brucer, fert in fort; Gunner, of the Gunnings, Gund; one of the two or three forefivest fellows a bloke could in holiday crowd encounter; benedicted be the barrel; kilderkins, lids off; a roache, an oxmaster, a sort of heaps, a pamphilius, a vintivat niviceny, a hygienic contrivance socalled from the ditor; the thick of your thigh; you knox; quite; talking to the vicar's joy and ruth; the gren, woid and glue been broking by the maybole gards; he; when no crane in Elga is heard; upout to speak this lay; without links, without impediments, with gygantogyres, with freeflawforms; parasama to himself; atman as evars; whom otherwise because; no puler as of old but as of young a palatin; whitelock not lacked nor temperasoleon; though he appears a funny colour;stoatters some; but quite a big bug after the dahlias; place inspectorum sarchent; also the hulloow chyst excavement; astronomically fabulafigured; as Jambudvispa Vipra foresaw of him; the last half versicle repurchasing his pawned word; soresplit and paddypatched; and pfor to pfinish our pfun of a pfan coalding the keddle mickwhite; sure, straight, slim, sturdy, serene, synthetical, swift. (Joyce 595-596)

This passage is quite representative of the whole of book four, and is one of the more punctuated sections; where paragraphs like this do not exist, Joyce fills in the space with choppy, one or two word sentences that are structured in much the same way the text in book two is structured. Finnegans Wake ends in a grand, sweeping, rapid motion that would rival that of any traditional symphony, with an broken paragraph

that reaches from page 619 to the work's close on page 628 (I have estimated the approximate length to be 4000 words), and incorporates long sentences, staccato sentences, and everything in between in its finale.

The first book, then, must be an opening movement that introduces the themes of the work, and it most certainly lives up to this task. In the first sentence the characters of Eve and Adam are introduced, and by page nineteen the Serpent, too, is present. Insofar as style is concerned, many of the same techniques used in the subsequent movements are present in book one, including dialogue as a means of slowing the reader down (in the Jute and Mutt dialogue), gargantuan paragraphs to convey rapid, restless motion, and continuous, unbroken sentences that can last for pages at a time (Joyce 19, 21-23, 119-123, 126-139). The first book, in its function as the first movement, alternates between the speed of the second movement, the slower, more reflective pacing of the third movement, and the monumental rush of instrumentation in the fourth movement, all the while introducing different aspects of the character moods that will be elaborated upon as the work develops. It is easy to conclude, then, that Joyce's first book, in its use of style and theme, performs admirably as a movement, providing the reader with a sense of what is to come, while making the themes and tones of the work readily apparent. However, despite structural proof that Finnegans Wake is a symphony, there is a bit more evidence required before resting the case. In order for Finnegans Wake to be a symphony, melody and harmony must also be present.

IV. Melody and Harmony

While I am of the opinion that any intentionally crafted auditory creation can be considered music, whether those are the works of Brian “Lustmord” Williams¹⁰ or John Cage’s “4:22”, there are a great many people who insist that compositions must possess melody and harmony in order to be considered to be music. In the case of the symphonic form, barring more experimental attempts at symphony as the form is subjected to the same innovation and scrutiny as other art forms, they are typically correct. If a symphony requires melody and harmony, in addition to a particular structure, then Finnegans Wake must have those elements as well in order to be called a symphony. Fortunately, this is where the connotative nature of the text can be readily applied, as it allows for the reader to focus on the melody and harmony of the text itself rather than any supposed meaning. Though melody and harmony are, by their very natures, inseparable, I will begin with a discussion of melody in the text.

As Robert Erickson notes in Structure of Music, there is no “right way” to make a melody, despite what one musical theorist may favor over another; because of this, there are only two essential elements to melody: pitch and duration (13-15). Erickson has this to say about the “tonic accent” (the stress put upon a note or chord):

Accent by reason of height is common to language too. In speaking, when we wish to emphasize something we raise the pitch of our voices; certain languages even have accent signs indicating rising or falling inflections for words. For example, the word “hee-haw,”

¹⁰ An experimental musician, perhaps most famous for his composition “Black Star” and for his work on film soundtracks.

imitating a donkey's bray, has two syllables of different pitch, the higher "hee" being the accented syllable. Higher pitch produces accent because we feel high tones to be more intense than lower tones, and because more physiological effort has to be expended to produce higher tones. (16)

As the text as music has been discussed with specific examples elsewhere, let us focus on melodic pitch in the first sentence of *Finnegans Wake*, "rivverrun, 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" (Joyce 3).

As Weaver notes, "'Riverrun' is a musical triad tied together...and played as a single note"; in the context of the rest of the sentence, with "past" as the second note and "Eve" as the third, "Adam" becomes the tonic note (the note on which the melodic stress is placed) (Weaver 104). The pitch, then, is dependent upon the accents of the words, as well as upon the placement of the words themselves. The notes are denoted by the presence of the words, and the length of the word denotes the note's duration. The thunderwords, then, can be seen as a rolling, heavily-sustained note, whereas shorter words such as "of" or "the" form shorter, staccato notes. The emphasis on the syllables forms how heavily the note is hit, or what accent of the note comes through in the playing. For instance, "riverrun" has the accent in the middle of the word on the syllable "ver", and therefore the stress of the note is placed upon that syllable. Melody, as we have seen, is at its most basic the upward or downward movement of pitch over a period of time, and the notes in *Finnegans Wake*

most certainly meet that definition, no matter how one chooses to interpret them based on native linguistic accents and other factors; in other words, it is melodious across linguistic borders. One can concede that there may be different emphases placed on different syllables depending on the reader, but this ultimately is analogous to the slight variations in performance one would encounter with different musicians playing the same score. If this analogy is true, then one does not necessarily have to agree with Weaver's analysis of the text to agree with his method of analyzing the text, which is to say that one can arrange the accents however one wishes while still preserving the fundamental basis of melody. What, then, of harmony?

Harmony is essentially, according to Erickson, the presence of multiple melodies, although he is careful to point out that the two terms are inseparable and that harmony can be present in even the simplest of melodies (71-72). Erickson provides, in an attempt to explain his meaning, an alternate definition, that harmony is a tone's feeling in relation to other tones, or what he calls "cadence" (72-73). Whereas melody may deal with a single tone, harmony is the quality of a tone taken in the context of other tones. Erickson notes that this phenomenon can also be seen in language (much like melody), writing:

Language has a variety of cadences, too. At the end of a sentence, the voice falls; to express a question, we use a rising inflection. We have evolved written symbols, commas, periods, semicolons, question marks, etc., to designate these inflections, in order to articulate both

spoken and written words. The analogy between such inflections and cadences is quite precise... (72)

It is difficult when dealing with language as a form of musical notation, rather than a musical staff or language written into a staff, to have multiple voices at once (such as one would find a chord), although Joyce does it in sections such as:

	But while the dial are they doodling dawd-	ENTER THE
	ling over the mugs and the grubs? Oikey,	COP AND
	Imposotopulos? Steady steady steady steady	HOW.
	steady studiavimus. Many many many many	SECURES
	many manducabimus. We've had our days at	GUBERNANT
	triv and quad and writ our bit as intermidgets. Art,	URBIS
	literature, politics, economy, chemistry, human-	TERROREM
<i>Cato.</i>	itry, &c. Duty, the daughter of discipline, the	
<i>Nero.</i>	Great fire at the South City Markets, Belif in	
<i>Saul. Aristotle</i>	Giants and the Banshee, A Place for Every-	
<i>Julius Caesar.</i>	thing and Everything in its Place, Is the Pen	
<i>Pericles.</i>	Mightier than the Sword? A Successful Career	
<i>Ovid.</i>	in the Civil Service, The Voice of Nature in	
<i>Adam, Eve.</i>	the Forest, Your Favorite Hero or Heroine,	
<i>Domitian.Edipus.</i>	On the Benefits of Recreation, If Standing	
<i>Socrates.</i>	Stones Could Speak, Devotion to the Feast of	
<i>Ajax.</i>	the Indulgence of Portiuncula, The Dublin	

Metropolitan Police Sports at Ballsbridge, De-
Homer scribe in Homely Anglian Monosyllables the
MarcusAurelius Wreck of the Hesperus, What Morals, if any,
 can be drawn from Diarmuid and Grania? Do
Alcibiades you approve of our Existing Parliamentary
Lucretius System? The Uses and Abuses of Insects,... (306).

There are additionally some Wakeese footnotes in the passage that lend an additional voice or voices to this particular section. Despite some passages like this, however (and the text continues in such a way for approximately forty pages), the majority of the text relies on more subtle cadences than the above sample. In such cases, Joyce's use of punctuation allows the reader to make educated guesses as to the proper inflection of a particular passage. Punctuation as a inflectional guideline holds true even in the long passages without a period, in which either a semi-colon is used to denote an inflectional obligation on the part of the reader, or else the passage is punctuation-less. In the event of the latter, one can reasonably conclude that the harmony is to match the tempo, which would be quite lively.

The harmony and the melody operate together to allow Finnegans Wake to be as interpretative and subjective as any other work of music. Naturally, there are rules, as it would seem as strange to pronounce "riverrun" with the syllables of "Adam" as it would be to play a C note when a D# is written on the staff; however, within these guidelines there is room for less drastic differences in pronunciation, tempo, and emphases. This openness ensures that each reader of Finnegans Wake is able to create his or her own auditory experience, in addition to whatever meaning he or she finds in the work. Because of these differences in interpretation, even at the subjective auditory level, the text truly allows the reader to "perform" the work, the

same as one would with any other form of musical notation. All that is left for the audience and the reader, then, is to engage the work in a purely aesthetic manner.

V. Leitmotifs in Finnegans Wake

Again, the statement that Finnegans Wake is a symphony is made while relying on the definition of a symphony as “an elaborate musical composition for full orchestra, typically in four movements”, as well as on the definition provided by Goetschius, that a symphony is composed of three standalone movements of differing tempos (fast, slow, fast) in addition to a fourth movement that is played first and incorporates the themes of the subsequent movements (COED 1050, 23-31)¹¹. The work is certainly elaborate, and, if one is convinced by the argument put forth in the previous section, a musical composition (or at the least musical); that leaves the task of defending Finnegans Wake as a work that is intended for orchestra and that exists in four movements. It must be noted, too, that, while the text clearly exists in four sections, this is not sufficient enough to conclude that the work is comprised of four movements, as a movement implies there is a structural consistency, both within the individual movement and within the work as a whole. A work of art (or at least a successful work of art), whether musical or textual, is not created haphazardly. It was stated that Joyce’s work was completed with very deliberate word placement earlier in this essay; if that is the case, then, despite the density of the work and Joyce’s techniques that are employed to avoid any semblance of meaning, it stands to reason that there will be present in the work the same sort of consistent motifs and rhythms that one would find in a similarly constructed piece of music, however experimental a work used for comparison’s sake may be. This is where existing criticism of Finnegans Wake, the attempts at

¹¹ Naturally, not all symphonies follow this pattern, to the point that the symphony is quite an amorphous musical form, particularly in contemporary times. However, this is why Finnegans Wake is viewed, for the purposes of this essay, in the same manner as a “traditional” symphony.

“picking the lock” of the text over the years, can actually be of some use insofar as form is concerned. The authors of such studies have meticulously noted recurring character moods (a term chosen to convey consistency in character naming conventions and purpose, although the concept of a “character” in Finnegans Wake is so amorphous that it would hardly be proper to refer to these multiple, shifting entities as outright characters) that can be seen, in the context of the text as music, to operate in much the same manner as a leitmotif would in a more traditional musical composition. The most prevalent of these recurring character moods are clearly HCE, ALP, and the Serpent, all of whom serve two functions in a musical context through the expression of their various moods. First, they serve, as has been touched upon, as leitmotifs of sorts, as a means for Joyce to provide the reader with the same sort of emotional cues within a section of his work as a composer would through the use of traditional notes arranged in a particular order. Second, these three character moods function to provide the work with a certain sense of theme and variation, in much the same way that a composer would state his or her original theme, develop it, and present variations upon the original theme for the purpose of retaining the listener’s interest as well as conveying mood, rather than simply resorting to looping the same melody repeatedly for an arbitrary length. It is necessary, then, to examine how these character moods are represented within the text in order to achieve that musical effect and therefore demonstrate the intentional care of Joyce’s work does not dissipate with meaning.

Perhaps the most prominent of these personalities is that of HCE, and all of its various forms both in characters and in phrasing throughout the work¹². There is a strong connection between HCE and Adam, as well as God, and because of this HCE can be broken up into two smaller personalities, each of whom has its own set of still lesser, more specific characters

¹² Although the initials only actually appear twice in the text, interestingly enough (Burrell 68).

(Burrell 78). First, one can trace the constant presence of HCE proper (as opposed to Adam) and its variations throughout the text as a recurring musical phrase, which manifests itself in a variety of ways. There is the mention of H.C. Earwicker, H.C. Enderson, Hermyn C. Entwhistle, and H.C.E. when the character mood manifests itself through the use of proper names, as well as the less specific but still noteworthy Here Comes Everybody (Joyce 32, 33, 138, 198, 320, 342). The theme can also present itself through initials themselves, with some variation; Burrell notes that hce, ech, hec can all be found on page 284 in *Finnegans Wake*, and that certain rephrasings such as hek and Hek can be found throughout the text (69). Despite the name itself being somewhat underrepresented throughout the text, it can be found in less obvious forms as well, although Burrell notes that the letters may not appear sequentially, as in the sentence (which retains Burrell's italics) "*Houce of call is all their evenbreads though its cartomance hallucinate like an erection*" (qtd. in Burrell 69). More obviously, but not quite fitting into the name category or the "permutations", to use Burrell's word, of the initials are phrases such as He'll Cheat E'erawan, *He Can Explain, Hatches Cocks' Eggs*, Hocus Crocus, Esquilocus, Helpless Corpses Enactment, and Haveth Childers Everywhere (Burrell 69, Joyce 46, 105, 71, 254, 423, 535).

Even when the initials themselves do not appear, whether through name, phrase, or permutation, the presence of the character mood of HCE can be found in the text through various character manifestations. There is, for instance, "God the Tailor"¹³, which Burrell notes is mentioned a number of times, including pages 172, 181, 247, 292, 344, 543, 455, 459, 508, and 529 (Burrell 70-71). Similarly, HCE is present through Cod and Cad, two names that are formed from changing letters in the word "god"; Cod can be found on pages 46, 54, 102, 121, 313, 427, 587, 577, and 579, while Cad can be found on pages 35, 88, 127, 178, 270, 332, 511, 588, 618,

¹³ From Genesis 3:21, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins and clothed them" (qtd. in Burrell 69).

and 101 (Burrell 71-73). Between pages eight through ten, HCE appears through Joyce's corruptions of Wellington and Napoleon ("Willingdone" and "Lipoleum"), which are representative of HCE and Adam, respectively (Burrell 73-75). Burrell also notes that HCE is present even when not manifesting through characters, but also through mentions of stuttering, thunder, and smoking; in addition to these, HCE appears in a variety of less notable aspects, including Ashe, boss, Grand Precursor, Gripes, Honuphrius, Mark the Wans, Mengarments, Muta, Mutt, mutter, Hosty, I AM, Jarl von Hoother, Kersse, Laraseny, lopp, Loud, mabby, Ondt, Puropeas Pious, Sulla, TAFF, tailor, Taler, tayloren, Thor, and Twelve-eyed man¹⁴ (Burrell 77-78). Adam, as the second half of the larger HCE, is found in the characters of Shaun and Shem, Juan, Yawn, Christ, Finnegan, Jute, Persse O' Reilly, Mookse, GLUGG, Norwegian captain, BUTT, Buckley, Gracehoper, Eugenius, Jeremias, Mauritius, Barnabas, Michael, Juva, Tristan, and Trustan, depending on what form HCE appears under in the same passage; Burrell considers the two (Adam and HCE) to be distinct personalities, but because of the interconnectedness between the two and the ambiguity over which one is consistently the same characters, for all practical purposes they are one (Burrell 78-94).

However, as with any composer¹⁵, Joyce does not rely upon one theme to carry throughout the entire work, and that is where the more feminine mood, ALP, comes into play. Sometimes referred to as Anna Livia Plurabelle, she can be divided into three main personalities, which are Issy (usually appearing during pre-Fall mentions of Genesis), Eve (when represented

¹⁴ It is important to note that the purpose of this analysis is not to justify the connection between the different aspects of HCE (or the other character moods), which other authors, such as Burrell, have established through their own writing; here the names are assumed, based on the aforementioned research, to be connected under their respective overarching forms, and are used in that capacity to show the consistency of theme in Finnegans Wake.

¹⁵ With the exception, of course, of less traditional musical compositions or single-theme-based forms such as a fugue.

in a post-Fall light), and ALP itself (in the role of a “Mother Goddess”); it should be mentioned that these interpretation-specific portrayals are used only for convenience of reference, and are not intended to suggest that Finnegans Wake, if considered to be a narrative, is anything less than absolutely subjective; it is merely easier to point out similarities between different entities while using an explanation for the text, the same way it is simpler to refer to notes through musical notation or through frequency rather than trying to describe the note itself.

Issy is taken from the Hebrew word “Isha”, which means woman, and was used in place of Eve in the original text of Genesis, and appears in different forms (including as the goddess Isis) throughout the text, although it is written literally as “Issy” on page 459; it is perhaps because of this ancientness that she is also associated with the character of Lilith in the text, who is represented as lilady, lilyth, Lillytrilly, and Lil (Burrell 95-96). Isolde is another form of the Issy aspect of ALP, and appears through the text in various forms, including Iseut, Isod, Izod, Ysold, Liselle, Izzy, Tizzy, Soldi, Sally, and Criss (Burrell 96). Issy is also strongly connected to Esther (and, one may reason, Ishtar), as represented through the names Isther, Estarr, Essie, Yssia, Still, Vanissy, and Pipette (Burrell 96).

ALP appears as Eve, according to Burrell’s understanding of the text, in connection to the Fall, and as such appears in a less innocent capacity than Issy. Eve as a name is derived from the Hebrew word for “life”, and is Latinized as “heva”, which appears in the text several times (Burrell 98). Eve also appears in the text as Kate, Kathe, Kavya, Katy, katey, Kateclean, Kothereeen, swabsister Katya, and Kate the Cleaner; the Kate aspect is particularly tied to the punishment of women, or attempts to become clean again after the Fall, and appears most notably on pages 79, 211, 280, 221, 556, 566, 334, 116, 40, 27, 335, 333, 8, 530, 394, 239, 448, 421, 141, and 113 (Burrell 99-100). ALP also appears in relation to HCE as God in her capacity

as Mother Goddess; while this aspect of ALP is not as pervasive as her other aspects, it is still found throughout the text, particularly on page 113, when she fills in as creator in the absence of HCE.

The last, but no less important, character mood in Finnegans Wake is that of the Serpent, which is represented primarily through its association with the earwig and through other, similar creatures (although the earwig/Serpent aspects use a “g” in the spelling to differentiate the Serpent from personalities that belong to HCE, which use a “k”, such as Earwicker, earwicked, etc.) (Burrell 103). Earwig itself only appears five times in the text, and variations upon the word such as earwigger, earwugs, ladywigs, eeriwhig, etc. also do not litter the pages; however, as with the other character moods in Finnegans Wake, it manifests itself in less obvious ways, including references to lobsters and worms, as well as through allusions to the play The Boots at the Swan, by Charles Selby, which features a character named Jacob Earwig (Burrell 103). The earwig as representative of the Serpent from the Garden of Eden is used primarily because, in a Biblically-explained reading of Finnegans Wake, the Garden is located in Ireland, an island which has no snakes, supposedly driven out by St. Patrick. In a secondary function it can be associated both with penetration of the body (and therefore sin) in the context of legends that earwigs crawl into human ears, as well as through the associations of the earwig with malicious advice, which is again probably a reference to folktales about earwigs inhabiting the ears of sleeping people (Burrell 103-104).

The earwig/Serpent can be found in a number of places throughout Finnegans Wake, and takes forms including “sneaks” (driven out by “Paddy”), Creeping Crawleys, reptile, pupal, eggways, znigznaks, eerie whigs a bit of a torytale (which puns off of Tory and Whig), alp on earwig, earwuggers, our red brother, earwigs, a penis, Pursy Orelli (punning off of perce-oreille,

French for earwig), lucifug, bettle, Illstarred punster, earpierced, Perce O'Reilly, and P.R.C.R.L.L. Royloy (Burrell 104-106, Joyce 19, 287, 20, 17, 31, 31, 47, 79, 164, 173, 243, 354, 360, 467, 579, 512, 491, 390, 496, 482, 378). The earwig/Serpent also appears in various puns on the Irish word geille, which means earwig, and can be found throughout the text as Gill, Gillie, Goll's gillie, and Gilly (Joyce 36, 227, 244, 354, 617).

Various forms of arthropods are not the only instances of the Serpent in the text, and indeed it often appears through references to snakes themselves, as the word serpent, the Latin word coluber, serpentine, snake, triplehydrad snake, snake charmer, holy snakes, and boa (Joyce 89, 495, 540, 157, 19, 36, 132, 494, 435). The Serpent as appears under the name Nick, and obvious reference to the term "Old Nick" for Satan, which Burrell notes is derived from the German word nickel, which means demon, and variously appears as Nick, nick, Nickel, nickelname, Nickekellous, and Nickil (Burrell 108). The Serpent also appears in the guise of condoms under such names as Coppinger, Carpenger, Cabbanger, and Coppercheap, and as Magraw, Magrath, and sheriff Clancy (Burrell 108-109). Some other personalities of the Serpent include Mr. Fry, Paul Fry, queer Behan, Mr Browne, old geeser, Mr Hunker, Herr Betrefennder, Nash of Girahash, Mr Polkingstone, Brimstoker, Antonius, Saunderson, Aasodocktor Talop, Master Milchku, ship's Husband, Rechnar Jarl, Roguenor, Shufflebotham, Burniface, Gophar, Cocksnark of Killtork, Skelly with the lether belly, Temptation Tom, MacSmashall Swingy, Mgravius, Old Toffler, MacCrawls, Mr Sneakers, director, Crookedribs, kreeponskneed, medullar, old somebobby, Big dumm crumm, glider, butcheler, good mothers gossip, shop's housebound, varlet de shambles, stumblebum, sexton, insister, Illstared punster, sharepusher, strifestirrer, Sneakers in the grass, dumb tyke, hog, oggog hogs, and all instances of the words pig, pork, ham, lard and other foods (Burrell 109-110).

The presence of these different aspects of the character moods of HCE, ALP, and the Serpent serve to show that Joyce's work, if taken as music, is structured in such a way that themes do repeat throughout the text; while the interpretations of the work may be myriad to the point of abstraction, there are enough recurring allusions that one is able to see similar themes crop up again and again, in much the same way that leitmotifs are repeated and elaborated upon in a musical composition; in short, *Finnegans Wake*, with its restatement of theme and four movements, is not only abstract in the same way that an instrumental musical work is abstract, but it is structured in much the same manner as a musical composition.

VI. Kant and Appreciating Finnegans Wake Aesthetically

As Dahlhaus notes in Analysis and Value Judgment, "To consider aesthetic judgments 'subjective' and nothing else is a cliché whose meaning is vague and indefinite but whose function is unambiguous: it serves the purpose of rendering reflection and rational justification unnecessary" (3). One must not, then, in taking Finnegans Wake as a text that is highly subjective, merely stop at the arrival at that conclusion and assume that there is no way to assess its value while acknowledging its abstractness, as this is dismissive and superficial toward the text itself as well as to abstract art in general, whether textual, musical, or visual. However, one must also acknowledge the difference between a logical statement and a "judgment of taste", as H.W. Cassirer notes in his Commentary on Kant's Critique of Judgment:

When we make a logical judgment about an object we ascribe to the object certain properties. A judgment such as *The table is round* would be an example of a judgment of this kind. It is clear that the predicate of this judgment is a property which we attribute to our object. On the other hand, when we say: *The table is*

beautiful, we do not ascribe to the table any property. We merely state that we take pleasure in it. We see that judgments of taste are essentially different from logical judgments, in that they are not at all concerned with the object and its properties, but merely with our own feeling about it. (178)

There is a difference, then, between subjective interpretation of an object and merely reasoning that taste is subjective; that is, one can justify engaging in the judgment of an object subjectively without offering the sophomoric explanation for difference in taste that Dahlhaus derides.

Of course, the difference is inherent in whether or not an object is considered to be beautiful or pleasant, in the Kantian sense. This is the difference between subjective universality and subjectivity itself; Kant distinguishes between the two by claiming that the pleasant has a meaning both for humans and for animals, which lack rationality, while the beautiful has meaning only for humanity because humans are capable of rational thought (Cassirer 183). The rationale for the difference between the two terms is that when one considers something to be beautiful, one does so under the assumption that the object is separate from individual tastes, and that it must be beautiful to everyone; an object that is beautiful will cause any observer to have the same feelings for the object as any other observer (Cassirer 188). Cassirer explains the difference rather well by saying:

All our judgments about the pleasant are purely subjective. One man may like one colour and another another. One many may prefer the tone of wind instruments and another the tone of string instruments. It is impossible to quarrel about this and to say that one judgment is true and the other is false. The judgments are entirely private. Everyone has his own taste.

The beautiful stands on an entirely different footing. It would be ridiculous if I said about a poem, or a building, that it was beautiful for me. When I call something beautiful, I do not mean that it merely pleases me, that I take pleasure in it. I expect that others will feel the same about it, and therefore I speak about beauty as if it were a property of the object. I assert that the thing is beautiful, and demand of others that they should agree. I blame them when they judge differently. I say: they have no taste. And the curious fact is that the reason that I expect everyone else to agree with my judgment is not that I have found out by experience what kind of things have been judged to be beautiful. I demand of other persons that they should agree with me even if they do not, and even if no one has ever held the same opinion about a particular object as I have. I cannot judge an object to be beautiful without implying that my judgment is universally valid. Regarding the beautiful it cannot be said that everyone has his own taste.

For this would be as much as to say that there is no such thing as taste at all. (189)

The beautiful is without specific attributes that make it beautiful, as opposed to the attributes that make something pleasant; the judgment of the beautiful is, according to Kant, a disinterested judgment, whereas judgment on the pleasant is full of personal interest.

To bring this line of reasoning back to the original thesis, one must rely on the definition that Kant provides for “purpose”, writing that “Purpose is the object of a concept in so far as this concept is regarded as the cause of the object, that is to say, as the real ground of its possibility” (qtd. in Cassirer 200). Cassirer expands upon this definition in the attempt to clarify Kant’s meaning by using the human ear as an example; the purpose of the ear is to provide its owner with the ability to hear sounds, which according to Kant means that the ear would not

exist except for that it has such a function to fulfill; to quote Cassirer, the “object is a mere effect which owes its existence to its purpose” (200-201). This is in stark contrast to the beautiful.

Judgments on the beautiful are independent of purpose, because they lack any interest in the existence of the object itself. Kant’s example is that of a palace; if one is asked whether or not one finds a palace to be beautiful, there is always the possibility that the respondent will not find the palace to be aesthetically pleasing; however, whether or not the palace ought to exist in the first place is never brought into question (Cassirer 180). In the case of that which provides pleasure, or is pleasant, the purpose of that object is enjoyment; there is a definitive reason that can be expressed as to why a particular object is pleasing to an individual, as expressed by each individual on his or her own terms; an item of food, for instance, can be found to be pleasing to the sense of taste, and whoever enjoys that food can provide reasons why he or she enjoys to eat such foods (he or she enjoys the taste of salt, or of sugar, etc.) (Cassirer 203). This is not the case with the beautiful, however, as one cannot provide an explanation as to why one enjoys something found to be beautiful; it is assumed that the beautiful will appear beautiful to all other observers, but it is without any foundation in purpose; it is entirely predicated on an inexpressible feeling, without being able to provide any purpose to support what it is about beauty that makes it beautiful (Cassirer 204).

For Kant, the beautiful can be divided into two classes, the “products of nature” and the “products of art” (Cassirer 205). The artist clearly has an express purpose when he or she creates a work of art, and that is for both the artist and the observer to find beauty within that work, without any objective purpose; as Cassirer writes, “the product of art is exclusive of any other purpose. The purposiveness contained in it is merely subjective, it is ‘the mere form of purposiveness in that representation by which an object is given to us in so far as we are

conscious of it” (206). Of course, one can point out that many artworks carry within them an explicit purpose; for example, Ayn Rand’s novels seek to explain her philosophical stances, race-relations novels attempt to humanize an ethnicity for a possibly unsympathetic audience, political artwork attempts to convince the viewer of the convictions of the artist. However, this purpose within the art is not the purpose of a work of art; one is perfectly capable of writing a philosophical treatise without writing a novel in which characters espouse certain philosophical perspectives, one can inform others rationally of why he or she does not believe a certain ethnicity is inferior to another ethnicity, and one may explain one’s politics with supporting evidence without incorporating them into a painting or a sculpture, etc. This art, then, is in and of itself without purpose; there may be a purpose behind the intentions of the artist, but the expression of the ideas can be achieved without creating a work of art; one must assume, then, that the ideas expressed within an artwork are not necessary to the existence of the art itself, and that as such the purpose of the art is to exist in and of itself, while the purpose of whichever message the artist is attempting to convey is to convince a target audience, but not necessarily to be beautiful, which the artwork achieves with or without comprehension of an audience. This can probably best be paraphrased by saying that meaning is subjective and beauty is not, or, that beauty is subjective universality; that is, two readers who enjoy a particular novel may be able to argue over what exactly the author meant to say in constructing that novel, but if both find the object to be beautiful they will not argue about its merits as a work of art.

This concept is no more apparent than in works of instrumental music, as they lack any sort of signification that can be interpreted beyond the viewer; therefore an instrumental composition can only be beautiful, as the actual meaning of each note is subjective to the individual’s own interests, so only enjoyment of the work may be shared with others; the purpose

of the artwork is to be beautiful; the only purpose it has is the purpose that the listener puts into it. The observant reader will note that if this position is accepted as being true, then all artwork is beautiful insofar as there are individuals who will find it to be beautiful; in that respect Finnegans Wake would be no different from any other piece of art, no matter what the so-called purpose of an artwork may be, because it can be found beautiful the same as any other piece of art. The mastery behind Finnegans Wake, then, and what sets it apart from being a novel, is that Joyce toyed with these notions. By forcing readers to be unable to decide on a singular meaning of the text, or even of several different meanings in the text, Joyce forces the reader to enjoy the text on a purely aesthetic level, removed from all attempts at a purpose beyond merely enjoyment and what the reader makes of the novel within his or her own mind; in that respect it becomes, essentially, music, in the same way that a musical note carries no more meaning than its aesthetic meaning and the meaning that a reader will place into the note.

VII. Conclusions and Unifying Theory

Perhaps the most important question that can be asked in consideration of all of the points made throughout this analysis is what does Finnegans Wake as a purely aesthetic work mean for Joyce criticism, as well as literary criticism in a broader sense. It certainly seems to find a middle ground between the people who find Finnegans Wake to be unreadable and the people who suggest theory after unrelated theory in the Rorschach-test-like manner that Bishop referred to in his introduction to the text, and the Kantian aspects of the examination serve to support the work as an aesthetic object and the interpretations as “pleasant”, without questioning the validity of the interpretations themselves. One cannot help but suppose that any given reader will drift toward

one or several critical perspectives that make sense to him or her, and will reject those that do not. However, this personal predilection is not a reflection on the aesthetic existence of Finnegans Wake as a whole, and as such the position posited here can be seen as a sort of unifying theory that allows the differing criticisms to operate independently of each other without the implication that one is superior to another; as stated earlier, ostensibly this is the position of the academic community on any work of criticism that can support its argument with textual evidence, but this often proves to be a false sense of acceptance, as certain ideas on a particular work will dominate the accepted universal meaning of a particular text, and marginalize criticism that differs too wildly from (or even ignores) whichever contemporary trend of interpretation is in vogue.

Furthermore, its significance lies in the blurring of lines between different artistic media that still resonates with originality in contemporary times, and even more so considering that it was completed in 1939. The novel as an abstract art form is a fairly difficult task to achieve compared to other works of art, as music has always had a firm rooting in abstraction, depending on the time period and the culture, painting and sculpture made a transition in the abstract (and in beauty for beauty's sake) with relative ease, and poetry has managed over the years to experiment more and more with form and abstraction; one cannot help but see attempts at experimentation with the novel in works as Tristram Shandy or the works of Lewis Carroll, but it seems that the novel as a work of pure abstraction, without resorting to a gibberish that would prevent publication or alienate readers, is an almost insurmountable task that Joyce nevertheless was able to achieve. The fact that it took Joyce seventeen years to complete the work is a testament to the difficulty even he had with its composition, which as critics such as Bishop have pointed out was not spent idly, but rather with constant care and revision; Joyce's own

manuscript, available in reproductions in many university libraries, displays lines repeatedly struck through and rewritten, especially in the first book which, in its role as a first movement of sorts, incorporates and introduces the themes that will continue throughout the remainder of the text.

In that respect, Finnegans Wake can pave the way for similar compositions, although care would have to be taken for such works to not appear too derivative. It opens the door for novels to be written in a way that is audibly and visually pleasing to read, rather than simply pleasing in content. Naturally, not everyone will agree with such a conclusion, and some will still find Finnegans Wake to be lacking in artistic merit, but the same could be said of any randomly selected work of art; by opening that door, however, it does allow for further abstract novels to perhaps be received favorably by a literary audience, in the same way that one may not appreciate the works of Picasso but may appreciate Kandinsky. All works of art are beautiful so long as there is an observer that finds beauty in a work, and thus Finnegans Wake does not have to be enjoyed by everyone in order to pave the way for other works that can be enjoyed by those who do not enjoy the trailblazer.

Additionally, Finnegans Wake, albeit in a capacity that is not exactly earth shattering, is able to serve as a sort of universal text because of its complexity. The fragmentation noted by the Modernists after the First World War never seemed to quite be fixed, as those who recognized the fragmentation seemed to all be able to agree that it was taking place, but not necessarily on how to react to this existence; the problem was really only exacerbated by postmodernism, which only served to fragment things even further rather than to put the pieces back together. For instance, the Modernists realized that there were multiple perspectives that existed simultaneously, and that none were more valid or true than the others (in an objective sense), and

this fact seems to bring with it a feeling of unease in Modernist writing, which is quite appropriate in a world that lacks a center; postmodernism did nothing to help, as, instead of finding a way to put the pieces back together, it forced the individual to realize that, not only were there multiple perspectives within any given sampling of people, each person is him or herself constructed out of multiple, conflicting identities; in other words, the fracturing only worsened.

It would be arrogant and regressive to assume that there was a way to put the pieces back together, or that any single perspective (or, for that matter, multiple perspectives) are any truer than others, and certainly Finnegans Wake does not solve the problem of fragmentation as though it were glue used to put together different shards of a broken pane of glass. It does, however, operate as a cultural quilt of sorts, as there is something for everyone within the text, depending on each individual's cultural perspectives. To return to Joyce's quote earlier in this text:

You are not Irish...and the meaning of some passages will perhaps escape you. But you are Catholic, so you will recognize this and that allusion. You don't play cricket; this word may mean nothing to you. But you are a musician, so you will feel at ease in this passage. When my Irish friends come to visit me in Paris, it is not the philosophical subtleties of the book that amuse them, but my recollection of O'Connell's top hat. (qtd in Bishop ix)

Any reader may find within the work what he or she is looking for, which, despite obviously explaining the different ciphers and riddles found within the text depending on the reader, also serves to provide people from multiple backgrounds and made up of multiple identities with a work that can be interpreted in a universal fashion. Whereas it may take someone from Asia

some background information to understand the significance of the works of Amiri Baraka, or someone from Eastern Europe (or America, as well as other locations, for that matter) some basic understanding of English history to comprehend some of the symbolism in Paradise Lost, this sort of rooting in the history of the text is not important when one interprets Finnegans Wake, as even those foreign to the English language will quite likely pick up on a great deal of puns and cognates derived from their own language to appreciate this section and that section, just as some allusions will be readily apparent to a person from one background while others will be apparent to another; clearly, Joyce could not himself incorporate the cultural backgrounds of every person who could possibly pick up his work, but it speaks volumes as to the careful construction, and universality, of the text that it is so abstracted that a reader whom Joyce would never have anticipated could find background-specific meaning within the work, as in the case of critic who found the DNA sequence in Finnegans Wake. It is through this revolutionary innovation that Finnegans Wake manifests its importance, both for regular readers and for academia.

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