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**“What can’t be coded can be decorded”**

**Reading Writing Performing *Finnegans Wake***

**Oliver Rory Thomas Evans**

**Phd Thesis**

**School of Arts, Birkbeck College, University of London  
(2016)**



This thesis examines the ways in which performances of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939) navigate the boundary between reading and writing. I consider the extent to which performances enact alternative readings of *Finnegans Wake*, challenging notions of competence and understanding; and by viewing performance as a form of writing I ask whether Joyce's composition process can be remembered by its *recomposition* into new performances. These perspectives raise questions about authority and archiving, and I argue that performances of *Finnegans Wake* challenge hierarchical and institutional forms of interpretation. By appropriating Joyce's text through different methodologies of reading and writing I argue that these performances come into contact with a community of ghosts and traces which haunt its composition. In chapter one I argue that performance played an important role in the composition and early critical reception of *Finnegans Wake* and conduct an overview of various performances which challenge the notion of a 'Joycean competence' or encounter the text through radical recompositions of its material. In chapter two I discuss Mary Manning's *The Voice of Shem* (1955) and find that its theatrical reassembling of the text served as a competent reading of the *Wake's* form as an alternative to contemporary studies of the book, and that its specific 'redistribution' of the text accessed affective and genetic elements that were yet to be explored in Joyce scholarship. In chapter three I consider several *decompositions* of the *Wake* by John Cage (1975-1983) and find that by paying attention to the materiality of the book rather than its 'plot' or 'meaning' his performances re-encountered the work concealed in *Finnegans Wake's* composition. In chapter four, I document and analyse my own performance, *About That Original Hen* (2014), a 'research-as-performance' lecture which re-enacts a visit to the James Joyce Archive. By reconfiguring *Finnegans Wake* in relation to a marginal figure from its composition process and a contemporary act of protest within the university, this performance explores how a diachronic re-animation of archival materials can engage with the ghosts which haunt its composition and enact a political reading of the text's production and subsequent archiving. I conclude the thesis by arguing that these performances repeat the contingencies, misreadings and appropriations and collective acts of reading and writing that were integral to the composition of *Finnegans Wake*.

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All other images are used to illustrate and document *About That Original Hen* and belong to the author unless otherwise indicated.

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## Abbreviations and References

<i>FW</i>	<i>Finnegans Wake</i> , 3rd edn. (London: Faber and Faber, 1975)
<i>JJ</i> Oxford	Richard Ellman, <i>James Joyce: New and Revised Edition</i> (Oxford: University Press, 1982)
<i>VoS</i>	Mary Manning, <i>The Voice of Shem: Passages from Finnegans Wake</i> (London: Faber and Faber, 1958)
<i>JJA</i>	<i>James Joyce Archive</i> , ed., Danis Rose et al

### About That Original Hen (2014)

<i>A</i>	Part A (Lecture)
<i>B</i>	Part B (Tabletop)
<i>F</i>	Part A (Film) <a href="https://vimeo.com/139245407">https://vimeo.com/139245407</a> (password: shem)
<i>T</i>	Part B (Tabletop) <a href="https://vimeo.com/97571937">https://vimeo.com/97571937</a> (password: shaun)

**Note:** All references to *FW* take the form of page and line number as such (000.00). All initial citations are referenced in footnotes and all subsequent citations are referenced in the body of the text.



## INTRODUCTION

### THE 'PERFUMANCE' OF *FINNEGANS WAKE*

*Finnegans Wake* (1939)<sup>1</sup> is a difficult book to read. It was also incredibly difficult to write and took James Joyce (1882 - 1941) seventeen years to compose. Suffering from an encroaching blindness, Joyce required the assistance of friends, family, patrons and amanuenses to slowly piece together this monstrous assemblage of neologistic language, encyclopedic references, exhaustingly long sentences and paragraphs, intricately structured motifs and themes, which, with its final sentence that returns to the beginning, demands countless re-readings and endless study. With this vast complexity one would assume that *Finnegans Wake* is impossible to adapt for performance. The *performance* required of its writers and readers stretches to the extremes of literary engagement and the notion of translating the book into another medium borders on absurdity. But from its earliest days as a *Work in Progress* (1922-1938) to the present, *Finnegans Wake* has been interpreted through a number of different performance mediums: as readings, theatrical productions, musical compositions, films and performance lectures.

This thesis considers several of these performances and, through practice-led research, investigates how the text may be adapted for performance within the frame of a British university in the twenty-first century. These performances of *Finnegans Wake* are discussed in relation to Joyce scholarship and rather than being treated as discrete events in the reception history of the book are considered as methodological instances of 'performance-as-research'. In turn, this thesis considers the extent to which such a text like *Finnegans Wake* provokes 'research-as-performance', and how its self-reflexive concern with competence, composition and community confirms a bridge between the otherwise unrelated disciplines of Joyce scholarship and performance studies.

The thesis encounters its objects by asking several questions of the relationship between *Finnegans Wake* and performance. The first considers the relation between

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<sup>1</sup>All citations of *Finnegans Wake* refer to the Faber and Faber, 1975 edition unless otherwise stated. All references will include page and line number as such: (000.00)

performance and competence. Can a performance constitute a *competent* reading of *Finnegans Wake*? how does such a text stretch the competencies of its performers and adaptors? and do they present alternative models of competence in their various understandings and readings of the text? The second concerns memory and composition. Can the (re)composition of *Finnegans Wake* into performance encounter the memory of the book's composition process? In what ways can a study of the text's archive address performance studies' concern with archival memory and repetition? and to what extent can we consider the its composition process as performance? The final concern deals with the notion of community and spectrality, and asks whether a performance can engender a communal encounter with past bodies that haunt the material composition of *Finnegans Wake*. Can the text address a spectral community through a performance's 'transgenerational conversation' between the past and the present? Can 'community' be found in the traces of labour and work in *Finnegans Wake* and its performance? and how do these performative encounters with the book's ghosts address hierarchies and power relations in both Joyce's collaborative writing process and the conditions in which it is being revisited in performance?

I will introduce the thesis with an unfolding of the word 'performance' and how its various theoretical iterations relate to *Finnegans Wake* and will be applied to this study. This will be followed by a survey of several performances and productions beginning with Joyce's own performance of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (1928), two recent solo theatre productions – Olwen Fouère's *Riverrun* (2013) and Antionne Caubet's *Finnegans Wake: Chapter 1* (2012) – and with the examples of symposium papers by Ihab Hassan (1969) and Jacques Derrida (1984) and a textual performance by Tim Conley (2003), I trace a parallel thread of Joycean 'research-as-performance', setting up the context for my own performance project, *About That Original Hen* (2014). This will be followed by a brief discussion on my methodological approach, which navigates between 'performance-as-research' and 'research-as-performance'.

Following these introductory examples I will examine two further works in detail before documenting and analysing my own practice-led research to conclude the thesis. I look at Mary Manning's dramatic adaptation, *The Voice of Shem: Passages from Finnegans Wake* (1955), because it demonstrates how a theatrical adaptation can work as a competent act of interpretation; I argue that Manning's dramaturgical

cutting and 'recombination' of material revisits Joyce's composition process, and that her inclusion of Irish folk-songs evoked a shared connection between the adaptor, the author and culturally embodied memory. John Cage's performance texts, *Writing Through Finnegans Wake* (1978-1985) and hörspiel, *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (1982) (also choreographed by Merce Cunningham as a ballet), performed simultaneous acts of reading and writing *Finnegans Wake* by recomposing the text into compositions that sit somewhere between music and theatre. Cage also challenged the notion of hierarchical 'competent' readings of the text by destabilizing the text's coherence; and although in Cage's attempt to emancipate Joyce's language from the 'law and order' of syntax he imposed the comparatively oppressive strictures of chance and indeterminacy, the performance of his recomposition opened up a spectral community between himself and those who participated in the book's composition and subsequent archiving.

The final component of the thesis consists of my performance-as-research project, *About That Original Hen* (2014-2015), a performance-lecture based on Madame France Raphael, an amanuensis whose errors were incorporated into *Finnegans Wake*. This work presents performance as a method of textual research (archival and genetic) and pursues the recomposition of the text into performance from the position of a subject within a twenty-first century academic institutional space. It explores the ways in which one's 'competence' for reading and (re)writing through the medium of performance must incorporate 'incompetencies' such as the failures, errors and mistakes which also constitute the reading and writing processes of the *Wake*; my work also performs a physical and textual decomposition of the book in an attempt to encounter the ghosts concealed in its composition, and by combining its performative study of the book's archive with a contemporary act of protest, I seek to examine the power relation contained in both *Finnegans Wake* and the university institution by operating a 'transgenerational conversation' (Schneider: 2011, 112) between bodies in the present and the past.

I conclude by arguing that such a densely packed, multivalent work of literature as *Finnegans Wake* will necessarily challenge the medium of performance in which it is adapted by shifting it into different forms. *Finnegans Wake* also highlights how the translation process between text and performance will always function as a 'work in progress' as it gathers material from an assortment of pasts it will also look towards the future that always remains to appear. The performative nature of *Finnegans*

*Wake* also spurs scholarly research towards the medium of performance as readers must continually become its actors. In answer to the central questions of the thesis I argue that a competent performance of the *Finnegans Wake* becomes an act of communal memory through the decomposition and recomposition of the text.

In the following chapter I will formulate a working definition of the term 'performance' for this thesis, encompassing an intersection of linguistic, philosophical and practical meanings (semiotics, performance theory, performance practice). This composite definition of performance will then be outlined through the key themes of the thesis (competence; composition and community) and extrapolated in relation to specific examples of performances. These will be followed by a survey of *Finnegans Wake* in performance from 1929 to the present and an exposition of the three central objects of the thesis (Manning: 1955; Cage: 1979-1985; Evans: 2014). Before outlining the details the thesis I will situate this present study in relation to previous scholarship on Joyce and performance, and foreground my performance-as-research in relation to my own practice leading up to the initiation of this current project.

## ***Finnegans Wake* and ‘Perfumance’**

‘Every evening at lighting up o’clock sharp and until further notice in Feenichts Playhouse [...] Newly billed for each wickeday perfumance [...] With nightly redistribution of parts and players by the puppetry producer and daily dubbing of ghosters...’

(219.01-08)

Near the centre of *Finnegans Wake* Joyce constructs a strange theatre, the ‘Feenichts Playhouse’ (219.02). Alluding to Dublin’s Phoenix Park and the resurrectional motif which underpins the *Wake*’s cyclical structure, the ‘Feenichts’ is also a ‘free’ theatre, in the sense of its lack of entrance admission (‘fee’ + ‘nichts’)<sup>2</sup>, and its freedom from homogeneity; the playhouse’s main entertainment, *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies*, is a ‘truly catholic assemblage’ (032.25) of performing arts, a ‘purefusion’ of ‘balletbattle pictures’, ‘pageant’, ‘shadows’ and ‘film’, ‘dances’, ‘accidental music’, ‘community prayer’, ‘songs’, ‘riddles’ and rituals; performed by actors, puppets and ghosts. It is as if Joyce was anticipating the wealth of performance possibilities available to future performers of his *Wake*. Joyce defines the ‘nightly’ events of this strange venue as a ‘*perfurmance*’, continually recurring as a ‘redistribution of parts and players by the puppetry producer and daily dubbing of ghosters’ (219.07-08). By fusing ‘performance’ with ‘perfume’, Joyce recoins the noun into a multi-sensory portmanteau, echoing the work of his ‘puppetry producer’ as he performs a linguistic ‘redistribution of parts and players’ by recasting morphemes to form new words and senses. The ‘dubbing of ghosters’ leaves a trace of what has been lost: the ‘form’ inside ‘performance’ has been *dubbed* over with ‘fume’, like the reinscription of a voice onto a cinematic screen. The ‘form’ of ‘perfumance’ is an absent presence which both disappears and remains within the word’s meaning.

Anticipating Peggy Phelan’s claim that ‘performance’s being [...] becomes itself through disappearance<sup>3</sup>, Joyce’s performance disappears the moment he represents it as a portmanteau. For Phelan, when performance is ‘saved, recorded, documented’ or ‘participate(s) in the circulation of representations *of* representations [...] it becomes something other than performance’ (Phelan: 1993, 146); as Joyce records his verbal performance in the ‘Feenichts Playhouse’, performance ‘becomes

<sup>2</sup> Although it’s ‘quality’ is worth ‘one large shilling’ (219.04)

<sup>3</sup> Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 146

something other': it becomes 'perfumance'.<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that it is no longer 'performance': the original word remains as a visual and aural echo within the new word. Rebecca Schneider picks up on this interplay of disappearance and reappearance when she states that 'performance does not disappear, but *remains* as ritual act'.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Phelan speaks of performance as un-repeatable act, according to Philip Auslander, an 'ontologically pristine' cultural event separated from the iterative reproducibility of commodification, Schneider emphasises the repeatable ritualistic aspect of performance.<sup>6</sup> Developing Richard Schechner's notion of 'restoration of behavior', in which he defines the 'script' of performance as a 'twice-behaved behaviour' that is 'always subject to revision' as culturally embedded codes are repeated and mutated between generations,<sup>7</sup> Schneider defines performance as something which 'script(s) disappearance' (Schneider: 2001, 105) and, revising Phelan's claim, 'becomes itself through messy and eruptive reappearance' (Ibid., 103). Like the disappearance and reappearance of 'performance' in Joyce's 'perfumance', the 'performative trace' challenges 'any neat antinomy between appearance and disappearance, or presence and absence'; performance is 'relentlessly citational, and remaining' (Ibid.).

Joyce does something comparable with the structure of *Finnegans Wake* when he 'scripts' the 'disappearance' of the voice of the river, Anna Livia Plurabelle (ALP), by cutting her final soliloquy mid-sentence ('A way a lone a last a loved a long the', 628.15-16), but lets her reappear at the beginning of the book's first sentence:

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<sup>4</sup>Joyce's linguistic 'performance' as an inventor of neologisms should also be compared with his oral 'performance' as a writer who composed much of *Finnegans Wake* through dictation. [see Ellman: 1982, 649]

<sup>5</sup>Rebecca Schneider, 'Performance Remains' in *Performance Research* Vol.6.ii (London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 100-108, 105 [my italic]

<sup>6</sup> Philip Auslander, *Liveness* (Oxon: Routledge, 1999), 46; Auslander argues that 'live performance' is already part of the 'economy of reproduction' since 'liveness' can only be defined by its conceptual partners, 'recording' and 'mediatization', and that the 'evanescence' of performance can garner just as much, if not more, cultural capital than a mass produced film (Ibid., 67). However, Auslander predicates his argument with a misquotation of Phelan by adding the word 'live' to her definition of 'performance's' ontology. (Ibid., 54) Phelan's original argument is much more subtle than this because she argues that it is not performance's 'liveness' that is compromised by 'reproduction' but the 'promise of its own ontology' (Phelan: 1993, 146). She does not determine performance's 'being' as a fixed entity which stands outside of 'reproduction' but as the 'promise' of an event which '*becomes* itself through disappearance'. Performance, then, is marked by its failure to become 'ontologically pristine' and as Phelan states, this failure of its *becoming-unreproducible* situates it in the ambivalent 'between' spaces; 'between temporal tenses [...] between living and dying' (Lane and Phelan: 1998, 8) 'Performance's being', in this sense, is something that cannot be captured because it is nothing but a promise yet to be fulfilled.

<sup>7</sup>Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Maryland: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 36-37

'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.' (003.01-03). Anna Livia returns, like a comprised ontology of performance, via a commodified ('commodius') 'recirculation' of the moving and fluid river to the static and lifeless castle of her husband, HCE ('Howth Castle and Environs'). In her disappearance, Anna Livia remains, but 'subject to revision'; her return constitutes a repetition which recalls her origin, and in this re-vision she transforms from river to castle, ALP to HCE, female to male, living to dead. These disappearing remains of Anna Livia confront 'any neat antinomy between' beginning and ending, 'presence and absence'. From a microcosmic to a macrocosmic level, from a single word to the cyclical structure of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce anticipates the ontological ambivalences of performance theories from the future. In this respect, Jacques Derrida asserts that it may seem as though we do not read Joyce's late works, which he referred to as an 'hypermnesiac machine' and '1000th generation computer', but are inscribed within them.<sup>8</sup> The effect of *Finnegans Wake*'s performance with language (exemplified through a neologism like 'perfumance') is that in its polyglottic, multivalent 'recombination' (614.35) and 'recircularion' of history and language, we often find curious traces from the future. The most famous of these is the occurrence of 'quarks' (383.01) at least thirty years before their discovery by Murray Gell Mann,<sup>9</sup> before the Albert Hoffman took his notorious bike-ride, Joyce dropped several 'L.S.D.'s into his text (107.02; 325.03; 418.04), and over half a century before it became a verb, he had 'one chap *googling* the holyboy's thingabib' (620.22).<sup>10</sup> Although these coincidences are easily demystified, part of the experience of reading the *Wake* is the sensation that Joyce has somehow managed to produce a memory not only of multiple historical pasts or of its own seventeen year long composition

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<sup>8</sup> 'Can one pardon this hypermnesia which *a priori* indebts you, and in advance inscribes you in the book you are reading?'; Jacques Derrida, 'Two Words for Joyce' (1987) in *Derrida and Joyce: Texts and Contexts*, eds., Andrew J. Mitchell and Sam Slote (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), 24

<sup>9</sup> Murray Gell-Mann, *The Quark and the Jaquar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex* (London: Little Brown, 1994), 180; The fact that Gell-Mann christened his quantam particles directly after Joyce's conflation of cheese with the cry of sea-gulls does not lessen *Finnegans Wake*'s apparent ability to recall the future. The act of naming his discovery constitutes another kind of performance - the illocutionary speech act in which the act of *naming* irrevocably transforms (at least within the linguistic and social sphere) an object from one thing to another. As this thesis will demonstrate with instances like 'perfumance', 'decorded', 'redismember' and 'ambiviolent'; Joyce littered the *Wake* with thousands of future acts of naming waiting to happen.

<sup>10</sup> These apparently miraculous instances of predictive naming can be explained away by recognitions of morphological coincidences: 'L.S.D.' is the old imperial acronym for pounds, shillings, and pence, whilst 'googling' is an obsolete term for squinting. But it only proves that Joyce's material, the textual fabric of Western language, is constructed upon an infinite web of contingent recursions and mutational repetitions.

process but of things yet to come; a future which will become the present of the reader. The *Wake* evokes this when a narrator, Shaun, describes his twin brother, Shem (Joyce's avatar), writing on his body with his own excrement, 'one *continuous present tense* integument slowly unfolded all marryvoising moodmoulded cyclewheeling history' (185.32 - 186.02, my italics).

This many-voiced ('marryvoising') cyclical 'history' that is the *Wake* is described much like Gertrude Stein's explanation of composition as a 'continuous present';<sup>11</sup> it is an act (or even *actionist* act) of writing, a performance, which encompasses both past and future into a 'continuous present tense'. Schneider speaks of this in relation to the way performance plays with 'the warp and draw of one time in another time' as a '*theatricality* of time' and, also picking up on Stein's sensitivity to the synchrony of performance, 'the nervousness of "syncopated time"'.<sup>12</sup> *Writing in Finnegans Wake*, which for now I equate with performance, shares this 'porous approach to time' in which temporality becomes multi-directional; the future combines with the past to construct a disorienting polyvocal and continuously moving present or, as a young Joyce described it, a 'fluid succession of presents'.<sup>13</sup>

What also brings Schneider's theory of performance (along with those of Joseph Roach and Diana Taylor)<sup>14</sup> close to this particular self-reflexive moment in the *Wake* is how memory and history, as writing or performance, are inscribed upon the body. Shem's 'double dye' which he produces 'nichthemericallly from his unheavenly body' is 'brought to blood heat [...] through the bowels of his misery', like some perverse process drawn from Viennese Actionism and used to write 'over every square inch of the only foolscap available, his own body' (185.29-36). The 'integument' (186.01) which slowly unfolds his 'cyclewheeling history' (*Finnegans Wake*), is the fleshy covering of a body. History is inscribed on this thick composition of living matter (the 'foolscap' of Shem's skin) and recycled bodily waste (his 'obscene matter', 185.30),

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<sup>11</sup> Gertrude Stein, 'Composition as Explanation' (1926) in *Look at Me Now and Here I Am: Selected Works 1911-1945*, ed., Patricia Meyerowitz (London: Peter Owen, 2004), 27

<sup>12</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 6

<sup>13</sup> James Joyce, 'A Portrait of the Artist' (1904) in *Poems and Shorter Writings*, eds. Richard Ellman, A. Walton Litz and John Whittier-Ferguson (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 211

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003)



to produce a membranous text. The many voices of history converge upon the memory of a single body; this ‘messy’ act of writing functions as a living archive or, as Schneider might describe it, ‘a fleshy kind of “document” of its own recurrence’ (Schneider: 2011, 37), since everything in the *Wake* recurs. There is a sense that Shem’s ‘continuous present tense integument’ (which can be read as one of the book’s many alternative titles) constitutes a document of writing, an archive or a record of a process intimately bound to ‘bodily memory’ (Ibid., 39). Diana Taylor would maintain a distinction between writing and embodied memory, a binary in which she sets the written ‘archive’ against the embodied ‘repertoire’ (Taylor: 2003, passim).<sup>15</sup> However, as Schneider points out, Taylor reiterates the very binary that she intends to disavow by categorizing the ‘repertoire’ as an ‘underprivileged’ and constantly effaced pole of an opposition that is actually ambivalent and undecidable (Schneider: 2011, 107). The distinction between the ‘archive’ and the ‘repertoire’, the ‘written’ and the ‘embodied’, is inaccurate since writing is also ‘an embodied act’ and ‘performance’ can also be considered ‘discursive’, iterating hegemonic gestures of inscription (Ibid.). For Schneider, ‘performance plays the “sedimented acts” and spectral meanings that haunt material in constant collective interaction, in constellation, in transmutation.’ (Ibid., 102). Interactions between the written word and embodied action are always being transformed through performance and, in this respect, a ‘document’, ‘text’ or ‘script’ belongs neither to the materiality of printed matter or an embodied ‘repertoire’ but somewhere in between; somewhere that cannot be captured because it continually shifts, like Anna Livia’s ‘riverrun’, as a process of ‘transmutation’. I want to unfold this notion of ‘performance’ in relation to *Finnegans Wake*: a sense in which acts of writing and performance are intricately weaved together, whereby a text like Joyce’s is not only a text *for* future performance but a document *of* past performance: the performance of writing.

Schneider’s emphasis on the haunting of performance with a ‘constellation’ of ‘collective interaction’ is integral to this model. The porous ‘melting’ of history with memory which she explores in her study of re-enactments considers how the syncopated relationship between pasts, presents and futures is fundamentally a

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<sup>15</sup> For Taylor, the ‘script’ of embodied performance, which she calls the ‘repertoire’, is frequently undermined and effaced by the written ‘archive’, claiming that ‘writing has served as a strategy for repudiating and foreclosing the very embodiedness it claims to describe’ (Taylor: 2003, 36).

performance of collective memory;<sup>16</sup> the ‘fleshy’ documentation of performance occurs within real or ‘imagined communit[ies]’ (Ibid., 6) in which ‘transgenerational conversation(s)’ take place (Ibid., 111). As the populous activity in ‘Feenichts Playhouse’ shows, performance is founded upon a community of ‘parts and players’; the labour that toils to repeat ‘each wickeday perfumance’ would not be possible without the collective effort of an ever changing, transformative community, presenting future perfumances from ‘the Pageant of Past History’ (221.18-19). Performance happens when a community repeats history through the iterative material of collective memory. With the word ‘transgenerational’, borrowed from trauma studies, performance can be regarded as a transmission through iterative codes of language and gesture; the ‘transgenerational conversation’ of performance is what happens in Schechner’s ‘restoration of behavior’, the mutating repetition of a ‘twice-behaved behaviour’. ‘Community’ is formed by the contact created between generations in the performance of this memory, but it is also formed by the *absence* of contact between them. It is a repetition touched by loss; an act of remembrance, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin, interwoven with memory and forgetting.<sup>17</sup>

Joseph Roach refines the term ‘collective memory’ into ‘selective memory’ in his discussion of performance as a communal act (Roach: 1996, 3). Cultural reproductions of memory become ‘public enactments of forgetting’ (Ibid.), and performances of collective memory present this ‘forgetting’ as a form of ‘memory imperfectly deferred’ (Ibid., 4). For Roach, this communal performance of selective memory is revealed to be ‘imagination’; the repetition of ‘restored behaviour’ is not a mere ‘recapitulation’ but a reinvention and recreation through the imaginative powers of a community (Ibid., 29). Roach compares this imaginative, communal aspect of memory to gossip:

memory circulates and migrates like gossip from location to location as well as from generation to generation, growing or attenuating as it passes through the hands of those who possess it and those whom it possesses.

(Ibid., 35)

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<sup>16</sup> Schneider: 2011, 38; Schneider answers Paul Ricoeur’s question, “Has history finally melted into memory? And has memory broadened itself to the scale of historical memory?” by arguing that if there ever had been a ‘space between history and memory’ it would not have fully ‘melted’ but ‘become porous and transient’.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Our purposive remembering each day unravels the web and the ornaments of forgetting’; Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 198

Roach could just as well be describing the ‘gossipocracy’ (474.04) of *Finnegans Wake*, also referred to as ‘the gossiple so delivered in his epistolear’ (038.23). The ‘gossiple’ in the ‘epistolear’ performs a number of puns: the ‘gospel’ paired with ‘gossip’ highlights how the same source can be told in diverging ways, or as in the *Wake*: ‘the same told of all. Many. Miscegenations on miscegenations’ (018.19-20), echoing gossip’s migration ‘from generation to generation’. ‘Epistolear’ pairs the ‘gospels’ with the ‘epistles’ but also develops the *Wake*’s important motif of ‘The Letter’ by making ‘epistolary’ sound like ‘epistle-ear’. This pun, like Roach’s analogy for the role of memory in performance, works as a stand-in for the underlying process at work in *Finnegans Wake*.

The entire book can be regarded as a letter, or the continually disrupted and deferred process of delivering a letter. In Book III.i this letter circulates from utterance to transcription to sending, amongst the *Wake*’s archetypal family community: ‘Letter, carried of Shaun, son of Hek, written of Shem, brother of Shaun, uttered for Alp, mother of Shem, for Hek, father of Shaun.’ (420.17-19) Typifying this whole sequence are the ruptures that defer and mutate its circulation, the imperfections of transmission are integral to this process. According to Sylvia Beach, Joyce intended the *Wake* to resemble a parlour game of whispers, in which something is repeated until ‘by the time the last person hears it, it comes out completely transformed’.<sup>18</sup> The ‘epistolear’ must therefore be hard of hearing as the utterance of the ‘gossipaceous Anna Livia’ (195.04) is passed along the family chain. Another side of the pun iterates the binding of writing and the body: the written letter is formed and mutated by the utterance of the voice and the imperfection of the ear. This collective transmission of language in *Finnegans Wake* is continually defined by the distorting effects of imperfections in the performance of its ‘gossip’. Like the distortion of history that Roach identifies in performance, the text is composed of a transgenerational community of ‘intermisunderstanding minds’ (118.24), and also as Roach identifies, the performance of these distortions is concerned with the inevitable failure of retracing *origins*.

In Book I.v, dedicated to the impossible deciphering of this ‘Letter’ we are supposedly

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<sup>18</sup> quoted in Dirk van Hulle, *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, and Mann* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 109

privity to an examination of an 'original document', discovered by an 'original hen' pecked from a midden-heap (123.31; 110.22-26). This 'polyhedron of scripture' (105.08) (really *Finnegans Wake*) undergoes many changes of identity and shifts between singular and plural; it is 'a multiplicity of personalities inflicted on the documents or document' (107.24-25), an exercise in extending a single 'original' into multiple, divergent copies. The 'Letter' chapter opens with an excessively long succession of alternative titles for this 'untitled mamafesta' which has 'gone by many names at disjointed times' (104.04-05). We are left with a sense that all that *really* remains of this 'original document' is not an original but a multiple succession of copies, titles and readings: we are left with nothing but the performance of an attempt to recover an original that will always remain lost and unrepeatable. *Finnegans Wake* can thus be described in the same terms used by Roach to define performance: it is 'the doomed search for lost originals continuously auditioning stand-ins' (Roach: 1996, 3). For Roach, alongside memory, performance produces 'substitution' or 'surrogation': an embodiment of collective (and selective) memory which 'rarely if ever succeeds' when culture 'reproduces and re-creates itself' (*Ibid.*, 2). Surrogation appears (or reappears) in the 'cavities created by loss through death or other forms of departure' (*Ibid.*) and, like the 'unreliability of flesh memory' (Schneider: 2011, 6), the 'stand-ins' which surrogate a 'lost original' through performance can, at worst become a process of complete 'erasure'; an 'enactment of forgetting' (Roach: 1996, 6).

Towards the closing pages of the book, just before the 'Letter' makes its final recursion as Anna Livia Plurabelle's closing soliloquy (615.12-619.19), the text describes itself as a 'wholemole millwheeling vicociclotometer' in which its 'dialytically separated elements of precedent decomposition' return as a 'subsequent recombination'; an 'exprogressive process' in which the fragmented remains of the Father (HCE, or Finnius the old One), who is also an egg, are recycled and stuck back together: 'as sure as herself pits hen to paper and there's scribings scrawled on eggs' (614.27-615.10). The surrogate of the re-membered 'old One' takes the form of a breakfast egg with writing 'scrawled' all over, echoing the 'continuous present integument' upon which his son, Shem, had previously scrawled his own 'marryvoising moodmoulded cyclewheeling history' (186.01-02). The surface of the egg stands in for the integument which stands in for the letter which stands in for *Finnegans Wake* which is a stand-in for the unobtainable 'original document'. Writing

is constantly (re)presented as a revolving sequence of transformative acts of surrogation, and in these enactments of collective memory ‘transmitted by the ancient legacy of the past’ (614.36-615.01), we discover forgetting. This key passage is prefaced with a lyrical interweaving of the *Wake*’s temporality and memory:

What has gone? How it ends?  
 Begin to forget it. It will remember itself from every sides, with all gestures,  
 in each our word. Today’s truth, tomorrow’s trend.  
 Forget, remember!

(614.19-22)

At this point, *remembering* takes place in the future. But in order for the renewal of memory to happen we must ‘begin to forget’. Joyce posits remembering as a showing of ‘all gestures’ within ‘each [of] our word(s)’, a reference to Marcel Jousse’s theory that all language is derived from gesture, so that language becomes a remembering of the gestures that words have forgotten: the hand that writes is *re*-remembered with the hand that acts.<sup>19</sup> This is where we might situate performance, or Joyce’s ‘perfumance’, at the bisection between gesture and speech, silence and voice, remembering and forgetting.

This pun on ‘member’ inside *remembering* is another Wakean iteration of the embodied connection between writing and performance. At one extreme, Joyce depicts writing as the memory of an act of sexualised violation – the hidden punctuation of ‘the original document’ in the Letter chapter appears to have been punctured ‘by a pronged instrument’ as its ‘gashes’ and ‘paper wounds’ reveal a silenced, distressed voice exclaiming: ‘stop, please stop, do please stop, and O do please stop’ (124.01-05). By combining the punctuation of a telegram with a hidden memory of a possible rape, which can only be interpreted through a violated puncture upon a page when held up against a light (124.34), Joyce anticipates the Derridean notion of writing as erasure, a process which Joseph Roach similarly recognises in certain ritual performances’s ‘relentless search for the purity of origins’ which are not a ‘voyage of discovery but of erasure’ (Roach: 1996, 6). Roach’s recognition of the violence inherent to this erasure is a recurring theme in the *Wake*. The portmanteau,

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<sup>19</sup>Joyce took notes on Marcel Jousse’s theory that language and writing originate from gestures, and the French philologist ends up in a portmanteau: ‘hourspringlike his joussture’ (535.02-03). For studies on the role of Jousse’s theory on Joyce see: Lorraine Weir, “The Choreography of Gesture: Marcel Jousse and *Finnegans Wake*,” *JJQ* 14.3 (Spring 1977), pp.313-25; Laurent Milesi, “Vico...Jousse.Joyce..Langue,” *Scribble 1: Genèse des textes* (Paris: Lettres Modernes Minard, 1988), pp.143-162

'redismember' (008.06), echoes its call to 'remember itself', as though *re*-membering were always a case of reattaching severed body parts. Jacques Mailhos argues that Joyce's 'text has to be dismembered in order to be remembered', so that in the *Wake*, 'to forget' is synonymous with dismemberment, and 'to remember' is to *re-member*.<sup>20</sup> Toni Morrison would also come to use a similar neologism, 'to disremember', as a locus of transgenerational trauma in her novel *Beloved* (1987), which Roger Luckhurst notes for its combination of contradictory imperatives: 'to recall and forget, to dismember and recompose'.<sup>21</sup> This constellation that emerges between *Finnegans Wake* and these various conceptions of transgenerational, collective acts of remembering and forgetting, indicate that the process of recomposition (and its 'precedent decomposition'; 614.34) is so often underscored by an element of violence or traumatic residue which performance, to recall Victor Turner's retracing of the word's origins, can '*furnish forth*'.<sup>22</sup>

In this comparison between *Finnegans Wake* and 'performance' there is the risk of this study becoming an analogous exercise. It is true that many of these theoretical approaches to performance concerning past and future, absence and presence, memory and forgetting, writing and the body, community and violence, are not unique to performance and *Finnegans Wake*. The *Wake*'s immense frame of reference and fugitive form means that any number of equivalent theoretical methodologies and disciplines could be applied to its study. But what sharpens the link between performance and the *Wake* is that they both repeatedly confound fixed categorization. *Ulysses* may also be elucidated with a study through performance theory and practice since it has also been adapted for performance<sup>23</sup> and engages many of the above concerns, but I choose to focus on the *Wake* because the radical confusion of forms is much closer to the 'open, multivocal, and self-contradictory' definitions of performance.<sup>24</sup> *Ulysses* divides into distinctive forms, such as the fugue of 'Sirens', the theatre of 'Circe' or the catechism of 'Ithaca', pushed to extremes

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<sup>20</sup> Mailhos also points towards the French *remembré*, which refers to the regrouping of 'previously separated patches of land'. Jacques Mailhos, "Begin to forget it" The Preprovided Memory of *Finnegans Wake* in *European Joyce Studies 4: Finnegans Wake: Teems of Times*, ed. Andrew Treip (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp.41-68, 53

<sup>21</sup> Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge), 96

<sup>22</sup> Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: the Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1982), 13

<sup>23</sup> James Joyce, Marjorie Barkentin and Padraic Colum, *Ulysses in Nighttown* (New York: Random House, 1958)

<sup>24</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), 16

across the surface of the text. As Martin Puchner argues, 'Circe' is so hyper-theatrical that it becomes a form of anti-theatre, but this is because the chapter can be viewed through a distinctly theatrical lens.<sup>25</sup> In *Finnegans Wake*, when Joyce makes use of theatricality it is always engrafted to other forms which complicate its structural coherence; the 'play' which takes place in the 'Feenichts Playhouse' eschews the expected dramatic properties of stage directions, whilst in the 'Bedroom' chapter (III.iv) it is never clear whether we are on a film set ('Closeup. Leads [...] Footage', 559.19, 31), a Victorian stage ('Chamber Scene. Boxed.', 559.01), a chess game ('First position of harmony [...] Check action', 559.21), or a Piscatorian fusion of all three.<sup>26</sup> The ever shifting ambiguity of Joyce's 'perfumance' is what brings his final work closer to the interdisciplinary concerns of performance and performance studies. But with the slipperiness of 'performance' and its relation to an equally slippery work like the *Wake*, it is necessary to make further distinctions between 'performance', 'performability' and 'performativity', especially when these variations begin to overlap and offer different angles to the notions of *composition* and *community* that have begun to emerge.

So far I have shown how performance relates to the composition of *Finnegans Wake* through the circulating and transformative, embodied behaviors of memory and forgetting and how these concerns introduce the notion of 'transgenerational conversations' and community, but there remains to be a discussion on how these aspects pertain to performativity and *competence*.

Bert O. States, in an attempt to furnish a working definition of performance which combines both 'performance' and 'performativity', highlights the difficulty in trying to capture a general concept as 'we slide from one manifestation of the phenomenon to another'.<sup>27</sup> States views this difficulty as a problem of linguistic taxonomy because 'performance' is a 'thing', and our use of 'words' to capture its essence will always fall short because 'things, especially complex things like performance, don't obey our

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 99

<sup>26</sup> Contemporary to Joyce's 'Work in Progress', Erwin Piscator was integrating different media into his theatrical productions. In his 'Documentary Play' (1929) 'Film was combined organically with live action on the stage for the first time'; Richard Drain, ed. *Twentieth-Century Theatre: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1995), 105

<sup>27</sup> Bert O. States, "Performance as Metaphor" (1996) in *Performance: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Vol. I, ed., Philip Auslander (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.108-137, 109

words for them'; 'they are subject to continual mutation and intermixture' (States: 1996, 109), and thus a definition of performance 'is a semantic impossibility' (Ibid., 110). One of State's solutions to the impossibility of finding a fixed definition is to recognise 'family resemblances' between the objects and events we might determine to be '*like* performances'; the indeterminable differentiations between things we want to call 'performative' become a question of metaphorical relationships (States: 1996, 131). The word itself can be seen as a 'stand-in' for a phenomenon that can only be expressed in terms of what it has *in common* rather than what it *is*. However, States also posits a definition suggesting that the 'kernel or gene of performativity' springs from a 'pleasure' found in 'the collapse of means and ends into each other, the simultaneity of producing something and responding to it in the same behavioral act' (Ibid., 130). This definition broadly combines the affect of pleasure (perhaps a *jouissance*) with performance's tendency towards self-reflexivity (a 'concretion of form and content' as Beckett once defined Joyce's *Work in Progress*)<sup>28</sup> and the collaborative relationship between 'producing' and 'responding'. If its 'means and ends' are collapsed, the site of a performance becomes a complex process, and the 'simultaneity' of production and response does not necessarily maintain a separation between performer and spectator but an ambivalent scenario in which these roles are interchangeable: a performer might also respond to the work they have produced as much as an audience member may participate in the work's production. States, quoting Mikel Dufrenne on readership, articulates this as a relationship of 'seeing' between the work of performance and the spectator in which they '*become* the performer of the work'; there is an expectation that in 'performance' 'we are willing "to play the game" on which all aesthetic perception is based' (Ibid., 117, 118).

Stephen Heath argues that the *Wake*'s absolute openness requires its readers to 'become its actor' by '[acceding] to the play of [its] incompleteness'.<sup>29</sup> Susan Shaw Sailor, continuing Heath's post-structuralist approach, argues that the text's resistance to fixed and determinable meaning forces its reader 'to become active

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<sup>28</sup> In a letter to Joyce about his essay on the *Work in Progress*, Beckett referred to a 'passage which treats of form as a concretion of content.'; Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett: Vol I: 1929-1940*, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld & Lois More Overbeck eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 7

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Heath, 'Ambiviolences' (1972) in Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer, eds., *Post-Structuralist Joyce*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 32



participants in its production.<sup>30</sup> According to Heath, the active reader participates in a 'situation of writing' (Heath: 1972, 32) so that the *reading* process becomes a *writing* process. This conception of reading the *Wake* iterates Derrida's proposition that 'reading *is* writing' (Roughley: 1990, 10). The 'performativity' of the *Wake* in this sense does not quite belong to the realm of J.L. Austin's 'speech acts' but to a active conflating of production and reception – we might revisit Austin's influential phrase from 'doing things *with* words' to 'doing things *to* words', as the reader acts upon the linguistic material of the text – and I mean *material* not as a metaphor but as the tactile encounter with materials that constitutes reading and writing. Annotating margins, cutting text, handling multiple books, folding paper, turning pages all show how writing is not a singular process of print and reading not a simple case of looking at print. The material terrain of reading, writing and performance is diverse but connected by its *handiwork*. This 'situation of writing' implies that *reading*, which we might no longer consider an isolated, passive activity but an 'event', becomes a repetition (with a difference) of the *writing* of *Finnegans Wake*. To what extent does the 'performativity' of the text and the reader's 'performance' of reading the text constitute a re-enactment of the composition process? If their 'active participation' by becoming 'actors' of the text situates them within the memory of the book's composition, to what extent do they replicate the *competence* of the author? To be more precise, *whose* 'situation of writing' does the performance of their reading re-enact?

The composition of *Finnegans Wake*, or the 'Work in Progress' until its publication in 1939, was not a singular act of writing by a single person but a result of shared labour amongst Joyce's family members, friends and occasional employees. Roach's definition of performance circulating 'like gossip' not only provides an apt description of memory in the *Wake* but also how it functioned in the book's composition as it 'grew and attenuated' by passing 'through the hands of those who possess(ed) it and those whom it possess(ed)' (Roach: 1996, 35). Whilst Joyce would always remain the chief engineer of his 'wholesale safety pun factory'<sup>31</sup> the performance of his composition relied heavily on the competence of others who acted as amanuenses,

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<sup>30</sup> Susan Shaw Sailor, *On the Void of To Be: Incoherence and Trope in Joyce*, (Michigan:University of Minnesota, 1993), 5

<sup>31</sup> James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, Vols. III, ed. Richard Ellman (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 154

copyists, readers, and researchers. This compositional community arose out of embodied incompetence: Joyce's failing eyesight. A division of labour thus emerged like a process of dismemberment and prosthesis as his helpers served as his eyes and hands. His daughter-in-law, Helen Kastor Joyce 'would read to him' and he 'would stop her, write down in a notebook something that she had read, and ask her to continue.'<sup>32</sup> Allegedly, whilst taking Joyce's dictation, Samuel Beckett accidentally inscribed the phrase 'come in' when Joyce responded to a knock at the door, a mistake which the author was happy to keep.<sup>33</sup> Joyce even entertained the possibility of having the poet, James Stephens, 'devote himself heart and soul' to the completion of Books II and IV, if his health problems made it 'madness to continue'.<sup>34</sup> Not forgetting the countless hands that haunt the *Wake's* densely woven fabric of appropriated source material, Joyce's writing required plurality; to an extent, his 'mastery' over his text was also tempered by handing his work to other hands and permitting their own imperfect performances to become part of the contingencies of its composition. The most interesting of these participants (in terms of how their performance would be incorporated into the text) was Madame France Raphael, an amanuensis employed to re-transcribe his barely legible notebooks. She often unwittingly contributed what Danis Rose and Wim Tigges have referred to as 'Raphaelisms', errors in transcription which would become 'fragments of her very own composition' in later drafts of the *Wake*.<sup>35</sup> It is uncertain whether Joyce deliberately orchestrated the use of 'Raphaelisms', or knowingly used these mutations instead of his 'original' notes, but they demonstrate how the 'erronymous' (617.30) performance of a marginal figure like Raphael, recognised for the lapses in her 'competence' as a reader of Joyce's handwriting, can become a *writer* in the silent community that haunts the book's composition.

The role of Raphael in *Finnegans Wake* will be an important focus in Chapter Four, when I use my exploration of her marginal place in the archive as a basis for performing *Finnegans Wake*. She is relevant here because her role in the text's composition moves from the linguistic and semiotic notion of competence in

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<sup>32</sup> Danis Rose, *The Textual Diaries of James Joyce* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1995), 10

<sup>33</sup> Richard Ellman, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 649; Although this story remains apocryphal and its trace is still yet to be recovered from the published text.

<sup>34</sup> quoted in Finn W. M. Fordham, "'Languishing hysteria? The clou historique?": James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Lucia Joyce's Breakdown.', (Thesis: Birkbeck College, 1997), 22

<sup>35</sup> Wim Tigges, 'Mme Raphael, Danis Rose, and the Fallacy of First-Draft Authority', *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 35/6, no. 4 - Vol 36. n. 1 (Summer - Fall, 1998), 834-840, 836; Rose: 1995, 179

performance to a more material and tactile conception of competence. The notion of *understanding Finnegans Wake* is brought into question when considering Raphael's transcriptions, provoking a further dimension to 'performance' that I will explore throughout this thesis.

Recalling the work she performed in the early thirties, Raphael wrote in a letter of 1959 that she 'must have made many stupid mistakes' which, although she 'would have made them in any case' increased because of the difficulty she had in trying to comprehend 'the terrible quantity of languages [...] some of which [she] did not know the first elements'.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps unaware of the fact that Joyce was not fluent in all the languages he acquired in his notebooks, Raphael remembered herself as lacking the basic linguistic competence to fully understand the notes she was transcribing. There may have been two types of 'competence' that Raphael considered lacking. Knowing 'the first elements' of a language is what Noam Chomsky defined as linguistic 'competence', the deeply rooted capability to grasp the fundamental laws of language.<sup>37</sup> 'Performance' is the application of this competence, putting it into practice.<sup>38</sup> Raphael's recollection was a kind of performance review: she considered her 'competence' (i.e. knowing 'the first elements') to be insufficient, affecting her 'performance' ('many stupid mistakes'). Colin McCabe recognises this relationship between competence and performance as a characteristic feature *Finnegans Wake*: 'Joyce is constantly testing our performance against our competence – systematically taking us to those moments where we can no longer hold the grammatical relations securely in place.'<sup>39</sup> As McCabe argues, Joyce's language in *Finnegans Wake* employs linguistic mechanisms like 'old syntax' and grammatically competent units of expression, but the extreme, excessive performativity of their execution makes Joyce's text subversive. The differences between Raphael's 'performance' and the performativity which McCabe describes are that Raphael was reading Joyce's notebooks, rather than *Finnegans Wake*; McCabe focuses on grammatical and syntactical competence, whilst the 'first elements' that Raphael had difficulty recognising would also have extended to the most basic units of expression such as

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<sup>36</sup> Raphael to Spielberg (28 September, 1959), A.I.8, The James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo [Hereafter, Raphael: 1959]

<sup>37</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1965), 4

<sup>38</sup>Chomsky: 'We thus make a fundamental distinction between *competence* (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations).' Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Colin MacCabe, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (2nd Edition) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; first published 1978), 178

spelling and morphology. From the process of its composition to its future reception, this linguistic notion of performance (as an active distortion or transfiguration of competence) belongs to *Finnegans Wake* as a process which embraces its impossibility, excess and failure. The performance of 'competence' in relation to *Finnegans Wake* is often coupled with 'incompetence'.

The other 'competence' Raphael refers to moves from a semiotic and semantic 'competence' to a more material, graphological 'competence'. She implied that her performance would always have been affected by a certain incompetence: she 'would have made [mistakes] in any case'. It is unclear to which automatic 'incompetence' she was referring: her inability to fully understand the obscure content of Joyce's notebooks, the illegibility of his handwriting, or, most likely, both. Her self-criticism iterates what we might describe as 'Wakean competence', a competence braided with incompetence.

Margot Norris argues that the *Wake* creates a 'fiction of the reader's inevitable incompetence [...] measured by implicitly postulating a hypothetical ideal reader who was a universal polyglot and polymath'.<sup>40</sup> This 'fiction' is found in the *Wake* as 'that ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia' (120.13-14) who calls 'unnecessary attention to errors, omissions, repetitions and misalignments' (120.15-16)). The reader's 'inevitable incompetence' is a fiction not just because finding this hypothetical universal polyglot and polymath is an impossibility but because the text itself is a document of incompetence. For Umberto Eco, the notion of an 'ideal reader' (or 'model reader') is predicated upon 'competence' shared between the reader and the writer; in this semiotic scenario of literary communication, the author must 'foresee a Model Reader capable of cooperating in the textual production as the author thought, and moving interpretively the way he moved in generating the text'.<sup>41</sup> In this Platonic situation the 'ideal' or 'model' reader must have a 'knowledge of the codes', constituting a 'competence' which mirrors the production of the text. The *reading* of the text becomes a repetition of the *writing* of the text. But if this applied to the 'ideal reader' found in *Finnegans Wake*, rather than calling attention to the text's

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<sup>40</sup> Margot Norris, 'Finnegans Wake' in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.161-184, 175

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Marco de Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, trans. Áine O'Healy (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 141

'errors, omissions, repetitions and misalignments', surely his 'competence' must entail the repetition of these textual infelicities? There might be another angle to Jacques Derrida's assertion that there can be no 'Joycean competence', when he claimed to be "incompetent" in a field in which there can be no competence'.<sup>42</sup> The impossibility of performing 'Wakean competence' lies in the impossibility of re-performing it's inherent *incompetence*. There is no 'ideal reader', not because he is a fiction, but because there was no 'ideal writer' in the first place.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the 'ideal reader' is that he or she is an individual. The co-operational relationship between author and model reader implies a sharing of knowledge (although not necessarily a *gaining* of knowledge), but precludes a notion of 'competence' which is shared, collaborative and collective. Like Marx's 'general intellect', the 'competence' required in the 'performance' of writing and reading *Finnegans Wake* has nothing to do with a singular genius but a plural composition of shared capabilities. If this 'competence', which produced the *Wake* and continues to reproduce it through performances of reading and re-writing, constitutes *communal composition*, then it is so as a collection of incompetencies; a constellation of 'errors, omissions, repetitions and misalignments' which coalesce into the text's *performance*. The *Wake* is not the product of a single writer but bears the traces of 'a multiplicity of personalities *inflicted*' (107.24-25) upon its documents, performed by 'the continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators' (118.24-26).<sup>43</sup> Competence, as I would like to consider it in relation to performance and *Finnegans Wake*, performs a division of labour predicated upon a collaborative 'intermisunderstanding'. Competence will always be marked by incompetence: *performance*, as a 'distortion of competence',<sup>44</sup> becomes the site at which this relationship is revealed.

This relationship between competence and performance as it relates to the production and reproduction of *Finnegans Wake* encompasses not only the linguistic

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<sup>42</sup> Alan Roughley, *Reading Derrida Reading Joyce* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1999), 43

<sup>43</sup> Tim Conley refers to the *Wake*'s 'host of amanuenses, researchers, proof-readers' and 'printers' as 'unconscious contributors in motion; charged particles nebulously revolving around a vague central personality'; Tim Conley, *Joyce's Mistakes: Problems of Intention, Irony, and Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 45

<sup>44</sup>Sybille Krämer, 'Connecting Performance and Performativity: Does it Work?' in Laura Cull and Alice Lagaay, eds., *Encounters in Performance Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 223-237, 225

dimension but also a certain extra-linguistic, material, tactile notion of competence. As Sybille Krämer argues, if competence is the ‘genuine object of linguistics’ then the performance of ‘actual speech is determined by a broad range of extra-linguistic influences’. Since Derrida and Butler’s ‘rehabilitation of the surface phenomena of speech’ – by focusing on the performative materiality of citational speech acts – Krämer sees an opportunity to ‘reverse the terms of Chomsky’s argument’ as:

performance can be rehabilitated as language theory’s genuine point of reference, precisely in terms of its characteristics as an ‘impure’ phenomenon, arising from the simultaneity of speech *and* social action, the coincidence of language *and* world, and the coupling of sign *and* thing.

(Krämer: 2014, 225)

Performance, then, does not become a measure of the extent to which the material conditions of speech and writing depart from a fundamental base measure of competence, but a demonstration of how the ‘extra-linguistic’ already formulates the ground for linguistic competence. If, as I do in this thesis, we view writing *as* performance and not just an assessment of writing which *becomes* performative, then it is necessary to consider how competence is imbued with incompetence that is inherently collaborative (‘intermisunderstanding’).

In another recollection from Madame Raphael, it seems that Joyce may have hinted at this complex notion of understanding. Recalling one of her infrequent encounters with Joyce, Raphael remembers how he complimented her for her understanding of the work:

When I began working for Mr Joyce I saw him personally and asked explanations when I was uncertain. I remember one day saying to him that I did my best but very often felt that I was in a fog and could not be at all sure of what I was writing. Very quickly he answered “Don’t trouble, you understand it much more than the most of my readers will understand it.” This was extremely kind but did not seem quite satisfactory to me.

(Raphael: 1959)

Although unconvinced by the flattering implications of Joyce’s reply, Raphael reveals the possibility for ‘understanding’ which couples the composition of the ‘Work in Progress’ with the reading of *Finnegans Wake*, and points towards a collaborative

and material notion of competence.<sup>45</sup> Joyce confronts the intellectual competence of the book's supposed target audience, his 'readers', with an alternative form of competent understanding. Alan Read offers a similar re-definition of the word when he recounts *standing-under* a mass of bodies to form a human pyramid, rendering 'understanding' as a 'practical involvement and intellectual perception [...] informed by intellectual judgements' but which 'is utterly tactile.'<sup>46</sup> Perhaps Joyce, never shy of multiple meanings, was also implying a form of *understanding* which set Raphael apart from most of his future readers: a relational, 'practical involvement' with the production of the text that is not only subject to error but a *tactile* encounter. Despite the compliment, Joyce may also have been making an oblique reference to her subordinate *under-standing* within an hierarchical power relation as she performed her reading and writing under the weight of her inevitable ignorance. When Joyce uses the word in the *Wake* it usually confirms a patronising inequality between a cognoscente and ignoramus: 'As my explanations here are probably above your understandings' (152.04-05); 'I overstand you, you understand.' (445.11); 'Understudy my understandings' (271.F05). This last example brings the pun to theatrical performance in which a peripheral actor, the understudy, is employed to 'understand' the text of the performance but as a contingency on stand-by; their memory, rather like Raphael's transcriptions, is put to work, but for the most part will be unused, remaining in the margins of the performance. The 'understanding' of her transcriptions, in which she 'could not be at all sure of what [she] was writing', resembles the parroting of a bad understudy, but it is precisely this uncertainty about what she was doing as she was writing that characterises Joyce's possible reconfiguration of 'understanding' as a form of competence (or competent incompetence). Her understanding of Joyce's 'Work in Progress' is not about a linguistic mastery over the content of the notebooks but an embodied encounter; in this fundamentally *tactile* relation, her lack of certainty about what she is doing incorporates her understanding with an element of subordination, even powerlessness.

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<sup>45</sup> Although the 'Raphaelisms' took place within the notebooks, Raphael was also involved in the drafts and revisions of manuscripts so she would not have been entirely in the dark about how her transcriptions related to the larger picture of the book's composition.

<sup>46</sup> Alan Read, *Theatre, Intimacy and Engagement: The Last Human Venue*, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 102

Although far from the terrain of performance art, Raphael's performance as amanuensis anticipates the Fluxus artist Bazon Brock's assertion that 'Performance contains the experience of powerlessness' (Krämer: 2014, 229). Sybille Krämer considers this powerlessness or the 'experience of limitation, of being controlled' as an 'imperfection' which performance artists in particular are capable of embracing because the indeterminate 'disappearing act' of performance confronts the teleology of the 'artwork' with the flexibility of process. Unlike Raphael, who remained uncertain, the performance artist, aware of their powerless imperfection before the things they 'can't control', 'becomes the true 'master"' (Ibid.). To an extent, Joyce's allowances for chance and error to play into his composition process granted him with a comparable mastery over his materials.<sup>47</sup> The imperfections and 'impure phenomena' (Ibid., 225) that typified the *performance* of the composition: its collaborative acts of reading and writing prompted by bodily affliction (glaucoma), meant that the 'competence' behind the work was not based solely on superior erudition and linguistic mastery of an individual but a *competent incompetence* which embraced the inevitable inequalities and failures in its division of labour. As Sam Slote has affirmed, '*Finnegans Wake* is a text that always exists in misrelation to itself and is thus a text that is always in error.'<sup>48</sup> The imperfect competence that constitutes its composition process ties it closely to the field of performance which, as Rebecca Schneider articulates, is composed by 'manipulants of error and forgetting' (Schneider: 2011, 38).

*Finnegans Wake* can be viewed as an historically fixed 'work' of literature located at a pivotal moment in the twentieth century (1939), but as the recently 'restored' *Finnegans Wake* shows and as the text is constantly reminding its readers, it has never stopped being a 'work in progress'. The performances of reading and writing which constitute its composition find their repetition in the archival practices of genetic reconstruction, the study of the notebooks, manuscripts, drafts and revisions which bear traces of the memory of the *Wake*'s collaborative composition process, re-trace the footprints (and handprints) that the performance of its composition left in its wake. As with performance's capacity to embrace its limits or its 'doomed search

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<sup>47</sup>see for example Matthew Creasy, ed., *Errears and Erroriboose: Joyce and Error*, European Joyce Studies: 20 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), and Tim Conley, *Joyce's Mistakes: Problems of Intention, Irony, and Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003)

<sup>48</sup> Sam Slote, 'An Imperfect *Wake*' in *Errears and Erroriboose: Joyce and Error*, European Joyce Studies: 20, ed. Matthew Creasy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp.135-149, 148



for lost originals' (Roach: 1996, 3), the *Wake's* genesis – a return to its original acts of reading and writing – similarly embraces a transitory, ambiguous, sometimes undecidable terrain between production and publication. As with the various aspects of performance outlined above – 'error and forgetting'; its emphasis on process and transgenerational 'intermisunderstandings'; the complex interweaving of temporalities – genetic criticism also often focuses on the temporal dimension of writing and regards its literary objects as a process rather than a product.<sup>49</sup> Dirk van Hulle differentiates 'genetic criticism' from more determined 'scholarly editing' by highlighting how it navigates the 'no man's land' of the '*avant-texte*', drawing 'attention to textual trouble-spots' instead of producing 'a restored text' (van Hulle: 2004, 4). Genetic criticism of *Finnegans Wake*, as with performance, highlights the contingent and the marginal properties of its composition. We might also consider it as another mode of performance. Alan Read alerts us to this potential connection between performance studies and composition, community and competence in *Finnegans Wake* when he speaks of performance's 'dissensuous' potential for:

making visible something that was otherwise obscure in that perceptual field, making audible something that was noise before, in other words an affirmative act wholly politically adversarial to one of the founding precepts of performance studies, the ambiguity of the unmarked.

(Read: 2009, 187)

Read offers a notion of performance, through Jacques Rancière's 'dissensus', which is not a 'form of disagreement or division of opinion' but 'the affirmation of a capacity for appearance' (Read: 2009, 186, 179). Referring back to Peggy Phelan's 'founding precept of performance studies' – the disappearing ontology of the 'unmarked' which, in his critique, presents 'the ambiguity of the unmarked' as a privilege of the performer, Read points towards performance's affirmative capacity to make visible or audible the marks in the margins that would otherwise have been ignored, lost or forgotten. Archival work is also an attempt at affirming the appearance of things otherwise obscured or concealed in noise; as Carolyn Steedman writes of the historian's task, the performance of archival work is to make 'the dead walk and talk' by reading 'for what is *not there*: the silences and the absences of the documents' which 'always speak to us'.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Dirk van Hulle, *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, and Mann* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 2

<sup>50</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 150-151

For all its polylingual loquacity, *Finnegans Wake* also affirms the presence of the absences and silences permeating its composition. Before Anna Livia is discussed in the form of gossip by two washerwomen in I.viii, her son ‘lifts the lifewand and the dumb speak’ (195.05); at the other end of the book, when the hitherto silent voice of the river speaks through her letter she signs with ‘here’s lettering you erroneously’ (617.30). Instances like these engage in the ‘making audible’ or ‘making visible’ the ‘dumb’ or ‘erroneous’ (erroneous/anonymous) presences that are *marked* and identifiable but submerged within the dense fabric of its obscure noise. Performance, whether we mean the performance that exists inside the text or the performances that can be made *with* the text becomes a locus for the inequalities, marginalisations and marks of expended energy that haunt any cultural production. There is therefore a political aspect to my definition of performance in relation to *Finnegans Wake*.

The political element to my performance analysis will become most apparent in my performance-as-research chapter, in which my performance-lecture of *Finnegans Wake*, an affirmation of the marginal presence of Raphael, is inflected by a contemporary political scenario within the margins of the university. The chapter dealing with John Cage’s recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* concerns the political problems raised by a ‘competent incompetence’ and the supposed mastery of powerlessness which Cage’s indeterminate and chance based procedures brought to Joyce’s text. Whilst the chapter on Mary Manning’s *The Voice of Shem* is less specifically political in its focus, the comparison between the dramatist’s interpretation and contemporary scholarly approaches highlights the subversive potential of applying a performance methodology to Joyce’s text as a subtle challenge to predominantly patriarchal, privileged forms of textual exegesis in the later 1950s. These chapters also consider ways in which the *recomposition* (and *decomposition*) of performance engages with the *memory* of *Finnegans Wake*’s composition and how this (often) violent and disarticulating process might generate certain aspects of community (or anti-community) between performer, audience and the original participants in the book’s production. The ‘politics’ of this thesis is thus concerned with power and pedagogy, as they relate to the performance of ‘understanding’ and ‘competence’; material relations and the division of labour, as they relate to the role of memory in the performance of composition, and how

performance's capacity to 'redismember' traces of textual and archival production becomes a site for the communal interplay of separation and togetherness. The 'political' dimension to this study of performance will not just meditate on the subversions that Joyce's text provokes or a materialist conception of its composition, but, to echo Jean-Luc Nancy, be a place where community is brought into play.<sup>51</sup>

### Situating the Thesis

There have been very few studies of performance and film adaptations of *Finnegans Wake* and the last two extensive studies are around thirty years old. Both Deborah Martin Gonzales' Phd thesis, "'Drauma' and 'Newseryreel': Joyce's Dramatic Aesthetic in Adaptation' (1986) and Jose Lanter's, *Missed Understandings* (1988) consider a broad selection of adaptations from Joyce's prose works.<sup>52</sup> Gonzales' thesis is primarily concerned with the influence of theatre and cinema upon Joyce and how theatrical and cinematic adaptations of *A Portrait as the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegans Wake* have succeeded in reflecting the author's technical understanding of both forms. Her thesis sets up a qualitative binary between the two and argues that Joyce's fiction has more in common with theatre than cinema because of his reliance on 'dialogue over description'.<sup>53</sup> She concludes that the success or failure of an adaptation has less to do with the adapter's method and more to do with the dramatic or cinematic qualities of the original source. Gonzales re-addresses the tendency in Joyce criticism to privilege his connection to cinema over theatre and the principle purpose of her thesis was to show how a variety of adaptations prove the prevalence of Joyce's dramatic aesthetic in his prose.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xxxvii

<sup>52</sup> Gonzales, Deborah Martin, "'Drauma' and 'Newseryreel': Joyce's Dramatic Aesthetic in Adaptation.'" (Tulane University, 1986) (thesis); José Lanter's, *Missed Understandings: A Study of Stage Adaptations of the Works of James Joyce* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988)

<sup>53</sup> Gonzales: 1986, abstract

<sup>54</sup> Gonzales contests critics such as Harry Levin, Edward Murray and Alan Spiegel who consider works like *Ulysses* to be 'cinematic' and argues that what could be considered to be Joyce's 'cinematic technique' was largely 'appropriated from the theatre by the cinema' (Gonzales: 1986, 33). The problem with this reclamation of theatre from cinema is that it does not consider how the historical relation between cinema and theatre during Joyce's period was still undergoing a mutual process of influence and transformation. Rather than privileging one form over the other it might have been more useful to consider how Joyce reflected this complex relationship in his work, such as the ambiguity of the 'Bed of Trial' scene in *Finnegans Wake* (III.iv.555-590) which evokes both cinema ('Closeup'; 'Footage', 559.19, 31) and theatre ('Callboy. Cry off', 559.30) by framing the action with imperative instructions from both forms.

Jose Lanthers' book focuses specifically on theatrical adaptations of Joyce's works from productions based on *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, and performs a systematic study in order to formulate judgements about their 'adequacy' as stage-adaptations (Lanthers: 1988, 227). Lanthers develops on Gonzales by arguing that she had enacted the same fallacy as those who compare Joyce's work to the cinema by failing to make a distinction between the theatricality and the 'verbal theatricality' of Joyce's texts which, as Alan Spiegel argues in relation to cinema and Joyce, constitutes a 'verbal analogue' to technique and not a confirmation of the author's skill as a dramatist or film-maker.<sup>55</sup> Lanthers is indebted to adaptation and narratological theories which mark a distinction between story and discourse but because adaptations of modernist texts like *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* 'seriously challenge traditional notions of narrative causality' (Lanthers: 1988, 3-4)<sup>56</sup> she departs from their parameters and effects a 'broader strategy' of analysis by examining them as both 'individual plays and as version of the source text' (Ibid., 4).

On *Finnegans Wake*, Lanthers disagrees with Gonzales that 'the book is dramatic in form' and stays close to Adaline Glasheen's view that the *Wake*'s relation to theatre is purely analogical and metaphorical (Ibid., 180). Her critique of Mary Manning's *The Voice of Shem* (1955) (examined in Chapter Two of this thesis) repeats David Hayman's position that Manning's dramatisation was a 'paste and shears job' and distortion of the text's narratological elements<sup>57</sup> by measuring Manning's 'misinterpretations' against Glasheen's interpretation of plot and character in her third *Census on Finnegans Wake* (1978). Lanthers limits her strategy from the beginning by taking Glasheen's interpretation for granted and systematically applying it to Manning's dramaturgical recomposition of the text. This approach sets up *Voice of Shem* as an inevitable failure because it assumes Glasheen's interpretation to be *more* correct than Manning's interpretation without contextualising the differences between the two. Rather than formulating a reading of her own, Lanthers relies on an

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<sup>55</sup>Alan Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye. Visual Consciousness in Film and the Modern Novel* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 78-79 quoted in Lanthers: 1988, 2

<sup>56</sup> Quoting from Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 263

<sup>57</sup> David Hayman, 'Notes for the Staging of *Finnegans Wake*', *A James Joyce Miscellany (Third Series)*, ed., Marvin Magalaner (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), 278-293, 278

edition of Glasheen's work that Manning would not have had the benefit of knowing. Manning adapted the text during what Lois Mink has referred to as the 'Age of Innocence' in *Finnegans Wake* studies, a time before publications like Clive Hart's *Concordance* or the *Wake Gazetteer* had advanced critics to a state of relative demystification with regard to the book's *content*;<sup>58</sup> as such Lanter's dehistoricises Manning's adaptation by not considering the relative sophistication of her 'atomization' of Joyce's 'characters and structure' (Hayman: 1962, 182) when there was far less certainty about them.<sup>59</sup>

The most limiting aspect of Lanter's critique is how she does not consider how Manning's 'missed understanding' (175.18) offers a different mode of knowledge to Glasheen's hermeneutic cataloguing. For Lanter, as a critic, 'the most one can do is agree or disagree with the adapter's choices, interpretations and solutions' (Lanter: 1988, 222), but this perspective is only limited because it does not fully appreciate how transforming the *Wake* into a performance requires a different interpretive logic to the narratological model Lanter prescribes. The affective, haunted memory of theatrical knowledge brings an element to Manning's adaptation which Lanter does not consider. As I will argue in Chapter Two, this opens up Joyce's text in a way that was idiosyncratic but nonetheless illuminating as an early act of interpretation during this critical 'age of innocence'. This thesis is therefore in part a response to these previous studies of theatrical adaptations of *Finnegans Wake* but does not repeat their qualitative judgements by measuring the extent to which they have 'failed' Joyce's 'original' text; I do not intend to provide a determined or fixed interpretation of *Finnegans Wake* as an object which the an adaptation will inevitably distort or betray. Instead, I will be taking the perspective of *performance* (rather than theatre, drama or music) and analysing how these transformations enact readings of *Finnegans Wake* which tread the indistinct line between writing and performance. I ask whether the re-inscription of a text like the *Wake* into performance requires a different kind of 'competence' or 'understanding' of the book to regular scholarly practice and if so, what defines the performance of such competence. I consider the extent to which this ability to read Joyce's book *through* different methods of performance should not be

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<sup>58</sup> Louis O. Mink, *A Finnegans Wake Gazetteer* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978), xii

<sup>59</sup> This is not say that despite the decades of research, the experience of reading *Finnegans Wake* continues, to use Glasheen's expression, a 'tour of the darkling plain'; Adaline Glasheen, *A Census of Finnegans Wake: An Index of the Characters and Their Roles* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), vii

seen as inferior or subsidiary to scholarly interpretations but on an equal parallel with them. In this respect the aim of this thesis is not to *compare* performance adaptations of *Finnegans Wake* to Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, but to find out whether the practice of performance can constitute a valuable methodology for reading *Finnegans Wake* as an act of rewriting. On the one hand, this thesis expands upon the few antecedent studies on the subject by conceiving a new methodological framework within Joyce studies, whilst on the other, it explores how *Finnegans Wake*, as a textual *event*, brings into question the complicated relationship between writing and performance and offers a valuable provocation to the theory and practice of performance studies.

### **The Performances**

This thesis consists of a critical and historical overview of several examples which iterate the various conceptions of performance explored above: the relationships between performance and competence, memory and composition, power and community. This will be followed by three case studies which expand upon these concerns in more detail. The first two consider previous performances, Mary Manning's *The Voice of Shem* and John Cage's *Writing Through Finnegans Wake* and *Roaratorio*, and the third case study will take the form of a 'research-as-performance' project, my performance-lecture, *About That Original Hen*.

I focus on Mary Manning's theatrical adaptation in order to respond to Lanthers and Hayman's critiques and offer an analysis of her production not as a failed interpretation but as a performance document of a reading and writing through *Finnegans Wake*. The analysis contextualises the performance in relation to contemporaneous scholarship such as Campbell and Robinson's *A Skeleton Key* (1944) and Glasheen's *Census* (1956), as well as Thornton Wilder's *Wake*-like play, *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). I argue that whilst early acts of scholarship sought a rigorous decoding of Joyce's text, Manning achieved an unfolding of the *Wake* by embracing the text's obscurity and uncertainties of reading that it provokes. Manning's 'decomposition' and 'recombination' (614.34-35) of Joyce's text positioned her into the corresponding roles of both reader/spectator and writer/dramaturge and through her unstitching of the text Manning was able to uncover the traces of the book's composition process. With the examples of theatrical allusions to spiritualist séance and her insertion of folk songs into her adapted script, I argued that Manning

also performed what could be considered an early form of genetic criticism or scholarship. What differentiated *Voice of Shem* in this respect from other works like *A Skeleton Key* was that it initiated a return to the composition process not through a text and manuscript based archive but within the archival space of a performance in which various material such as text, affects, voices, lyrical memories and ghosts may encounter one another. The haunted space of theatre becomes a place in which the ghosts of a text's archive may converse: a performing-archive and space for the revenants to perform.

In chapter three I focus on several of John Cage's compositions *Finnegans Wake* because they offer radically different approaches to performing the text. In his first four 'Writing Through *Finnegans Wake*' (1975-1982) projects, Cage decomposed the book by 'writing through' it using James Joyce's name as a central 'mesostic' spine, and in *Muoyce: Writing for the Fifth Time Through Finnegans Wake* (1982), he applied chance operations to transform the text into blocks of fragmented and incoherent language. Unlike Manning's theatrical reading of the *Wake*'s obscurities and uncertainties, Cage's compositions (which sit somewhere between music, poetry and theatre) plunged Joyce's text into even further obscurity to the extent that the notion of 'reading' or 'understanding' have to take on new associations. I also focus on his 'hörspiel' (radio-play), *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (1979), which combined his reading of the second 'writing through' text with sounds and music alluded to in the *Wake* and in 1983, became a ballet collaboration with Merce Cunningham. Comparing a revival performance of this ballet performance in 2011 with a critical review of a 1987 performance in the James Joyce Quarterly, I consider the manner in which Cage's recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* irritated and confronted authoritative modes of understanding with a more tactile, indeterminate and *unknowing* relationship to the text. I argue that the political impetus behind his translation of *Finnegans Wake* from the 'law and order' of grammar and syntax to the 'poetry and chaos' of indeterminacy is flawed because his desire to liberate language from power and interpretation required the imposition of a new 'law and order' of indeterminacy and universalization. However, with the example of a television interview with Richard Kostelanetz in which he performs his reading of *Finnegans Wake* as a performance of writing I argue that this particular way of paying attention to the text, which simultaneously re-read and re-wrote *Finnegans Wake* with a tactile, numerical and anti-hermeneutic mode of understanding, Cage performed a silent

connection to the work of those who encountered Joyce's text more as material than a literary code to be cracked.

In the fourth chapter, I document and analyze my performance-lecture, *About That Original Hen* (2014), based on Madame France Raphael, an amanuensis whose errors were incorporated into *Finnegans Wake*. I focus on Raphael's 'erronymous' (617.30) transcriptions as a route into the book's concealed labour, and with the example of my own performance's contingencies argue that errors and mistakes constitute an integral part of 'Wakean competence'. I argue that the disintegration of my copy of *Finnegans Wake* during my performances presented the inevitable expenditure and decomposition that occurs in attempts to 'redismember' (008.06) the ghosts that haunt its composition; and, by aligning a contemporary act of protest with acts of writing in the *Wake*, I consider how this 'transgenerational conversation' through (re)composition (Schneider: 2011, 111) produces a community, but argue that the pursuit of such a community also reproduces ambivalent and violent ('ambiviolent', 518.02) effects found both inside and outside of *Finnegans Wake*. This project also wears the costume of genetic criticism by bringing into play genetic and textual criticism's attention to archival ambiguities with performance study's concern with memory, materiality and power relations. It contributes both to performance studies by exploring the relationship between performance and the archive and contributes to genetic Joyce studies by exploring how one might use performance to highlight the role of accidents and marginal archival presences in the composition of *Finnegans Wake*. *About That Original Hen* also follows in the wake of previously unacknowledged 'research-as-performance' projects which have either enacted performative studies of *Finnegans Wake* or utilized *Finnegans Wake* as a performative spur to test the boundaries of research practice.



## Chapter One

### Performing *Finnegans Wake*

‘Performance of the problem passion play of the millentury’

(032.32)

#### Performance in *Finnegans Wake*

James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* (1939) is full of performance. The book jostles with the performing arts and refers to virtually all of those at the author’s disposal: theatre, dance, pantomime, song, music-hall, opera, vaudeville, ballet, television, pub-quiz, dumbshow, radio, film, funeral, storytelling, speech, debate, séance, trial, inquest, rite, ritual, game, riddle, prank, guided tour, ventriloquism... The title derives from an Irish drinking song, lubricating the book with its spry gallows humour (‘lovesofffun at Finnegan’s Wake’, 607.16). Joyce even inserted the score and verse of his own jaunty and performable pub ditty, ‘The Ballad of Persse O’Reilly’ (044.22-047.29). The ‘melodiotiosities’ of *Finnegans Wake*’s ‘accidental music’ (222.01-02) have been recognized extensively, from the catalogues of songs and operas that underscore its rhythms and allusions,<sup>60</sup> to Peter Myers’ study of the sound of *Finnegans Wake* (1994), taking seriously A. Walton Litz’s provocation that Joyce’s final work ‘is not ‘like’ music, it *is* a kind of music.’<sup>61</sup> Recently, George Cinclair Gibson, has argued that ‘the secret structure’ of *Finnegans Wake* may belong to the pre-Christian Irish funerary rite of the *Teamhur Feis*.<sup>62</sup> In an extensive unfolding of the *Wake*’s episodes, characters (or ‘sigla’), motifs and language, Gibson unearths an entire systematic parallel between the book and the ‘complex array of rites, rituals, mythic and historical reenactments, sacred drama, conclaves, assembles, funeral and inaugural ceremon[ies]’ (Gibson: 2005, 5) which constitute the performance of the *Teamhur Feis* – the ‘druriodrama’ (050.06), or ‘druid-drama’, which Gibson claims to underpin the entire book.

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<sup>60</sup>see Matthew J. C. Hodgart and Mabel P. Worthington, *Song in the Works of James Joyce* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); Matthew J. C. Hodgart and Ruth Bauerle, *Joyce’s Grand Operoar: Opera in Finnegans Wake* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997)

<sup>61</sup> Although Litz reconsidered this statement and concluded that ‘*Finnegans Wake* is not properly music at all but poetry.’ A. Walton Litz, *The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 71 & 72; Peter Myers, *The Sound of Finnegans Wake* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1992), passim

<sup>62</sup> George Cinclair Gibson, *Wake Rites: The Ancient Irish Rituals of Finnegans Wake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 8

Whilst the inheritance of Hibernian musicality and pagan ritual may reverberate beneath the crust of Joyce's 'mounding mass' (008.01), the theatrical and dramatic arts litter its surface. The *Wake's* largely comedic form is invoked by Aristophanes' ('Harrystotalies', 110.17) chorus from *The Frogs*: 'Brékkek Kékkek Kékkek Kékkek!...' (004.02-3), and with the characters Mutt and Jute (015.29-018.16), Butt and Taff (338.5-355.07), and Muta and Juva (609.24-610.33), the book pivots around the badinage of double-act dialogues. Meanwhile, Punch and Judy knock the central protagonist down to size ('what a pentschanjeuchy chap he was!', 004.24; 'to one he's just paunch and judex', 133.23). But beyond Ancient Comedy and popular entertainment Joyce casts at least one reference to his 'greatest rival' (Atherton: 1959, 162), 'Great Shapesphere' (295.04), per page and performs his debt to Ibsen ('Ibn Sen', 488.07) with an 'Ibscenest nansence!' (535.19) – honoring a roll-call of the Norwegian's plays with mock re-namings ('peers and gints [...] headygabblers', 540.22-24); while Bygmester Solness serves as one of the many costumes of the *Wake's* central Thespis and stuffed effigy, 'Bygmester Finnegan' (004.18).<sup>63</sup> The lifespan of the omnipresent patriarch, HCE (aka 'Here Comes Everybody', 032.18-19), is condensed to a night at the theatre: 'If they whistled him before he had curtains up they are whistling him still after his curtain's doom's doom' (049.01-02). As the earliest critics have noted (Glasheen: 1957; Atherton: 1959), the uncountable mass of characters, 'heroes, heroines, heavy fathers, and so on' (Atherton: 1959, 149) can be reduced to a basic *dramatis personae* – 'the whole stock company of the house' (510.17) – who present 'all the charictures in the drame' (302.31-32) with the same actors.<sup>64</sup> The architecture of the *Wake* also includes its very own theatre, the 'Feenichts Playhouse' (219.02) which, according to Edmund Epstein, occupies Books II and III with 'an eight-act drama

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<sup>63</sup>On the relation of Shakespeare and Ibsen to Joyce's work see: Laura Pelaschiar (ed), *Joyce/ Shakespeare* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015); Vincent John Cheng, *Shakespeare and Joyce: A Study of Finnegans Wake* (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1984); B.J.Tysdahl, *Joyce and Ibsen: A Study in Literary Influence* (Oslo: Norwegian Universities Press, 1968) and Marvin Carlson, 'Henrik Ibsen and *Finnegans Wake*', *Comparative Literature*, Vol.12, No.2 (Spring, 1960), 133-141

<sup>64</sup> The core 'actors' in the cast, otherwise known as 'The Doodles family' (299.fn4) are the parents, HCE and ALP ('Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker' and 'Anna Livia Purabelle'); the twin brothers, Shem and Shaun, and their sister, Issy (represented by the 'siglum', Π, Δ, □, Λ, −I, respectively). Accompanying the family are Kate (K), the cleaner (211.19), and Joe 'Sacksoun' (015.35) (S), a serpentine police constable. Following them are several clusters of people: the four old men ('mamalujo' 397.11; 398.04; 476.32) (X); 'the twelve' customers (284.18; 673.13), (O); and the twenty-nine 'leapyear' girls, the 'Floras' (220.03), (O).

probably entitled “A Royal Divorce” and ‘finishes with rounds of applause (590.30)’.<sup>65</sup> *A Royal Divorce* is the title of a play (attributed by Joyce to W. G. Wills)<sup>66</sup> about Napoleon’s love-life and military campaigns, and was toured by W.W.Kelly and his company (‘Mr Wallenstein Washington Semperkelly’s immergreen tourers’, 32.29) across the British Isles until just after the First World War (Atherton: 1959, 161). It is unlikely that Joyce read the play but drew on his memory of seeing it performed on stage. ALP’s soliloquy which concludes the *Wake* (615.12-628.16) is allegedly drawn from Joyce’s recollection of hearing Josephine’s final monologue in which she and Napoleon ‘are reunited in death and begin again’ (Atherton: 1959, 162).<sup>67</sup> Joyce’s memory of the performance’s stagecraft also finds its way into his book when he alludes to the smoke and mirrors (‘pepper ghosts’, 214.16; 460.6) of a dumb-scene in which the battle of Waterloo was represented with Napoleon (or sometimes Wellington, depending on which actor needed a rest) in the foreground on ‘his big wide harse’ (008.21); a tableaux vivant re-enacted in Kate’s guided tour of the ‘Wallinstone national [...] museyroom’(008.01-09).<sup>68</sup> Along with Dion Boucicault’s *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1864), which Joyce was likely to have seen performed at the Queen’s Theatre around 1900, *A Royal Divorce* is an example of how Joyce’s sources for *Finnegans Wake* were not solely textual or appropriated from books but often gathered from a memory of performances, ephemeral experiences and cultural memories.<sup>69</sup> It is not just plays and dramas that constitute the *Wake*’s ‘truly catholic assemblage’ (032.25) but the living medium of the theatre itself.

Although I would agree with Glasheen and Lanthers to some extent that *Finnegans Wake* is not a ‘dramatic’ or ‘theatrical’ text because it absorbs so many other forms, I would contend, on the other hand, that in various ways it is composed for performance and as much as it is composed of performances. Both the book’s performativity and performability, from the earliest days of its composition has played

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<sup>65</sup> Edmund Epstein, *A Guide Through Finnegans Wake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 12

<sup>66</sup> The authorship is disputed and usually ascribed to either W. G. Wills or C. C. Collingham

<sup>67</sup> This also iterates the book’s variations on the ‘liebested’ from *Tristan und Isolde* throughout (e.g. ‘deaf with love’, 395.29); another performance text which permeates the composition of the *Wake*.

<sup>68</sup> Atherton also suggests that the interchangeability between Napoleon and Wellington in the scene, ‘apparently when Mr. Kelly wanted a rest’ (Atherton: 1959, 162), offered a model for the systematic interchangeability of the twins, Shem and Shaun.

<sup>69</sup> More recently than Atherton, Judith Harrington has discovered another theatrical model for the twins, Shem and Shaun, in the Victorian one-act farce, *Box and Cox: A Romance of Real Life* by John Maddison Morton; Judith Harrington, ‘Box and Cox & Cox and Box in *Finnegans Wake*’, *James Joyce Literary Supplement*, vol.14. no.1 (Spring, 2000), 9-10

an important but often unrecognised role in the book's dissemination and critical interpretation.

### **Mr. Joyce Directs the *Work in Progress***

The first recorded performance of *Finnegans Wake* was by the author himself. In August 1929 Joyce recorded the last pages of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (213.11-216.5), a fragment from his *Work in Progress*,<sup>70</sup> at the Orthological Institute in London with C.K.Ogden.<sup>71</sup> Due to his poor eyesight Joyce required a blown-up version of the text to read from but, according to Richard Ellman, the lighting in the room was so weak that he had to be 'prompted in a whisper throughout' by Ogden.<sup>72</sup> The recording served to promote Joyce's new writing to an increasingly skeptical readership and it is no coincidence that in the same year he published a collection of essays about the *Work in Progress* written by his 'twelve deaferended dumbbawls' (284.18-19).<sup>73</sup> If *Our Exagmination* functioned as 'proof' that the *Work in Progress* was worthy of reading for critical appraisal, the recording of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* was proof that this strange project was also worthy of listening to. However, both publications might be considered as performances because they demonstrate what one can *do* with *Work in Progress*; they are introductory examples of putting the text into practice: from unpinning its philosophical and poetic models (Samuel Beckett; Frank Budgen), performing exegesis (Stuart Gilbert) or inciting its revolutionary modernism (Eugene Jolas) to capturing 'the immense rhythmic beauty of [Joyce's] technique' (*Exagmination*, 89) on record, they performed their apologias for the *Work in Progress* by putting it *to work*.<sup>74</sup> In two modes of performance – reading and writing, recording and documenting – Joyce and his disciples promoted this work as an *event*.

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<sup>70</sup> James Joyce, *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (Paris: Fountain Press, 1928); Between 1923 and 1937 the *Wake* appeared in various fragmented forms as *Work in Progress*.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Ellman, *James Joyce*, 2nd. edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982; first published, 1959), 617 [hereafter: *JJ*]

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*; 'Reading script for reading of ALP', IX.A.5, The James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo

<sup>73</sup> Samuel Beckett et al., *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1929) and (London: Faber and Faber, 1929) [hereafter: *Exagmination*]; the collection reappears in *Finnegans Wake* as 'the contonuation through regeneration of the urutteration of the word in pregress' (284.20-22)

<sup>74</sup> Samuel Beckett, 'Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce', 1-22; Frank Budgen, 'James Joyce's *Work in Progress* and Old Norse Poetry', 35-46; Stuart Gilbert, 'Prolegomena to *Work in Progress*', 49-75; Eugene Jolas, 'The Revolution of Language and James Joyce', 79-92

A typical feature of many of the essays was their emphasis on the text's performable and performative qualities. Victor Llona imagined the text as a 'vast company of actorwords' with Joyce as their 'virtuoso stage director' (Ibid., 95, 96). Robert McAlmon made a case for its affective appreciation as an 'esperanto of the subconscious' produced by a 'sensation of understanding' which the reader gains not with explanation but the intuitive feelings that underpin the work's rhythmic and gestural affinity with dance, music and pantomime (Ibid., 110-111), all led by the 'twilight refrain' of Joyce's 'Irish tenor' voice (Ibid., 109, 112, 114). The technique of Joyce's voice, both material and textual, plays a prominent role in *Exagmination* and its 'rhythmical qualities' (Ibid., 167) are often called upon as if the greatest proof of its value were the traces of the author's voice left behind by the memory of his presence. Describing the 'odors and sounds' of Joyce's words, Eugene Jolas recalled the tactile immediacy of his reading voice:

Those who have heard Mr. Joyce read aloud from *Work in Progress* know the immense rhythmic beauty of his technique. It has a musical flow that flatters the ear, that has the organic structure of works of nature, that transmits painstakingly every vowel and consonant formed by his ear.  
(*Exagmination*, 89)

The 'technique' of the writing is made evident by the performance of his reading. Jolas refers to the author's living voice as the key to the text's 'organic' and 'natur[al]' 'musical flow', as though it were Joyce's 'grain of the voice',<sup>75</sup> embedded in the machinery of the work that will convince the listener of its natural beauty. The emphasis on listening is also an important point as it not only confirms Joyce's musical 'ear' but that his composition process was just as much about *listening* as it was about writing, or that its 'writing' was in fact a form of listening. In an oft quoted passage from his essay, Samuel Beckett remarked that it 'is not to be read – or rather it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and listened to.' (*Exagmination*, 14). Beckett argued that it is 'inadequate to speak of 'reading' *Work in Progress*' (Ibid., 15) because the conjunction of its 'visibility' and 'audibility' requires something more akin to the kind of 'apprehension'. These alternatives to reading, *looking at* and *listening to*, extend the act of reading into active forms of reception: reading must become a process of visual and audible participation, one must

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<sup>75</sup> Adrian Curtin also makes this connection between Joyce's phonographic voice and Roland Barthes' famous description of the voice; Adrian Curtin, 'Hear Joyce Speak: The Phonograph Recordings of "Aeolus" and "Anna Livia Plurabelle" as Audiotexts' in *JJQ* vol.46, no.2 (Winter 2009), pp.269-284, 278-9

become the work's audience.<sup>76</sup> The other implication that Beckett makes is that 'it is not only to be read' but to be read *aloud*. When he also wrote, 'You complain that this stuff is not written in English. It is not written at all' (Ibid., 14), Beckett might also have had in mind the fact that Joyce dictated much of his composition and, as Joyce's occasional amanuensis, Beckett would come to know parts of the *Wake* as a process of listening and transcription.<sup>77</sup> For Beckett, *Work in Progress* was not simply written with pen and paper but an oral performance transcribed by the hands of the author's various 'helpers'.<sup>78</sup> The processes of 'reading' and 'writing' the text are intimately bound to one another and, as part of this thesis seeks to argue, 'looking' and 'listening' at the *Wake* are not just required of its audience to apprehend but of its writers, re-writers and, ultimately, its performers.

The *Exagmimation* can be seen as a dutiful performance directed by Joyce, as he once admitted that 'he had stood behind "those twelve Marshals more or less directing them what lines of research to follow"'.<sup>79</sup> The performance of Joyce's 'voice' lay not just in the groove of a record but in his ability to control and arrange other voices. However it is interesting that alongside the image that Joyce evoked of himself as a directorial presence behind the ear of his twelve 'disciples', we are also left with the counter-image of Joyce the performer and C.K.Ogden as 'stagemanager's prompt' behind his ear during the recording of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. (JJ, 617). Ogden did, after all, translate the same passage into his own 'basic english'.<sup>80</sup> Despite his apparent mastery over his text, there is also an aspect of its composition and performance which involved a relinquishing of power and granting permission to others to handle and even recompose his text.<sup>81</sup> In 1931, Adrienne Monnier hosted a

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<sup>76</sup> Jacques Derrida describes *Ulysses* in similar terms when he suggests that the 'gramophony' of the text is 'both heard and read, reproduced by the ear and by the eye' quoted in Sebastian Knowles, 'Death by Gramophone', *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol.21. no.1 (2003), 1-13, 4

<sup>77</sup> According to Claude Sykes, Joyce declared of his work that: 'It is all so simple. If anyone doesn't understand a passage, all he need do is read it aloud.' (JJ, 603)

<sup>78</sup> Along with Beckett, Joyce's helpers throughout the seventeen year long period of composition consisted of Harriet Shaw Weaver (his chief patron), Paul Léon, Stuart Gilbert, Eugene and Maria Jolas and close members of his family such as Nora, his children, Lucia and Giorgio and daughter-in-law, Helen Kastor Joyce, and, as discussed above, his amanuensis and copyist, Madame France Raphael, who will become the centre of attention in Chapter Four.

<sup>79</sup> 'Letter to Valery Larbaud, July 30, 1929' quoted in JJ, 613.

<sup>80</sup> JJ, 627; C.K. Ogden, "Work in Progress by James Joyce", *transition*, March 1932, see also, *In Transition: A Paris Anthology*, ed., Noel Riley Fitch (London: Secker & Warburg, 1990), 135-139

<sup>81</sup> The most radical instance of this manumission (which never occurred) would have been allowing the young Irish poet, James Stephens, to 'continue the writing of *Finnegans Wake* if Joyce should lose his sight or heart for the job' (JJ, 630)

'séance' in which she read from the French translation of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, followed by Joyce's gramophone recording (*JJ*, 636-7) The author was present for the séance but mainly silent, and with a comment about how the event would constitute his 'farewell' from Paris, the 'séance' must have borne a strange resemblance to a 'Finnegan's Wake' as the author's voice played through the gramophone and his work was transformed into another language. The promotion and early criticism of *Work in Progress*, like its composition, involved the performances of others, and as much as Joyce was at the centre he could also place himself into the margins. At the Monnier séance, Joyce was already haunting an intimate community performance of the *Wake* like an absent presence.

### **Two recent solo performances**

Antoine Caubet's *Finnegans Wake: Chapter 1*, premiered in January 2012 at the Théâtre de L'Aquarium in Paris, used Philippe Lavergne's French translation of the first chapter (003.01-029.36), with words taken from the final page (628.01-16) to hint at the famous circularity of the book's structure.<sup>82</sup> It was primarily a solo performance delivered as a monologue by the actor Sharif Andoura, accompanied by original music and sound, film projection and puppetry in the form of shadow projection and a human sized marionette suspended from the flies. With her company, *The Emergency Room*, Irish-Breton actress Olwen Fouère adapted and performed the final chapter (593.01-628.16) as a solo performance in *Riverrun, the voice of the river*, which premiered at the Druid Lane Theatre, Galway (July, 2013). With a sound-score designed by Alma Kelliher and incremental lighting shifts by Stephen Dodd, Fouère delivered a condensed version of the final chapter, which primarily consists of the 'voice' of ALP as the river Liffey, on a sparse set with salt sprinkled on the floor suggesting a shoreline. The only other feature was a microphone which occasionally picked up her voice to filter it through Kelliher's live sound design. Caubet's production conveyed a confidently competent, knowing articulation of the *Wake*, focussing on the phallogentric and patriarchal aspects of the opening chapter (such as the 'willingdone' monument and the 'crops' (055.08) of Finnegan), with a costumed homage towards its Irishness. Fouère's production, on the other hand, was much less assertively gendered and whilst it centered on one of the book's most

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<sup>82</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, trad. Philippe Lavergne (Paris: Gallimard, 1982)

'feminine' chapters, her approach to the text's 'parapolylogic' waves of voices and transformative embodiments of transcultural movements and gestures made her interpretation of the text much more androgynous and gender fluid; and despite Fouère's Irish heritage, *Riverrun* appears far less nationally specific than *Finnegans Wake: Chapter 1*.

Although Andoura was not quite dressed as a leprechaun, his orange checkered suit gave him the appearance of an eccentric clown from a quaint islands across the channel, hinting towards a francophone theatrical Irishness (see fig.1). His delivery expressed the comic mutability of Joyce's language; deftly co-ordinating the rapid flux of linguistic associations and witty portmanteaux like a seasoned master of ceremonies. The confidence of this production conveyed a resolutely masculine approach to *Finnegans Wake*. Like the opening four chapters of the book, the focus of this performance lay primarily with the patriarchal figures of Finnegan and HCE. The opening lines (which come Anna Livia's closing paragraph) invoked a father figure: 'my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father' (628.1-2) and the phallogentric thrust of the first chapter's allusion to HCE's alleged crime in Phoenix Park reaches a spectacular climax in the shape of a gigantic shadow-puppet erection to represent the Wellington ('Willingdone', 8.10) Monument in 'Fiendish Park' (196.11).<sup>83</sup> However, the aspect that sustained this production's masculinity had to do with the affect of Andoura's delivery; a confident and assured kind of fluency that prompted the audience, at the performance I attended, to also show that they really '*got it*' through aptly timed laughter and scattered murmurs of acknowledged allusions.

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<sup>83</sup> It is interesting also to note that the 'Willingdone Museyroom' passage (8-10) that Andoura performed very much as a man, is also, like the final lines of the *Wake*, supposedly spoken by a female personage, Kate ('the mistress Kathe', 008.08).



**fig. 1** *Sharif Andoura in Finnegans Wake, Chap. 1*<sup>84</sup>

In a public interview during an open rehearsal of the show, Andoura referred to his knowledge of the text as having ‘decodé le code d’espion’ (decoded the spy’s code).<sup>85</sup> In the hermeneutic and exegetical tradition of Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson’s *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944),<sup>86</sup> Andoura claims to have decoded Joyce’s text so that it may be translated efficiently to a wider audience. Along with the boyish delight of having ‘decodé le code d’espion’, his confidence also echoes the distinctly patriarchal voices in *Finnegans Wake* that are charged with maintaining and delivering texts.<sup>87</sup> This is not to say that Caubet’s adaptation suffered because of its boldness or that it enacted an oblivious chauvinism, but to remark on the subtly gendered and political implications that come with mediating *Finnegans*

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<sup>84</sup> © Hervé Bellamy

<sup>85</sup> ‘Dans les coulisses de l’Aquarium 2011-12: Repetition Publique Interview á propos de Finnegans Wake - Partie 1’ [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTe8lHFip5g>] [accessed 20.3.2012]; with thanks to Zofia Trafas for helping me translate.

<sup>86</sup> Joseph Campbell & Henry Moron Robinson, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (Novato: New World Library, 2013; first published by Harcourt Brace, 1944)

<sup>87</sup>In I.v a presumably male philologist deciphers the ‘feminine clothiering’ (109.31) and ‘enveloping facts’ (109.14) of ALP’s ‘untitled mamafesta’ (104.04); in III.i and III.ii Shaun/Jaun, who ‘[delivers] himself with express cordiality, marked by clearance of diction and general delivery’ (431.21-22), is the postman charged with the delivery of a letter ‘uttered for Alp’ (420.18); like the condescending schoolmaster in I.vi who explains the tale of the *Mookse and the Gripes* (I.vi.152-159) to an imagined audience of sniffly schoolchildren, Shaun also tells the tale of the *Ondt and the Gracehoper* (III.i. 414-419) with a delivery that ‘falls easily upon the earopen and goes down the friskly shortest like treacling tumtim with its tingtingtaggle’ (419.14-16). The treacly speech of Jaun in III.ii is directed towards his sister, Issy, and her 28 girl friends, much like a conflated version of Polonius and Laertes In *Hamlet*. In *Finnegans Wake*, then, the handling and delivery of texts and stories is often gendered so that feminine content or speech is decoded, or recoded, by a masculine figure. Although stuttering and imperfect speech is also associated with patriarchal fallibility (‘Bygmester Finnegan, of the Stuttering Hand’, 004.18), fluent and authoritative delivery is one way that voices in *Finnegans Wake* exert patriarchal dominance; a dominance that Joyce mocks and satirizes.

*Wake* whether through performance or scholarship.<sup>88</sup> It could also be considered as a suitable register for a performance of the opening chapter since its central theme is the fall of Finnegan and, by association, the fall of Men.

Although unaware of the Paris production,<sup>89</sup> *Riverrun* could be considered as an answer to Caubet's adaptation. In contrast to Andoura's code-breaking mastery of textual mediation, Fouéré was not concerned with decoding *Finnegans Wake* but with *becoming*, in a sense, a part of its 'code'. In an article about *Riverrun* she describes how she sees the *Wake* 'as a seam of dark matter somewhere between energy and form, music and language: the trace of a boat on an endlessly changing surface.'<sup>90</sup> Echoing some of the book's earliest commentators,<sup>91</sup> she refers to it as a 'sound-dance of revolutionary energy that is impossible to surf like an expert' and 'an impossible task and a continuous process' (Fouéré: 2013). Rather than unravelling its secret and redelivering it as an accomplished task, Fouéré's work is seen as imperfect and ongoing but also as a cellular component of Joyce's disorientating flux of language: 'The performer in 'riverrun' swims like a 'cara weeseed', a tiny cell in a cluster of cells, negotiating its way through the swirling world that made us.' (Ibid.)

This simile makes much sense after having seen two performances of *Riverrun*, first at its premiere in the Druid Lane Theatre, Galway (July, 2013) and later at The Shed in the National Theatre, London (March, 2014). Each time I had the feeling that Fouéré's performance was primarily a process of becoming, a passing inhabitation of the text in which her body and voice were intuitively transformed *inwards* into the 'voice of the river', rather than delivering a memorized chapter *outwards* to an audience. This did not mean that it was an introverted and inaccessible performance, but that it offered an affective tangle between the text's 'impossibility' and her body's intuitive receptivity.

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<sup>88</sup> This will be an underlying thread in my chapter on Mary Manning's theatricalisation of Joyce's book at the Harvard Poet's Theater during the 1950's and of particular significance to my own performance work documented in Chapter Four.

<sup>89</sup> Personal interview with Olwen Fouéré 13.3.2014

<sup>90</sup> Olwen Fouéré, 'Swimming the River', *The Irish Times*, July 13th, 2013

<sup>91</sup> On the revolutionary kinesthetics of Joyce's language see: Eugene Jolas, 'The Revolution of Language and James Joyce' and Robert McAlmon, 'Mr. Joyce Directs an Irish Word Ballet' in *Examination*, 77-92, 103-116

**fig. 2** Olwen Fouéré in *Riverrun*<sup>92</sup>

There is a hand gesture found in a pair of images from both of the production's publicity material (figs 1 and 2) which might clarify this distinction. In each instance the performer's right hand is lifted and opened with the fingers parted, but each with its own intention. In the first, Andoura crouches next to a life-sized marionette; his eyes are focused and his hand points towards something unreachable in the distance. The long marionette strings hint at the presence of a hidden agent in the heavens manipulating the action below, whilst the actor's open hand conjures a sentence from Book IV: 'A hand from the cloud emerges, holding a chart expanded.' (593.19) The acronym of the patriarch, HCE, is embedded in this Blakean sentence and in Andoura's gesture there is a similar unfolding of omniscient constellations. The performer might not be the 'hand' emerging from the heavens but he can at least expand and chart the imaginations of his audience that he guides with his fluent speech and hands, pinpointing the relevant codes he has 'decoded' (232.26) for their benefit and entertainment. In *Riverrun*, Fouéré's open palmed gesture (Fig. 2) has a different effect: it is positioned vertically, but not pointing, in a contorted symphony with her other limbs – the lifted and twisting foot beneath, the left arm pushing into her torso and its dark reflection on the floor, widened by the spotlight; all of these elements, led by Fouéré's fingers, are not so much illustrative, knowing gestures to a 'decoded' narrative but might be considered as the 'altereffects' ('altered' + 'aftereffects'; 482.02) of what Eugenio Barba calls the

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<sup>92</sup> © Colm Hogan

'dilated body' of the performer.<sup>93</sup> Very much like the language she delivers, this 'dilation' is a 'continuous mutation', a process of heightened energy that alters everyday balance into a state of 'dynamic opposition' and 'coherent incoherence' (Barba and Savarese: 2011, 51, 53). Engaged in a flux of oppositional movements, Fouéré's voice and body communicates the swelling 'sound-dance' of the *Wake* without explaining or rationalising the 'meaning' behind the words. To use a verb from the *Wake*, Fouéré's 'handwording' (021.20; 022.06-07) is not about revealing a hidden code but performing the 'coherent incoherence' of the river's voice and becoming a component of its 'swirling' 'cluster of cells' (Fouéré: 2013). As the Wakean neologism combines the human tools of *hand* and *word* into one, Fouéré's performance similarly combines bodily and linguistic components in a way which extends the text into a 'swirling cluster' of articulate but elusive combinations. Andoura's combination of hand and word evinces a coherent mastery over Joyce's language; the specificity of his hand literally manipulates the articulation of the word. But although Fouéré guides the audience with her corporeal illumination of the text's fluid 'voice', she also permits them to become lost in an uncertain state of 'coherent incoherence' in which the hand moves them one way while the word moves them another. This is not to say that her performance is confusing or contradictory, but that the audience are made to feel at ease in their own state of unknowing as her open palm, pointing upwards and outwards, offers a gesture of equivalent 'unknowing' – the 'incoherence' typified by the *Wake*'s babbling 'nat language' (083.12) is granted a 'coherence' with this 'dynamic opposition' of hand and word.<sup>94</sup> So whilst Andoura, the actor who has 'decoded' the 'code' of the text, hands Joyce's language back to his audience as a masterfully complex, but hermeneutically coherent narrative, Fouéré hands the text back to her audience, but as a new set of codes performed as a 'swirling cluster' of cellular activity. *Riverrun*, with its transhistorical and intercultural use of theatrical and performative codes (movements, gestures and facial expressions that borrowed from Charlie Chaplin and Isadora Duncan to Indonesian Theatre and African Masks),<sup>95</sup> did not *decode* the *Wake* but presented a kind of

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<sup>93</sup> Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (London: Routledge, 2011), 51

<sup>94</sup> For an in depth study on the 'incoherence' of *Finnegans Wake* see, Susan Shaw Sailor, *On the Void of To Be: Incoherence and Trope in Joyce*, (Michigan: University of Minnesota, 1993), which applies a post-structuralist reading (through the lenses of Julia Kristeva and Jacques Derrida) of the text's resistance to fixed and determinable meaning and suggests that its readers are '[forced] to become active participants in its production' (Sailor: 1993, 5).

<sup>95</sup> Personal interview with Olwen Fouéré 13.3.2014

*recoding*, or, to use a Wakean term, she ‘decorded’ (482.35) the text. Fouéré’s performance, which does not attempt to guide her audience with a literal or authoritative decoding of the book’s meaning, offers something much more like a virtuosic ‘trance’ (Exagmination, 114). With her ‘coherent incoherence’, Fouéré conveys neither control nor subordination to Joyce’s text but a careful balance between the two in which her virtuosity as a performer allows her to take control of the manner in which the text possesses her.

I refer to Joyce’s neologism, ‘decorded’, because it interrupts ‘decoding’ with ‘recording’ and an unravelling, musical sense of ‘de-chording’, and offers a notion of performance, which (like the passage in which it appears) deals with the complex space between speech and writing, remembering and forgetting, or ‘the counterpoint of the visual and the oral’.<sup>96</sup> To contrast with the straight coherence of Andourra’s performance which decodes the text for his his audience, the notion of Fouéré ‘decording’ suggests that a performance of *Finnegans Wake* should offer something more than a satisfied and knowing uncovering of literal meaning but a translation of Joyce’s language into the complex and sometimes mystifying (and mystified) world of the performer.

### **‘Melodiotiosities in purefusion by the score’: Musical Compositions**

It is no surprise that the musicality of *Finnegans Wake* has prompted a number of musical interpretations. From the 1940’s to the present composers and musicians have mined material from the text to set and recompose into music. Often composers will select short passages or lines for short, incidental songs or suites<sup>97</sup> or they may compose more ambitiously extensive interpretations like John Buller’s operatic rendering of Book II Chapter I, *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies* (1975) which part-staged the children’s game of Angels and Devils with singers and a small

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<sup>96</sup> Donald F. Theall, *Beyond the Word: Reconstructing Sense in the Joyce Era of Technology, Culture, and Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 142

<sup>97</sup> For example: Harry Partch, *Two Settings from Joyce’s Finnegans Wake* (1944); Samuel Barber, *Nuvoletta* (1947); Humphrey Searle, *The Riverrun* (1951-55); Stephen J. Albert, *To Wake the Dead* (1977-78) and *Tree Stone* (1983-84).

percussive orchestra;<sup>98</sup> or Margaret Rogers' 'chorale', *A Babble of Earwigs, or Sinnegan with Finnegans* (1987), which scored her inventive phonetic, rhythmical investigation into the structures of each one-hundred letter word thunderclap.<sup>99</sup> Passages from the *Wake* have also been used as material for experimental free-improvisation in Phil Minton Quartet's album, *Mouthfull of Ecstasy* (1994), which extracts and subverts them through Minton's masterful but disturbingly infantile and guttural vocal textures and the free-jazz, noise improvisations of John Butcher (Saxophone) and etc. Minton's intuitive and often primal response to Joyce's text uncovers a dark, chaotically ecstatic core which carefully composed orchestrations have shied away from. One of the most recent musical treatments of the *Wake* is an ongoing internet archive project initiated by Derek Pyle, the *Waywordsandmeansigns* Project (2015-), which provides a complete, unabridged reading of the book set to music with a different musician, composer or performer for each chapter. Whilst some of the music serves as a forward moving aide to the listening of the entire text, some pieces make the task of listening even more of a challenge.<sup>100</sup> The diversity of this project however, like Adam Harvey's blog or Raphael Slepou's *fweet.org*, utilizes the internet to provide an alternative reference point for readers of the book. The fact that there will be a second iteration of this collaborative project affirms the medium's suitability for re-disseminating *Finnegans Wake* not as a singularly reproducible text but a continuously transforming, communally constructed archive of reading, re-writing and performance.

The composer who has performed the most extensive and radical musical interpretations of *Finnegans Wake* is John Cage (1912-1992). But what makes his contribution stand out amongst these musical adaptations is not the extent to which he recomposed *Finnegans Wake* into music but how it prompted him to compose 'music in the sense of *Finnegans Wake*'.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> John Buller, *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies: on Part 2 of Finnegans Wake by James Joyce for singers, speaker and 13 instrumentalists* (London: G.Schirmer, 1978); Buller also composed two other pieces based on the *Wake*: *Finnegan's Floras* (London: Schirmer, 1980) and *Two Night pieces from Finnegans Wake: for Soprano solo and chamber ensemble* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

<sup>99</sup> Margaret Rogers, *A Babble of Earwigs, or Sinnegan With Finnegans* (Milwaukie: Margaret Rogers, 1987)

<sup>100</sup>Derek Pyle et al., 'Waywords and Meansigns (Recreating *Finnegans Wake* in its Whole Wholume)', <http://www.waywordsandmeansigns.com/> [accessed 28.09.2015]

<sup>101</sup> Klaus Schöning, *Roaratorio, ein irischer Circus über Finnegans Wake*, ed. Klaus Schöning (Königstein: Athenäum, 1982) CD/Booklet, 41 [hereafter: Schöning: 1982]

Throughout his career as a composer and artist, *Finnegans Wake* was an indispensable text for John Cage. When he studied under Schönberg in Paris he read the earliest installments of the ‘Work in Progress’, alongside texts by the likes of Kurt Schwitters and Gertrude Stein in Eugene Jolas’s journal, *transition*.<sup>102</sup> In intimate gatherings of friends he would often entertain with readings from the *Tales of Shem and Shaun* or of *Here Comes Everybody*.<sup>103</sup> It wasn’t until 1942 that Cage composed a piece of music after a passage from Joyce’s text, *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* (1942) for solo voice and closed piano.<sup>104</sup> Despite the unusual use of the piano as a blunt percussive instrument the composition is resolutely simple, employing only three tones for the singer’s voice. The piece evokes a subtle ritualistic, shamanic tone with its drone and trance like rhythm and texture. Its companion piece, *Nowth Upon Nacht* (1984), composed many years later in memory of Cathy Berberian who also performed *The Wonderful Widow*, makes this effect even more prominent by employing only one tone with the occasional microtonal glissando in the voice and scoring a basic, ritualistic drum pattern.<sup>105</sup> Both of these pieces form a pair of parentheses around the intermediary work with which this chapter is concerned and they are both exemplary of the way Cage would use Joyce’s text throughout his career: an incantatory voice engaging with a rhythm that combines otherworldly ritual with everyday utterance. Until the late ’70’s the text remained a subtle influence throughout his work. From tacit allusion in ‘Lecture on Something’ where the initials of the *Wake*’s protagonist, HCE, occur without explanation,<sup>106</sup> or in his gradual disintegration of Thoreau’s diaries into meaningless ‘Empty Words’ so that language, as in Joyce, is liberated towards ‘miscalization’ (Schöning: 1982, 55), to the occasion in 1965 when Marshal McLuhan and his son, Eric, who was writing a book about the subject, suggested

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<sup>102</sup> Kenneth Silverman, *Begin Again: A Biography of John Cage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 9

<sup>103</sup> John Cage, *X: Writings ’79-’82* (London: Marion Boyars, 2001), 54

<sup>104</sup> John Cage, *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs*: Edition Peters no. 6297 (New York: Henmar Press, 1961; composed 1942)

<sup>105</sup> John Cage, *Nowth Upon Nacht*: Edition Peters No.67039 (New York: Henmar Press, 1984)

<sup>106</sup> John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 129

Cage score a composition for voices based on the ten thunderclaps,<sup>107</sup> the *Wake* kept weaving in and out of Cage's career. Other projects that implicitly bore the influence of Joyce included his commissioned piece for the LA Olympics, *HMCIEEX* (1984), a late piano piece, *ASLSP* (1985), a piece for prepared piano *In the Name of the Holocaust* (1942) and five stage works 'with the *Wakean* title' *Europerras* (1987-91).<sup>108</sup> But the most important series of compositions with *Finnegans Wake* emerged not from the promptings of his avant-garde music career but the Joyce institution itself.

In 1978 Cage was offered an opportunity to publish a text through Wesleyan University Press, *Writing Through Finnegans Wake*, which would take up an entire edition of the James Joyce Quarterly<sup>109</sup>. In total Cage produced five versions of *Writing Through Finnegans Wake*, a methodical 'translation' using the letters in JAMES JOYCE to reduce the text to a continuous 'mesostic' set down the middle of the page. Each time he wrote through the *Wake* Cage applied more precise and reductive rules to make his texts shorter so that by the fifth time what had been a 120 page version of a 626 page book had become a 'collage of typescript' of 14 pages (Shöning: 1982, 31). Employing 'chance operations' into an already indeterminately and procedurally generated piece of writing, Cage used the *I Ching* to distribute Joyce's punctuation amongst the page, 'speckling printed text with commas, slashes, and exclamation points - some upside down' (Silverman: 2010, 294). *Writing for the Second Time Through Finnegans Wake* was read by Cage at William Burroughs' Nova Convention, 'sharing the program with Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, and rock music', (Ibid., 293) and it also appeared on *Soho Television* as part of an interview with Richard Kostelanetz in which viewers saw Cage in the middle of the process itself, counting syllables and employing the *I Ching*.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *John Cage: An Anthology* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1991; first published 1970), 20; On this never completed project Silverman reports that: 'Cage considered composing new star-map music, in which microphones attached to the throats of the chorus members would make their singing of Joyce's verbal thunderclaps sound like actual thunder, the strings playing pizzicati that would sound like rain. He seems to have started on the project, formulating a talk on "Disappearance of syntax/Joyce".' [Silverman, 292]

<sup>108</sup> Scott W. Klein, 'The Euphonium Cagehaused in Either Notation: John Cage and *Finnegans Wake*' in *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D. G. Knowles (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1999), pp.151-170, 155

<sup>109</sup> John Cage, *Writing through Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce Quarterly Vol.15 (special supplement) (Tulsa: University of Tulsa, 1978)

<sup>110</sup> This television interview will be of particular interest for my analysis in Chapter Three.



In 1979 the text became part of a commission by Klaus Schöning of the German radio station WDR for a *Hörspiel* entitled *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* and was awarded the Karl-Sczucka Prize in the same year.<sup>111</sup> The recording took two months to make, one month in the field and then one month at the IRCAM recording studio in Paris. The strict adherence to these compositional time periods were one of the many parameters within which Cage orchestrated *Roaratorio*'s production (Kostelanetz: 1989, 216). William Brooks refers to the piece as one of Cage's 'encyclopedias' because it is an assemblage of 'an immense sound-catalog' derived from lists of all of the sounds and places described and alluded to in *Finnegans Wake* compiled by Louis O. Mink.<sup>112</sup> Most of the sounds were recorded in Ireland by Cage accompanied by the sound engineer John Fulleman and his wife Monika Fulleman from mid-June to mid-July in 1979. The rest of the 1,210 sound events which included human, animal and other natural and man-made sounds from as far reaching locations as Patagonia, the Indus River, Trieste, Siberia and Neptune (thanks to NASA) were recorded by an assortment of other artists and friends. (Brooks: 1983, 222). In his advice to those who collected sounds for him Cage wrote: 'If there is some question about where you should go [...] you could answer it by some chance operation, such as dropping a coin on a map' (Silverman: 2010, 317). The mesostic text was then 'used as a ruler' so that 'each of the sounds he had cataloged was inserted at a time that corresponded approximately to the location in which it was mentioned in the book' (Brooks: 1983, 222). Along with his voice and the field recordings Cage also commissioned 32 traditional Irish songs performed by six musicians which were distributed through the work by chance operations (Ibid.). From mid-July to mid-August Cage and Fulleman superimposed the four sonic units in Paris at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), creating a sonic collage of more than 2,000 acoustic elements on 64 tracks of tape (Silverman: 2010, 318). The master tape was prepared so that the recordings of Cage's voice and the Irish musicians could be removed in order to represent them in a live performance setting (Kostelanetz: 1989, 217). This was the arrangement that was used when *Roaratorio* was used in a collaboration with a Merce Cunningham for

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<sup>111</sup> Richard Kostelanetz 'John Cage as Hörspielmacher' (1989) in *Writings about John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 213-221: 222

<sup>112</sup>William Brooks, 'Roaratorio Appraisiated' (1983) in *Writings about John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 222-224: 222

a ballet version of the piece in 1983.<sup>113</sup> *Roaratorio* engendered a community spread across the globe, recomposing the *Wake*'s 'hypermnesic', global memory through a collaborative composition process based on chance and indeterminacy.

For those sympathetic to John Cage's aesthetic, *Roaratorio* has been considered 'a rousingly beautiful masterpiece of sonic art' (Silverman: 2010, 318). The presenter of the Karl-Sczucka prize at Donaueschingen praised its 'moral force' as giving 'one an overwhelming feeling of openness and hope' (Ibid., 319). William Brooks described the piece as 'unreal, dearly loved, joyfully affirmed, but illuminated by the certainty of loss, the recognition that this place cannot be, never was, before us' (Brooks: 1983, 222). But the Joycean ear on the other hand, was less sympathetic to Cage's systematic derangement of *Finnegans Wake*. Reviewing the Cunningham and Cage performance of *Roaratorio* at the BAM in 1987, Richard Gerber of the James Joyce Quarterly concluded that:

*Roaratorio* is Joyceless not only because Cage has obliterated Joyce's name and text, but because structure without content really is meaningless. Joyce's *Wake* was made to be heard, and that is why *Roaratorio* is so frustrating.<sup>114</sup>

This antagonism will become the focus of chapter three, exploring Cage's challenge to Joycean 'competence' by leveling the distinction between the 'uninitiated' and the 'cognoscenti', and exploring the extent to which his (flawed) universalism can access the *Finnegans Wake*'s community of ghosts and dead labour.

I will now discuss a final iteration of performance integral to this thesis which also takes place from within a scholarly academic frame. But unlike Cage's intrusion upon the scholarly sphere of Joycean competence with his re-writing and performing of *Finnegans Wake*, it is the intrusion of *Finnegans Wake* itself which also has the capacity to subvert the conventions of scholarly and academic frames.

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<sup>113</sup> A revival of which I attended in 2011 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music during the Merce Cunningham legacy tour. The original 1979 WDR recording was used in order to retain Cage's presence as a voice, despite the fact that Cunningham's absence was performed by another dancer.

<sup>114</sup> Richard J. Gerber, *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 24. No. 3 (Spring, 1987), pp.369-373, 370

### **‘Cited by the learned scholar’: Research-as-Performance**

Returning to Joyce’s portmanteau, ‘perfumance’, I will discuss a final permutation of performance in which the specter of Joyce’s word has crept into certain ‘performances’ of scholarship, in particular Jacques Derrida’s symposium paper on Joyce (Derrida: 1984) and Jon McKenzie’s ‘punctual’ general theory of performance in his study, *Perform, or Else* (McKenzie: 2001).<sup>115</sup> In noting these instances of how the word has been utilized *beyond Finnegans Wake* as a performative strategy for developing theoretical work, I will argue that these instances belong to an occasional trend in Joyce scholarship, such as a ‘scenario’ performed by Ihab Hassan (1969) or Tim Conley’s uncorrected textual performance in *Joyce’s Mistakes* (2003),<sup>116</sup> which infuse their scholarly practice with performance. Alongside the few examples of previous scholarship that have considered the link between Joyce and performance (Gonzales: 1986; Lanter: 1988; Myers: 1994; Burkdall: 2001), I will situate my own performance-research practice within this trend as the first instance which engages *performance* (rather than theatre, music, or film) as its key methodological term.

In his book, *Perform, or else* (2001), Jon McKenzie appropriates Joyce’s neologism for his queered disintegrative ‘general theory of perfumance’ (McKenzie: 2001, 231). Although he does not acknowledge the *Wake*, his employment of the portmanteau is certainly a playful extenuation of the performativity of Joyce’s language. McKenzie uses the word as a ‘punctual’ which, unlike the regular signification of concepts ‘follow the materialities of signifiers, the tonalities of affects, the traces of difference’ (Ibid.). As this ‘punctual’ language might suggest, McKenzie takes his cue more from Derrida than Joyce, and refers to the symposium paper, ‘Ulysses: Gramophone’, in which Derrida examined how the ‘gramophony’ of Molly Bloom’s ‘yes-laughter’ ‘operates between and beyond the eyes and ears, between and beyond the *eidōs* and *logos* of knowledge and truth’ to constitute a ‘perfume of discourse’ (Ibid.). He also notes how Derrida considered calling his paper ‘*On the perfumative in*

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<sup>115</sup> Jacques Derrida, ‘Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce’ (1984), trans. François Raffoul in Mitchell, Andrew J. & Slotte, Sam (eds.), *Derrida and Joyce: Text and Contexts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), pp.41-86 ; Jon McKenzie, *Perform - Or Else: from discipline to performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001)

<sup>116</sup> Ihab Hassan, *Paracriticisms: Seven Speculations of the Times* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp.63-73; Tim Conley, *Joyce’s Mistakes: Problems of Intention, Irony, and Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp.95-98

'*Ulysses*'.<sup>117</sup> The *Wake* does not appear in this strata of literary debt because McKenzie is recalling Derrida who was recalling the various 'calls of perfume' in *Ulysses* (Derrida: 1984, 75) rather than the 'perfumance' in 'Feenichts Playhouse'. But the absence of a direct acknowledgement confirms Derrida's claim that both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* – which he identifies as not as two but 'one volume', 'the book of all books' (Ibid, 69) – constitute a super-competent 'computer', a 'hypermnesic machine capable of storing in a giant epic work, with the memory of the West and virtually all the languages of the world, *the very traces of the future*' (Ibid., 60; his italics). If, as Derrida proposes, this 'hypermnesic' composite volume has signed in advance the memory of its future this must include future uses of Joyce's portmanteau. While neither Derrida nor McKenzie's 'perfumances' perform direct readings of *Finnegans Wake*, their writings can be seen as hypermnesic *re-writings* of *Finnegans Wake* by placing Joyce's neologism into their own theoretical practice.<sup>118</sup>

For McKenzie, 'perfumance' functions as a 'puncture' to discuss the social and cultural role of performance (which, he argues, has become a dominant paradigm, replacing discipline, since the Cold War) as a 'disintegration of forms' by destabilizing the Western philosophical tradition's emphasis on the eye and the ear so that 'this eye-ear and ear-eye both become nose, become perfumative' (McKenzie: 2001, 231). The hegemony of the sight and sound is dislocated by the rehabilitation of smell. Like Joyce's intoxication with the play of re-naming and the 'puncture' 'materialities of the signifier', McKenzie plays with a litany of 'perfumative' definitions:

Let us name it – *Perfumance*: the citational mist of any and all performances. *Perfumance*: the incessant (dis)embodying-(mis) naming of performance. [...] *Perfumance*: the odor of things and words, the sweat of bodies, the perfume of discourse. *Perfumance*: the ruse of a general theory.

(McKenzie: 2001, 203)

This 'ruse' of naming and '(mis)naming' performance into 'perfumance' becomes a

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.; see also Derrida: 1984, 75

<sup>118</sup> Despite the scarcity of references to *Finnegans Wake* in 'Ulysses: Gramophone', Derrida's reading of the earlier text is infused with his understanding of the latter text. As Alan Roughley suggests, his reading 'may well have been filtered through his knowledge of the *Wake*' and the self-reflexive form of the paper itself, in which Derrida 'continually returns to the ways in which he created his talk on Joyce', means that it also has much in common with *Finnegans Wake*'s 'fictitious accounts of its creation'; Alan Roughley, *Reading Derrida Reading Joyce* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1999), 61

way of highlighting the contingent properties of the body as it erupts into '(dis)embodying' discourses of performance which privilege sight and sound over smell, taste and touch. 'Perfumance' is a call for a multi-sensory and conceptually transient understanding of the 'onto-historical formation' which pervades this 'age of global performance' (Ibid., 263); as such, McKenzie's 'perfumance' is also concerned with temporality as it 'emits emissions of the future' (Ibid., 232). Whilst the ends of McKenzie's research are markedly different to *Finnegans Wake* (of which there is no 'end' other than its endlessness), the multi-sensory diachrony of 'perfumance' belongs to the 'audible-visible-gnosible-edible world' (088.06) of Joyce's text which is always keen to equate the construction of memory and temporality through all the senses.<sup>119</sup> In this respect, Jon McKenzie is a competent (if unconscious) performer of *Finnegans Wake*.

This notion of competence comes into play not as a decoding of Joyce's texts but as a re-deployment of his language into the performance of their own theoretical work; their performance (the application of competence) is therefore a *revision* of Joyce's writing. However, in 'Ulysses: Gramophone', Derrida made sure to complicate the notion by declaring not only his own 'incompetence' as a reader of Joyce but the statement that 'there cannot be a Joycean competence' (Derrida: 1984, 59, 60). This rather confrontational assertion was made as a deliberate provocation to an audience of 'experts' at 'the opening of a large symposium' (the Frankfurt James Joyce Symposium, 1984), in order to explore two questions: 'what would competence mean, in the case of Joyce? And what can a Joycean institution or family, a Joycean international, be?' (Ibid., 59). There was therefore an eventfulness to his paper, a self-conscious performance in which he combined the self-deprecation of playing the 'incompetent' outsider with the rather less self-deprecating role of the prophet Elijah ('Elijah: That name is not inscribed, no, on my birth certificate but it was given to me on my seventh day', Ibid., 62). Derrida constantly alluded to his alterity, as an outsider to the Joycean institution, in the composition of his paper and to his Jewishness, which he shares with Bloom. In this respect he was playing out 'the worry about family legitimation' which, for Derrida, is 'what makes both *Ulysses* and

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<sup>119</sup> For example, it speaks of 'remarkable evidence [...] given, anon, by an eye, ear, nose and throat witness' (086.32-33) and integrates the division of time with the division of the senses: 'All the presents are determining as regards for the future the howabouts of their past absences which they might see on at hearing could they once smell of tastes from touch.' (355.02-05)

*Finnegans Wake* vibrate' (Ibid., 59). His claim to be an illegitimate 'incompetent' reader of both texts, which he only knew 'indirectly, by hearsay, rumors, gossip [*on-dit*], secondhand exegeses, and always partial readings' (Ibid., 59), can nonetheless be viewed as a legitimate (and therefore competent) reading of Joyce as a *performance of incompetence*.

This description of his 'incompetent' knowledge is in itself very *Wake*-like since both are composites of 'rumor' and 'gossip', and by exposing the 'deception' of any Joycean legitimacy at this event, Derrida brought into question what it meant to read and write about Joyce as an expert: what are the proper methods for becoming a competent reader? how does one join such an exclusive community? Derrida's paper, which in today's parlance would be called an 'intervention', staged itself as a filial challenge to the paternal authority of the Joycean community, and in this respect further echoed the *Wake* by iterating its theme of paternal overthrow (setting his impish 'Shem' against the Joyceans' patriarchal, 'HCE'). His performance resembles the master-slave dialectic when he posits himself as a humiliated and intimidated outsider who grants his audience authority by recognising them:

You call on strangers so that they come to tell you, which is what I do by responding to your invitation: you do exist, you intimidate me, I recognize you, I recognize your paternal and grandpaternal authority, recognize me, give me a diploma in Joycean studies.

(Derrida: 1984, 62)

But this caustic plea for recognition to join the ranks of the initiated is not an antithetical attempt to overthrow the 'Master' but a call to recognise the arbitrariness of Joycean authority; Derrida demonstrates that there is no such thing as competence or incompetence but the *performance* of both. The performance of authoritative competence and the collective showing of this authority is challenged by the adversarial self-reflexivity of Derrida's performance. Like the continually decentered paternal authority and heterogenous, ungraspable community in *Finnegans Wake*, Derrida's intervention replays Joyce's simultaneous affirmation and negation of an authoritative community:

When you call on incompetent people, such as myself, or on allegedly external competences, even though you know that there aren't any, isn't it in order to both humiliate them and because you are expecting from these guests not only some news, some good news that would come to finally free you from the hypermnesic

interiority in which you run in circles like madmen in a nightmare but also, paradoxically, a legitimacy? For you are both very sure and very unsure of your rights, and even of your community, of the homogeneity of your practices, methods, and styles. You can count on no consensus, no axiomatic agreement among yourselves. In the end, you do not exist, you are not authorized to exist as a foundation, and this is what Joyce's signature gives you to be read.  
(Derrida: 1984, 62)

Derrida brings into question the notion of a Joycean 'community' which disappears the moment it appears. 'Joyce's signature' is the 'hypermnesic' super-computer which runs this community 'in circles like madmen in a nightmare' and yet paradoxically grants them with 'legitimacy'. Elsewhere in the paper Derrida can hear this version of James Joyce 'laughing at this omnipotence – and at this great trick played' on everyone who would seek the impossibility of 'hypermnesic mastery' (Ibid., 69, 68). It is Derrida's role as both an internally 'incompetent' and externally 'competent' reader to draw attention to the fiction of this community which, through live encounters like symposia or the textual dissemination of criticism, nonetheless exists as a community of unauthorized readers. Along with his frequent attention to the composition process of his paper, 'Ulysses: Gramophone' presents a foundational example of the main concerns of this thesis: competence, community, composition and the possibilities of doing research *as performance*. Much of the performativity (or 'performativity') of 'Ulysses: Gramophone' lies in its attention to its process, both within its composition and its performance. In doing so Derrida presented what I would consider to be a 'practice-as-research' (or 'research-as-performance') paper and as such it constitutes a model for this thesis which is not only concerned with these questions of competence, community and composition but with the performance of research.

Derrida's 'research-as-performance' piece paid specific attention to the role of diachrony and chance; it syncopates the time of its composition with the time of its delivery and connects the experience of chance encounters and writing in Joyce to the contingencies of his own writing process.<sup>120</sup> The double-time of the paper constitutes a performance of memory and repetition by recalling part of its composition which took place (allegedly) on a journey to Tokyo:

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<sup>120</sup> These two elements which move the essay from conventional research practice (which tend to hide the erraticisms of process) to the more self-conscious mode of practice as research will be explored in relation to John Cage's recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* in Chapter 3 and my own performance-as-research project, *About That Original Hen*, in Chapter 4.

I am thus in the process of buying postcards in Tokyo, pictures of lakes, and I am apprehensive about giving an intimidated presentation before “Joyce scholars” on the *yes* in *Ulysses* and on the institution of Joyce studies, when, in the store where I find myself by chance, in the basement of the Okura hotel, “coincidence of meeting,” I fall upon a book entitled *16 Ways to Avoid Saying No*, by Maasaki Imai.

(Derrida: 1984, 47)

This passage reveals much about his intentions behind the paper and the performance of his writing. The postcard recalls ‘the scene of the postcard’ (Ibid., 44), a reference to his book *The Post Card* (1980) where he ‘had tried to restage the Babelization of the postal system in *Finnegans Wake*’ (Ibid.). By returning to the present tense Derrida was also re-staging the affective dimension of his process; the apprehension he feels about writing is paired to the intimidation that he intends to perform at the symposium. This admission of feelings, as honest as it may be, points towards the affective performativity of his paper; he is not nervous about presenting before ‘Joyce scholars’ but about presenting himself as ‘intimidated’. His inferiority before the authority figures in his audience must be an act; he does not express anxiety about his competence as an academic or scholar but as a convincing actor who can convey ‘intimidation’. The performance of reading his paper becomes a narrativisation of the experience of writing and along with the experiences of nervousness and fear he has an encounter with chance; a ‘coincidence of meeting’ in which the external world around him seems to respond to his internal thoughts. This is how Derrida compares himself to Bloom who in the ‘Eumaeus’ chapter reflects upon ‘the chance nature of encounters, the galaxy of events’ and ‘dreams of writing [...] about what happens to him, as I [Derrida] do here’ (Ibid., 45). Derrida is repeating the diachrony of Bloom’s ‘dream of writing’ which, since Joyce has already documented ‘the whole galaxy of events’, has already been written but is repeated as the imagination of a future act of writing. By connecting postcards and a chance encounter in Tokyo with Bloom’s reflections on chance and writing and his recollection of a postcard which mentions Tokyo (‘Great battle, Tokio’),<sup>121</sup> Derrida’s paper performs a ‘great circular return’ (Ibid., 46). In re-staging his thinking about writing about his experience he also re-stages Bloom’s thinking about writing and, by maintaining his attention to the accidental elements of composition, forges a line

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<sup>121</sup> Derrida: 1984, 46, or U.16.1232-41



back to Joyce's writing process.<sup>122</sup> Derrida's recursive and self-reflexive framing thus draws attention to the arbitrariness of writing, and a double-bind of power and powerlessness emerges out of the exposure of its process. The final sentence of 'Ulysses: Gramophone' attests to this when he writes:

I decided to stop here because I almost had an accident as I was jotting down this last sentence, when, on leaving the airport, I was driving home returning from Tokyo.

(Derrida: 1984, 81)

As the author and solo performer of the text he has the arbitrary power to end where ever he likes, but the authority of his decision is determined by the arbitrariness of a potential accident. There is a mock-heroism to this as Derrida shows how he literally put his life on the line to bring his writing to this audience of Joyce scholars, but ending with the evocation of this 'almost ... accident' also conveys the relationship between submission and mastery in his composition process. Like Joyce's supposed control over his archive,<sup>123</sup> Derrida's control over his writing is a performance of mastery and chance, recorded at the point of interruption.

The combination of performance and the academic presentation of ideas is not necessarily a new departure within the history and practice of Joycean criticism. Before Derrida's performative intervention at the Frankfurt symposium in 1984,<sup>124</sup> Ihab Hassan presented a paper at the Second International James Joyce symposium in 1969 called 'Joyce-Beckett: A Scenario in Eight Scenes and a Voice', a fragmented meditation on Joyce and Beckett's relationship during the *Work in Progress* which reads like a piece of closet-theatre about the performance of postmodern scholarship.<sup>125</sup> Hassan begins with a prologue which could function both as a set of pre-emptive stage directions or a documentation of the symposium it was written for:

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<sup>122</sup> In a footnote to 'Ulysses: Gramophone' (constituting a third layer of memory to the essay), Derrida speaks of Joyce's archive of variants, manuscripts and page proofs as a self-consciously constructed 'diachronic dimension' in which contingencies and 'typographical errors themselves' were deliberately gathered by the author, not as accidental details on the periphery of his 'corpus', but to 'indicate essential moments in the work' (Derrida: 1984, 86). For Derrida, Joyce was just as much concerned with the indeterminate and unfixed processes of writing as he was and, also like Derrida, engineered a performance of writing which deliberately harbours accidents.

<sup>123</sup> see above footnote

<sup>124</sup> see Introduction; Jacques Derrida, 'Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce' (1984), trans. François Raffoul in Mitchell, Andrew J. & Slotte, Sam (eds.), *Derrida and Joyce: Text and Contexts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), pp.41-86

<sup>125</sup> Fritz Senn (ed), *New Light on Joyce from the Dublin Symposium* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 180-194); also in Ihab Hassan, *Paracriticisms: Seven Speculations of the Times* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp.63-73

The scholars assemble; they dine and are of good cheer. One rises to speak. He speaks of silence – that, at least, appears to be his theme. The matter is not yet clear.

(Hassan: 1975, 63)

The ‘scenes’ take place between ‘The Gresham’ (the Dublin hotel at which the symposium was held); a fictional or semi-fictional library (‘The Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Perhaps’)<sup>126</sup>; ‘A Paris Apartment, 1933’; ‘The Computer Lab’ at IBM and ‘Beckett’s Skull’. (Hassan: 1975, 63-73). Like *Finnegans Wake* and early Beckett, Hassan’s paper is a comic and parodic intertextual collision of voices, allusions and self-references. The piece is structured around a ‘Speaker’'s attempt to deliver a comparative study of Joyce and Beckett frequently interrupted by a ‘Voice’, possibly a disruptive audience member or the speaker’s own self-critical interlocutor: ‘The point has not been made, no, no, five minutes into the speech, and the main point has not been made.’ (Hassan: 1975, 64) This device recalls the many interrogative interruptions and dialogic interjections in the *Wake*<sup>127</sup>, but it also echoes ‘the principle of interruption’ in Brecht’s Epic theatre, which Walter Benjamin viewed as a way to ‘expose what is present’.<sup>128</sup> Hassan described his method as a ‘gaiety in form’ which ‘surprises itself’ (Ibid., 78) and, as an interruption of what might be considered to be the normal proceedings of an academic symposium, the paper’s meta-theatrical interruptions were a way of ‘exposing what is present’ - namely, a *performance* of scholarship at the beginning of a period in Joycean studies influenced by postmodern and post-structuralist theory. These interruptions may not have directly addressed the social conditions that were ‘present’ at the time but they functioned within the symposium as an intervention for thinking about the ‘postmodern imagination’ and what it meant to be studying Joyce and Beckett at that particular point in the twentieth-century. Towards the conclusion of the piece the ‘Voice’ says of Joyce and Beckett: ‘Both bring the future into our lives. What future?’ (Ibid., 73).

Any academic paper involves an aspect of performance - the way it is delivered, the way it behaves within the conventions of a symposium. But this is not what makes papers like Hassan’s or Derrida’s *performative*. I do not use the term ‘performative’ to

<sup>126</sup> Where secret books can be found like ‘*The Life and Works of James Augustine Aloysius Joyce*, by H.C.Earwicker’, or ‘*The Making of Beckett’s “End Game,”*’ by James Joyce’ Ibid. [Hassan: 1975, 63]

<sup>127</sup> e.g. the interrogations of Shaun and Yawn in III.i and III.iii respectively

<sup>128</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 234

imply that these academic papers *do* more than any other academic paper can; they do not perform ‘speech acts’ that are more efficacious than any other paper might be. ‘Theatrical’ is another possible adjective for considering how the challenge to conventional scholarship draws attention to the form in which their ideas are presented; ‘exposing what is present’ through a form of exaggeration which Samuel Weber (discussing the theatricality of Jean Genet’s writing) describes as ‘an excess of gesture over signification’.<sup>129</sup> In this respect Hassan used different voices and interruptions in the space of his scholarly paper as gestures to exaggerate the dialogic and cross-referential aspects of its form. Hassan performed, as a scholar, *performing* scholarship as a piece of theatre. The multiple layers within the piece do not add anything new to what is expected of his performance as a scholar - academic presentations may often consist of a central line of inquiry interrupted by anticipations of contradictions and counterarguments, switching between reading from notes to directly addressing the audience and sometimes referring to the time and place in which they are delivered. The difference is that Hassan exaggerated these elements by drawing attention to their disruptive effects during the event of his paper. Weber might refer to this as a kind of ‘disruptive spatiality’, a theatrical reversal of the ‘configuration of concepts that we take for granted in perceiving and thinking, our familiar grid’ (Weber: 2004, 300-301). Expanding on Aristotlean *anagnorisis* (recognition) and *peripeteia* (reversal), Weber suggests that ‘theatrical’ writing produces an ‘interruption of the temporal continuum of conscious intention by something unexpected, something that does not *fit*’; we become aware of something which ‘*stands out*’ and thus becomes a kind of ‘*spatiality*’. (Ibid.). In this sense, we do not succumb to the tricks of theatricality but become aware of the space in which we can longer no safely situate ourselves. ‘Theatricality’ is not the intrusion of artifice into everyday surroundings but a recognition of the theatricality of the everyday.

In *About That Original Hen*, I also allow for the theatre of everyday life to intrude upon the theatre of scholarship by deliberately interrupting my archival research with the intrusion of an industrial dispute that took place around the same time. The inclusion of protests by cleaners and students and the particular story of a female protester’s arrest on University property threatens to displace the focus of my work – the role of female hands writing Joyce’s *Work in Progress* – but the interruptive

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<sup>129</sup> Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 298

material, which becomes thematically integrated by paying attention to acts of writing, serves to expose subtle violences that underpin both institutional spaces and writing processes. The theatricalised performance of this research is what makes the disjunction between temporal and spatial lines coalesce into a site for critical reflection. But, as the nature of this thesis will show, which is both performance and documentation, the interruptive ‘theatricality’ is not restricted to the ‘live’ sphere of scholarly performance.

While the performativity and theatricality of these ‘live’ examples of ‘research as performance’ papers enact ‘principles of interruption’ to reveal the inherent performance of research practice, Tim Conley performs the opposite by theatricalising the performance of his writing as an uninterrupted flow of error. At the centre of his study about errors and mistakes in Joyce’s late works,<sup>130</sup> Conley explores the ‘bumpy relationship’ between ‘temporality and text’ by capturing the uncorrected *liveness* of his own writing (Conley: 2003, 95). He refers to this chapter as a ‘deviation from academic rubric’ and a ‘meditative experiment of sorts, in which this text itself is both the subject and the analyst’ (Ibid.), taking him into the double role of the practice-led researcher like Derrida and Hassan in their symposium papers and myself in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The ‘experiment’ involved leaving in all of the errors that occurred during the typing process. The result is not an analysis of Joyce’s texts but of the ‘textual condition’ Joyce’s work which, as he describes *Finnegans Wake*, was ‘an accident waiting to happen’ (Ibid., 76). Conley’s methodology becomes a re-performance of Joyce’s composition process by letting the spelling mistakes of his unrevised draft flow uninterrupted. He even stages the writing as a re-enactment by ‘wearing a blank white shirt as Joyce liked to do when stretched out to compose’ (Ibid., 95). But this performance is only a repetition of Joyce’s composition process in respect of its failure to reproduce the original conditions – instead of transcribing dictation, handwriting or using a typewriter, Conley writes at a computer and pays ‘no mind to the spellchecker’s naggings’ and ignores ‘the flashes of red underline which appear’ as he types (Ibid.). His performance takes place in a different century to Joyce’s (and Derrida’s) and reflects this by acknowledging the technology with which it is performed, but the difference only consolidates its relation back to *Finnegans Wake*; it demonstrates how an

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<sup>130</sup> Tim Conley, *Joyce’s Mistakes: Problems of Intention, Irony, and Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp.95-98

erroneous text captures the imperfections of a writing process regardless of its division of labour. The spellchecker's redlines would be just as redundant if *Finnegans Wake* had been composed on a 21st century computer because of its extremely atypical and unstandardised use of spelling. However Conley doesn't re-enact the singularity of 'Wakese', but addresses the question of the author's agency and authority within the 'bumpy relationship' between 'temporality and text'.

There is an ambivalent relation at work between the writer and his text which is captured by the textual record of this performance. The 'interlooping' (Ibid., 95) of error and intent, contingency and control, exposes both the failure of the writer's performance to meet the competence expected by his tools (the computer spellchecker) and the authority of the writer's performance which actively embraces this failure. Conley considers his text to be domineeringly meek, as it enfolds the fallibility of human error with an 'aggressive' self-awareness, and compares this to Joyce's fondness for postmarks:

The text's self-awareness is so aggressive a neurosis that it must seize the attention, in whatever fashion, of the reader - just as the typing errors and malapropisms here demand notice. In short, the postmarks are not warnings (too late for that) but something akin to apologies for the erroneous nature of the text it recognizes and frames.

(Conley: 2003, 97)

A postmark acts like a signature because it inscribes an authorial decision to conclude, but if it acts as an apology for the errors that it 'recognizes and frames' it also alerts the reader to the evanescence of the text by marking the disappearance of its process. The text is recognized as an event and the ruse of its completion is confirmed by the arbitrary dates of its postmark. *Finnegans Wake* marks this 'bumpy' temporal syncopation as its last words are not an incomplete and thus infinitely recirculating sentence but: 'PARIS, 1922-1939.' The postmark constitutes the text's material condition as an object – it is a copy of what remains of a vanished event: a performance of error filled, collaborative writing that took place in Paris between 1922 and 1939. This postmark and Conley's egregious spelling mistakes attest to the paradoxical relationship between the unrepeatability and the reproducibility of performance: the composition process has been lost but yet it remains in the material composition of a book. Conley dramatizes this relationship by personifying his copy of the book as an antagonist in his writing process:

*Finnegans Wake* sits nearby, untouchable, giving a look not of reproach but of a daring lerr: go on, go on, I dare you.

(Ibid., 95)

Inverting Stephen Heath's claim that a reader must become its actor (Attridge and Ferrer: 1984, 32), Conley turns *Finnegans Wake* into an actor by ventriloquizing the 'look' it gives him which, aptly and accidentally, becomes a 'daring lerr'. The 'leer' of the book is marked by Conley's human ability to 'err' and thus the record of this material encounter between performer and object is recorded as an accidental portmanteau; the 'accident waiting to happen' of the *Wake* is repeated not by a detailed re-enactment of Joyce's composition process but as a response to the material presence of the book which conceals this process. From another angle we could hear this prosopopoeia as a ghostly voice, like the ghost of Joyce which 'is always coming on board' when Derrida writes,<sup>131</sup> a haunting 'ventriloquent agitator' (056.05-06) provoking Conley into his performance. What is 'untouchable' about the book as it 'sits nearby' is not the stature of *Finnegans Wake* but the ghosts which inhabit the material of the book; *Finnegans Wake* is a tangible, *touchable* object whilst the spectres that haunt its composition remain *untouchable*, yet they provoke Conley to act, as erroneously and human as they once were, by daring him with projected speech.

In this illuminating 'research-as-performance' experiment, Conley uncovers the extent to which our mastery over materials transforms into their influence over us. This may just be a moment of animist ventriloquism but by theatricalising and subverting the conventions of 'academic rubric' (Conley: 2003, 95), Conley effectively brings his research practice into the same terrain as *Finnegans Wake* which, in this instance, is not an abstracted textual essence but a reproducible document of error; a circulated commodity composed of paper, glue and ink and haunted by the traces of its dead labour. The authority of the writer is therefore dislodged by the materiality of the text as it indicates his subordination to the process. Becoming *Finnegans Wake*'s actor, it would seem, whether you are Joyce or a critical reader, involves a submission to its material conditions.

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<sup>131</sup> In 'Two Words on Joyce', Derrida declared that 'every time I write, and even in the most academic pieces of work, Joyce's ghost is always coming on board', citing his book *Glas* as 'a kind of *Wake*'; *La Pharmacie de Platon* as 'a sort of indirect reading of *Finnegans Wake*' and how *La Carte Postale* 'is haunted by Joyce', a haunting which 'invades the book, a shadow on every page'. He also defined Joyce's ghost as a ghost-in-the-machine operating in the 'joyceware' of a hypermnestic '1000th generation computer' which computes and controls you in advance; Attridge & Ferrer: 1984, 150, 147

All of these instances which have either engaged performance with *Finnegans Wake* or *Finnegans Wake* with performance constitute precedents for this thesis. Following from Derrida and McKenzie's 'performance', my analyses will also re-employ portmanteaux from the *Wake* as critical tools. For example, 'decorded', a word that complicates the notion of competent 'decoding' with the memory of 'recording' will be used to consider the liminal condition of performance which sits between text and action in my discussion of Mary Manning's *Passages from Finnegans Wake* and as a categorization of my own performance, *About That Original Hen*, as a 'decording'. Other words which condense the central concerns of the thesis – 'redismember'; 'decomposition and recombination'; 'ambivalent'; 'erronymously' – are not merely stylistic flourishes of scholarly citation but offer a concretion of object and analysis to display how this 'performance-as-research' thesis is *both* an analysis of performance and a performance of analysis. Chapter Four in particular will consider how these words can be *put into performance* as well as showing how performance can illuminate their meaning. Derrida and Hassan's symposium papers on Joyce demonstrated how notions of competence (and incompetence) and institutional authority can be challenged by the interruption of performance and theatricality within the frame of scholarly practice; in these interventions, which re-encounter Joyce's composition process, the researcher-performer also brings into question the notion of community. Furthermore, Tim Conley's exploration of errors in *Finnegans Wake* by staging a re-enactment of its composition process and recording its contingent, living errors as part of a scholarly publication similarly disrupts the conventional frame of research practice with the intrusion of performance. By casting himself not as an infallible master of scholarly discourse, but as an imperfect, erroneous hand amongst a network of material presences and absences, Conley addresses the diachrony of the 'textual condition' and presents his role as a component amongst a performative community of voices and materials, bound by their contingencies and incompetences.

## Practice • Performance • Research (A Methodology)

This thesis finds itself at a slippery intersection between ‘research’ and ‘practice’. Although I will distinguish between different ways in which a text like *Finnegans Wake* can be ‘read’ (from hermeneutic or genetic criticism to performative or performance-based interpretations), I also want to collapse the barriers between ‘practice-as-research’ by highlighting the *performance* of research through my practice as a performer-scholar. As previously discussed, the term ‘performance’ incorporates a wide and constantly shifting ground, but I have outlined its web of definitions in relation to composition, community and competence by paying specific attention to how performance conflates the activities of reading and writing. By introducing ‘performance’ into the web, *reading* and *writing* become ever more interchangeable as the word highlights how both terms are connected through a sense of active participation rather than forms of passive reception and regurgitation. A *performance* of reading becomes a performance of writing, for example, when a reader actively annotates a page or, if we accept Taylor’s notion of the ‘repertoire’ as text, embodies the memory of a text through speech; on the other hand, writing becomes reading when an author or editor revises a text, or when a critical writer furnishes forth *a reading* of something; the performance does not simply constellate the mutual *activities* of reading and writing but recognises the ceaseless oscillation between the two. If anything, performance, as it will be continually understood in this thesis, is a matter of such ambivalent oscillation; it is not a determinable essence but an efflorescent state of movement between objects and actions. As such I want to use performance as a methodological tool which has the capacity to both disrupt and converge categories.

The distinction between ‘practice’ and ‘research’ is another instance of such categorical pairings which performance might collapse.<sup>132</sup> The term ‘practice-as-research’ seems to imply a negative sense of performativity; a sense in which ‘performance’ is in the business of *putting on an act*. The preposition, ‘as’ (frequently coupled with the subjunctive indicator, ‘if’), creates an association between ‘practice’ and ‘research’ in which we are led to believe that ‘practice’ can only *perform* at being ‘research’; it presents a scenario in which we must suspend our (supposed) regular

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<sup>132</sup> For an recent engagement with the specific term, ‘Practice-as-Research’ (PaR) see Robin Nelson, ed., *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)



understanding of the terms and imagine that it is *as-if-practice-were-research*, or *as-though-practice-were-playing-at-research*. This nebulous word, 'practice', becomes a temporary substitute for the more institutionally approved term, 'research' – the legitimate ground to which the scholar's field-trip upon the unstable terrain of 'practice' must eventually return. However, the 'performance' that takes place within the phrase could be seen as a conscious separation and spotlighting of two elements which are part of the same process: the 'as' functions as an objective examination of the tautologous phrase 'practice-is-research' by showing how one performs 'as' the other. It also begs the equivalent scenario in which we might want to prove that 'research-is-practice'. One might argue however that such equivocation is misleading because while all research must entail a practice (such as the practice of reading and writing), not all practice entails research. But this objection indicates what the separation between the two terms is really doing which is to highlight the intrusion of external practice into field of academic research and thus maintaining a binary distinction between 'doing' and 'thinking'. Baz Kershaw has noted the AHRC's preference for the term 'practice' (over 'performance') because it implies that 'practical creativity must have add-ons', in the form of evidential 'outputs', 'to join in the business of knowledge-making'.<sup>133</sup> 'Practice' is perhaps a safer word for funding bodies because it implies a stage in a process (from 'theory' to 'practice' to 'evidence' to 'analysis') which comfortably sits within the measurable (and commodifiable) boundaries of 'research'.

The assumption behind this preference for 'practice' has to do with documentation: practice must be captured by the archival tools of research in order for it to be duly assessed. Performance will always present a problem to this sequence because of its 'lack of definable limits' and the 'instability of its "objects"' (Kershaw: 2008, 24) which are so often determined by their resistance to the methods of containment required by research practice. As the lead investigator of PARIP, Kershaw felt 'queasy about the officially produced paradox that the traces of a creative performance event had more value than the event itself' (Ibid., 25). But this queasiness which performance provokes within academic research frameworks is useful because it entails an 'enhanced reflexivity' that 'reveals the assumptions of

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<sup>133</sup> Baz Kershaw, 'Performance as research: live events and documents' in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed., Tracy C. Davis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.23-45

knowledge claims' (Ibid., 27). If it exposes an unequal quantitative relationship between the event of performance and the documentation of its traces then the economic assumptions which underly 'knowledge claims' found within institutional frameworks may be challenged, or at least brought to light. For Dwight Conquergood, 'performance studies' (which Richard Schechner argues is integrally connected to performance practice)<sup>134</sup> is an ongoing challenge to these 'booby-trapped' binaries embedded in the academy. Performance studies has the ability to 'refuse and supersede the deeply entrenched division of labour, apartheid of knowledges, that plays out inside the academy as the difference between thinking and doing, interpreting and making' (Schechner: 2013, 26). Conquergood's 'radical move', as spokesman for performance studies at Northwestern University, 'is to turn, and return, insistently, to the crossroads' which bisects 'abstraction' and 'practice' (Ibid.). This restless but inquisitive revolving at the crossroads aptly describes the role of *performance* in this thesis. As a result the distinction between 'documentation' and 'performance' will be complicated, particularly in my final chapter.

Having outlined a number of working definitions for 'performance' and articulating the *role* of performance – as a reflexive tool of research which disrupts and integrates binaries – I can propose a methodology. Rejecting the term 'practice as research' (and even 'practice led' or 'practice based' research), because it assumes an imbalance between object and analysis, I would like to entertain the more specific term 'performance-as-research', but only if it is to be understood as the ontological partner of 'research-as-performance', and that the 'as' can be converted into the copula, 'is'. Perhaps a less mystical methodological determination would be: 'a performance study of a literary object'. This addresses the project's attention to a singular literary text, *Finnegans Wake*, through the perspective of performance studies, an interdisciplinary field which encompasses *both* theory and practice. The conflation of 'performance' with 'research' requires a combination of both a study of *Finnegans Wake in performance* and a study of *Finnegans Wake through performance*. I hesitate to nominate an outright terminology because this would occlude the necessary 'queasiness' which the thesis has embraced by integrating 'regular' research practices (literary analysis, archival research, theoretical critique) with 'irregular' and 'experimental' practices (live performance, multi-media

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<sup>134</sup> Schechner: 2013, 2; 'The relationship between studying performance and doing performance is integral.'

documentation). In 2015 this 'queasiness' should be more or less obsolete and, with the broad scope of other AHRC funded projects that are perhaps far more comfortable with the distinction between 'hard facts' and 'liquid knowing' (Nelson: 2013, 48) a methodological irrelevance. But I acknowledge the discomfort because it has been integral to the nature of the research itself: the push and pull between different disciplines and fields of knowledge; the difficulty in designating a role for myself as the thesis's primary actor; the frustrating (but also rewarding) ambivalence in the attempt to define the borders between my practice as an 'academic' and a 'performer'. The rift occurs because of the debt my research has incurred towards both Joyce and Performance Studies. On the one hand it must serve the wealth of scholarship behind Joyce's text, but on the other it must also serve the field of performance studies. Although I believe it is possible (and indeed necessary) to provide value to both scholarly fields, methodologically, there should be a level of determination. As the perceptual lens of the thesis is performance, with *Finnegans Wake* as its example, then I would refine the methodological title of my research to: 'performance study'.

As Kershaw has suggested, 'performance is multidisciplinary [and] needs multiple means to identify the knowledges it produces' (Kershaw: 2008, 36), so too does this current project engage performance for its multiplicity – a multidisciplinary which also further justifies *Finnegans Wake*, a peculiarly multitudinous product of forms and disciplines, as its principal object. Consequently, my analyses of previous performances and my own performances of Joyce's text will encounter a number of theoretical resources. The concern with 'competence' draws upon semiotic and linguistic approaches to text and performance and with the consideration of how tactile encounters with the materials of textual production might offer another notion of competence brings phenomenological and materialist dimensions to these frames. My study is also informed by archival research and pays particular attention to the methodology of genetic criticism. As I have shown above there are fertile connections between genetic criticism and performance studies with regard to their concerns with memory and composition. It is my intention, in placing both disciplines in close proximity throughout the thesis, to discover how genetic criticism might be informed by performance studies and how performance might be conceived by dwelling in the site of textual genesis. These methodological frissons may also be viewed as part of the thesis's political perspective which, in another unsettled disturbance (like that

between 'academic' and 'performer'), the double-bind of 'academic' and 'activist' plays out through an assimilation of Marxist and 'post-Marxist' frameworks, manifested in my exploration of performance as a subversion of pedagogical norms and power relations, the engagement with memory through a consideration of divisions of labour and, finally, as a record of political struggle and protest as an underlying component of my practice as a performance-scholar. But while these theoretical approaches imply a broad scope for the thesis, its fundamental methodological frame will be that of performance studies – how performance can function as a reading-machine for *Finnegans Wake*, and how *Finnegans Wake* offers a reading of performance.

The next two chapters serve as preludes to my own research performance. With Mary Manning's *The Voice of Shem* I consider how theatrical adaptation functioned as early form of performance research and an alternative methodology to the paraphrasing 'decodings' of Campbell and Robinson's *A Skeleton Key* and Adaline Glasheen's *Census* of the book's plot, content and *dramatis personae*; and with John Cage's radical recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* I explore how his reading and writing *through Finnegans Wake* functioned as an anti-hermeneutic, tactile method of performance research. Aspect from both of these very different methodologies have thus paved the way towards my own research performance which constitutes the final part of this thesis.

## Chapter Two

### Waking the Stage with the Voice of Shem

‘watching her sew a dream together’  
(028.06-07)

In 1955, Mary Manning Howe (1905-1999), a Dublin émigré who left behind her career at the Gate Theatre for Boston in 1934, adapted James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* for the stage in a ‘tiny candy box theatre’ across the street from Harvard Square.<sup>135</sup> In the midst of the the Dada and Surrealist inspired theatrical excursions of young poets like Frank O’Hara, John Ashbery, Jack Spicer and Bunny Lang, Manning had rearranged Joyce’s unperformable, ‘impassable tissue of improbable liyers’ (499.19) into a play-script to be performed at the Harvard affiliated Poet’s Theatre.<sup>136</sup> The adaptation became known as, *The Voice of Shem: Passages from Finnegans Wake*, when it was published by Faber and Faber in 1958.<sup>137</sup> This published text featured a preface by Denis Johnston, an old colleague of Manning’s from the Dublin Gate Theatre, who considered the adaptation to present ‘the simple worf and plague (and poison, if you insist) of the story’.<sup>138</sup> Johnston was alluding to Shaun’s mockery of Shem (and thus a Joycean act of self-mockery) in Book I.vii, where the ‘babbly’ penman is accused of ‘unconsciously explaining [...] the various meanings of all the different parts of speech he misused’ to obscure ‘all the other people in the story’ (i.e. *Finnegans Wake*) whilst ‘leaving out [...] foreconsciously, the simple worf and plague and poison’ (173.33-174.2). In Johnston’s view, Manning had uncovered the ‘simple words and places and persons’ obscured by the ‘cuttlefishing’ (173.36) density of Joyce’s language and represented them in the form of a play. The ‘principal service [...] that Mary Manning performs for readers’, Johnston argued, was ‘writing the stage directions’ so that we can work through the ‘multitude of names and overtones’ and discern ‘the surprisingly few people in the

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<sup>135</sup> Letter from William Morris Hunt (treasurer) to Marjorie Griesser (Viking Press), November 23rd, 1955, Houghton, 398

<sup>136</sup>The play was subsequently revived by the ‘Wigs and Cues’ Barnard Student Theatre company in New York (1958), at the Belfast Lyric Theatre (1958), and as a touring production in France and the UK in the late 1960s. Neither of these productions involved Manning and her production team from 1955; John A. Pope, ‘Finnegans Wake at the Poets Theatre’ (28th April 1955), *The Harvard Crimson*; Lyric Theatre Archive <http://www.lyrictheatre.co.uk/archive.aspx?category=1951-1959> accessed [23.4.2013] Izzy Abrahami, ‘The Joyce-Theatre Affair,’ *Levende Talen*, 269 (June-July, 1970), 454-55;

<sup>137</sup> Mary Manning, *Voice of Shem: Passages from Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958) [hereafter: VoS]

<sup>138</sup> Bulmer Hobson, ed., *The Gate Theatre* (Dublin: The Gate Theatre, 1934); VoS, ix

actual cast' that Joyce concealed within his book (*VoS*, xi). This view places *The Voice of Shem* alongside other demystifications of the *Wake* that were published during this 'age of innocence' in *Finnegans Wake* studies, such as the exegetical paraphrasing of Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson's *A Skeleton Key* (1945) or Adaline Glasheen's *Census* (1956), published the year after Manning's adaptation.<sup>139</sup> Without benefitting from the swathe of lexicons, catalogues and reader's guides that emerged from the 1960s onwards, Manning had indeed performed a valuable service for 'readers' and other 'amateur unriddlers' in the illuminating of Joyce's 'darkling plain'.<sup>140</sup> However, the 'principal service' which Johnston highlighted only speaks for 'readers' of Joyce's work. It must not be ignored that *The Voice of Shem* was a live performance made to entertain a small theatre audience, and whilst the text contributed to the scholarly unriddling of the book's *dramatis personae*, its 'principal service' to its audience was not to reduce or simplify the experience of encountering Joyce's *Wake*.

Manning's adaptation of *Finnegans Wake* for the stage happily embraced the confusion of the book's 'redistribution of parts and players' (219.07). Although she illuminated certain characters and motifs from the book with theatrical business, like an entomologically costumed ballet sequence for the story of the *Ondt and the Gracehoper* (*VoS*, 41-42/ *FW*, 414-419), or the 'transformation' of two washerwomen into a tree and a stone (*VoS*, 32-33/*FW*, 215-216), her methodology did not follow a strict explicatory or exegetical model. Instead, her 'redistribution' of the text offered a representation of the baffling and often confusing experience of reading (and writing) *Finnegans Wake*; highlighting affective, and sometimes non-verbal aspects of Joyce's book.

Reviewers of the play, some of whom were familiar the *Wake*, felt comfortable enjoying the performance without necessarily having 'solved' the riddle. A *Boston*

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<sup>139</sup> Louis Mink referred to the several decades that followed the publication of *Finnegans Wake* in 1939 as the 'Age of Innocence', due to the 'lack of scholarly guidance' when 'one could bring to the *Wake* only one's own perception and experience'; Louis O. Mink, *A Finnegans Wake Gazetteer* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978), xii

<sup>140</sup> A term used by Glasheen to describe herself and other non-scholarly Wakean exegetes; Thornton Wilder & Adaline Glasheen, *A Tour of the Darkling Plain: The Finnegans Wake Letters of Thornton Wilder and Adaline Glasheen*, Edward M. Burns and Joshua A. Gaylord, Eds., (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2001), xiii. According to Ruth Bauerle, Glasheen had begun her study of the *Wake* 'as a joke' [Ruth Bauerle, 'Adaline Glasheen: In Memoriam', *James Joyce Literary Supplement*, vol.7, no.2 (Fall, 1993), 2]

*Herald* reviewer recognized that the production was ‘concerned with H.C.E. or Everyman, as well as with the spirit of Ireland’ and the ‘prose rhythms’ that follow the ‘heave and fall’ of a sleeping man’s chest, but his overall impression of the play was how these elements ‘intermingle with each other to give us a work of art that plumbs the mysteries of elemental and beautiful things’.<sup>141</sup> Words like ‘mysteries’, ‘elemental’ and ‘things’ might suggest a vagueness in Manning’s adaptation, but they also indicate the limitations of verbalizing an affective response to the ‘heave and fall’ of the play’s rhythm and ‘spirit’. Another reviewer concluded that *Finnegans Wake* (meaning both the book and the performance) was ‘plain good fun, if viewed as a symphony, not as a drama’.<sup>142</sup> It seems that although audiences were keen to gain a sense of what this mysterious book might be *about*, their responses were also measured with a sense of abandonment to the flow of the performance. They might have left the theatre with only a vague impression of ‘word, place and person’, but they would also have left having felt something which reduces description to bland cliché or forces them to question the production’s form (music, *not* drama?). This chapter examines the ways in which Manning’s ‘decomposition’ and ‘recombination’ (614.35-36) of *Finnegans Wake* performed its contribution to the early years of *Wake* scholarship by presenting a close (and sometimes inaccurate) reading of Joyce’s text but also by using theatrical form to uncover aspects which other studies were either unable to or had yet to discover. *The Voice of Shem*, like *A Skeleton Key* or Glasheen’s *Census*, should be considered as a document of early *Wake* criticism, but what defines this particular document is how it was able to perform amongst the inevitable uncertainties and ambiguities of reading.

For Stephen Heath, ‘the only imaginable translation of *Finnegans Wake* is the development of another writing in progress, extending and disseminating Joyce’s writing according to those relations of irony and parody, fragmentation and transformation.’<sup>143</sup> Manning’s adaptation was an enactment of this ‘writing in progress’, leaving behind a record of this redistribution in the form of a published text. *The Voice of Shem* reflected the way that the characters throughout the *Wake* don

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<sup>141</sup> ‘Poet’s Theater ‘Finnegan’s Wake’, *The Boston Herald*, November 30, 1955 in Poets’ Theater Archive (MS Thr 833), Series VI. General Material concerning the Poet’s Theatre (398) [Houghton Collection, Harvard University]

<sup>142</sup> Ted Small, ‘Finnegans Wake (Wigs and Cues Barnard Student Theatre Company)’, 10th April 1958 *Columbia Daily Spectator*

<sup>143</sup> Stephen Heath, ‘Ambiviolences’ in *Post-Structuralist Joyce*, eds., Daniel Ferrer & Derek Atteridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 60

ever-shifting costumes, roles and occupations; the transformation of Joyce's prose into theatrical dialogue, lyrical theatre and ballet-accompanied speech thus furthered the process of metamorphosis that is intrinsic to the ontology of the *Wake*. But this process of metamorphosis was not just a result of Manning's astute *reading*, but of her writing, or *rewriting* of the text. Whilst Manning took the *Wake* into the future by turning it into a play, she also returned it to the past by unstitching the complex weaving of Joyce's composition process. Such a diachronic handling of an already diachronic text is particularly suited to the theatre; a diachronic space in which past and future intermingle in a continuous, 'syncopated' present.


Jean-Michel Rabaté has suggested that *Finnegans Wake* is not so much a 'written polyphony' as an 'experience of patterns of prosodic polyphones'; it is 'woven, braided, loomed with voices.'<sup>144</sup> With this metaphor in mind, the weaving of text with voices, I will argue that *The Voice of Shem* not only uncovered the 'simple wof and plague and poison', but also brought to life the 'warf and woof' that Joyce had woven together in the obscurely bound fabric of his book. Not only will I consider how this performance of *Finnegans Wake* might be re-historicized within the context of early acts of criticism and interpretation, but I will also argue that her specific unstitching and re-weaving of Joyce's text allowed her audiences to encounter traces from the book's archive. With the examples of a theatrical inheritance of spiritualist performance (bound by a connection between the theatre of Yeats and the spiritualist Hester Dowden), and her employment of Irish folk songs throughout the play, I argue that Manning performed a prescient (if unconscious) genetic reading of Joyce's book by touching upon a form of memory that is not restricted to the archival materials of notebooks and revisions but extends to embodied and affective forms of archival memory which Joyce also utilized in his composition process. But before reaching this reading of Manning's reading I will describe her treatment of *Finnegans Wake* and discuss her adaptation as it related to other early readings of the text.

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<sup>144</sup> Jean-Michel Rabaté *Joyce Upon the Void: The Genesis of Doubt* (London: MacMillan, 1991), 87



*The Poets' Theatre*  
presents  
***Finnegans Wake***  
By JAMES JOYCE  
*Adapted for Speakers and Chorus by MARY MANNING*  
*Directed by EDWARD THOMMEN*



Presented by special arrangement with the administrators of the Joyce Estate and  
with the Viking Press, Inc., publishers of *Finnegans Wake*.

November 28 through December 8  
At the Poets' Theatre Workshop, 24 Palmer St., Cambridge, Mass.  
Evenings at 8:30; Matinee Saturday, December 3 at 2:30  
(No performance Monday, December 5)

December 10 and 11  
BY INVITATION OF THE NEW YORK POETRY CENTER  
At Kaufmann Auditorium Y. M. H. A., New York City  
Saturday, December 10 at 8:40; Sunday, December 11 at 3

***Next Production: THE BANDEIRANTES, by Hugh Amory***

**Fig 3.** Winter Advertisement, 1955<sup>145</sup>

### **Manning's Recomposition of *Finnegans Wake***

Manning's *The Voice of Shem* combined carefully selected passages, sentences and words from Joyce's text with Irish Folk-Songs, a Ballet sequence and musical accompaniment. The play consists of six scenes which loosely follow the enormous structure of *Finnegans Wake* - beginning with a prologue; a scene about the fall of Finnegan (Earwicker); his subsequent 'resurrection', and return to death, at his wake; a scene where washerwomen gossip about Earwicker and his wife, Anna Livia Plurabelle; a 'Tavern' scene where the action follows Earwicker into 'his

<sup>145</sup> (MS Thr 833), 399, Houghton Library

dreams' (VoS 38) and takes us into 'The Dream Dramas' in which Earwicker's two sons and daughter perform lectures, a ballet and various *coup de theatres* until he is woken to hear his son, Shem, reading a letter to his parents; the play concludes with a domestic scene, the family surround a sleeping child in what had previously represented Finnegans's coffin, ALP delivers her final soliloquy and the Chorus end the play where it began, reciting the first sentence: 'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's...' (VoS, 69). Manning managed to excerpt material from virtually all of the chapters in the *Wake*; from extended passages such as the Washerwomen sequence of I.viii.196-216 into Scene Three (VoS 24-33), to the odd quotation like 'Three quarks for Mister Mark' (383.1) integrated into Scene Five which largely takes passages from the first three chapters of Book III.

It would be pointless to enumerate exactly how much of *Finnegans Wake* is missing from Manning's play. For example, from the central 'cast' of the *Wake* there are no twenty-nine leapyear girls, no recognizable 'mamalujo' quartet or the twelve pub patricians, although words and lines that can be attributed to these figures are used in the script. Sections that might appear to be more 'adaptable' to the theatre such as the pub quiz of I.vi, the *Mime* of II.i and the story-telling sequence of II.ii (complete with its own 'stage directions') have not been dramatized, but certain dynamics and materials from each of them have been transfused into the essential thrust of the play; the jocund badinage in the *Mime*, for example, finds its way into the Dream Dramas of Scene Five. Manning was only able to dismember and reassemble the text in such a way because she had a keen sense of its composition as a whole. As a result, she produced a rapid-paced, (almost) linear thread of action crafted with material that travels backwards and forwards throughout the text. For an audience, her adaptation might appear to have cut the *Wake* to its bare essentials, representing the narrative *core* of Joyce's work, but as a contribution to Joycean scholarship at the time Manning produced a vital reading of the book's composition process. After having solved the problem of how to stick his diffuse collection of fragments together, Joyce compared the solution his problem to a 'partition' that had collapsed between two 'tunneling parties.' (JJ, 304). In a dream he also envisioned the same process, the binding together of Book I and Book III, as a 'Turk' weaving together a jumble of different coloured cloths, 'picking from right and left'.<sup>146</sup> These descriptions that Joyce

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<sup>146</sup> Finn Fordham, *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake: Unraveling Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 79

gave to his own writing process might be applied to Manning's adaptation; not only did she effect a continuation of Joyce's work in progress, an 'active participation' with the text through a her 'subsequent recombination' (614.35) of its 'separated elements' (614.34), but in doing so she performed a 'decomposition' (614.34) which, I will argue, constituted a re-enactment of Joyce's own composition process. In taking the *Wake* forward in time through theatricalisation, Manning was simultaneously taking it backwards in time through recomposition.

Finn Fordham describes Joyce's 'serial rewriting practices' as an enactment of the *Wake*'s 'notion of a cyclical continuous present tense', an example of how diachronic time, in which 'history', the past, present and future occur simultaneously and 'everything is made immediate' (Fordham: 2007, 55) This 'collapsing [of] the past and the present' (Fordham: 2007, 55) shares a similar way in which the diachrony of theatrical time might be spoken of, such as Marvin Carlson's assertion that the present of the theatre is *haunted* by the past of its history (Carlson: 2003), or Rebecca Schneider's development of Gertrude Stein's 'syncopated time', the jittery, undecidable conception of temporal simultaneity we might experience in the theatre. One significant aspect in Manning's adaptation was her inclusion of Irish songs; all of which, apart from one, are embedded in the *Wake*. The inclusion of these songs in their original state (i.e. before Joyce had transformed them into 'Wakeese') means that she represented Joyce's language on stage in tandem with some of the raw materials of his composition process. The effect of this, in particular with the paralleling of 'The Exile of Erin' with Joyce's parody of the ballad is a theatricalized re-enactment of Joyce's composition process. The actors on stage thus articulated a collapsing of different temporalities into a simultaneous, immediate present; a syncopation of the raw and the processed material components of Joyce's composition. A performance of the genetic specters from the archive of *Finnegans Wake*.

Further to the way Manning's recomposition of the *Wake* broached a genetic reading of its materials through temporal syncopation, there was also an aspect of her production, especially during its original performances in 1955, which also suggests the *presence* of James Joyce as an activated genetic trace. It is significant that Manning's adaptation was retitled *The Voice of Shem*, and not simply *Passages from Finnegans Wake*, when it was published in 1958. 'Shem' was often used as a

nickname for Joyce and Manning, who was a Dubliner herself and an intimate acquaintance of Samuel Beckett would have been familiar with the association between the character of Shem and the author.<sup>147</sup> It is telling that a reviewer of the original performance considered the character of ‘Shem the Penman’ to be the ‘spokesman of the piece,’ (Pope: 1955) and that in the revival by the New Poet’s Theater (1968), ‘It [was] Shem the Penman who seem[ed] to represent Joyce himself’; the actor had also been given ‘round spectacles like those Joyce wore’.<sup>148</sup> Although Tom Clancy, who played Shem in 1955 (see Fig. 1), was not dressed to resemble Joyce, his performance may have been suggestive of Joyce through his voice: he had a Dublin accent and sang Irish melodies with a ‘light tenor voice’ (*VoS*, 8).<sup>149</sup> In this ‘resurrection dream’ (*VoS*, ix), Manning was not simply concerned with bringing the *Wake* to a new audience but with resurrecting the ‘voice’ of James Joyce. It is through aspects like these that one might consider the play’s bringing forth of ‘Shem the Penman’ as a haunted, surrogation of Joyce’s ghost. What distinguishes this re-enactment of the author’s voice from the re-enactment of the author’s trace through textual, genetic scholarship is the performance of the book’s composition via an affective, vocalized connection to its raw, ‘original’ materials.

### **Manning’s Theatricalisation of *Finnegans Wake***

To gain a sense of the kind of ‘theatre’ which Manning transposed *Finnegans Wake* it is worth comparing her adaptation to a contemporaneous and far more famous Joycean theatricalisation, Marjorie Barkentin and Padraic Colum’s 1958, Off-Broadway play, *Ulysses in Nighttown*.<sup>150</sup> Whilst Manning cut and reassembled

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<sup>147</sup> In a letter of 1937, Beckett referred to Joyce as ‘Shem’ when discussing the work he had to perform on the galley proofs of *Finnegans Wake*: ‘It is stupefying work & there remains a great deal to be done. When Shem suggested my doing it on the phone he was very tentative, as though very well aware of the attitude.’ (Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*: Vol I: 1929-1940, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld & Lois More Overbeck eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 565)

<sup>148</sup> Roderick Nordell, ‘New Poets’ Theater presents Joyce’s ‘Finnegans Wake’, unattributed and undated article in Houghton, 398. The article would have been a review of the New Poet’s Theatre production directed by William McKinney, performed at the Loeb Drama Center, Cambridge, January 26th and 28th, 1968.

<sup>149</sup> Joyce’s tenor register has often been commented upon: e.g. Adrian Curtin, ‘Hear Joyce Speak: The Phonograph Recordings of “Aeolus” and “Anna Livia Plurabelle” as Audiotexts’ in *JJQ* vol.46, no.2 (Winter 2009), pp.269-284, 278; However, according to Hodgart and Worthington (1959) it is in fact ‘the voice of Shaun’ (407.13), as one of Joyce’s ‘anti-selves’, who is granted with the tenor register in *Finnegans Wake* (cf. Hodgart and Worthington: 1959, 55-58)

<sup>150</sup> Marjorie Barkentin, dir., *Ulysses in Nighttown* (New York, 1958) Play; James Joyce, *Ulysses in Nighttown*, (New York: Random House, 1958)

Joyce's text into a theatrical recomposition, Barkentin, under the 'supervision' of Padraic Colum 'dramatized and transposed' the 'Circe' chapter from *Ulysses*, bookended by the opening and closing chapters ('Telemachus' and 'Penelope') as prologue and conclusions. The adaptation involved minimal interference with the text, no additional material and kept the linear structure of each episode. Rather than taking Joyce's text *to* the theatre, as Manning did, *Ulysses in Nighttown* extracted the theatre within *Ulysses*, but whilst Stephen and Buck Mulligan's dialogue and Molly Bloom's soliloquy were suited for simple staging, the of 'Circe's' 'exuberant theatricality' forced Barkentin and Colum were 'to reduce, simplify, and domesticate' Joyce's surrealistic and impossible 'stage directions'.<sup>151</sup> According to Martin Puchner, the chapter's muddying of reality and hallucination posed a problem to the adaptors and their solution, which involved a narrator speaking the more phantasmagorical 'stage directions, enacted a separation between the two 'levels' of reality and hallucination (Puchner: 2002, 99).

Unlike *Nighttown*, *The Voice of Shem's* layers of representation were not so neatly separated; it is never clear entirely whether we are in or out of the resurrection dream. If it is situated anywhere, it is in between dreaming and waking. It is probably more of an impossible challenge to stage 'Circe' in the theatre than *Finnegans Wake*. As Martin Puchner argues, 'Circe' projects too much theatricality to be a usable dramatic script' whilst 'at the same time it does not provide enough information for a continuous stage performance' (Puchner: 2002, 99). Joyce's narrative stage directions are central to "Circe"'s resistance to the form of the novel but at the same time their hyper-theatrical quality is such that they are almost *too* literary for the stage. Puchner argues that Joyce wrote the stage directions in 'Circe' (which began as basic descriptive narrative) as a form of unperformable 'closet' theatre aimed at a reader rather than a stage director:

it is because these stage directions are no longer directed at a stage director that their authority is in fact increased beyond all limits; as long as they are mere directives, they can be disobeyed [...] as soon as they are directed at a reader, however, their prescriptive force can range unchallenged.

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<sup>151</sup> Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 99

(Puchner: 2002, 87)<sup>152</sup>

Whilst *Finnegans Wake* does feature the occasional 'stage direction' which Manning incorporated into her adaptation, she did not use them as directives but as part of the theatricality of her interpretation. Because *Finnegans Wake* has no clear separation between speech, narrative and stage directions like 'Circe' there is no 'authority' within the text that her dramatization needs to adhere to other than her own capabilities as a competent reader of *Finnegans Wake*. Manning showed her competence through the use of stage directions (Dennis Johnston considered this to be her greatest 'service' to the text) demonstrating her 'active participation' with the text's embedded characters, narratives and gestures as well as a synoptic command over the book's intratextual motifs and allusions.

The adapters of *Ulysses* were 'dedicated to the principle of not adding any text to the original' (Puchner: 2002, 99), as though the purpose of their production was to prove that despite the universally lukewarm appreciation of *Exiles*, Joyce was in fact a competent dramatist. This was not the purpose of Manning's adaptation, although it did demonstrate how the form of the *Wake* fit relatively comfortably with modernist forms of theatre. The most effective aspect of Manning's adaptation was that it demonstrated a sophisticated interpretation of *Finnegans Wake* at a time when there were scant scholarly resources to hand. But there were also other factors, such as

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<sup>152</sup> This aspect of what Puchner defines as 'exuberant closet drama' – an 'excess of theatrical action' which 'willfully exceed[s] the limits of theatrical representation' (Puchner: 2002, 15) – places Joyce's 'theatre' alongside much of the contemporaneous Surrealist theatre being performed (or not being performed) whilst he was writing both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. David G. Zinder characterizes many Surrealist plays as being 'written in a manner that exceeded the physical possibilities of stage production' so that playwrights could 'retain control over their creation by making it impossible to stage' (David G. Zinder, *The Surrealist Connection: An Approach to a Surrealist Aesthetic of Theatre* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), 11) With the exception of Antonin Artaud, the supposedly inter-disciplinary preoccupations of the Surrealist avant-garde failed to recognize contemporary developments in the 'pure language of theatre' (Zinder: 1980, 11) by practitioners like Adolph Appia, Ignaz Witkiewicz, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Edward Gordon Craig and Artaud's distinctive assault on the literary theatre (after his expulsion from Breton's group). According to Zinder, the writing of many surrealist plays were 'regarded for the most part as a literary exercise' and, rather conservatively, considered 'the stage primarily as a platform for experiments in language' (Ibid). This was also an important part of Yeats' anti-theatricalism in which he saw the actor's role primarily as 'an extension of the lyrical voice' (Puchner: 2002, 12) and envisioned an ideal theatre that would 'restore words to their sovereignty' by making 'speech even more important than gesture upon the stage' (W.B. Yeats, 'Samhain: 1903: The Reform of the Theatre' in *Explorations* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 108) Although Manning was no anti-theatricalist, asserting that 'illusion in the theatre is terribly necessary' (Houghton, 567, p.16), the influence of Yeats's program for a poetic theatre upon Manning was clearly evident not only because of her active role in the foundation of The Poet's Theater at Harvard but in her production notes for *Voice of Shem* where she states that, 'The words are the things indeed and the words should be sacred' (VoS, 71)

her background in both the Dublin Theatre scene of the 1930's and her integral involvement with the Harvard Poet's Theater, which contributed to her own unique understanding and theatrical handling of the text.<sup>153</sup>

Mary Manning was a Protestant from a middle-class Dublin family who emigrated to Boston in 1934.<sup>154</sup> In her home city she was a prolific theatrical and literary worker and, as her daughter, Susan Howe, acknowledges in her poetic memoir, she did not emigrate before 'becoming an actress, a theatre critic, a magazine editor, a novelist, and the author of several plays.' (Howe: 2002, 45). She went to drama school in London at sixteen and later returned to Dublin where she attended the Abbey Theatre drama school and subsequently acted in productions at the Abbey and the Gate in the early 1930s.<sup>155</sup> She was also a childhood friend, alleged lover and frequent correspondent of Samuel Beckett and, along with her mother, Susan, was the object of a 'grotesque caricature' in Beckett's first, unpublished novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*.<sup>156</sup> Whilst Beckett helped Joyce with his *Work in Progress*, he would occasionally write to Manning with updates of its progress and his

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<sup>153</sup> Although Puchner lays the blame with 'the adapters', Marjorie Barkentin and Padraic Colum, for restricting themselves to the 'principle of not adding any text to the original' (Puchner: 2002, 99), it may well have been the demands of the Joyce estate which required such an approach. When it came to the preparation of this Broadway production (a couple of years after Manning's *Finnegans Wake* was first performed at the YHMA in New York) the 'authority' of Joyce's stage directions might also have been backed up with the authority of the copyright holders. From looking into the correspondence between Viking Press (the US copyright holders of *Finnegans Wake*) and The Poet's Theater, it would seem that the term 'dramatization' was a sensitive issue. Before the New York performance in December, 1955, Viking Press sent an urgent letter to Manning declaring that: 'We do not wish to have it termed a "demonstration dramatization" or to have any indication that it is a "dramatization" in the billing', (Houghton, 398) in response to its earlier title: 'A Dramatic Adaptation of *Finnegans Wake* (as a dramatic chorale of passages from the novel of James Joyce)' (Houghton, 552). Apparently, they were under the impression that the performance would be referred to as a 'concert reading from *Finnegans Wake* or a reading of scenes from the book' (Houghton, 398). For the copyright holders, a 'dramatization' was one step too far, perhaps because it would have implied that the authority of Joyce's hand had been diminished by the interference that the technicalities of a 'dramatization' would have entailed, whilst a 'concert reading' would have implied that whilst things were happening 'in concert' with the text, it was essentially a public reading of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Although *Ulysses in Nighttown* was presented as a 'dramatization' by Marjorie Barkentin (under the 'supervision' of Padraic Colum, whose well-known friendship with Joyce might have provided reassurance for the estate), the frontispiece of its publication emphasizes James Joyce's authorship and qualifies the term, 'dramatized', with 'transposed' - as if Barkentin and Colum's task had been to simply transport Joyce's drama from the confines of the novel onto the Broadway stage. In the end, the title used for Manning's New York production was, '*Finnegans Wake*, an adaptation for speakers and chorus by Mary Manning Howe' (Houghton, 552)

<sup>154</sup> Susan Howe, *Kidnapped* (Tipperary: Coracle, 2002), 42

<sup>155</sup> Philip Casey, 'Mary Manning', 2nd March 2011, *Irishwriters Online*, <http://www.irishwriters-online.com/manning-mary/> [accessed 23.5.2013]

<sup>156</sup> James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), 154

seemingly begrudging obligation to his mentor's interminable work.<sup>157</sup> When she came to adapt the *Wake* for the stage, Manning's relationship to the text would not have been one of objective distance but of an intimate, cultural and personal connection. *Finnegans Wake* was not just an eccentric and, in the mid-1950s, largely ignored masterpiece that she had the audacity to stage, but an affective *record* of the collaborative and exhausting work of her friends and contemporaries as well as a provocative Irish swansong from a fellow self-exiled Dubliner.<sup>158</sup>

The Poets' Theatre was essentially a transitional space between amateur enthusiasm and professional craft and stood on the margins of Academic institutionalization. The 'tiny candy box theatre' was housed in a loft at 24 Palmer Street across from Harvard Square and seated a maximum of 49 audience members in a space 'about 18 feet square'.<sup>159</sup> Nora Sayre characterized the space as having a 'congregational purpose' and being a 'home for poets and performers in a period when artists were often classified as freaks, when academia was repressive.'<sup>160</sup> According to Sayre, Manning had been a 'galvanizing force' at the theatre and was known as the 'Lady Gregory of the Poets' Theatre', bringing her invaluable experience of Yeats's own attempt to create a National Verse theatre in Dublin amidst the irreverent 'delinquency of aesthetes' that many of the students and poets brought to the theatre (Sayre: 1984, 98). In this collaborative, congregational environment where amateurs, artists and academics made experimental 'poetic' theatre, Manning chose to adapt *Finnegans Wake* and bring Joyce's text to a relatively wider audience.

According to Lyon Phelps the aim of the Poets' Theater was to 'claim new territory for the theatre' rather than base [their] theatre on territory that had already been

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<sup>157</sup> In a letter to Manning from December 1937, Beckett referred to writing an article on Joyce (which was never published) as 'slopemptying' and spoke of the financial necessity of submitting himself to the arduous work of Joyce's 'proof corrector in chief'; Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*: Vol I: 1929-1940, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld & Lois More Overbeck eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 570

<sup>158</sup> Manning's insertion of certain ballads into her adaptation were chosen not just because they are all 'woven into the book in some form or other' but 'are part of the Dublin life Joyce knew so well and remembered with such passionate accuracy' (*VoS*, 71). It is safe to assume that their use in *The Voice of Shem*, as well as the reproduction of Joyce's words which she considered 'sacred' (*VoS*, 71), was a 'passionate' attempt by Manning to remember the 'Dublin life' she knew before she emigrated to Boston.

<sup>159</sup> Letter from William Morris Hunt (treasurer) to Marjorie Griesser (Viking Press), November 23rd, 1955, Houghton, 398

<sup>160</sup> Nora Sayre, 'The Poet's Theatre: A Memoir of the Fifties', *Grand Street*, Vol. 3. No.3 (Spring, 1984), 98



claimed', citing Jarry, Yeats, Cocteau, Brecht and Lorca as influences.<sup>161</sup> This 'new territory', however, was not necessarily being claimed within the field of Theatre but in particular in relation to Poetic Theatre and theatre made by poets. In one way, The Poets' Theater was a direct response to the successful verse dramas of Christopher Fry and T.S.Eliot and looked to modernist, Euro-centric theatrical models rather than Classical drama to experiment with new forms of poetry on stage.<sup>162</sup> The provocations of dadaist, surrealist and Brecht's epic theatre were certainly the more appropriate starting points for young New York School poets like Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery and Jack Spicer, whose predominantly informal *vers libre* and vibrant humour suited more meta-theatrical forms rather than Ancient Greek theatre or the Stanislavski/Strasbourg driven realism of contemporary American theatre.<sup>163</sup> This combination of innovative poetry with European modernist theatre practice may have been unique for their local Cambridge and New York audiences but they were drawing upon similar influences to their own influences. Like Yeats before them, the Poet's Theater 'found a great deal of inspiration in Japanese No plays',<sup>164</sup> O'Hara's *Try, Try!: A Noh Play* (1951) being one such instance.<sup>165</sup> With this not so original appropriation of classical Japanese theatre they hoped to achieve a 'theatre of action where verse became the expression of the action and at the same time of action[s] that are not normally [...] considered part of the expression of the theatre' (Houghton, 567, 14-15). In other words, it was to be a mutual exchange between the conventions of 'theatre' and of 'poetry' but without the revivalist ideals and complex anti-theatricalism of Yeats and Edward Gordon Craig's über-marionette verse theatre. This double layered form relates to an aspect of Yeats' theatre that Martin Puchner has identified in plays like *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer* in which 'a mimetic space is presented alongside the diegetic one' (Puchner: 2002,

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<sup>161</sup> Discussion between Lyon Phelps, Mary Manning, and Jack Rogers concerning the history of the Poet's Theatre, typescript carbon transcript, 1958, Houghton, 567, 13

<sup>162</sup> According to Nora Sayre, who used Christopher Fry 'as a whipping boy', 'They were disturbed by Fry's popularity because his work seemed to fulfill a public need in a philistine era - to assuage the audience's feelings of guilt for not reading poetry'; Kevin Killian and David Brazil (eds.), *The Kenning Anthology of Poets Theater 1945-1985* (Chicago: Kenning Editions, 2010), iii

<sup>163</sup>When the Classics were consulted, it was usually pursued in the spirit of meta-theatrical anachronism. John Ashbery's *The Heroes* (1950), for example, features Theseus and Patroclus 'sitting around in costumes that are vaguely Greek' in a 'living room of an undeterminable period' delivering statements like: 'In short, he is in the dubious position of a person who believes that dada is still alive. '; John Ashbery, *Three Plays* (Calais and Vermont: Z Press, 1978), 3 & 6

<sup>164</sup> Houghton, 567, 14

<sup>165</sup> *Try, Try!*, dir. V.R. Lang, Poets' Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 26th, 1951; Frank O'Hara, *Amorous Nightmares of Delay: Selected Plays* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp.17-50

130). What the productions of the Poets' Theater (including Manning's *Finnegans Wake*) might share with Yeats' theatre is this layering of theatrical representation with lyric diegesis - the *showing* of the stage is brought into contact with the *telling* of the verse. In Yeats' theatre this doubling on stage becomes a 'confrontation, co-optation, and interruption of theatrical mimesis by diegesis' (Puchner: 2002, 130); his Platonic anti-theatricalism emerged from his desire to re-establish the 'sovereignty' of words on stage so that the authority of the lyrical voice might reclaim its place above the mere illusions of theatrical mimesis.<sup>166</sup>

Although this conflict and the failure to eradicate mimesis from his plays created a compelling dynamic for Yeats' Theatre, Manning and her colleagues were far less fundamentalist in their approach to the marriage of literary and theatrical form. Disagreeing with Phelps on how their mission was to let 'the audiences in on the workings of our theatre', Manning was swift to side with the mechanics of theatrical representation by stating that, 'Illusion in the theatre is terribly necessary' (Houghton, 567, 16). However, as is evident in her production notes to her adaptation of *Finnegans Wake*, she also took the poetry or poetics of Joyce's language very seriously. 'The words are the things indeed and the words should be sacred', she states,

Perfect audibility is required [...] Joyce wrote to be heard. Any production of *Finnegan* should be paced so that the audience has time to hear. If not, the subtle imagery, adroit punning, and the essential meaning will be lost in a verbal shuffle. True, we have used ballet, but here again the words dominate the dancers.

(VoS, 71)

Verbal clarity was a priority in Manning's transposition of Joyce's language onto the stage; her aim was to do justice to the notion that the *Wake* functions as a text full of 'subtle imagery, adroit punning' and 'essential meaning'. Manning's desire to transmit the *Wake's* 'essential meaning' through the 'perfect audibility' of her actor's delivery adopts a similar approach to the text that was being pursued by her contemporaries in the growing field of *Finnegans Wake* studies, in particular the exegetical decipherments of Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson. However, the form in which Manning presented her own take on the book's 'essential meaning' differs

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<sup>166</sup> W.B. Yeats, 'Samhain: 1903: The Reform of the Theatre' in *Explorations* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 108

from the ‘amateur unriddler’s’ *Skeleton Key* or *Census* not just because it was a theatrical adaptation, but because the use of actors, props and scenography brought an interpretation of Joyce’s language in direct confrontation with a layer of mimetic and diegetic complexity. Manning may have averted the confusion of a ‘verbal shuffle’ but, as I will argue below, her adaptation allowed for a *mimetic* ‘shuffle’ which, rather than weakening the quality of her interpretation (as Jose Lanfers has argued),<sup>167</sup> offered a reading of *Finnegans Wake* that highlights the absurdity of attempting to ‘solve’ or ‘unlock’ such a work, as well as being able to bring to life certain affective and emotional qualities of the text in ways that a paraphrase or a catalogue cannot. Manning’s call for a verbal competence in potential actors of her adaptation conveys her own competence as a reader and interpreter of Joyce’s text; her task was to bring forth, through a medium of performance, her notion of the *Wake*’s ‘essential meaning’. Although this brings her adaptation close to other scholarly readings and interpretations of Joyce’s book, it also sets it apart from them. As will be examined below, the nature of this ‘essential meaning’ then, will be quite different to that pursued by other readings of the text.

### ***The Voice of Shem amongst the ‘amateur unriddlers’***

Manning produced her adaptation at a time in the history of *Finnegans Wake* studies that has been referred to as the ‘Age of Innocence’ by Lois Mink and the ‘Gilded Age of *Wake* scholarship’ by Bernard Benstock.<sup>168</sup> For Mink, reflecting in the late 1970s, this ‘Age’ was defined by its lack of scholarly guidance so that ‘one could bring to the *Wake* only one’s own perception and experience’, whilst Benstock, writing around the same time, observed nostalgically that this ‘Gilded Age’ permitted the ‘occasionally outrageous interpretation that excited and irritated, amused and even infuriated at the time.’ (Mink: 1977, 238) In her critique of Manning’s adaptation, Jose Lanfers ignores this historical context and although she refers to another work performed during this ‘age of innocence’ (Glasheen’s *Census*) she applies it to her reading of *The Voice of Shem* in order to outline Manning’s supposed misreading rather than considering how both Glasheen and Manning, in very different ways, dealt with the inevitable uncertainties of reading that *Finnegans Wake* presented to them. For this part of the

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<sup>167</sup> José Lanfers, *Missed Understandings: A Study of Stage Adaptations of the Works of James Joyce* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988)

<sup>168</sup> Louis O. Mink, *A Finnegans Wake Gazetteer* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978), xii; Bernard Benstock, ‘The State of the “Wake”’, *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (Spring, 1977), pp. 237-240: 238

chapter I will therefore recontextualise *The Voice of Shem* alongside the critical work of Manning's fellow 'amateur unriddlers' which not only includes the cataloguing and paraphrasing of Glasheen, Campbell and Robinson, but the oblique dramatic translation of Thornton Wilder.

For Benstock, later systematic developments in *Wake* scholarship meant that there seemed to be no room for risk and experiment since his contemporaneous '*Wake* commentators prefer[ed] to stay on safer ground' by remaining 'within the bounds of careful scholarship.' (Ibid.) Adaline Glasheen, was one of these early commentators performing her work during the 'Age of Innocence' which she would later refer to as 'the amateur's age of unriddling.'<sup>169</sup> In a preface to the correspondence between Glasheen and the playwright Thornton Wilder, she refers to this time: '*Finnegans Wake* was yet outside literature, criticism, scholarship, when it had no price on the literary exchange, when it seemed capable of solution or dissolution at any moment.' (Wilder and Glasheen: 2001, xiii). For readers like Glasheen and Wilder, this work (during the 1940s to mid-1950s) took the form of correspondences between friends who 'took to playing around with *Finnegans Wake*, enjoying [themselves] and doing [their] best to unriddle bits of that difficult and entertaining book.' (Ibid.) These acts of reading would coalesce into Glasheen's *A Census of Finnegans Wake: An Index of the Characters and Their Roles*,<sup>170</sup> which was exemplary of the 'imaginative, unstructured' and 'freely shared' (Wilder and Glashen: 2001, xiv) playful collaborations between fellow insomniacs 'sentenced to [...] nuzzle over a full trillion times for ever and a night' Joyce's 'chaosmos.'

The economic and social import that Glasheen ascribed to these pursuits stood outside of its subsequent institutionalization and circulation within the Joyce industry; for Glasheen and her 'helpers', their work took the form of a game – an enormous cryptic puzzle invented for a collaborative group to crack. When Glasheen described her method, the nature of her desire to work with the *Wake* becomes apparent:

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<sup>169</sup> Thornton Wilder and Adaline Glasheen, , *A Tour of the Darkling Plain: The Finnegans Wake Letters of Thornton Wilder and Adaline Glasheen*, Edward M. Burns and Joshua A. Gaylord, Eds., (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2001), xiii

<sup>170</sup> Adaline Glasheen, *A Census of Finnegans Wake: An Index of the Characters and Their Roles* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), xvii

I started, hit or miss, to draw up an alphabetical list of such proper names as I could discern in *Finnegans Wake*. I did it for the diversion of the thing and because I could never find given passages or people. I had also a vague idea that listing all the people in *Finnegans Wake* would solve the riddle of the book.  
(Glasheen: 1956, xvi)

Glasheen's ultimate goal, although she condemned it to the status of 'a vague idea', was to 'solve the riddle of the book.' Not only does this demonstrate Glasheen's attitude towards her work as dedicated engagement with the play of riddling, but it evinces an ideal in which the erudite scholar finally uncovers the undiscovered secret of the text, as though all of their work were performed in an obsessive drive towards the Eureka moment. The actual performance of her work, described as a 'diversion,' involved a methodical disambiguation and cataloguing of the proper nouns in the *Wake*.<sup>171</sup> Unlike Victor Lloná's critical account of Joyce's language in *Work in Progress* in which his reading revels in the obscurity of the 'purposely darkened stage', (Beckett et al: 1972, 95) Glasheen's playing of Joyce's game sought to cast beams of light upon 'the well-trodden darkling plain.' (Glasheen: 1956, vii) Her enjoyment of the 'book's obscurities' had nothing to do with 'mystification' or 'chatter about dreams having a logic of their own' but instead with Joyce's 'logic of sharp, waking, verbal wit.' (Ibid.). It was her role in this cryptic game of unriddling to decode Joyce's obscure prose by extracting the names of his 'prepronominal *funferal*'; displaying an extensive cast-list and deictic indications of setting. She does this with a synopsis that indicates the roles of the characters involved in each chapter and, if possible, the settings of these chapters such as the 'banks of the river Liffey' for I.viii. 196-216 or 'The Tavern' for II.iii.309-382. (Ibid., xx-xxi) Before her extensive Index of proper names, Glasheen printed a table entitled 'Who Is Who When Everybody Is Somebody Else,' placing five protagonists and 'miscellaneous' into columns so that their corresponding reincarnations can be delineated; for example, HCE, Shaun, Shem, Issy and ALP correspond to 'Joyce, Sr.', 'John Stanislaus Joyce, Jr.', 'James Joyce', 'Nora Joyce', and 'Mrs. J., Sr.?' (Ibid., xxvi) There are many question marks and blank boxes in Glasheen's table which demonstrate the tentative approach she took in her judgements. Although she was determined to show that *Finnegans Wake*

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<sup>171</sup> By the early fifties, when she started her work on Joyce, Glasheen occasionally worked in a library in Connecticut, but spent much of her time in the company of her children and *Finnegans Wake*. In the first letter she sent to Wilder she included a 'list [...] of some of the people who turn up in *Finnegans Wake*' which she made 'last winter when my child had swollen glands.' (Wilder and Glasheen: 2001, 7). The performance of this 'diversionary' work may have taken a very different quality to that of the academic spending hours in a faculty library without a sick child to tend to.

could be decompartmentalized and reduced to a narrative with characters, her *Census* did not purport to be the last word on the matter. Glasheen's table could be compared to Llona's image of the 'stiff tableau vivant' which her 'multicoloured beams of light' reveals as they 'play intermittently upon the boards flashing upon a fragmentary scene.' (Beckett et al: 1972, 95) Although her 'tableau vivant', like Manning's play, is far from 'stiff' and defined since it is staged with caution and obscured glints of light.

In Denis Johnston's introduction to the 1958 Faber edition of *Voice of Shem*, he proposed that Manning performed a similar 'service' to Glasheen in that she too disambiguated Joyce's complex of 'proper names' by adapting it for the stage:

The principal service, however, that Mary Manning performs for readers is, I think, in writing the stage directions. Most of us find that our greatest problem in making head or tail of *Finnegans Wake* lies in the difficulty of knowing who is talking at any particular moment, and to whom. All that is important is to be sure that the proper doubling is strictly observed by the casting department.

(VoS, x)<sup>172</sup>

However, Johnston was referring specifically to the published text of Manning's adaptation and, according to the few reviews of its several incarnations, the disambiguation of character, set and plot were not necessarily the most immediate effects of its performance. Contrary to the play's cast-list and Manning's distribution of text between Shem and Shaun, one student reviewer from the *Harvard Crimson* was under the impression that 'Shaun is absent as an explicit character' whilst 'she has made Shem the Penman spokesman for her piece.' (Pope: 1955) But it is difficult to determine how Manning, despite her title, actually made Shem the 'spokesman' since she uses a Chorus and a radio announcer to open the play and the last words of ALP followed by the Chorus to close it. (VoS, 1, 69). There are scenes in which Shem and Shaun are given equal passages of texts between them: Scene two (VoS, 20-23) is a contraction of the prosecution and defense speeches made between Justius (Shaun) and Mercius (Shem) in I.vii.187-195, and whilst Manning removes most of Joyce's nominal clues from the dialogue (i.e. 'Brawn is my name'; 187.24), she keeps in Shaun's 'Shem, you are' (193.28) which, to the Harvard reviewer, would indicate an 'explicit' characterization of the battling twins, or at least that one of them

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<sup>172</sup> Denis Johnston had known Manning whilst they both wrote for the Dublin Gate Theatre. cf. Bulmer Hobson (ed.), *The Gate Theatre* (Dublin: The Gate Theatre, 1934), passim

is called Shem. The most likely reason for the reviewer's impression that Shem was the 'spokesman' for the piece whilst Shaun remained 'absent as an explicit character' is because of the casting. The 1958 Faber publication indicates that Tom Clancy and Ed Chamberlain played Shem and Shaun respectively in the original production in the Spring of 1955 (*VoS*, 75) but whilst Tom Clancy (one of the few 'professional' actors of the production)<sup>173</sup> played Shem throughout, various 'Shaun' characters such as 'Jaunty Jaun' (III.ii/Scene 5) or the pompous authority figures in Scene 6 resembling the patronizing Shaun of III.i were split between Ed Chamberlain, Jack Rogers and Joseph Mitchell.<sup>174</sup> Contrary to Johnston's claim that Manning's adaptation cleared up ambiguities about 'who is talking at any particular moment' in *Finnegans Wake*, much of her redistribution of the text amongst her cast members iterated the ambiguity and obscured polyvocality of Joyce's *dramatis personae*. The confusion of actor's bodies playing various parts differentiates *The Voice of Shem* from Glasheen's *Census* because it does not clearly delineate the 'dramatis personae' but embodies the *Wake*' play of illumination and obscurity.

If we take Johnston's introduction as a prerequisite for judging Manning's 'service' to the text and its audiences we might, like Jose Laners does in her book *Missed Understandings*,<sup>175</sup> consider it a failure since these details risk upsetting Johnston's sole demand for 'the proper doubling [to be] strictly observed by the casting department'. (*VoS*, x) One example of how Manning may have failed to observe a strict correspondence between the cast and their multiple roles on stage was to have Tom Clancy dancing as the Ondt in the 'Ondt and the Gracehoper' section of the

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<sup>173</sup> Tom Clancy was an actor from Dublin who 'sang Irish melodies during the scene changes and acted several important roles' in *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (Elinor Hughes, 'Poets' Theater "Finnegans Wake", *The Boston Herald, Wednesday, April 27, 1955*). Before the play opened at the Y.M.H.A in New York on December 10th, 1955, he received a sternly worded letter from Actors' equity who were chasing him up for not informing them of his upcoming performance. In addition to his acting, which was described as 'excellent' and 'authoritative' in reviews from *The Boston Herald* (April 27 & November 30, 1955), Clancy was also paid an extra ten dollars for working as 'production manager'; Poets' Theater Archive (MS Thr 833) Series I. Primary documents: (10) Poets' Theatre. Executive Committee. *Minutes of meetings* (1955); Series V. Production materials. (398) *Finnegan's Wake*: correspondence, 1955-1956, Houghton Collection, Harvard University.

<sup>174</sup> In fact, 'Shaun' was only named as a role by the second production (November 28th - December 11th, 1955). In the original cast list stored at the Poets' Theater archive there is no 'Shaun' character and Ed Chamberlain is listed in several roles such as 'Man Two' and one of 'Two Brawlers' [Poets' Theater Archive (MS Thr 833), Series VI. General Material concerning the Poet's Theatre (398) [Houghton Collection, Harvard University]

<sup>175</sup> José Laners, *Missed Understandings: A Study of Stage Adaptations of the Works of James Joyce* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988)

adaptation.<sup>176</sup> It is generally considered that the Ondt and the Gracehoper stand in for Shaun and Shem respectively,<sup>177</sup> so it follows that the actor playing Shem would have danced the role of the Gracehoper. However, Manning did ‘correctly’ assign Ed Chamberlain (as Shaun) to the role of the narrator of the tale rather than a dancing Gracehoper.<sup>178</sup> Without the parallel between Shem and Shaun being transferred to this balletic sequence in the play, the audience were not being asked to equate Shaun/Shem with Ondt/Gracehoper; the multiple bodies performing Shaun’s different incarnations would have made the doubling too complex for the parallel to be clear. But with this scene the audience were still able to recognize the underlying motif of sibling rivalry and battling contraries, as Manning establishes early in the play with the Mutt and Jute dialogue played as two ‘fumbling cavemen’. (*VoS*, 2-4)<sup>179</sup> One could argue that this faulty doubling of parts embodies the motility of *Finnegans Wake*’s form and multiple personages. The notion of a ‘strictly observed doubling’ is largely irrelevant to the casting of *Finnegans Wake* because characters and roles are not easily fixed in the text itself; Shem and Shaun are constantly intertwining and swapping places, not just with each other but with their father and with a multitude of uncountable figures, elements, motifs and associations. Manning’s ‘miscasting’ in her adaptation does not evidence a limited understanding of *Finnegans Wake* but an embodying of the texts obscure complexity and incoherencies onto the stage.

Regardless of how clear Manning’s demarcations were when performed on stage, confusion about recognising characters was likely to have been a common experience for audiences, even for those who may have claimed to ‘know’ the *dramatis personae* of the *Wake*. In this respect, Manning reproduced the effect of reading *Finnegans Wake* for the first time not necessarily because she has failed to

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<sup>176</sup> *VoS*, 41-43, derived from *FW*, 414-419. According to the cast lists in the archive Tom Clancy played the ‘Ondt’ in both the Spring and Winter productions in 1955 [Houghton, 398]. However, in the *Harvard Crimson* review of the first performance, the absent Shaun character ‘does appear in his incarnations of Ondt and Jaunty Jan during the H.C.Earwicker dream sequences’ [cf. fn. 55]. It is possible, therefore, that who ever compiled the cast-list for the archive was confused and Shem was in fact paired with his ‘correct’ incarnation as the Gracehoper; or it is just as possible that the Harvard reviewer was simply stating that some of the more recognizable ‘Shaun’ characters appeared on stage as the ‘Ondt’ and ‘Jaunty Jaun’.

<sup>177</sup> see for example, John Gordon, *Finnegans Wake: A plot summary* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), 224

<sup>178</sup> This role was given to Joseph Mitchell in the Spring and George Montgomery in the Winter productions of 1955. (Houghton, 398)

<sup>179</sup> Derived from *FW*, 16-18



interpret and represent the content, but because she has managed to stage the *Wake*'s disorientating, polyphonic form.

In 1958, a reviewer of the all-female 'Wigs and Cues Barnard Student Theatre Company's' production of *Voice of Shem* in New York found that the audience's confusion about character and story wasn't 'of major concern' since '*Finnegan's Wake* <sic> is just plain good fun, if viewed as a symphony, not as a drama.'<sup>180</sup> The *Wake* consistently compels respondents to cope with its mystification by viewing it as a different form than that in which it has been presented. But the reviewer's insistence that *Voice of Shem* should *not* be viewed 'as a drama' reveals something about the context in which the adaptation was produced and assumptions that her audiences would have made about what constitutes an acceptable 'drama.'<sup>181</sup> The confusion between characters and plot in *The Voice of Shem* may, as José Lanfers insists, demonstrate a 'missed understanding' about the content of *Finnegans Wake*, (Lanfers: 1988, 185) but in comparison to Glasheen's delineation of *dramatis personae*, Manning seems less concerned with solving riddles through indexing proper nouns than she is with reflecting the impact of reproducing Joyce's challenging language on stage.<sup>182</sup> Whilst Glasheen's studies in the 1950s might reflect the tradition of what Margaret Norris refers to as the 'novelistic fallacy,'<sup>183</sup> Manning's adaptation maintained a formal density which undermines 'the singularity

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<sup>180</sup> Ted Small, 'Finnegans Wake (Wigs and Cues Barnard Student Theatre Company)', 10th April 1958, *Columbia Spectator*

<sup>181</sup> Although acknowledging the wealth of Theatrical allusion in the *Wake* Glasheen was convinced that it was 'not a dramatic book' (Glasheen ix) and that it could not fulfill her specific concept of 'the dramatic' since in Joyce's book 'the drama is inhibited before it attains dramatic climax' (Glasheen & Wilder, xvii). José Lanfers equates the work of stage adaptations with the reductive work of paraphrase and in relation to *The Voice of Shem* argues that 'If *Finnegans Wake*, for so many different reasons, resists paraphrasing, it can be said to resist dramatization for many of the same reasons.' (José Lanfers, *Missed Understandings: A Study of Stage Adaptations of the Works of James Joyce* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 213)

<sup>182</sup> This is not to say that Manning intended Joyce's language to be impenetrable for her audience. In her production notes she requires that, 'Any production of *Finnegans Wake* should be paced so that the audience has time to hear. If not, the subtle imagery, adroit punning, and the essential meaning will be lost in a verbal shuffle.' (*VoS*, 71) The effect may baffle and confuse but the performance of Joyce's language must remain clear.

<sup>183</sup> Margaret Norris, *The Decentered Universe of Finnegan's Wake: A Structuralist Analysis* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 10; Campbell and Robinson's introduction to their *Skeleton Key* articulates this fallacy at its worst when they refer to the book's form and language as 'accidental features' which must be '[stripped] away' in order to discover what '*Finnegans Wake* is all about.' (Campbell & Robinson, 12). Although in the business of 'unriddling' the *Wake*, Glasheen's *Census* does not attempt to strip away 'the fog' of Joyce's obscurity because 'it is about obscurity' (Glasheen: 1956, xvi). Rather than a 'key' or 'solution', Glasheen provides a torchlight for the unique investigations of others readers.

of experience [...] by the replication of events and the instability of characters.’ (Norris: 1976, 5). *Passages from Finnegans Wake* was less a ‘missed understanding’ and more of a dramatization of ‘intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators’ (118.25-26) which characterize the book; like the ‘variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled, changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns’ (118.26-28) of the *Wake*’s letter, Manning’s adaptation effectively reproduced the uncertainties of reading for the stage.

Neither Glasheen’s nor Manning’s approaches to *Finnegans Wake* are determinably right or wrong. They were both performed with the intention of bringing Joyce’s book to a wider audience at a time when the study of the *Wake* remained largely outside of academic institutions and was pursued by enthusiastic amateurs. Both dealt constructively with the book’s obscurity across the ‘darkling plain’ in the ‘Age of Innocence’ and are the product of their working conditions and environments. Manning’s reading of the *Wake* may, like the *Skeleton Key*, feature questionable interpretations,<sup>184</sup> but, unlike the *Census* which went through three reincarnations with revisions and expansions,<sup>185</sup> *Voice of Shem* represents a reading performed *in its time*, by a particular reader with a particular collaborative group - and, like Glasheen’s first *Census*, is a document for a time in the history of *Finnegans Wake* studies when all critiques and readings of Joyce’s text were performed as the collaborative stumbling in the dark of eager amateurs.

### ***A Skeleton Key against The Skin of Our Teeth***

Prior to Glasheen’s *Census*, another collaborative study was published by the mythologist Joseph Campbell, and the novelist, Henry Norton Robinson: *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944). This work abridged Joyce’s text through extended

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<sup>184</sup> One contemporary reviewer accused Campbell and Robinson of ‘[cutting] it [*Finnegans Wake*] up into scraps and past[ing] some of the scraps together again in a way that may or may not make sense but never makes Joyce’s sense’ and found ‘many footnotes unreliable’; John V. Kelleher, “Joyce Digested,” a review of *A Skeleton Key to ‘Finnegans Wake’* by Campbell and Robinson in *Accent: A Quarterly of New Literature*, V, 3 (Spring 1945), 181-186

<sup>185</sup> see Adaline Glasheen, *Third Census of Finnegans Wake: An Index of the Characters and Their Roles Revised and Expanded from the Second Census* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977)

paraphrase, a method of translation that has received much criticism since.<sup>186</sup> Their reductive reading of *Finnegans Wake* was, in part, a response to a ‘staging’ of the *Wake* which predated Manning’s adaptation.

According to Edmund Epstein in his preface to the recent paperback edition of *A Skeleton Key*, Thornton Wilder’s play, *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), ‘indirectly brought about the creation of the *Skeleton Key*’ (Campbell and Robinson: 2013, xv). In a pair of articles published in the months following the play’s premiere, Campbell and Robinson accused ‘Mr. Thornton Wilder’s exciting play’ of being ‘not an entirely original creation, but an Americanized re-creation, thinly disguised, of James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*.’<sup>187</sup> The most significant features of the play which Wilder had ‘stolen’ from Joyce was its ‘circular form [...] closing and opening with the cycle-renewing, river-running thought-stream of the chief female character. The main divisions of the play closed by periodic catastrophes (ice age, deluge, war) devices which are borrowed from the cosmic dissolutions of *Finnegans Wake*’ and the character ‘Mr. Antrobus’ who ‘is strangely reminiscent of Joyce’s protagonist, H.C. Earwicker, *that homgenius man* (034.14)’ and his family, who vaguely correspond to the ‘Earwickers’ in the *Wake*. (Epstein: 1993, 251). They complimented Wilder for writing ‘the most sensitive, most complete, most convincing interpretation yet to appear of [the] great Joycean theme’ of ‘the Letter’ (Ibid., 257).<sup>188</sup>

The fact that *The Skin of Our Teeth* prompted two extensive commentaries on its ‘stolen’ material and a subsequent book-length guide to *Finnegans Wake* shows that for Campbell and Robinson, Wilder had covertly translated a sophisticated

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<sup>186</sup> Bernard Benstock, characterizing ‘the *Key*’ as a paraphrase of ‘slapdash scholarship’ which ‘boils down’ the *Wake* ‘into insipid pap’, and remarked that ‘paraphrase is a method of reducing a work into something else, and, in the case of the *Wake*, it most often proves to be reducing toward absurdity.’; Bernard Benstock, *Joyce-Again’s Wake: an analysis of Finnegans Wake* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1965), 4

<sup>187</sup> Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson, ‘The Skin of Whose Teeth’, *The Saturday Review* (1942) cited in Joseph Campbell, *Mythic Worlds, Modern Words: On the Art of James Joyce*, ed., Edmund L. Epstein (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 251

<sup>188</sup> ‘The wonderful letter which the wife of Mr. Antrobus throws into the ocean at the close of Act II [...] is precisely the puzzling missive of *Finnegans Wake*, tossed into the sea, buried in the soil, ever awaited, ever half-found, ever reinterpreted, misinterpreted, multifariously over-and-under interpreted, which continually twinkles, with its life-riddle, through every page of Joyce’s work.’ (Epstein: 1993, 252) The trope of the letter which Glasheen similarly described as ‘continually written, read, yearned for, discovered, mulled over’ (Adaline Glasheen, ‘Finnegans Wake and the Girls from Boston Mass’, *Hudson Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1(Spring, 1954), 89-96:93), was also used by Manning as an absurd dramatic climax to *The Voice of Shem* (VoS, 61)

interpretation of Joyce's work into a popular theatrical form. In their view 'Mr. Wilder, having mastered the elaborate web, [had] selected a few structural strands, reduced them in size and weight, and presented them, neatly crocheted to box-office taste.' At one point in their exposé they depict

Mr Wilder [as] a man who has entered an uninventoried treasure cave and who emerges with a pouch full of sample sparklers. Only the lapidary who has himself paid a secret visit to the wonder-hoard is in a position to gasp at the authentic Joycean glitter of Mr. Wilder's resettings.

(Epstein: 1993, 259)

This metaphor demonstrates Campbell and Robinson's conception of the role of the *Wakean* 'amateur unriddler', a privilege which they shared with Wilder, as specialist treasure-hunters. For these early critics, *Finnegans Wake* contained a hidden 'wonder-hoard' which only the privileged 'lapidary' could access. Consequently, the glittering value of Joyce's 'hoard' could only be recognised by them and it was up to them whether to share this with the public or not. The reference to themselves as 'lapidaries', stone-based artisans, characterizes these 'unriddlers' as craftsmen. In this 'gilded age' when the treasure of *Finnegans Wake* was up for grabs, the act of interpretation or criticism was equal to that of further recrafting, whether on stage or as paraphrase.

Wilder's correspondent and collaborator in the unriddling of the *Wake*, Adaline Glasheen, defended his play by arguing that Campbell and Robinson's accusation was absurd since "everything" (or the cunning pretense of everything) is in *Finnegans Wake*.' (Glasheen and Wilder: 2001, xvii) Although Wilder admitted that 'the play is deeply indebted to James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*',<sup>189</sup> Glasheen contended that the connection is limited because both Joyce and Wilder were drawing on an enormous frame of references in which similarities between the two works were inevitable:

Both writers pillage with both hands from some of the best known stories in the Bible and produce [...] their own portraits of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and his family. Both Joyce and Wilder are aware that they have been preceded at Bible-pillaging by anonymous medieval authors of *Adam and Eve*, *Cain and Abel*, *Noah*, plays that belong to one or more of the Mystery cycles [...]. Here ends important resemblance between *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *Finnegans Wake*.

(Glasheen and Wilder, xvii)

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<sup>189</sup> Thornton Wilder, *Our Town and Other Plays* (London: Penguin, 1962), 14

Acknowledging an historical and theatrical link that both of them share with Medieval Mystery plays, Glasheen drew a line under these resemblances because *The Skin of Our Teeth* only resembles the *Wake* in content and not form. For Glasheen, *Finnegans Wake* 'contains examples of every literary form, including drama' (which she limits to the Aristotelean 'imitation of significant action'; *Ibid.*), but the example of Drama is not reflected by Joyce because 'no action in *Finnegans Wake* is efficiently performed, but always botched like the hunt for treasure', any 'drama is inhibited before it attains dramatic climax.' (*Ibid.*) Consequently, Wilder's play which, according to Glasheen 'has nothing to do' with 'blighted form and inhibition of dramatic climax' because it 'is a well-made play with a clear, affirming message', Campbell and Robinson's 'comparison between them has the value and character of nothing.' (*Ibid.*) For Glasheen, *The Skin of Our Teeth* was not a complete imitation of *Finnegans Wake* because it does not imitate Joyce's form.

Wilder himself professed that the innovations of Joyce's prose and language were not translated into his own practice as a dramatist. In a preface to *The Skin of Our Teeth* he wrote:

I am not one of the new dramatists we are looking for. I wish I were. I hope I have played a part in preparing the way for them. I am not an innovator but a rediscoverer of forgotten goods and I hope a remover of obtrusive bric-à-brac,  
(Wilder: 1962, 14)

He acknowledges that whilst 'the treatment of several simultaneous levels of time was borrowed from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*,<sup>190</sup> his play was also indebted to Henry James's *A Sense of the Past* and Mark Twain's 'Connecticut Yankee.' (Campbell and Robinson: 2013, xvi) Wilder's use of simultaneous levels of temporality and meta-theatrical self-referentiality were not necessarily new devices in the theatre since playwrights in the 1920s like Luigi Pirandello had come to fully exploit a tradition which stretched back to Shakespeare and even as far as Euripides. Wilder's use of these devices in *The Skin of Our Teeth* appear whimsical and slight in comparison to a play such as Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (1921). For example, his

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<sup>190</sup> The play's characters, which include dinosaurs, Cain, Moses and the family of Mr and Mrs Antrobus who have been married for 5,000 years (Wilder: 1962, 131), live in a 1940s New Jersey household which is also further temporally replicated by frequent meta-theatrical indications of taking place in 'The X theatre' (*Ibid.*, 97) making the play's action also occur *in the present*.

character Sabina (with whom Campbell and Robinson associate with Kate the servant in *Finnegans Wake*; Epstein: 1993, 260) frequently interrupts her stage business to remark on the play which she is tired of performing every night. She complains that ‘The author hasn’t made up his silly mind as to whether we’re all living back in caves or in New Jersey today, and that’s the way it is all the way through.’ (Wilder: 1962, 101). In comparison to the tragic condition of Pirandello’s characters who are defined by their search for an author, there are no real dramatic consequences when Wilder has his characters refer to ‘the author’ and the action could just as easily continue without those moments of self-referentiality.

Although to some extent Wilder’s play *does* imitate certain aspects of Joyce’s self-referential form, *Finnegans Wake* is full of formal interruptions, references to its playing with time and reiterative autonoms such as: ‘*Ho, Time Timeagen, Wake!*’ (415.15), and about a third of the way into the ‘drama parapolylogic,’ (474.05) a disorientating dialogue amongst five voices is interrupted by:

SILENCE.

Act drop. Stand by! Blinders! Curtain up. Juice, please! Foots!  
(501.07-08)

Rather than breaking the chapter out of its form of a ‘polylogue’ into something drastically different, a voice reassures us that ‘we are again in the magnetic field.’ (501.16). In this ‘magnetic field’ (i.e. *everywhere*) ‘we’ are not pulled *out* of the theatrical representation in order to comment on it, but are pulled *towards* theatrical representation.

In the third act of *The Skin of Our Teeth* the action is interrupted by the stage manager who announces that ‘seven of our actors have been taken ill’ and are to be replaced by volunteers. He introduces the interruption as ‘an explanation’ that has to be made ‘to the audience.’ (Wilder: 1962, 156-158) In Joyce’s third act (of the third book) the interruption, referred to three lines later as ‘justajiff siesta,’ bears no explanation and is absorbed immediately back into the ‘drama parapolylogic.’ The joke that the abrupt ‘SILENCE’ and the (re?)raising of the curtains took the duration of an afternoon’s nap plays with the reader’s or an audience member’s capacity to skip large intervals of time in their imagination whilst following the flowing pace of prose or action on stage. Wilder’s theatre seems to constantly want to halt the action

by *explaining* to the audience that everything they are watching is theatrical artifice. The effect of this on the audience is not likely to be one of representational disruption since the play has prepared the audience for this from the first scene.<sup>191</sup> Wilder doesn't disrupt his dramatic action but simply *tells* us that it is being disrupted. In *Finnegans Wake*, the interruption *towards* the tools of theatrical artifice (curtains, footlights) does not explain Joyce's methodology of representation but reflects the mode of the book itself which is in a constant state of reawakening, as though the language frequently wakes up into different mediums before swiftly returning to its half-sleeping 'drauma' (115.32). In the *Wake*, everything is constantly waking from its 'justajiff siesta.'

Manning's adaptation also reflects this disruptive but fluent shifting towards other forms when she reproduces this moment in Scene Five: *The Dream Dramas*, the most complexly interwoven part of the play which combines material from Books II and III of *Finnegans Wake* (VoS, 39-61).<sup>192</sup> Before transposing the action into a Ballet performance of the 'Ondt and the Gracehoper' passage from *FW*, 414-419, Manning gives the words 'Act drop. Stand by! Blinders! Curtain up. Juice, please! Foots!' (501.7-8) to a confusion of offstage voices:

VOICES  
(Offstage)

-Act drop.  
-Stand by!  
-Blinders!  
-Curtain up.  
-Juice, please!  
-Foots!

(VoS, 41)

Instead of reproducing the word 'SILENCE'<sup>193</sup> Manning precedes these voices with the stage direction '*roll of drums and a blackout*' so that the actual, live silence following the 'roll of drums' is visually accompanied by the sudden lack of light. In the

<sup>191</sup> A stage direction on the first page of the script indicates, '*Slide of the front doors of the theatre in which this play is playing; three cleaning women with mops and pails*', as the Announcer says; 'The X theatre. During the the daily cleaning of this theatre...' (Wilder; 1962, 97)

<sup>192</sup> José Lanter details Manning's excerpts as '*Scene Five* pp.474, 216-26, 414-19, 396, 527-28, 556-61, 429-473, 572-76' (Lanthers:1988, 183)

<sup>193</sup> This is placed a few moments previously before several lines taken from *FW*, 223.23-24 with the stage direction *A voice offstage bellows: "Silence!"* (VoS, 39).

darkness Manning toys with the audience's perception of what is being presented to them. Before this blackout she inserts a dialogic re-rendering of, 'A space. Who are you? The cat's mother. A time. What do you lack? The look of a queen.' (223.23-24) which is taken from the *Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies* chapter and re-ascribes the questions and answers to Shaun and ALP:

SHAUN  
A space. Who are you?

ALP  
(*Majestically*) The cat's mother. A time.

SHAUN  
What do you lack?

ALP  
The look of a queen!

(*VoS*, 40)<sup>194</sup>

Campbell and Robinson interpret this line in a very different way, ascribing the dialogue to 'Glugg' (Shem) and an unnamed 'Maggy'<sup>195</sup>:

"Who are you?" he asks. "The cat's mother," one replies. "What do you lack?" he asks after a pause. "The look of a queen."

(Campbell and Robinson: 2013, 146)

Both of these translations, on the page and for the stage, function as dramatized interpretations of Joyce's line. In the 1939 text there are no indications as to who is saying what and if indeed anyone is actually speaking these lines. My own assumption about who might be speaking would be Shem and Shaun, since in the paragraphs that follow we are introduced to 'Chuffy' the 'nangel' and 'Glugger' the 'duvlin', aka Shaun and Shem who 'are met, face a facing' (223.15) and in the paragraph before 'A space' (223.19-22), Shaun, referred to as 'the evangelion' (which we might assume is a synonym for 'nangel') addresses his 'scaldbrother' who we can assume is Shem, the 'scalding' hot Devil-brother. However, there is no logical way of

<sup>194</sup> 'The look of a queen' is very likely an allusion to the final lines of Yeats' play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902): 'Did you see an old woman going down the path? / I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen.' (Yeats:1997, 28). Both dialogical exchanges in Yeats and Joyce imply symbolic shifting between an older and a younger woman: the transformation of Cathleen ni Houlihan from a 'poor old woman' into a young girl with the 'walk of a queen' and the temporal and spatial shifts between the young Issy and the maternal ALP. With this allusion carried forth into *The Voice of Shem* there was also another layer of diachrony to consider as the ghost of Yeats's Irish revivalist theatre haunted the voice of Sarah Braveman who performed a composite of both ALP and Issy and delivered the line above.

<sup>195</sup> The name often given to the 28 'rainbow girls' who join Shem, Shaun and Issy for the children's games in II.i. An early mention of them occurs in the quiz chapter (I.vi): '8. And how war yore maggies?' (142.30)



inferring who is asking and who is answering in the following sentence. In my reading, neither ALP nor the Maggies appear in this exchange. The *Skeleton Key* rendering of 'A time' into 'a pause' also reduces Joyce's sentence into a simplified dramatic stage direction, whilst Manning's imbrication of 'A space' and 'A time' into live dialogue creates a compelling ambiguity whereby Shaun and ALP might be referring to themselves as 'Space' and 'Time' or using these words with indefinite articles as self-reflexive commentaries on the indefinite flux of theatrical time and space within which they find themselves.

It does not matter whether Manning has redistributed these words to the 'correct' characters because in the performance's terms the exchange is an indication of the play's form - one that is aware of itself as a piece of theatre, performed in 'time' and 'space', but in a manner that is also uncertain, indefinite and rapidly fluctuating between times, settings and characters. Unlike the certainty of Campbell and Robinson's translation of this moment into dialogue, or the frequently halting pace and clearly defined meta-theatricality of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Manning's recalibration of Joyce's text into performance mimics the formal ambiguity which is characterized by its temporal and spatial slipperiness.

### **Dismembered in the Dark**

But the ambiguous textures which *The Voice of Shem* translated into theatrical space does not necessarily mean that Manning's reading lost touch with Joyce's composition. The new environment in which she placed Joyce's language did revel in obscurity but harnessed the play of obscurity and illumination in a way which recalled certain aspects of the book's composition process: the flickering of Joyce's failing eyesight, or the importance of other readers responses during revision. In response to Joyce's question on whether she could see 'the plot' emerging from an early fragment, Harriet Shaw Weaver described the text as a 'shadowy pattern' with a 'Jacobean flavour' and a darkness which 'lifts and falls, lifts and falls (like a safety curtain in a theatre)'.<sup>196</sup> Her theatrical comparisons are useful as they refer to a medium etymologically connected to sight – the *theatron* – yet the nature of this 'seeing' is marked by what it cannot see or what it is not sure that it can see. Weaver's theatrical conception of the *Work in Progress* also breaks with the classical

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<sup>196</sup> Letter from Harriet Shaw Weaver to Joyce', 10th June 1926, cited in Bowker: 2011, 352

model of anagnorisis, which builds towards a climactic revelation, as she imagines the endless repetition of a rising and falling safety curtain. Perhaps the theatre into which Manning read and recomposed *Finnegans Wake* similarly reproduces this back and forth between concealing and revealing, seeing and not seeing.

Whilst everything is still in the dark and after the offstage voices have reminded the audience that they are in a theatre, Manning has her Radio Announcer define the nature of this theatrical space:

*RADIO ANNOUNCER*

We are now in the magnetic field! Moisten your lips for a lightning strike and begin again! I repeat, We are now in the Dream Place...

(*VoS*, 40)<sup>197</sup>

In a sense, this authoritative voice *authors* the scene through the act of naming. On the one hand this instance resembles the kind of assertive indication of setting that Glasheen would perform in later additions of her *Census*,<sup>198</sup> or Campbell and Robinson's desire to 'translate' Joyce's 'dream logic into waking logic,' as though it were their job to bring the 'baffling obscurity of *Finnegans Wake*' to the light of day (Campbell and Robinson: 2013, 359). But this verbal indication of a supposed setting takes place in the dark, and the 'setting' that is being named is not really a setting at all but a 'magnetic field' which Manning reiterates as 'the Dream place', a space, or perhaps a succession of spaces, that are defined by the indeterminacy of their borders. In effect this announcement is a reiteration of the last words of the previous scene when the coffin at the center of the stage has been transformed into a 'ship which is to bear the hero and Iseult to Cornwall'<sup>199</sup> but as darkness falls across the stage and we hear the 'sound of seagulls' a chorus of Women's Voices announces that 'we out by Starloe! He dreams his dreams.'*(VoS*, 38) It is not clear if the next scene is set in Cornwall, but it is clear that someone is dreaming.

There is another resonance in having a voice attempt to name the 'place' of the performance in the dark. It recalls the role of Joyce, dictating to his amanuensis from

<sup>197</sup> The first two statements are taken again from III.iii (501.15 & 17-18)

<sup>198</sup> For example, in her critique of *The Voice of Shem*, José Laners is keen to discredit Manning's ambiguity of setting for the Mutt and Jute dialogue by referring to Glasheen's *Third Census* in which she situates it on the 'battlefield of Clontarf'. The 1956 *Census* is not so specific. (Adaline Glasheen, *Third census of Finnegans Wake* (California: University of California Press, 1977), xxvi)

<sup>199</sup> Scene Four, which largely lifts from II.iv, establishes Shem and ALP as the figures of Tristan and Isolde on the boat to Cornwall (*VoS*, 37)

the darkness of his glaucoma. The assorted voices from offstage that attempt to re-orientate the scene resemble the voices that helped in the performance of *Work in Progress's* composition; Helen Kastor Joyce's reading voice, Ogden's whispered prompts during the recording of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (JJ, 612) Although the comparison between this theatrical moment and the working conditions of *Finnegans Wake's* composition would not have necessarily been explicit to an audience, as a record of Manning's reading and adaptation of the text in 1955, her text does contain a genetic connection to the composition process including factors of mistakes and misremembering that resulted from Joyce's fading eyesight and the human error of his helpers.

The published script of *The Voice of Shem* is the only sustained record of its performance available and it is also the only available record of Manning's process of textual reconstitution. Because of this it is impossible to recapture the exact processes of reading, remembering and forgetting that Manning performed as she was making her adaptation other than reading back and forth between the *Wake* and *The Voice of Shem*. With Joyce's lines:

We are again in the magnetic field. Do you remember on a particular lukesummer night, following a crying fair day? Moisten your lips for a lightning strike and begin again. Mind the flickers and dimmers! Better?

(501.17-20)

She replaces the first 'again' with 'now', which gives the audience an impression of sudden change, but she keeps the phrase 'begin again' which might also suggest that the 'now' refers not to a new frame of representation but the 'seim anew,' a repetition with a difference (*VoS*, 32; *FW* 215.23). Instead of keeping 'mind the flickers and dimmers!', which would have fit perfectly with the following stage direction for the lights to rise, Manning inserted 'I repeat, We are now in the Dream Place...'. It is difficult to tell whether she is providing a gloss on these lines, in the fashion of Campbell and Robinson, completely inventing the line as a reiteration which, like the stage lights, elucidates the 'world' (*VoS*, 4) of the play, or whether she was misremembering words from elsewhere in the *Wake*. The latter case might even have been a conscious decision by Manning since a few lines before 'we are now in the Dream Place' ALP is given the lines 'She shall be dismembered forever, they shall be dismembered forever.' (*VoS*, 40). The closest equivalent to this in the *Wake* is from the first chapter: 'Redismembers invalids of old guard find poussepousse

pousseypram to sate the sort of their butt.’ (008.06) The association of remembering with dismemberment is an apt depiction of both Joyce’s and Manning’s composition processes as they cut and reconfigure fragments of text and voices together into something that is constantly changing.

One equivalent to ‘Dream Place’ occurs in Book IV, during the ‘Letter’ section (615-619) of ALPs closing soliloquy: ‘That was the prick of the spindle to me that gave me the keys to dreamland’ (615.28-29). For some critics, Manning’s reconfiguration of this sentence from the infamous ‘Letter’ which makes mention of a ‘key’ might represent a considerably meaningful moment in her interpretation of the book. Edmund Wilson, the first to publish an extended reading of *Finnegans Wake*,<sup>200</sup> recognized the ‘dramatic effect’ of ‘not fining out till almost the end’ about the fact that the book had been Earwicker’s ‘dream’ ‘inspired by his feelings for his children.’<sup>201</sup> He also acknowledges a similar sense of denouement with ‘new emotional connotations’ when ALP ‘reads’ her letter, as though the concealed truth at the heart of the *Wake* has been uncovered in a moment of climactic revelation (Wilson: 1961, 237). The implication of Sleeping Beauty, pricked by her spindle, provides the ‘key’ to the ‘world’ of the *Wake* and in this letter its truth appears to have become unlocked. But would it really be that much of a revelation to discover that we have been in ‘dreamland’ the entire time? A more compelling association to make between ALP’s talk of spindles, keys and dreamlands and Manning’s ‘dismembering’ of the line into ‘We are now in the Dream Place’ is the evocation of a woman weaving. In the redistributed texts and voices of Manning’s play we are ‘watching her sew a dream together’ (028.06-07), as she re-stitches and re-weaves Joyce’s text onto the stage. In this moment, the voices in *The Voice of Shem*, which are anonymous and in the blinding dark, reflect the composition of the wake itself, a blind perspective guided by voices.

Returning to Weaver’s analogy of Joyce’s text as a shadowy theatre, which does not climactically expose an hitherto concealed meaning or plot, but flickers in an

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<sup>200</sup> Edmund Wilson, ‘The Dream of H.C.Earwicker’, *The Wound and the Bow*, (London: Methuen University Paperbacks, 1961; first published by W.H.Allen & Co Ltd, 1941), 218-242. Wilson was also acquainted with Thornton Wilder who he claimed had ‘explored the book more thoroughly than anyone else’ and in his essay expressed his hope that ‘Mr. Wilder will some day publish something about *Finnegans Wake*.’ (Wilson: 1961, 238)

<sup>201</sup> Referring to III.iv.555-590 when ‘Earwicker partially wakes up’ to the sound of his one his crying infants. (Wilson: 1961, 220)

ambivalent state of obscurity and illumination, there is another possible connection to Manning's theatricalisation of Joyce's text which also performs a mockery of the desire for a satisfying unravelling of 'meaning' or 'truth'. Not only does *The Voice of Shem* enact the uncertainties of the reader it also parodies the 'amateur unriddler's' hunt for certainty.

For readers seeking to interpret and unravel *Finnegans Wake*, the 'Letter' is the perfect dramatic revelation. Campbell and Robinson, in a moment when they are not condemning Wilder's stolen material, compliment his 'interpretation' of the letter:

The wonderful letter which the wife of Mr. Antrobus throws into the ocean at the close of Act II [...] is precisely the puzzling missive of *Finnegans Wake*, tossed into the sea, buried in the soil, ever awaited, ever half-found, ever reinterpreted, misinterpreted, multifariously over-and-under interpreted, which continually twinkles, with its life-riddle, through every page of Joyce's work.

(Epstein: 1993, 252)

This conception of the 'Letter' as a symbol for the *Wake* itself was also an idea that the earliest commentators of Joyce's book had for dealing with the capacious and copious encyclopedic 'world' of *Finnegans Wake*. In 1941 Edmund Wilson agreed with a reviewer of the 1939 publication that:

the riddle of the letter is the riddle of life itself. This letter has been scratched up from a dung-heap and yet it has come from another world; it includes in its very brief length marriage, children, and death, and things to eat and drink - all the primary features of life beyond which the ideas of the illiterate writer evidently do not extend; and Earwicker can never really read it, though the text seems to exceedingly simple and though he confronts it again and again.

(Wilson: 1961, 238)

Since this Letter *is* 'life itself' but can 'never really be read', this concept of the *Wake* as the 'Letter' is indicated as an indeterminable textual object which can be produced or represented but it is not interpretable, its *form* is the 'riddle' but the *content* of the riddle is always out of reach.

Wilder's representation of the 'Letter' in *The Skin of Our Teeth* is to an extent, as Campbell and Robinson would believe, an 'interpretation' of the contents of the letter, since Wilder has Mrs. Antrobus (his version of ALP) outline the content of the letter as she throws it into the ocean, but the unriddling of its content remains a theatrical,

illusionary mime accompanied by a summarized paraphrase of what it is supposedly *about*:

Before I go I have a letter ... I have a message to throw into the ocean. [*She flings something - invisible to us - far over the heads of the audience to the back of the auditorium.*] It's a bottle. And the bottle's a letter. And in the letter is written all the things that a woman knows. It's never been told to any man and it's never been told to any woman, and if it finds its destination, a new time will come. We're not what books and plays say we are. We're not what advertisements say we are. We're not in the movies and we're not on the radio.

We're not what you're all told and what you think we are: We're ourselves. And if any man can find one of us he'll learn why the whole universe was set in motion. And if any may harm any one of us, his soul - the only soul he's got - had better be at the bottom of that ocean - and that's the only way to put it...

(Wilder: 1962, 150-1)

Although Mrs. Antrobus's speech ends with a conclusive cadence that ensures us that 'that's the only way to put it', her speech, in which she uses the pronoun 'we' as a representative of all women, is an attack on representation itself and the artistic representation of women. The letter, presented within the reality of the play as an invisible, transforming object (from hand to bottle to letter to ocean), is also a gestural mime which imitates the ever-shifting nature of representation, whether in the form of writing or embodied action. Like the false representation of women through patriarchal modes of writing and theatricalization, her letter is itself artificial and empty. The only way for it to be (re)communicated or enacted, in Wilder's play, is through a passionate act of paraphrase and summary. Wilder's version of the theme of the letter is on the one hand an accurate theatricalization of the indeterminable and slippery nature of that theme in *Finnegans Wake*, but it is still presented in 'wideawake' language which delivers the letter as a conclusively toned paraphrase.<sup>202</sup>

In *The Voice of Shem*, Manning presents the 'Letter' similarly as a dramatic climax. However it does not occur in the form of a determined paraphrase of its contents but as a bathetic parody of the patriarchal, pedagogic performance of interpretation. Instead of representing a feminist argument against representation through an indication towards the contents of the Letter, Manning uses a reading of an actual

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<sup>202</sup> In justifying the nature of his language in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce wrote: 'One great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cutanddry grammar and goahead plot.' (Richard Ellman, ed., *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. III (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 146)

letter from the *Wake* in order to demonstrate the absurdity of the patriarchal performance of hermeneutic explanation.

The reading of the letter in *The Voice of Shem* occurs as the climax to the 'Dream Drama' scene (*VoS*, 61) From half-way through the scene, Manning has the two brothers, Shem and Shaun, take turns to perform as condescending and eventually bumbling and demented figures of pedagogic and moral authority such as 'Savnarola', a 'canon law professor', a 'priest' and another 'professor' (*Ibid.*, 50, 55). When ALP, 'wearing the uniform of Benent St. Berched's Nightschool', 'runs in and impulsively flings her arms around' Shaun, he shouts: 'Izzy! I overstand you, you understand' (*Ibid.*, 52) In these performances of patriarchal and pedagogical authority the scene of learning is not about shared understanding but the assertion of male dominance over female sexuality, a performance that is constantly undermined by the anarchic *danse macabre* of ALP/Izzy and the 'maggies' who rapidly shift from flirtatious obedience, 'No, professor; yes, Professor; no, Professor. Yes. Yes. Yes.' (*Ibid.*, 51) to flamboyant erotics:

*Two girls rush in and remove their skirts. Since they have already removed their blouses, the class shows increasing excitement and even Shem feels the strain.*  
(*Ibid.*, 59)

The girls who had previously enveloped Shem and Shaun's professor figures are now, like the opening of a letter, 'revealing' themselves. The effect of this embodiment of the 'true' representation of women (although this is still a 'performance' of truth) does not satisfy or confirm the discourse of Shem/Shاون (who are also avatars in HCE's dream who keeps waking up, disturbed by the performance taking place all around him), but make these male characters flustered and stammering (*VoS*, 49-61). The climax of the scene functions like a stunted ejaculation, rather than ALP reading the letter it is given to Shem to read:

*(The class is up now and swaying in time to the music. There is a clash of cymbals; all the dancers freeze into immobility and one of the girls rushes on. She is wearing a large placard with NIGHTLETTER written on it. She takes a letter out of her bosom and hands it to Shem, who reads it aloud very slowly and distinctly and facing the audience.)*

**SHEM**

"With our best youlldied greedings to Pep and Memmy and the old folkers below and beyant, wishing them all very merry Incarnations in this land of the livvey,

and plenty or preprosperousness through their coming new yonks. From Jake, Jack and little souscouci (the babes that mean too). Sender. Boston. Mass.”

*(Earwicker wakes slowly, rises from his bed. The chorus cheers at the conclusion of the reading.)*

SHAUN

*(Shouting)* Sponsor program and close down.

*(Blackout)*

CURTAIN

(VoS, 61)

Instead of a climactic revelation of the truth to female sexuality the audience get a mischievous Christmas card from three ‘babes’. The cheers from the chorus gives the scene a sense of resolution as it expresses a release from the tension that would have been created by shifting from the rapid pace of the dream dramas to the frozen ‘immobility’ of a tableau vivant. But the content of the ‘Nightletter’ is a bathetic climax since it appears to do nothing more than represent an obnoxious greeting from three children to ‘Pep and Memmy and the old folkers.’ Manning conflates the Nightletter that concludes the Nightlessons chapter (308.16-25) with another letter from III.i. 421.10-11, in order to get the sender’s address: ‘Boston (Mass).’ To the audience at the Poet’s Theatre in Harvard this may have appeared to be a nod towards the performance itself since Boston would only have been a short distance away from them. In the performances of *The Voice of Shem* in Massachusetts, 1955, Manning’s text would have indicated another layer of self-referentiality to its autotelic description of the omnipresent ‘magnetic field’ or ‘dream place.’

José Lanthers finds this moment disappointing, not because it provides the play with a bathetic anti-climax but because it fails to fall in line with her interpretation of the letter’s identity:

The letter from the children to their parents which ends Book II.ii of the *Wake* is also used to conclude *Scene Five* of the play [...] Apart from the fact that this is rather contrived, there is nothing in the play to connect the letter with the two sons and the daughter - as there is no evidence in the *Wake* to connect this letter with the other one from Boston, Mass. According to Glasheen, the children’s letter ‘seems to wish their parents a merry Christmas, but in fact wishes them dead. The young people are now, all of them, accomplices’ (*Second Census*, p.xliii) In the adaptation it seems to have the opposite effect, leading directly to the father’s awakening-resurrection.

(Lanthers: 1988, 198-9)



Glasheen did not make her interpretation about the children's letter wishing their parents dead in her 1956 *Census*, but Laners uses the *Second Census* to imply that Manning's use of the letter has the 'opposite effect' to what it is supposed to have. However, Manning's blending of the different letters which follows a complexly woven merging of passages and phrases from both Books II, III and IV of *Finnegans Wake*, creates an effect that reflects the form of *Finnegans Wake*, a 'world' that consists of 'miscegenations on miscegenations', as the Radio Announcer tells the audience in the Prologue to the play. (*VoS*, 4; *FW* 018.19). This bathetic muddling of sources and failure to unveil the 'true' Letter reiterates Manning's (and Joyce's) mockery of pedagogic, hermeneutic authority in the Dream Drama and reconstitutes the words at the beginning of the play which evoke the unstable and ever-shifting reality of the *Wake* on stage:

In the ignorance that implies impression that knits knowledge that finds the nameform that whets the wits that convey contacts that sweeten sensation that drives desire that adheres to attachment that dogs death that bitches birth that entails the ensuance of existentiality...

(Ibid.)

*The Voice of Shem* reflects this process of weaving and knitting together ignorance and impressions and knowledges, driven by a desire to sharpen the 'wits' by finding a 'nameform' for what is being experienced. This in turn resembles a reader's experience, making connections back and forth within the text and through their own memories and internal archives of knowledge and associations. Misremembering is just as much a part of this as accurately remembering. In doing so Manning has her actors perform a mockery of the 'professors' who would insist on explaining their interpretation of the text to an audience.

This is also an accurate depiction of a mockery that Joyce performs in the *Wake*. The challenge to a scholarly unravelling of his text is something that permeates every page of the *Wake*, both inviting 'ideal readers' with an 'ideal insomnia' to interpret whilst rendering their attempt to translate it into 'wideawake' language absurd. Bernard Benstock associated *A Skeleton Key* with this mistaken and one-sided approach to interpreting the *Wake* when he remarked that Campbell and Glasheen's method of 'paraphrase' reduces the work 'toward[s] absurdity.'<sup>203</sup> Manning's bathetic

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<sup>203</sup> Bernard Benstock, *Joyce-Again's Wake: an analysis of Finnegans Wake* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1965), 4

anti-climax with the letter, which follows the ritualistic undermining of Shem and Shaun's figures of pedagogic patriarchy, encapsulates the absurdity of reducing the *Wake* solely to the authority of an hermeneutic explanation of content.

Alongside the way in which Lanthers bases her entire critique of *Voice of Shem* on Glasheen's later interpretation of *Finnegans Wake*, she also betrays an intrinsic problem with the shift from the page to the stage and the way in which signs take on complex and sometimes undecidable relationships with one another, ignoring the way that *Finnegans Wake* weaves voices whose identities are difficult to discern. Similar to her obsession with the correct assertion of 'place' and 'setting' of the opening of the *Wake*, Lanthers, again through Glasheen, unveils another of Manning's 'missed understandings' when she 'mistakes' the sleeping embodiment of 'Shaun', 'pure Yawn' (474.01), with his father, HCE:

Yawn is identified as HCE, because they are both unconscious:

*Music. The lights rise slowly revealing Earwicker still unconscious on the coffin, which now stands on a platform upstage. Below it, the woman (ALP) is seated, twanging on the harp. The music fades on some muted twanging.*

*ALP*

*(Wailing) Lowly, longly, a wail went forth. Pure Yawn lay low. (Women wail obediently backstage.) On the mead of the hillock lay, heartsoul dormant mid shadowed landshape, brief wallet to his side, and arm loose, by his staff of citron briar, tradition stick-pass-on. (More wailing.)*

*(Shaun and Shem enter right and left. They wear straw boaters, tennis flannels, colourful blazers, and carry walking sticks.) (VS, p.39)*

Glasheen sees Yawn as a version of Shaun: 'It was predicted that Shaun-Jaun would grow till he filled space (429.23-4). Now called Yawn and sleeping in a poppy-field [...] he covers the whole of Ireland.

(Lanthers: 1988, 193)

Lanthers assumes that the words taken from page 474 of the *Wake* must be referring to the body (Earwicker) that the stage directions have lying 'unconscious on the coffin.' Not only has Manning failed to represent this body as the 'Shaun-Jaun' that Glasheen recognizes but the way in which he grows 'till he filled space' (perhaps anticipating Ionesco's *Amadee*?) - what a shame that Manning could not have replaced her inaccurate 'coffin' with the 'whole of Ireland'! What Lanthers fails to consider is the use of deixis and physical presences on stage can constantly shift

and sometimes contain more than one possible referent. In the theatre a coffin can be *both* a funereal container and a 'dormant mid shadowed landscape'; an actor's body can be *both* HCE and a Yawn-Shaun-Jaun composite. If this kind of simultaneity can exist within the *Wake* itself, why can it not on stage where we are constantly required, as spectators, to be open to double and shifting modes of perception? If Lanfers had followed through with this critique she would have also noted how these words, which are unattributed to a character in the text, have been given by Manning to 'ALP' to speak. This creates a kind of Brechtian *verfremdungseffekt* in which the actor performs her character ('wailing') whilst simultaneously indicating this performance - ALP, whilst 'wailing' speaks of 'a wail' going forth, the deictic pronoun, 'my', is missing whilst she indicates her own performance with an alienating indefinite article, 'a'. Rather than simply attributing bits of texts to characters, Manning plays with the re-inscription of unspecified voice to a characterised voice which provides the performance with several layers of a polyvocal shifting interplay of signs and referents.

This is something that is already at work in *Finnegans Wake*, but even rudimentary semiotic approaches to theatre acknowledge the potential for theatrical deixis to undergo slippery realignments. Kier Elam refers to deixis in the theatre as an essential feature that is 'constant in [...] dramatic discourse' as it 'is always tied to speaker, listener and its immediate spatio-temporal coordinates', whilst on the other hand it is 'dynamic to the extent that participants and the time and location of utterance indicated undergo continual change.'<sup>204</sup> Coincidentally echoing the *Wakean* phrase 'work in progress' (or 'word in pregress' (*FW* II.ii.284.19-21) Elam also writes that 'Deixis [...] allows the dramatic context to be referred to as an 'actual' and dynamic world already in progress.' (Elam: 2002, 128). He also refers to deictic signs, such the speaker's 'I', the listener's 'you' and the 'present object's' 'this', as "shifters" ('empty signs') which do not 'specify' their objects but simply 'point' towards their objects (Ibid.) For Elam, these 'empty' 'shifters' should not remain empty as they require the filling in of 'contextual elements (speaker, addressee, time, location)' (Ibid.) This is, as the brief example in *The Voice of Shem* above demonstrates, a limited and closed-off approach to the vitality of 'incomplete' signs on stage, but contains within it an aspect which Lanfers approach cannot stomach:

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<sup>204</sup> Kier Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (Second Edition) (London and New York: Routledge, 2002; first published, 1980), 125-6

the performance of deictic and indicative signifiers that shift and complicate the 'ideal' (Lanters) reading of a text which, through the confusion of adaptation has effectively *emptied* them out in order for them to be refilled with a spontaneous plurality of diverse and subjective responses from an audience – an audience which consists of members who may resist or embrace this potential semiotic chaos.

Lanters version of the Wakean 'ideal reader', which becomes the 'ideal' audience when discussing Manning's adaptation, recalls another semiotic issue: questions of reader response and competence. Umberto Eco, a close (though ultimately not 'closed') reader of *Finnegans Wake*,<sup>205</sup> refers to the author's 'ideal reader' as a 'Model Reader', which Marco de Marinis later reformulates, when writing on performance, into the 'Model Spectator.' Eco summarises the role of 'competencies' and the 'Model Reader' thus:

To organize his own textual strategy an author must refer to a series of competencies (a more inclusive expression than "knowledge of the codes") which confer content on the expressions that he uses. He must assume that the entire set of competencies to which he refers are the same as those referred to by the reader. Therefore he will foresee a Model Reader capable of cooperating in the textual production as the author thought, and moving interpretively the way he moved in generating the text.<sup>206</sup>

In semiotics, the notion of 'competence' relates, as Eco indicates, to a pragmatic, comprehensive reception of information that goes a step beyond just a simple "knowledge of the codes". It refers to the point at which understanding does not arise from recognition but as a cooperative 'production', or *reproduction* of the author's initial intentions. Eco grants the competent reader with the same verb as the author, as though they were both engaged in a symbiotic dance, mirroring each other's movements in order to complete the generation of text. For Lanters, an audience of Mary Manning's *Voice of Shem* are unable 'to respond' to what they see and hear because Manning, as an 'incompetent' reader of Joyce, has failed to transfer not only the correct 'codes' but the correct manner for complete communication to occur between audience and text (her text is 'too vague') (Lanters: 1988, 184).

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<sup>205</sup> Umberto Eco, *Talking of Joyce* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998), 42

<sup>206</sup> Quoted in Marco de Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, trans. Áine O'Healy (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 141

But Manning was a perfectly ‘competent’ reader of the *Wake*. In this scene that Lanthers criticizes as a ‘missed understanding’ of Joyce’s text, Manning represents the text not through a semiotic decoding of content but as a *recoding* of a performative practice that is embedded in the composition of Joyce’s work. In this instance it is the form of the spiritualist seance which underpins Manning’s reconstitution of *Finnegans Wake*.

### **Decoded Séance**

This *re-coding* of the *Wake* might be considered along the lines of what Richard Schechner refers to as the ‘restoration of behaviour’ in which a culturally embedded practice or ‘script’ is reiterated through its performance – a re-performance that follows an encoded pattern but is often altered in its iteration.<sup>207</sup> For Diana Taylor, the ‘script’ of embodied performance, which she calls the ‘repertoire’, is frequently undermined and effaced by the written ‘archive’, claiming that ‘writing has served as a strategy for repudiating and foreclosing the very embodiedness it claims to describe.’<sup>208</sup> But as Rebecca Schneider has argued, Taylor reiterates the very binary that she intends to disfavor by categorizing the ‘repertoire’ as an ‘underprivileged’ and constantly effaced pole of an opposition that is actually ambivalent and undecidable (Schneider: 2011, 107). The distinction between the ‘archive’ and the ‘repertoire’, the ‘written’ and the ‘embodied’ is inaccurate since writing is also ‘an embodied act’ and ‘performance’ can also be considered as ‘discursive’, iterating hegemonic gestures of inscription (Ibid., 107). For Schneider, ‘performance plays the “sedimented acts” and spectral meanings that haunt material in constant collective interaction, in constellation, in transmutation’ (Ibid., 102). In other words, there is an interaction between the written word and embodied action that is always being transformed through the field of performance. Manning’s re-inscription of Joyce’s text into the theatre draws attention to the sedimentary layers of a text that are not just textual but contain embodied, cultural practices that have been encoded in its process of production. Her ‘competency’ here has not do with the reinscription of codes that have been established after the fact of the text, e.g. Glasheen’s interpretation of setting or character, but with a reading of the text that uncovers,

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<sup>207</sup>Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 35-6

<sup>208</sup>Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 36

through performance, ‘codes’ of acts and behavior that are sedimented in the genetic history of the text.

In the Yawn chapter (III.iii), which is widely considered to contain a seance,<sup>209</sup> there is an allusion to this concept of ‘re-coding’ when the speaker of the chapter contests that ‘what can’t be coded can be decorded’:

The prouts who will invent a writing there ultimately is the poeta, still more learned, who discovered the raiding there originally. That’s the point of eschatology our book of kills reaches for now in soandso many counterpoint words. What can’t be coded can be decorded if an ear aye sieze what no eye ere grieved for. Now, the doctrine obtains, we have occasioning cause causing effects and affects occasionally recausing altereffects. Or I will let me take it upon myself to suggest to twist the penman’s tale posterwise. The gist is the gist of Shaum but the hand is the hand of Sameas.

(482.31-483.04)

The references to ‘eschatology’ and ‘our book of kills’ implicate the afterlife of the book which, subverting an allusion to the ‘Book of Kells’ into ‘book of kills’, ties the notion of reading (‘raiding’) or rewriting the ‘penman’s tale’ with death and the exploration of the world after death, where things happen ‘posterwise.’ With ‘recausing altereffects’ Joyce articulates this process as a repetition that produces ‘effects and affects’ which are either altered or altering. In Leigh Wilson’s study on the presence of spiritualist and occult practices in Modernist literature she concludes that the use of ‘magical mimesis’ in Joyce’s work, such as *Circe* in *Ulysses* or the séance in III.iii of *Finnegans Wake*, ensures that ‘the copy is no longer inert but has the power to transform the original’ (Wilson: 2003, 167). In his representation of eschatological spiritualist practice, the interrogation of ghosts through a ‘medium’ who transmits a variety of voices, Joyce plays with the ontology of writing and its interpretation, the inevitable alteration that occurs to a dead object or persona when it is reconstituted through the medium of the ‘monopolylogue.’

In Manning’s adaptation, the ghosts of the *Wake*, the bodies that collaborated in its composition, have not been ‘decoded’ but, as this passage suggests: ‘decorded’. Like

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<sup>209</sup> Leigh Wilson writes that ‘Book III.iii of *Finnegans Wake* is now usually seen as ‘containing a séance, as the interrogators’ questions are answered by a range of figures speaking through the mediumistic body of Yawn.’ Jane Lewty takes this further by arguing that the entirety of *Finnegans Wake* constitutes a ‘continual séance, conducted through a stationary figure whose ‘Hearsomness [...] facilitates the whole of the polis’ (023.14-15)’; Leigh Wilson, *Modernism and Magic: Experiments with Spiritualism, Theosophy and the Occult* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 73

a recording, but one that is not fixed or inert, but constantly unravelling through its repetition in performance, like the ‘decording’ of a cord made from braided string, Manning’s reconstitution of the spiritualist practice of the séance performs a genetic trace that has been embedded in Book III.iii of *Finnegans Wake*.

In the notebooks that relate to the composition of Book III.iii, Joyce took down an index from a book by the medium and spiritualist, Hester Dowden, entitled *The Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde*.<sup>210</sup> Danis Rose claims that his reading of this book in which Dowden transcribed ‘a series of conversations which took place in London in the summer of 1923 involving herself, “Mr V” (a reticent mathematician), “Johannes” (Mrs Travers Smith’s spirit-control) and the discarnate spirit of the Irish playwright’, ‘formed the basis of a long passage near the end of Yawn where HCE takes on the guise of the whingeing, self-pitying spirit of Wilde.’<sup>211</sup> Whilst Dowden’s book provided the source for a particular passage in the chapter, the practice it represented - the performance of séance writing - reverberates throughout the entire chapter in which voices arise ‘from the recumbant Shaun’ (Rose: 1995, 77) and echoes Joyce’s composition process.

One of Joyce’s notes from the book refers to Dowden’s séance partner, Mr. V, which he jotted down as ‘Mr V - taps or writes.’<sup>212</sup> This refers to the process of automatic writing that Dowden and the ‘reticent mathematician’ performed. Mr. V, with his eyes closed, held a pencil which would tap ‘impatiently on the paper’ until Dowden ‘rested [her] fingers lightly on the back of his hand.’<sup>213</sup> In a ‘state of semi-coma’ Mr. V would then instinctively dictate the voices that came to him. This performative scenario can be taken as emblematic of Joyce’s own composition process: the half-blind writer channeling voices into his ‘drama parapolylogic’ whilst a woman, in particular his amanuensis, Mme. Raphael, used her hand to steady the illegible scrawl of his

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<sup>210</sup> James Joyce, *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo VI.B.14*, ed. Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), 238-9 [hereafter VI.B.14]

<sup>211</sup> In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver from January 1925 Joyce wrote: ‘Miss Beach will send you a book of spirit talks with Oscar Wilde which will explain one page of it. He does not like *Ulysses*. Mrs Travers Smith, the ‘dear lady’ of the book, is a daughter of professor Dowden of Trinity College, Dublin.’ (quoted in Rose: 1995, 77) Dowden published her work under her married name, Hester Travis Smith.

<sup>212</sup> VI.B.14, 239

<sup>213</sup> Hester Travers Smith (ed.), *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1924), 79-80

jottings.<sup>214</sup> There are subtle allusions to this interrelation of hands and voices in the Yawn chapter itself, such as when the speaker refers to ‘mouthspeech allno fingerforce’ (484.2-3), implicating the finger’s power over the speech that initiates from the mouth. Joyce even coins a term for the spiritualist ritual of automatic writing - ‘psychical chirography’ (*FW* 482.18) - which audibly braids psyche with hand (‘chiro’) through the doubled consonance of ‘ch<sup>r</sup>’, whilst the shapes of the words ‘psychical’ and ‘chirography’ (if viewed with a squint) could reconfigure into ‘physical choreography’, providing an appropriate, if oxymoronic, term for the intimate dance of hand movements between Dowden and ‘Mr. V.’ The connection between handwriting and dance also reminds us that writing, especially the complex process of writing *Finnegans Wake*, is a fundamentally physical, embodied act.

The other reference to Dowden’s séance with Oscar Wilde that is embedded in the Yawn chapter comes from a note in which he writes ‘impersonating/medium’ next to his symbol for Shaun (^).<sup>215</sup> Daniel Ferrer relates this note to a passage in Dowden’s book where she considers (and refutes) the possibility of ‘impersonation’ from the *au dela* (the beyond) and concludes that the voice must either come from Wilde’s ghost or the clairvoyance of the mediums performing the séance.<sup>216</sup> In an early draft of the chapter Joyce directly transposes his note into the text and renders it as ‘Now, will you just search your memory for this impersonating medium. Would it be without revealing names a fellow.’<sup>217</sup> But by the final draft, the ‘original’ is considerably altered by his ‘copy’ as the sentence is stretched apart:

Now, I am earnestly asking you, and putting it as between this yohou and that houmonymh, will just you search through your gabgut memoirs for all of two minutes for this impersonating pronolan, fairhead on foulshoulders. Would it be in twofold truth an untaken mispatriate, too fullfully true and rereally a doblinganger much about your own medium with a sandy whiskers? Poke me nabs in the ribs and pick the erstwort out of his mouth.

(490.13-20)

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<sup>214</sup> Possibly alluded to in a sentence in III.iii: ‘the dogumen number one, I would suggest, an illegible downfumbed by an unelgible?’ (482.21)

<sup>215</sup> VI.B.14, 239

<sup>216</sup> ‘I should not attribute any messages so characteristic of the whole man to an impersonation on the other side. I think in this case it is a choice of two hypotheses; either Oscar Wilde is speaking, or the whole script, ouija board and automatic writing must be derived from the subconsciousness or clairvoyance of two mediums.’ (Dowden: 1924, 78)

<sup>217</sup> MS 47482b-69v, LPA: Now, will you just search yr memory ^+for this impersonating medium+^Wd it be ^+without revealing names,+^ a fellow : *JJA* 58:018 | Nov-Dec 1924 | III 3 A | *FW* 490.15 (VI.B.14, 239)



A reference to the ‘Yahoos’ and ‘Houymonyms’ from Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* is inserted followed by the association of memory with a ‘gabgut’, a composite of mouth and stomach, which ties the figure of the ‘impersonating medium’ with the act of ventriloquism.<sup>218</sup> In between ‘impersonating’ and ‘medium’ Joyce inserts ‘pronolan’ which, amongst its various associations, reiterates the shifting identities of pronouns which, as Manning’s confusion of deixis on stage demonstrates, perform ‘impersonations’ of different characters. There are many other potential resonances that Joyce’s redrafting created out of his initial reference to the ‘impersonating medium’ and the grafting of all this extra material enacts Leigh Wilson’s theory about the presence of Occult practices in Modernist literature in which the mimetic ‘copy [...] has the power to transform the original.’ (Wilson: 2003, 167). With this chapter, Joyce covertly demonstrates the influence of the performative Occult practice of the spiritualist séance. It is an influence that became occluded by his own process of composition which in turn resembled the collaborative conditions of Hester Dowden’s composition of the *Psychic Messages of Oscar Wilde*. Whether consciously or not, Mary Manning similarly uncovers, or ‘decords’, this embedded reference to the performance of the séance when she adapts this chapter for the stage.

After the Ondt and the Gracehoper ballet, ALP takes off her widow’s weeds and lies down beside the coffin (*VoS*, 45). Whilst she sleeps she is transformed into the figure of ‘Isobel’ by Shem and Shaun’s acts of naming: ‘Now for la belle! Icy-la-Belle!’; ‘Isobel, she is so pretty’. Earwicker reiterates the theme of incest whilst ‘echoing’ his sons and refers to her as ‘Lottiest pearldaughter’ (*Ibid.*). After these performative utterances transform the actor’s character through naming, she suddenly sits up and speaks ‘in a sweet childish voice’ before assuming ‘the voice of an advertiser’ (*Ibid.*). The oscillation between voices imitates the ‘monopolylogue’ of the Yawn chapter but swaps the gender of the medium by replacing a supine Shaun with a somnambulant ALP/Issy. But this scene also bears a resemblance to another performance of a woman on stage, ventriloquising a monopolylogue of ghost’s voices, that Manning was very likely to have seen at the Abbey Theatre in 1930.

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<sup>218</sup> The word ‘ventriloquism’ literally translates as ‘stomach-speaking’ (Connor: 2000, 54) and Joyce foreshadows this allusion in I.iv with the sentence: ‘a rude breathing on the void of to be, a *venter* hearing his own *bauchspeech* in backwards [...] the cluekey to a worldroom beyond the roomwhorld’ (100.27-29; emphasis added). The ventriloquist (‘venter’) utters his stomach-speech (‘bauchspeech’) in order to access a world ‘beyond’ the present ‘roomwhorld’, the ‘worldroom’, which is a distorted mirror-image of its counterpart.

In *The Words Upon the Window Pane* (1930), W.B. Yeats staged a spiritualist séance led by a medium called Mrs. Henderson who is apparently based on Hester Dowden.<sup>219</sup> In the séance ‘the stage is invaded by angry, bitter ghosts, who manipulate Mrs Henderson’s body like a marionette’ and her shifting back and forth between the voices of a little girl, Swift and his two lovers, Vanessa and Stella, displaces, as Richard Allen Cave suggests, ‘the Abbey style of comic realism’ with ‘a dance-drama.’ (Yeats: 1997, 355). Instead of dramatizing an occult performance of writing, Yeats depicts the most theatrical and audibly dramatic form of spiritualist mediumship in which, as one of his characters describes it, the medium enters ‘a state of somnambulism and voices [come] through her lips that purport to be those of dead persons.’ (Ibid., 206)

The character of Mrs. Henderson, who alongside the voice of Swift, speaks in several female voices, including the little-girl voice of ‘Lulu’ who is her ‘control’, finds herself reincarnated in the only central female role in *The Voice of Shem*, as the somnambulant medium who channels the voices of ALP, Isobel and an ‘advertiser.’ The passages which Manning draws her speeches from in this scene come from III.iii.526-528 when, as Finn Fordham describes it, Issy’s ‘voice surges up through Yawn’s body’ and she addresses ‘someone, ‘meme’, her self, ‘me, me’ and her ‘*même*’, or equal (in French).<sup>220</sup> This voice also belongs to a distinctive characterization of Issy that occurs frequently throughout the book and who addresses herself with the ‘little-language’ that Swift used in his *Journal to Stella*. For example in I.vi.143 she speaks about her hands through the coddling voice of Swift:

Thanks, pette, those are lovely, pitounette, delicious! But mind the wind, sweet!  
What exquisite hands you have, you angiol, if you didn’t gnaw your nails, isn’t it  
a wonder you’re not achamed of me, you pig, you perfect little pigaleen!

(143.32-35)

Much later in III.iii, in a passage that Manning gives to ALP to deliver, the blending of Swift’s pillow-talk and Issy’s ‘nircississies’ (526.34) comes forth in the form of a polyvocal monologue:

*ALP*

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<sup>219</sup> William Butler Yeats, *Selected Plays*, ed. Richard Allen Cave (London: Penguin, 1997), 354

<sup>220</sup> Finn Fordham, *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake : Unraveling Universals* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007), 177

Still to forgive it, divine my lickle wiffey, and everybody knows you do look lovely in your invisibles (*She assumes the voice of an advertiser*) Eulogia, a perfect apposition with the coldcream...(*She returns to her mirror*) My, you do! Simply adorable! Could I but pass my hands some, my hands through, thine hair! So vickyvicky veritiny! (*Addressing her hands*) O Fronces, say howdyedo, Dotty! Chic hands. The way they curve there under nue charmeen cuffs!...

(VoS, 46)

In these choices of passages for *The Voice of Shem*, Manning has effectively ‘decoded’ a series of genetic traces embedded in *Finnegans Wake*. The juxtaposition from Yawn to ALP into the role of the ‘impersonating medium’ indicates a theatrical precedent which, having worked in the Dublin Theatres in the 1930s, Manning is very likely to have seen for herself and which in turn represents a performative imitation of a woman, Hester Dowden, whose own performance of collaborative automatic writing formed a genetic basis for Joyce’s ‘drama parapolylogic’ – a chapter which he could not have composed without the hand of his amanuensis, Mme. Raphael. Manning further (re)codes this genetic undercurrent by having ALP address her hands. In this scene, Manning’s transposition of the *Wake* onto the stage has ‘decoded’, by unstitching and re-stitching, a fabric of interrelated genetic materials: the performative practice of the spiritualist séance as a polyvocal act of ventriloquism, the collaborative performance of automatic writing and the merging of male and female hands and mouths in both the process of the séance and of the *Wake*’s composition.

### **‘for a sings [...] the best favourite lyrical national blooms’ (385.24-25)**

Several years before Matthew Hodgart and Mabel Worthington published *Songs in the Works of James Joyce*, Mary Manning recognized various hidden allusions to Irish songs and used them as a melodious glue to stick the fragments of Joyce’s book together again.<sup>221</sup> Manning’s inclusion of Irish folk songs and ballads embodied the *Wake*’s advice for readers ‘to wipe their glosses with what they know’ (304.F03), especially in the likely case that Tom Clancy may also have sung these songs from

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<sup>221</sup> Matthew J. C. Hodgart and Mabel P. Worthington, *Song in the Works of James Joyce* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959)

memory.<sup>222</sup> Manning's recollection of these songs from the *Wake* touches upon a form of memory within Joyce's composition process - a culturally embodied memory - which brings forth an emotional and affective element to her interpretation. Their inclusion also highlights how the act of interpreting *Finnegans Wake* will rarely be an entirely objective performance of reading, detached of its reader's own embodied memory. Rebecca Schneider argues that 'affect lodges in objects, in sentences, in architectures and images as much as in and between living people',<sup>223</sup> and Manning's use of these songs similarly dislodges affect from the the archive of Joyce's composition process, through the presence of actors

In her afterword to *The Voice of Shem*, Manning directed readers towards the various 'records' and 'college and public libraries' in which these songs can all be 'easily procured' (*VoS*, 71). She followed this with her justification for using the ballads in her adaptation:

The songs are carefully chosen because they are, except the lullaby, all woven into the book in some form or other and are part of the Dublin life Joyce knew so well and remembered with such passionate accuracy. The lullaby is a late eighteenth-century county Cork ballad and is a great favorite in Ireland still. I do not think its use would have offended Joyce.

(Ibid., 71)

Manning gave several reasons for her lyrical insertions. Firstly, she indicated that the songs reveal how one aspect of Joyce's text had been woven together through the familiar words and rhythms of popular songs. Secondly, she emphasized how these 'carefully chosen' songs constituted an aspect of 'Dublin life' Joyce 'knew so well and remembered with such passionate accuracy'.<sup>224</sup> This is a comment on Joyce's composition process and shows how, aside from the multitude of information from records and libraries stored in his notebooks, he wove his book together with the

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<sup>222</sup> The Boston Herald review of the Spring performance in 1955 remarked upon how the 'excellent actor from Dublin', Tom Clancy, 'sang Irish melodies during the scene changes'. [Elionor Hughes, 'Poets' Theater "Finnegans Wake"', *The Boston Herald*, Wednesday, April 1927, 1955]. It is not clear whether this refers solely to the singing of 'The Exile of Erin' (shared with Shaun; *VoS*, 22-23), which occurs whilst the scene changes from the pub of (Scene Two) to the banks of the river Liffey (Scene Three), or if Clancy sang 'Irish melodies' which have not been set down in Manning's published text and which may have been provided as one of the perks of employing an authentic Dubliner in the cast.

<sup>223</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Theatre and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 44

<sup>224</sup> Hodgart and Worthington suggest that most of the songs incorporated by Joyce 'he must have known by heart, since their appearance in print is fugitive at best, on broadsheets or in obscure collections' (Hodgart and Worthington: 1959, 12)

'passionate' resources of his memory. With this example we might take seriously Arthur Power's report that Joyce claimed to have composed 'to the constant emotional promptings of [his] personality' and that 'emotion', rather than 'intellect', 'dictated the course and detail of [his] book'.<sup>225</sup> Referring to Joyce's composition process in such a way, and in relation to Manning's theatricalization of this process, opens up the possibility of discussing a genetic approach to *Finnegans Wake* in terms of affects and emotional memory in parallel to drafts and notebooks.

Aside from her stage directions, Manning's insertion of the lullaby, 'The Castle of Dromore' (*VoS*, 64),<sup>226</sup> is the only element of her text taken from outside of the encyclopedic scope of the *Wake*. There are several lullaby allusions she could have used,<sup>227</sup> but her choice of lullaby to accompany the closing scenes as 'the dapplegray dawn drags nearing nigh' (*Ibid.*, 66), shades the production with a recollection of infancy. The lullaby, which sings of seasonal regeneration as a reassuring prelude to the infant's adulthood, also echoes the *Wake's* themes of sleep and renewal:

Though autumn leaves may droop and die  
A bud of spring are you –

Sing hushaby, lul lul lo lo lan,  
Sing hushaby, lul lul loo.

[...]

A little rest and then the world  
Is full of work to do

Sing hushaby, lul lul lo lo lan,  
Sing hushaby, lul lul loo.

(*Ibid.*, 64)

<sup>225</sup> Arthur Power, *Conversations with James Joyce*, ed. Clive Hart (London: Millington, 1974), 95.

<sup>226</sup> The lullaby is sung by the 'Chorus' in the final scene of the play, when the coffin at the centre of the stage has become a cradle (*VoS*, 63). The scene blends parts III.iv and IV of the *Wake* and before it concludes with ALP's final soliloquy depicts a tableau image of HCE and ALP tending to their children who have woken up in the night (cf. 562-563). Whilst the words of the lullaby do not come from the text, its insertion functions as an interpretation of this moment in the narrative.

<sup>227</sup> For example. 'Cusheen Loo' ('I lerryn Anna Livia's cushingloo'; 200.36); 'Hushabye baby' ('Hasaboobrawbees isabeabel'; 146.17); 'Rockabye Baby' ('Booby in the Wave Trough'; 104.07); 'Ninna Nanna' ('allabalmy, and her troutbeck quiverlipe, ninyananya'; 578.21)

The song recalls the transition from infancy to the acquisition of language and signals the inheritance of embodied memories from oral culture. It presents an inheritance shared by both Manning and Joyce connecting them backwards through generations of Irish infantile lyrical encounters with language, but it also imposes an inheritance onto Joyce's text which he did not put into his composition. As such it does not represent Manning's delving into the textual inheritances of *Finnegans Wake*, but signals towards the transgenerational, genetic traces of collective memory which permeate the book. The interruption of Joyce's language with 'The Castle of Dromore' reveals how the affects associated with nostalgia, exile and recollection underscore certain parts of his text; it is not so much the traces of text and language which Manning used to re-read the *Wake* into the theatre but the traces of the emotional content which are lodged into the idiosyncrasies of its language.

But Manning's reading of the *Wake* onto the stage did not simply reduce Joyce's text to a sentimental uncovering of its genetic materials. Giving the twins, Shem and Shaun, both 'The Exile of Erin' and Joyce's hidden remodeling of the ballad, 'If you met on the bingie a poor acheseyeld from Ailing' (148.33-149.10), to sing respectively, Manning not only represented a lyrical inheritance 'decorded' in the text but staged the process of verbal distortion in Joyce's composition. As Scene Two blends into Scene Three and the jollity of the pub softly slides into the gossipy duologue of the washerwomen by the river Liffey, Shem and Shaun sing:

*(Lights go down and chorus exits. There is one spot on Shem singing the sad song of "The Exile of Erin.")*

*SHEM*

THERE came to the beach a poor Exile of Erin,  
 The dew on his robes was heavy and chill;  
 For his country he sighed, when at twilight repairing  
 To wander alone by the wind-beaten hill.  
 But the day-star attracted his eye's sad devotion,  
 For it rose o'er his own native isle of the ocean,  
 Where once, in the fire on the flow of his youthful emotion,  
 He sang the bold anthem of Erin go bragh.

*(The spot moves to Shaun.)*

*SHAUN*

*(Sings jeeringly to the same tune)*

If you met on the bing a poor acheseyeld from Ailing,  
 When the tune of his tremble shook shimmy on shin,  
 While his countrary raged in the weak of his wailing,  
 Like a rugilant pugilant Lyon O'Lynn;  
 If he weapt while he leapt and guffalled quith a quhimper,  
 Made cold blook a blue mundy and no bones without flech,  
 Taking kiss, kake or kick with a suck, sigh or simper,  
 A diffle to larn and a dibble to lech;  
 If the fain shinner pegged you to shave his immartial,  
 Wee skillmustered shoul with his ooh, hoodoodoo!  
 Broking wind that to wiles, woemaidsin he was partial,  
 We don't think, Jones, we'd care to this evening, would you?

(VoS, 22-23)

Manning was not the first to note the ghost of this song which appears in the 'Pub Quiz' chapter (I.vi) as a question about Shem (the 'poor acheseyld from Ailing'; the exiled Joyce) to Shaun (the uncaring gentleman 'Jones'); Campbell and Robinson had previously noticed that the question 'is set to the rhythm of Thomas Campbell's "The Exile of Erin"' (Campbell and Robinson: 2013, 108). But by having actors sing both Joyce's source material and his translation, Manning demonstrated an oral writing process concealed within the genetic components of Joyce's composition. Through the voice of Tom Clancy, who will have recited from a culturally embodied memory, *The Voice of Shem* re-performed a composition process which took place within the vocalic memory of the author. This 'genetic' reading which Manning brought to the stage did not re-present *Finnegans Wake* through a reading of text-based archival materials such as notebooks or revisions but performed a genetic reading by presenting a different kind of archival material which had just as much importance: the rhythms and melodies lodged in the memory of the voice. Articulating Joyce's recomposition of 'The Exile of Erin' through two contrasting voices, one patriotic and melancholic, the other mocking and sardonic, also highlights a double quality in Joyce's writing which expresses both the 'passionate accuracy' (VoS, 71) of an Hibernian nostalgia at odds with the equally Irish impulse to satirize and poke fun at any form of nationalist sentiment. The 'voice of Shem' which Manning brought to the Poet's Theater was not merely a Dublin ex-pat's theatricalisation of her own nostalgia upon the stage but a re-enactment of 'Shem's' voice in the process of composition, captured in the act of a polyvocalic reassembling of the lyrical and cultural memories and affects dislodged from the author's embodied archive.

While Tom Clancy, with his Dublin tenor voice, may have functioned as something of an authentic surrogate for Joyce, there is another moment, suggested by a stage direction, which could have evoked the ghost of the author's voice as it was captured in 1929 on his famous *Anna Livia Plurabelle* recording. In Scene Three when Manning indicates for the actresses' voices who are playing the washerwomen to 'become more lyrical':

#### FIRST WOMAN

Well, am I to blame for that if I have? You're a bit on the sharp side. I'm on the wide. (*The Angelus rings faintly in the distance. The voices of the women become more lyrical.*) Well, you know or don't you ken or haven't I told you every telling has a taling and that's the he and the she of it.

#### SECOND WOMAN

Look, look, the dusk is growing.

(*VoS*, 31)

The paragraph that begins 'Well, you know or don't you ken or haven't I told you every telling has a taling and that's the he and the she of it' (213.11-215.11) is not necessarily *more* lyrical than the paragraph that precedes it – the conclusion to the chapter only really begins to slip into more of a distinctly 'ALP' rhythm by the middle of the penultimate paragraph –<sup>228</sup> but Manning's stage direction for the 'voice of the women [to] become more lyrical' could very well serve as a coded reference to Joyce's actual voice since it directly precedes the words which he had famously recorded in 1929 for C.K.Ogden (*JJ*, 617) Shifting the tone towards a more 'lyrical' mode grants this particular piece of text with more theatrical significance; they are not only reciting Joyce's text but they are quoting from a recording of Joyce's voice. It is impossible to tell how these words would have been delivered in 1955 and whether they were performed as an imitation of Joyce's reading, but it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the members of the audience at the Poet's Theater would have been familiar with the recording. In effect, Manning's weaving of Joyce's recorded voice into her reconstitution of his text enacted, in the *Wake's* terms, a 'dubbing of ghosters' (219.8), in which the ghost of Joyce's voice that was once captured by a recording, has now become 'decorded' (482.30) by a woman's living

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<sup>228</sup> This is not to say that any of the passages previous to this could not be defined as 'lyrical', it is just to indicate how the music of Joyce's prose begins to swell towards the end of this episode which William Martin has recently argued 'epitomize[s] the lyrical dimension of the *Wake*.'; William Martin, *Joyce and the Science of Rhythm* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 193



voice. Underneath the rhythm of the actor's live voice there was the prompting of Joyce's dead voice.

The record of Manning's reading of *Finnegans Wake* in 1955, which takes the shape of a script for a theatrical performance, does not behave as a paraphrase or an encyclopedic unraveling of disambiguated 'content', but as a performance that remembers processes, forms and collaborative acts of writing which constituted its composition. The text of her performance does this not as a literal re-enactment of the composition process but as a reconstitution of certain 'genetic' processes that were performed during its composition into a different form. Manning did not simply 'decode' the *Wake* onto the stage through a semiotic translation of characters and settings, she *recoded* it by performing what Rebecca Schneider calls a 'transgenerational conversation' (Schneider: 2011, 111). This 'decoded' performance text, unlike the paraphrase of *A Skeleton Key*, the cataloguing and summarizing of Glasheen's *Census* or the theatricalization of *Finnegans Wake*'s central themes and characters in Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, enacts an early form of genetic *Wake* criticism not by studying drafts and notebooks but through a performative process of re-inscription. Manning's adaptation shows that the 'performative repetition' of 'the archive' (the archive in this case being the 1939 text of *Finnegans Wake*) is 'not stasis' but a '(re)composition' that generates a 'transgenerational conversation' between the collaborative conditions of the Poet's Theatre in 1955 and the shared labors of Joyce and the hands and voices that aided him in his final work's composition.

## Chapter Three

### **‘chancedrift through our system ... beyond recognition’: John Cage’s Decompositions of *Finnegans Wake***

When you don’t know what you’re doing, you do your work very well.

(John Cage)<sup>229</sup>

The individual is merely the residue of the dissolution of community, the isolated, abstract remnant of a primordial decomposition.

(Simon Bayly)<sup>230</sup>

Its handmaidens are spared the possession of knowledge [...] the mysteries of the firm too are a closed book to them, since they deal only with figures. Just one thing is required of them: attention.

(Siegfried Kracauer)<sup>231</sup>

In this chapter I will consider the extent to which John Cage's Hörspiel, *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (1979), and Merce Cunningham’s ballet version of *Roaratorio* (1983; 2011), opened up Joyce’s text to a form of understanding which contested the notion of an authoritative competence. I argue that in his attempt to liberate *Finnegans Wake* from the 'law and order' of syntax and exegetic interpretation Cage ignored the tension between competence and performance that already takes place within the language of the *Wake*. By ‘demilitarising’ Joyce’s text to the ‘poetry and chaos’ of chance procedures Cage’s recompositions risked undermining their claim towards an emancipatory politics by imposing a new regime of indeterminacy. Following this critique of these performances, I return to the texts that Cage reads in *Roaratorio*, *Writing through Finnegans Wake* (1977-78), and his fifth iteration of his ‘writing through’ project, *Muoyce* (1984), as they appear in a community television interview with Richard Kostelanetz. In this televised encounter Cage performed and reflected upon his composition process. I argue that in this performance which ‘pays attention’ to *Finnegans Wake*, ‘but stops short of explanation’ (Cage: 2003, 53), Cage tapped into a community of lost readers and

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<sup>229</sup> John Cage, *Empty Words: Writings '73 - '78* (London: Marion Boyars, 1980), 136

<sup>230</sup> Simon Bayly, *The Pathognomy of Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 40

<sup>231</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1998; first published as *Die Angestellten. Aus dem neuesten Deutschland*, 1929), 42

writers congealed inside the *Wake* and those who encounter the text not as a narrative to be decoded but as material to be transcribed, counted and re-stored into archives and catalogues. I will argue that this exposition of the labour concealed within his decomposition, rather than the universalized ‘poetry and chaos’ of *Roaratorio*, is where the ‘politics’ of Cage’s *Finnegans Wake* might find most purchase.

### ***Roaratorio*, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 2011**

Having spent an afternoon wandering around Brooklyn in the rain with a hole in my boot, I finally took my seat in the stalls of the BAM to see a revival of Merce Cunningham’s ballet version of John Cage’s ‘hörspiel’, *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (1979/1983).<sup>232</sup> Cunningham had died two years previously and this was the conclusion to a global ‘legacy tour’ by his dance company. The late choreographer had helped revive his 1983 choreography for *Roaratorio* with new dancers and with the aid of video recordings from old rehearsal footage.<sup>233</sup> Both Cage and Cunningham had performed in the original shows: the composer, miked-up and sat at a desk to the side of the dance-floor, incanting softly from his text, *Writing for the Second Time Through Finnegans Wake*; the choreographer, dancing several solos amongst the jigs and pliés of his company. But on this drizzly December evening in 2011, *Roaratorio* was not just a revival but a memorial to both absent presences; lost father figures, like Joyce, of postmodernist performance.

The 1983 recording of *Roaratorio* surrogated the absent voice of Cage; lightly singing and mumbling his mesostic recomposition of *Finnegans Wake* amidst a rumour of sounds captured across the globe via chance procedures.<sup>234</sup> Taking the place of

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<sup>232</sup> See Chapter One for a description of the process behind *Roaratorio*

<sup>233</sup> ‘Monday’s with Merce #13: ‘Roaratorio’ (July, 2008) Merce Cunningham Trust, [www.mercecunningham.org/film-media/mondays-with-merce/episodes-13-re-roaratorio/](http://www.mercecunningham.org/film-media/mondays-with-merce/episodes-13-re-roaratorio/) [accessed 28.9.15] (hereafter: Cunningham: 2008)

<sup>234</sup> A mesostic is a text that is tied together by the letters of a name or a phrase, like an acrostic poem, but running through the middle of the page instead of to the left. In his later period of composition (from the late 1960s until his death), Cage composed thousands of lines of mesostics. In his preface to *Anarchy* (Cage: 1988) he declared that his ‘mesostic texts do not make ordinary sense, they make nonsense’ and compared them to ‘music’ in the sense that Arnold Schoenberg defined music: as ‘a question of repetition and variation, variation itself being a form of repetition in which some things are changed and others not.’ (Retallack:1996, 2). The texts which use this form are: John Cage, *Writing through Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce Quarterly Vol.15 (special supplement) (Tulsa: University of Tulsa, 1978); ‘Writing for the Second Time Through *Finnegans Wake*’ in John Cage, *Empty Words: Writings ’73 - ’78* (London: Marion Boyars, 1980), pp. 133-176; and ‘Writing for the Fourth Time Through *Finnegans Wake*’ in John Cage, *X: Writings ’79 - ’82* (London: Marion Boyars, 1987), pp. 1-49; The third iteration remains unpublished.

Cunningham was a younger dancer recollecting the ‘hen-like strutting’ and ‘quick waltz duet’ with two Issy-like girls<sup>235</sup> repeated from the video archives, but, because these movements had been re-inscribed upon a body other than Cunningham’s, they passed unnoticed and were absorbed back into the ‘simultaneous multiplicity’ of movements which the other thirteen dancers performed in a random but controlled overlapping of solos, duos and groups.<sup>236</sup> As the bodies on stage fluctuated seamlessly amongst contiguous tempos and arrangements; ‘jigs and reels, tightly angled jumps, arabesques and closely patterned footwork’<sup>237</sup> with no apparent centre to attach specific meanings, the ghost of Cunningham was submerged into the anonymous heterogeneity of his choreography; forgotten in the flux of remembrance. Similarly, Cage’s recorded voice, disconnected from his body and floating in stereo, was almost lost amongst the multi-layered sonic collage of ‘running water, traffic, babies crying’ (Macaulay: 2011) and fragments of traditional Irish music which had also been performed live in 1983 but were now repeated as a recording through the speakers. Occasionally, the audience could hear echoes of Joyce’s recomposed text – at one moment Cage’s voice lifted and began to sing, ‘Thou in shanty! Thou in scanty shanty!! Thou in slanty scanty shanty!!!’ (305.23-24) – but, like the composer, Joyce had also become a ghost’s voice lost in the multiplicity of his ‘roaratorio’ (041.28). In this revival of Cage and Cunningham’s ‘hörspiel-ballet’ of Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, the memorial presence of these avant-garde father-figures turned into half-forgotten absences.

The ‘masters’ behind this performance’s text, composition and choreography were all decentered by the work’s multiplicity and, as I shifted uncomfortably in my seat, trying to ignore the dampness of my sock, it became apparent to me that what was important was not my being able to recognise the scraps of *Finnegans Wake* which remained in Cage’s recomposition but to set aside my knowledge of the text into the margins of the experience and pay attention to the audible and visual work that was unfolding. It was pointless decoding the performance through my own knowledge of *Finnegans Wake*, at least to the extent that my familiarity with the ‘original’ would make my judgement more authoritative than those in the audience who were

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<sup>235</sup> Richard J. Gerber *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 24. No. 3 (Spring, 1987), pp.369-373, 372

<sup>236</sup> Alastair Macaulay, ‘A Varied Dreamscape That’s Also a Farewell’, 8th December, 2011, *The New York Times*

<sup>237</sup> Judith Mackrell, ‘Roaratorio: Review’, 7th October, 2011, *The Guardian*

unfamiliar with Joyce's book. Instead, it was better to encounter Cage and Cunningham's 'decording' of the *Wake* from amongst the shared, but separated, perspectives of the restless woman to my right or the curious and talkative little girl sat in front of me: in an anonymous state of attentive but distracted, collective receptivity.

This performance was an opportunity for me, attending as a *Wake* scholar, to forget what I knew or could remember of Joyce's language and to feel present and attentive to the incoherence and activity that bustled around us. This included everything from the performers on stage to the sound in the speakers; the audience around me to the weather outside. The dancers, when they were not dancing, remained at rest to the sides, changing their leg-warmers, brightly coloured clothes or stretching before returning to the dance; we were not so much watching a ballet but watching ballet-dancers *at work*, in the middle of their practice. At the same time Cage's sound environment neither interrupted nor guided but played-out alongside them like the everyday noise that enters through an open window of a rehearsal room; except that in *Roaratorio* (and *Finnegans Wake*), everyday background noise does not come from the street but from what Alphonso Lingis calls 'the murmur of the world'.<sup>238</sup> One recurring noise was a baby's cry which sharply cut across the soundscape. Although, on record, the crying rarely disturbs my listening, I remember how it became particularly discomfoting during this performance. Not only were my toes wet, but I was suffering from mild stomach cramps which would have been tolerable had they not been irritatingly echoed by the irregular crying. The lack of any centralised musical direction and the decentered activity of the dancers, cut across with the baby's cry, created a dissonance that I could feel not only through my ears but in my digestive system. The restless movements of the woman sitting next to me also seemed to confirm that this rumbling 'murmur of the world' was not only being felt along my stomach lining but, in the different forms of their own sensations, amongst the bodies around me.

Lingis might describe this kind of separated connectivity as 'all this noise we make when we are together makes it possible to view us as struggling, together' (Lingis:

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<sup>238</sup> Alphonso Lingis, *The Community of those who have Nothing in Common* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 80. As Simon Bayly recounts, listening intentionally to the noise outside of his apartment window initiated Cage's 'entire trajectory as a composer' (Bayly: 2011, 146)

1994, 105); Cage's 'humming, buzzing, murmuring, crackling, and roaring world' (ibid., 80) may have brought us *together* – between the noise, incoherence and discomfort – into a communal environment in which we 'symbiotically merge with one another' (ibid., 95). We experienced 'communication' not as the transcoding of a message but as the collective background noise itself which would otherwise have been decoded into a signal for us to recognize. Instead of a coherently received communion, sitting in the audience of *Roaratorio* might also be described as another kind of 'decoded' experience: the notion of an 'unworking community' which, in Simon Bayly's application of Maurice Blanchot's and Jean Luc-Nancy's 'inavowable' and 'désoeuvrée' communities to performance, considers theatre audiences as a 'community 'unworking' itself',

a coming together that is not a form of communion [...] a heterogeneous collection of bodies subject not to a merging or cohesion but to something more like an unceasing discombobulation.<sup>239</sup>

Similar to the way 'decoded' dismantles 'decoding' and 'recording' by unlacing their sense of permanence like an unravelling cord, 'unworking', in Bayly's use of the term, denotes both a sense of gathering and unravelling. The passive proximity between spectators and the event unfolding before them provokes the community's 'unceasing discombobulation' with 'a host of hyperactive, symptom-like behaviors' and it is the 'virulent outbreaks of laughter, coughing, sniffing, sweating, twitching, fidgeting, mumbling, whispering, rustling, creaking [...] crying' (Bayly: 2012, 42) which both integrate and separate the 'unworking community' at the theatre. Cage also articulated this conception of a live community of discombobulated bodies. Within the indeterminate frames of his performances he demonstrated 'love' for the audience by removing his authority and 'getting out of their way':

An audience can sit quietly or make noises. People can whisper, talk and even shout. An audience can sit still or it can get up and move around. People are people, not plants. "Do you love the audience?" Certainly we do. We show it by getting out of their way.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Simon Bayly, *The Pathognomy of Performance* (Palgrave, 2012), 42; Whilst Bayly defines his notion of an 'unworking community' through the ephemeral 'pathognomy' of assembled bodies, Blanchot and Nancy's negative communities, drawing from Hegel and Bataille, were more concerned with how 'community reveals itself' through death (Nancy: 1991, 14); for Blanchot, the basis of communication was not speech 'or even the silence that is its foundation and punctuation, but the exposure to death' (Blanchot: 1988, 25).

<sup>240</sup> John Cage, *A Year From Monday: lectures & writings* (London & New York: Marion Boyars, 1968), 51

With *Roaratorio*, like most of Cage's compositions, the audience are not interfered with. Cage did not intend to impose meaning in the manner of Jacques Rancière's 'policed regime of the senses', in which the hierarchical 'distribution of the sensible' determines an audience's understanding of an artwork by privileging certain modes of perception over others.<sup>241</sup> Rather, a performance like *Roaratorio* suggests a version of Rancière's emancipatory alternative, a 'redistribution of the sensible' which dislocates the primacy of text, music and dance into a decentered multiplicity of sensuous (or 'dissensuous') engagement; listening and seeing are equal to touch and smell in the way that my understanding of *Finnegans Wake* had become displaced by an irritable,<sup>242</sup> but receptive, experience of damp discomfort as I was submerged into the 'poetry and chaos' of Cage and Cunningham's 'redistribution of parts and players' (219.07).

This is one way of conceptualizing how the anarchism that informed Cage's approach to *Finnegans Wake* had an effect on my particular experience of this *Roaratorio*. Inspired by anarchistic philosophies which suppress the ego (Zen Buddhism), encourage non-interference (Henry David Thoreau), or radical pedagogies without 'partitions' (Buckminster Fuller),<sup>243</sup> Cage's recompositions presented *Finnegans Wake* to his audiences not as 'law-abiding' authoritative interpretations but as chaotic, 'demilitarised' zones of 'poetry'.<sup>244</sup> In discussing *Roaratorio* with Klaus Schöning, who commissioned the piece, Cage said:

I hope that *Roaratorio* will act to introduce people to the pleasures of *Finnegans Wake* when it is still on the side of poetry and chaos rather than something analyzed and known to be safe and law-abiding.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 85; Davide Panagia, "'Partage du sensible': the distribution of the sensible" in *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*, ed. Jean-Philippe Deranty (Durham: Acumen, 2010), pp.95-103, 96

<sup>242</sup> The irritation which I describe here might show a genealogical connection between *Roaratorio* and what Alan Read identifies as the 'performance gene': the particularly human capacity to irritate or be irritated.; Alan Read, *Theatre in the Expanded Field* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), xvii

<sup>243</sup> Cage was enthusiastic about Fuller's book, *Education Automation* (1962), in which the scientist proposed an educational environment 'without partitions' and, recalling Marshall McLuhan, Cage described his ideal learning process as a process of 'brushing' information against information so that the mind can 'invent or create' a 'third thing' when 'two things come together'. (Kostelanetz: 2003, 259)

<sup>244</sup> *Writing Through Finnegans Wake* (1977-1983) represented five incarnations of Cage's desire for a 'Language free of syntax', a 'demilitarization of language' which could be applied to James Joyce because despite of his radical 'new words' he stuck to 'old syntax' (Cage: 1980, 11)

<sup>245</sup> Klaus Schöning, *Roaratorio, ein irischer Circus über Finnegans Wake*, ed. Klaus Schöning (Königstein: Athenaum, 1982), 7 CD/Booklet

For Cage, the regulation of grammar, syntax and punctuation were ‘on the safe side with the policemen’ and needed to be emancipated from ‘law and order’ towards ‘poetry and chaos.’ (Schöning: 1982, 38). This de-policed, deregulation of language which Cage applied to *Finnegans Wake* with mesostics and chance procedures, also applied to his attitude towards performance. Criticizing Allen Kaprow for imposing intention over its participants, Cage argued that ‘art’s political content [...] doesn’t include policemen’.<sup>246</sup> By removing the artist’s influence over the audience’s experience he compared his ideal performance environment to ‘the anarchist moments, spaces, or times’ in life which are not ‘organized or policed’ but where ‘awareness’ and ‘curiosity’ come into play (Stanford: 1995, 69). Cage also articulated these principles in relation to the pedagogical approach of his lectures which he made deliberately ‘uninformative’ so that his audience did not ‘think that something is being done to them’, in order for the them ‘to do something about it’ (Kostelanetz: 2003, 139).<sup>247</sup> The autonomy that this gave his audiences has much in common with contemporaneous pedagogic and theatrical approaches of Paolo Freire and Augusto Boal, or also Jacques Rancière’s ‘ignorant schoolmasters’ and ‘emancipated spectators’,<sup>248</sup> but the ‘poetry and chaos’ of Cage’s anarchism came with his own prescriptions.

In a now notorious 1977 performance of *Empty Words* (a ‘demilitarised’ text based on Thoreau’s diaries) at the Teatro Lirico in Milan, Cage unintentionally incited a riot as a frustrated audience of students and activists catcalled and stormed the stage in response to his soporific and meaningless succession of fractured phonemes.<sup>249</sup> Although Cage continued to the end, despite the interruptions of his irritated audience/participants, he afterwards declared that the event was ‘useless’,

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<sup>246</sup>Referring to Kaprow’s piece, *18 Happenings in 6 parts* (1959); Mariellen Stanford, ed., *Happenings and Other Acts* (London: Routledge, 1995), 68-9

<sup>247</sup> Cage’s pedagogic approach to his audiences had much in common with Paolo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Opressed’ which also opposed the notion of education as an hierarchical regulation of consciousness by mechanically ‘depositing’ content into the student (Freire: 1970, 57). But the ghost of Keats also haunts Cage’s unobtrusive pedagogy. There is certainly an unacknowledged poetic Romanticism in Cage’s postmodern aesthetic which shares Keat’s assertion that ‘we hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us’ and that ‘poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one’s soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself but with its subject’ (Keats: 1990, 377).

<sup>248</sup> see *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (California: Stanford University Press, 1991) and *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2011)

<sup>249</sup> Allen S. Weiss, *John Cage: Empty Words (Part III)* (Chicago: Ampersand, 2001) CD/Booklet



'destructive' and 'ugly' because his antagonists had been 'full of self expression' (Weiss: 2001, 5). This distaste with participants' self expression also extended to performers of his work who were not disciplined enough to disavow their subjectivity. In 1964 members of a 'conventional symphony orchestra', hired to play from 'arrangements of dots and lines' traced from a star atlas in his piece, *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1964), took 'advantage of the confusion' and abused the electronic equipment they were given to play with.<sup>250</sup> Cage's reflections on the event conveyed a more precise notion of 'poetry and chaos' when he refined his notions of 'freedom' and 'the practicality of anarchy':

When this freedom is given to people who are not disciplined and who do not start [...] from zero - by zero I mean the absence of likes and dislikes - who are not, in other words, changed individuals but who remain people with particular likes and dislikes, then, of course, the giving of freedom is of no interest whatsoever. But when it is given to disciplined people, then you see [...] Not an individual who has changed but a group of individuals, and you show, as I've wanted to do, the practicality of anarchy.<sup>251</sup>

Cage conceived of freedom in a negative, rather than positive, sense; a *freedom from* the self rather than a *freedom to* express individual subjectivity. This 'practical anarchy', emerging from a disciplined absence of ego, required transcending a social environment made up of individual subjects. This negative freedom was also integral to *Roaratorio*.<sup>252</sup>

Having liberated Joyce's text from the 'law and order' of syntax in *Writing for the Second Time Through Finnegans Wake*, Cage wanted to use *Finnegans Wake* in *Roaratorio* to liberate his composition process from the language of music:

I wanted to make a music that was free of melody and free of harmony and free of counterpoint: free of musical theory. I wanted it not to be music in the sense of music, but I wanted it to be music in the sense of *Finnegans Wake*. But not a theory about music. I wanted the music to turn itself towards *Finnegans Wake*. And away from music itself.

<sup>250</sup> Cornelius Cardew, *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (London: Latimer New Dimensions Limited, 1974), 38-9

<sup>251</sup> John Cage, 'Reflections of a Progressive Composer on a Damaged Society' in *October*, Vol. 82, (Autumn, 1997), pp.77-93, 80-81

<sup>252</sup> Cornelius Cardew, like Adorno before him, heavily criticised Cage's political aesthetic and found it 'impossible to deplore the action of those orchestral musicians' because 'they gave spontaneous expression to the sharply antagonistic relationship between the avant-garde composer with all his electronic gadgetry and the working musician - instead of taking the disruption as a lesson for Cage in 'class struggle' he chose to 'coldly condemn it' (Cardew: 1974, 39). Cardew asked how a composer can reflect *upon* society whilst ignoring the lessons that are given to him by that society: if the realization of freedom in his performances were not to his satisfaction should he not have considered *why* this was the case rather than merely taking a moral stance against their resistance to his particular conception of 'freedom'?

(Schöning: 1982, 41)

By affirming the ‘poetry and chaos’ of *Finnegans Wake* through musical composition, Cage granted *Roaratorio* autonomy from the policed regimes of melody, harmony and counterpoint. The *Wake* was not a text to be transcoded into the laws of music but into an autonomous composition which moved *away* from the formal rules of music. Although Cage did not seem to consider how his disavowal of the law and order of musical convention would be replaced with the equivalent law and order of indeterminacy, his emphasis on music *turning towards* and *away* gives his description of *Roaratorio* a sense of relational movement; his compositions did not interpret or elucidate *Finnegans Wake* but illuminated the flux of movements and connections that were involved in his recomposition process. Composition as a flight *away* from the coercions of form and ego.

As an audience member, the ‘policing’ of my own reception of *Roaratorio* – being able to correlate my knowledge of *Finnegans Wake* against the immediate experience of Cage (and Cunningham’s) recomposition – was suspended. I knew, for instance, that the murmuring water lapping in and out of Cage’s sound environment must have been recorded at a specific place, prompted by a specific mention of water in Joyce’s text and located by a specific chance procedure, but the sound itself could not communicate this information to me. The particular and the universal were collapsed into one as the sound sourced from a single river stood in for every possible river catalogued in the *Wake*.<sup>253</sup> What was I to do with my knowledge that this sound could be related back to Anna Livia Plurabelle? Or that its source was likely to have come from somewhere in chapter I.viii? We were not listening to discrete signals but the noise of their connections. Submerged within this connective noise it became irrelevant whether I could recognise the textual redistribution which lay beneath. Instead, I was forced to re-encounter *Finnegans Wake* not as a book or a text but as an environment communicating nothing but an absence of communication; I was left to make my own connections between the rain outside, the damp in my shoe and the water drowning out Joyce’s text and Cage’s voice. *Finnegans Wake*, on the ‘side of poetry and chaos’, had become immersed in the complex multitude of its ‘decomposition’ and ‘recombination’; its loss of meaning or coherence fulfilled an aspect of the *Wake*’s ‘universalisation’ (032.21) and Cage’s

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<sup>253</sup> On Lois Mink’s count, there are possibly 980 river names alluded to in the *Wake* (Mink: 1978, xvii)

favorite call from the text, 'Here Comes Everybody!' (032.18-19), was iterated by *Roaratorio*'s unequivocal inclusive totality.<sup>254</sup>

But as the voice who recounts H.C.E.'s nickname reminds us, 'Here Comes Everybody' is 'an *imposing* everybody' (032.19, my italics). What may have been an optimistically utopian model for a globally interconnected 'roaring world' for Cage and Cunningham in 1983, feels now, in this age of precarious flexibility, desperate mobility and ever increasing social inequality – despite our incredibly accelerated advances in technology – like the revival of a utopian dream-document which has turned into an overwhelming nightmare from which we cannot awake. The indeterminate noise and freedom which Cage's universalised *Finnegans Wake* embraced, conveys a naïve conception of emancipatory aesthetics. In his attempt to 'demilitarize', Cage ends up 'delegating power' to the rule of indeterminacy;<sup>255</sup> a structure which, as Jean Baudrillard argued at the turn of this century, has become the dominating force in late-capitalism and the 'liberated' subject's consciousness (Baudrillard: 1999, 71). Because 'the decision to surrender to chance is not taken by chance' (Ibid., 78) there must be a locus of power determining such a decision, and as much as Cage wanted to reject his power as an artist,<sup>256</sup> it has always been Cage who was 'imposing everybody' upon his audiences. 'Music in the sense of *Finnegans Wake*' when it is on the side of 'poetry and chaos' may enact a discombobulating, communal encounter with a text that has been liberated from the 'policemen' of 'theory' and interpretation, but it is also the case that one master (James Joyce) has been replaced by the indeterminate regime of another, John Cage.

Whilst I intend to follow through the 'emancipatory' logic of Cage's *Wake* as a contestation of Joycean competence by focusing on a particular Joycean's response (Richard Gerber's irritated but attentive review of the 1986 performance of

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<sup>254</sup> As early as his 1959 'Lecture on Something', Cage referred to H.C.E., who is 'constantly the same and equal to himself' (032.20), in relation to his own 'intersectional' compositional practice in which 'everything's different but in going in it all becomes the same' (Cage: 1961, 129). This underlines a contradiction in Cage's work as the heterogeneity of his source materials became homogenized by his indeterminate procedures. The 'a posteriori' score for *Roaratorio: an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*, attests to this as he re-titled it: '—, — Circus On —,' leaving the noun, adjective and title blank for any future versions. With this blank title, *Finnegans Wake* became an *example* of a process rather than an *exemplary* text in process and thus reduced Joyce's text to a fungible object. (Pritchett: 1993, 180)

<sup>255</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2001) 78

<sup>256</sup> Perhaps the most troubling articulation of Cage's political philosophy occurred when he criticised civil rights struggles for their concern with 'power', declaring: 'tell the Black's power's not a good word [...] it's precisely power that's not needed.'; quoted in Kenneth Silverman, *Begin Again: A Biography of John Cage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 211

*Roaratorio*), I will also acknowledge the limitations of *Roaratorio's* supposed emancipation from Joyce's 'old syntax' and consider the extent to which Cage's recomposition of the *Wake* was merely a continuation of Joyce's radical performance of writing. But before embarking on this critique it will be necessary to pay closer attention to how both *Roaratorio* and Cage's 'Writing Through *Finnegans Wake*' projects, which I return to at this chapter's conclusion, fit into Cage's specific notion of 'theatre' which broadly encompasses both public and private manifestations of performance and, in its 'theatocratic' engagement with the senses, confronted the competence of its audiences.

### **Cage's Theatrocracy**

In a radical contrast to Mary Manning's theatre, Cage's 'theatre' was inseparably connected to musical composition. If Manning had cut and adapted Joyce's text to fit the stage of the Poet's Theater, Cage cut and adapted the *Wake* to fit a stage that is shared by various time-based forms: theatre, music, poetry, and literature. Cage's theatre encompassed such a broad sphere of possibilities that it was constantly at risk of becoming indistinguishable from everyday life:

Theatre is something that engages both the eye and the ear. The two public senses are seeing and hearing [...] the reason I want to make my definition of theater that simple is so one could view everyday life as theatre.<sup>257</sup>

Cage's 'music' becomes 'theatre' because it engages both 'the eye and the ear'. It is by definition a heterogenous engagement of the 'two public senses', a framing of everyday life with an attentiveness that becomes theatre. With this simplification of 'theatre' into the broad and chaotic contingencies of the 'everyday', Cage offered a compositional field that challenges established divisions and hierarchies amongst form and content. Any Kantian distinction between the arts has been uprooted and dissolved so that their qualities become equal, indeterminate and paralleled with the surrounding world. This dissolution of established aesthetic distinctions makes Cage's work inherently political, as it seeks to disrupt certain hierarchies and

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<sup>257</sup> Marjorie Perloff, 'John Cage's Living Theatre' in *Against Theatre: Creative Destructions on the Modernist Stage*, eds. Alan Ackerman and Martin Puchner (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) pp. 133-148, 140; For Cage, seeing and hearing were the two primary senses of theatre and although he considered the other senses to be 'as much involved in theatre as seeing and hearing', he argued that 'if you add tasting, smelling, and touching to theatre, you get ritual' (Kostelanetz: 2003, 206)

divisions within an established cultural practice. Merging ‘art’ with the ‘everyday’ offers a re-conception of a music that encounters the complexities of the social compositions that surround the conditions of its production.

The move ‘away from music’ in *Roaratorio* also iterates the way Cage’s compositions often shift music ‘towards theatre, negating not only the separation of the senses but that of the arts’.<sup>258</sup> Marjorie Perloff argues that *Roaratorio* could be considered as a typical example of Cage’s ‘theatre’, following another definition of his ‘theatre’ based on multiplicity:

But then ‘theatre’, as Cage usually understood it, could not be ‘drama’ in the traditional sense; rather it demanded what he had called, with reference to *Roaratorio*, written just a few years before the *Alphabet*, a ‘circus situation’, a ‘plurality of centers’.<sup>259</sup>

This notion of a ‘theatre’ as a ‘circus situation’ and ‘plurality of centers’ implies a social multiplicity, an anarchist conception of a participatory ecology that is shared through non-interference. Along with Cage’s intention to disrupt certain ‘regimes of the sensible’, the inevitable noise that a ‘circus situation’ produces can also be compared to Rancière’s concept of ‘dissensus’ which he defines as ‘a conflict between two regimes of sense - two sensory worlds’ (Rancière: 2008, 58). Like the affinity with the ‘partage du sensible’, this notion of theatre can also be traced back to Plato’s anti-theatrical prejudice. With a ‘plurality of centers’, this definition not only provokes questions about the individual’s role within a society but how the ‘multitude’ or the ‘circus situation’ of a pluralistic society is considered in Cage’s recompositions of *Finnegans Wake*.

Samuel Weber outlines the notion of ‘theatrocracy’ from a passage in Plato’s *Laws* in which an interlocutor describes the ‘universal confusion of forms’ that emerges when the ‘unmusical license’ of poets, ‘ignorant of what is right and legitimate in the realm of the Muses’, contaminate musical performance with a frenzied ‘genius’ that gives way to ‘an evil ‘sovereignty of the audience’, a theatrocracy [*theatrokratia*]’:

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<sup>258</sup> Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner, eds., *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, Practices, Processes* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 35

<sup>259</sup> Marjorie Perloff, ‘John Cage’s Living Theatre’ in *Against Theatre: Creative Destructions on the Modernist Stage*, eds. Alan Ackerman and Martin Puchner (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) pp. 133-148, 139; ‘the *Alphabet*’ refers to the play *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet* to which I will refer later and can be found in Cage: 2001, pp.53-101.

Possessed by a frantic and unhallowed lust for pleasure, they contaminated laments with hymns and paeans with dithyrambos [...] and created a universal confusion of forms by compositions of such a kind and discourse to the same effect, they naturally inspired the multitude with contempt for musical law, and a conceit of their own competences as judges.<sup>260</sup>

This invasion of 'theatocratic' rule into the field of music is remarkably similar to Cage's 'redistribution' of musical composition by turning it towards theatre. Not only do Cage and Plato's Athenian speak of this dissonant transformation of musical laws as an immersion of the audible with the visual (since both *theatre* and *theatrocracy* stem from *theatron*, 'the place from which one sees'; Weber: 2004, 34) but they also conceive of it as a 'universal confusion of forms' inspired by 'the multitude'. A distinction between the two, however, would be that whilst Plato's *theatrokratia* implies a 'sovereign' power of the multitude, Cage's 'plurality of centers' was an attempt to do away with any notion of power or sovereignty altogether. But the important aspect of this emancipatory (or anti-democratic, for Plato) transformation of musical form into theatocratic multitude and plurality, is that the 'authority and correction' (Ibid., 33) of aesthetic and social organization becomes jeopardized. Weber contends that the disruptive quality of 'theatrocracy' disrupts another stem from *theatron*: 'theory', provoking an instability within the dominant social order:

This disruption of the *theatron* goes together, it seems, with a concomitant disruption of *theory*, which is to say, of the ability of *knowledge* and *competence* to localize things, keep them in their proper place and thus to contribute to social stability.

(Ibid., 36)

In Cage's 'circus' on *Finnegans Wake*, he also destabilized authoritative forms of 'knowledge' and 'competence' when he proclaimed it to be a musical composition 'free of musical theory' (Schöning: 1982, 41). In decomposing the syntactical 'law and order' of Joyce's text by reconstituting *Finnegans Wake* into the 'poetry and chaos' of 'demilitarized syntax', Cage not only challenged the 'competence' and 'knowledge' of those who may have a privileged understanding of the text, and thus destabilizing any member of the audience's hold over the *Wake* regardless of how well they know the book, but he also challenged the stability of musical 'knowledge' and

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<sup>260</sup> Plato, *The Laws* (700-701a) quoted in Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 32-33

‘competence’ by composing *through* a literary text, instead of adapting it into a recognizable musical form.<sup>261</sup>

The other element which formulated Cage’s apparently ‘simple’ categorization of theatre was that it was time based. Music and theatre were so closely connected because they consist of ‘any action being performed within a certain time span.’ (Rebstock and Roesner: 2012, 35) Cage suggested that musical performance and theatrical performance are consequently the same thing, as there will always be a visual element to a musician interpreting a composition within a demarcation of ‘time brackets’.<sup>262</sup> Cage would even find an affinity between ‘literature’, or more precisely, *reading*, and the time-based aesthetics of music and theatre because it is also ‘a process that takes place in time’.<sup>263</sup> This comparison between different forms is not a unique observation as it simply retraces the properties of these art-forms to their classical origins, when theatre, music and literature were all components of what Aristotle categorized as ‘poetics’. But the significance of this affinity is that if the often private act of reading can be considered in similar terms as the public experience of music and theatre, then we might consider that what connects all of these art-forms is not so much the distinction between public and private performance but performance that takes place within certain times and places.

Cage argued that the theatrical element of a musical performance begins not with the appearance of the musician, but between the musician and the score; a visual component that is usually only seen by the performer and hidden from the audience:

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<sup>261</sup> Although I am suggesting that Cage disturbed the language of musical competence by turning music towards a theatrical and literary language (a language ‘in the sense of *Finnegans Wake*’), we might also consider how the language of *Finnegans Wake* was equally being turned towards the language of music. In an analogy between ‘music and language’, Theodor Adorno imagines that if the ‘speaking of language were comparable to the ‘speaking’ of musical language, ‘it would have to be the act of transcribing a text, rather than decoding its meaning’ that serves as the best comparison. This is also how one could compare Cage’s method of reading and writing *through Finnegans Wake*, since he was not interested in interpreting or ‘decoding’ the text but re-transcribing Joyce’s text into new compositions. In this respect, pieces like *Roaratorio* have rendered *Finnegans Wake* into something closer to musical transcription than literary decoding. (Adorno: 2011, 4)

<sup>262</sup> Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Theatre: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (Oxon: Routledge, 2008; first published as *Ästhetik des Performativen*, 2004), 133

<sup>263</sup> John Cage and Richard Kostelanetz, ‘For the Third Time’, dir. Steve Lawrence (Manhattan: Automation House, 1978) Television Spot, hosted at [http://www.ubu.com/film/cage\\_third.html](http://www.ubu.com/film/cage_third.html) [accessed 18.11.14] hereafter: (Third Time: 1978)

The first thing that could be theatrical is what the pianist is looking at - the score. Normally nobody sees it but him, and since we're involved with seeing now, we make it large enough so that the audience can see it.

(Kostelanetz: 2003, 113)

This notion renders unstable the boundary between composition and performance. The 'theatre' of the composition takes place not only in what the audience sees – the translation of the score into performance – but in what the performer sees. Cage's 'theatre' not only takes place between performer and audience but in the performance that takes place between a reader and a text. Taking this idea further, might we consider Cage's readings of *Finnegans Wake*, which he performed by *writing through*, as an extension of his theatre onto the page? In the next section I will make this move by considering how *Roaratorio* and his text, *Writing Through Finnegans Wake*, could both be seen as performances which belong not only to the theatre of live performance but the theatre of an institutional publication; the staged page of the *James Joyce Quarterly*.

### ***Roaratorio* at the James Joyce Quarterly**

In the Spring 1987 issue of the *James Joyce Quarterly*, where Cage's first 'Writing Through' had been published eight years previously, Richard Gerber wrote a review of Merce Cunningham and John Cage's collaborative performance of *Roaratorio* performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. In summarising Cage's 'shorthand version of the *Wake*' he declares that 'It is entertaining, indicative of Cage's cleverness, but little else' and describes this "demilitarized" *Wake* as 'an aural homogenization not unlike Muzak.'<sup>264</sup>

As a representative of Joycean scholarship, Gerber critiques *Roaratorio* as a 'frustrating' and 'meaningless' failure because it 'lets down' both audiences who are either familiar or unfamiliar with Joyce's text. For Gerber, the performance's value is to be determined not in terms of Cage's or Cunningham's work or the performance itself but through its service to Joyce. He concludes:

Unfortunately, for the uninitiated, *Finnegans Wake* poses sufficient purposeful obfuscation without added complications. For the cognoscenti, the pleasures of recognition and the presentation of original insights or new perspectives are

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<sup>264</sup> Richard J. Gerber, *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 24. No. 3 (Spring, 1987), pp.369-373, 370



always welcome. In terms of Joyce's work, Cage's *Roaratorio* lets down both of these audiences. While his mesostics work well enough on paper as amusements, Cage's reductions, recompositions, dissolutions, and reconstitutions for mass performance work to obscure, pervert, or merely ripoff Joyce's technique. The confusion of Cage's soundtrack and the muddying of his reading artistically serve as only static background to the spectacle on stage. Where Joyce's neologisms are creative redefinitions, Cage's are rigid and sterile, sounding crazy and meaningless when they can be heard at all. *Roaratorio* is Joycean not only because Cage has obliterated Joyce's name and text, but because structure without content really is meaningless. Joyce's *Wake* was made to be heard, and that is why *Roaratorio* is so frustrating.

(Gerber: 1987, 372)

Gerber does indicate that his opinion is formulated specifically through Joycean 'terms', but, similarly to José Lanter's (d)evaluation of Mary Manning's adaptation of *Finnegans Wake*, it is Gerber himself who defines what these 'terms' are, whilst also claiming the terms of an audience's collective subjectivity: the potentially dissensual 'we' of an audience made from the 'cognoscenti' and the 'uninitiated' is shaped into a consensual, homogenous 'we' that has been 'let down' by Cage.

The two types of audience member that Gerber speaks for belong to the same epistemological set of relations, between those who *know* and those who *do not yet know*. The underlying assumption is that the 'pleasures of recognition' and the welcoming of 'original insights or new perspectives' that the *knowing* 'cognoscenti' are capable of could have been imparted to the *unknowing* 'uninitiated'.<sup>265</sup> But *Roaratorio* disrupts the possibility of this power-relation to be achieved. Gerber, in the role of the Old Master,<sup>266</sup> defines the 'uninitiated' *Finnegans Wake* reader as having the capability of gaining an understanding of the text's 'obfuscation' only through a way that is 'sufficient' and 'purposeful', in other words, in the way that he (and the other 'cognoscenti' he speaks for) were able to *know* the text. Cage's interference with *Finnegans Wake* simply adds 'complication', distracting potential initiates from the true path towards ritual assimilation into a privileged society of the *initiated*.

Equally, the opportunities that Gerber's spectating 'cognoscento' might have in their reception of a performance of *Finnegans Wake* depend on the authority of their own particular form of knowledge. The first opportunity for them is the 'pleasures of

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<sup>265</sup> 'cognoscenti' can be translated from the Italian as the plural of 'one who knows'.

<sup>266</sup>In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière describes the explicatory role of the 'Old Master' in terms of sensory manipulation: 'Having thrown a veil of ignorance over everything that is to be learned, he appoints himself to the task of lifting it.' (Rancière: 1991, 6)

recognition'. An audience member is always entitled to their own pleasure, but in Gerber's terms, this pleasure arises from the 'initiated' privilege of recognising something that someone else in the audience is incapable of recognising. Cage frustrates this by disrupting the relation of inequality between the *knowing* and the *not-yet-knowing* members of the audience. The second opportunity that Gerber articulates, the supposed 'welcoming' of 'original insights' and 'new perspectives', follows on from this hierarchical dynamic. Since these terms, 'insight' and 'perspective', are being defined by Gerber, and subsequently disrupted by Cage, *Roaratorio* cannot even be granted with the basic, qualitative adjectives, 'original' and 'new', because his work is 'not even to be thought about' in terms of 'insight' and 'perspective.' In short, because *Roaratorio* does not reflect the form of Joycean knowledge that Gerber's 'cognoscento' possess, it cannot be *recognised* in his authoritative, Joycean terms. The piece is incapable of being meaningful to its audience because a particular mode of reading *Finnegans Wake* has been removed by Cage - as Gerber articulates it, *Roaratorio* is 'Joyceless' because his 'name' and 'text' (as if they were one and the same) has been 'obliterated'. 'Joyce', in Gerber's terms, is not only to be equated with the authoritative homogenisation of his 'name' and his 'text', but also with the meaningful symbiosis of 'structure' with 'content'. 'Joyce' is Gerber's shorthand for *my Joyce*, and subsequently *my Finnegans Wake*. *Roaratorio* is 'meaningless' for Gerber and his imagined audience not because it is 'meaningless' in the sense that Cage may have intended, but it does not represent the *Wake* or *Joyce* in a way that an 'initiated' Joycean could have represented them to the 'uninitiated'. Where Gerber sees 'Cage's reductions, recompositions, dissolutions, and reconstitutions' as 'obscure' perversions of 'Joyce's technique', another may see them as modes of *redistributing the sensible* order of receiving *Finnegans Wake*.

Rancière's 'partage du sensible' refers not simply to the way certain power structures partition interpretation amongst the 'Old Master' and the 'Ignoramus', but to how the senses themselves - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling - are distributed within a policed order predicated upon inequality (Rancière: 2004, 89). One of Gerber's principle complaints was that in Cage's recitation the *Wake* could barely be heard:

muttering beneath his tape of animal, human, city and countryside sounds. More than 90% of the words were drowned out, although I think I heard Jute

and Jinnies, Anna, Shem, and Shaun. But it could have been anything being read.

(Gerber: 1987, 372)

Clinging to scraps of Joyce that he could recognise, Gerber bemoaned the loss of the text by privileging the ten percent that he could hear. To an extent Gerber was right that the text ‘could have been anything’ as it attests to Cage’s reducing the *Wake* to a state of fungible materiality.<sup>267</sup> However, the *Wake*-reader would remain in a state of irritable judgement throughout, unable to dislodge his apperception of the performance from his attachment to Joyce’s text. He described Cunningham’s movements as *Wakean* allusions as he strutted ‘hen-like’ and was taunted ‘by two Issy-like girls’ (Ibid.) which could recall the ‘original hen’ from I.v (110.22) and the children’s games of II.i. In his conclusion he reminds us that ‘Joyce’s *Wake* was made to be heard’, but because Joyce’s *Wake* had become redistributed by the quiet and barely audible voice of John Cage into a multi-faceted performance, Gerber argued that it had become impossible now to hear *Finnegans Wake*. If the policemen had had their way, the audience would have been able to distinguish the *Wake* above the roaring multitude; the fact that the audience could hear many things, as well as see many other things, of which *Finnegans Wake* has become a molecular component, was entirely irrelevant to Gerber’s judgement of the performance.

But there is an admission in Gerber’s review which suggests that his actual experience differed to his writing about the performance. There is a sense that had it *not* been a recomposition of the *Wake* he may have enjoyed it:

*Roaratorio* is eclectic, noisy, busy and, for all its shortcomings, rarely boring. It works best as dance performed to random (though sometimes melodic) sound.

(Ibid.)

Placing aside its ‘shortcomings’ – the failure to reproduce *Finnegans Wake* coherently – Gerber was not *bored* by its heterogeneity. His understanding as a Joycean may have become sidelined, but it is apparent that he understood the performance on a more tactile, multi-sensory way. He could even be described as Cage’s ideal participant because the combination of his irritation and engaged attention meant that he had, to an extent, been emancipated from his ‘likes and

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<sup>267</sup> see footnote 312 above

dislikes' (Cage: 1997, 80) in order to pay attention to its eclectic noise, even though this entailed disappointment and irritation. It is only in the performance of his writing, in which he expresses himself as a Joycean authority, within the competent, institutional frame of the James Joyce Quarterly, that he returned to the language of critical distinction and judgement.

It is ironic, or perhaps entirely apposite, that *Roaratorio* was recorded as an incompetent reading of *Finnegans Wake*, dishonoring the name of James Joyce ('*Roaratorio* is Joyceless'; *Ibid.*, 372), within the authoritative margins of the James Joyce Quarterly when it was the same Joyce institution which originally hosted Cage's text of *Writing Through Finnegans Wake*.<sup>268</sup> On the one hand this succession of hospitality and rejection outlines the democratic contours of the Quarterly's academic community; entertaining avant-garde reconfigurations of Joyce's work at one time and subjecting such experimentation to necessary criticism at another. But it also points towards the performative effect of *Writing Through Finnegans Wake*'s intrusion upon its scholarly space. In a similar fashion to Derrida's paper at the Frankfurt James Joyce Symposium, both *Writing Through* and *Roaratorio*, presented challenges towards Joycean competence and the 'institution' (Derrida: 1984, 59). By refusing or failing to interpret the text in a competent or coherent way, Cage intruded upon the scholarly space with incoherence and Joycean incompetence.

However, at the same time, *Writing Through Finnegans Wake* was perhaps the *most* 'Joycean' of readings to have been hosted by the publication in that its compositional form – the proper noun 'mesostic' – persistently paid tribute to the *name* of James Joyce, as it placed each letter, in capitals, through the centre of the page like a methodically inscribed memorial to the patriarch of the institution; re-surrogated and preserved from the reassembled matter of his work.<sup>269</sup> Like Derrida, Cage was a guest invited to perform upon a Joycean institution's stage (in this case, the page), and also gave the academic Joyce community 'Joyce's signature' to read (Derrida: 1984, 62) – in the form of the mesostic – as a

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<sup>268</sup> John Cage, *Writing through Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce Quarterly Vol.15 (special supplement) (Tulsa: University of Tulsa, 1978)

<sup>269</sup> Perhaps part of what made *Roaratorio* so 'Joyceless' for Gerber was that unlike *Writing Through*'s performance upon the page, there was no way for the audience or listener to see or hear the constant iteration of the 'master's' name as it remained concealed within the soundscape.

challenge to the notion of Joycean competence; destabilising and refracting any 'homogeneity' of 'practices, methods, and styles' (Ibid.) that might emerge out of the fiction of a Joycean 'community' and 'competence'. But rather than insisting on the absence of 'consensus' or 'axiomatic agreement' amongst scholars, or even that such a 'foundation [is] not authorized to exist' (Ibid.), Cage's interventions across the page of the James Joyce Quarterly and his re-purposing of various academics' research like Mink's *Gazateer*, and Glasheen's *Census* to compose *Roaratorio* offers a more positive notion of Joycean competence and community; a dissensuous, endless performance across papers, in both material and academic senses, where the 'understanding' of *Finnegans Wake* is not reinforced by a unified, collective *work* of common interpretation but by a heterogenous, overlapping and sometimes irritable interrelation of different 'practices, methods, and styles' (Ibid.). Cage's performances of the *Wake*, when considered within the 'theatre' of the Joycean institution, do not call for its destruction but outline the dissonance of its community; an 'unworking' community which does not seek to produce a crystallized *work* but a ceaseless performance of reading and writing, re-reading and re-writing.<sup>270</sup>

### Reading Writing Through Finnegans Wake

It is now worth paying attention to the textual performance of Cage's recomposition of *Finnegans Wake* to examine the extent to which his methodology demilitarised the 'law and order' of Joyce's language towards 'poetry and chaos', and to ask whether the dissonance of these re-writings, for all their anti-hermeneutics, could serve as valuable *readings* of Joyce.

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<sup>270</sup> This risks a rather commonplace description of how most academic communities, especially in the humanities, function, but it is precisely the 'commonplace' that Cage would have wanted his compositions to bring into focus since the impetus behind his aesthetic was for us to pay attention to the everyday; he expressed this in another mesostic on James Joyce: 'elegance in the enjoyment/ And expression of vulgarity/examination/of the commonplace/arrangements for its return to mystery' (Cage: 2001, 98). But this does not mean that the composer's intervention into the frame of the James Joyce Quarterly should be considered as neutral.

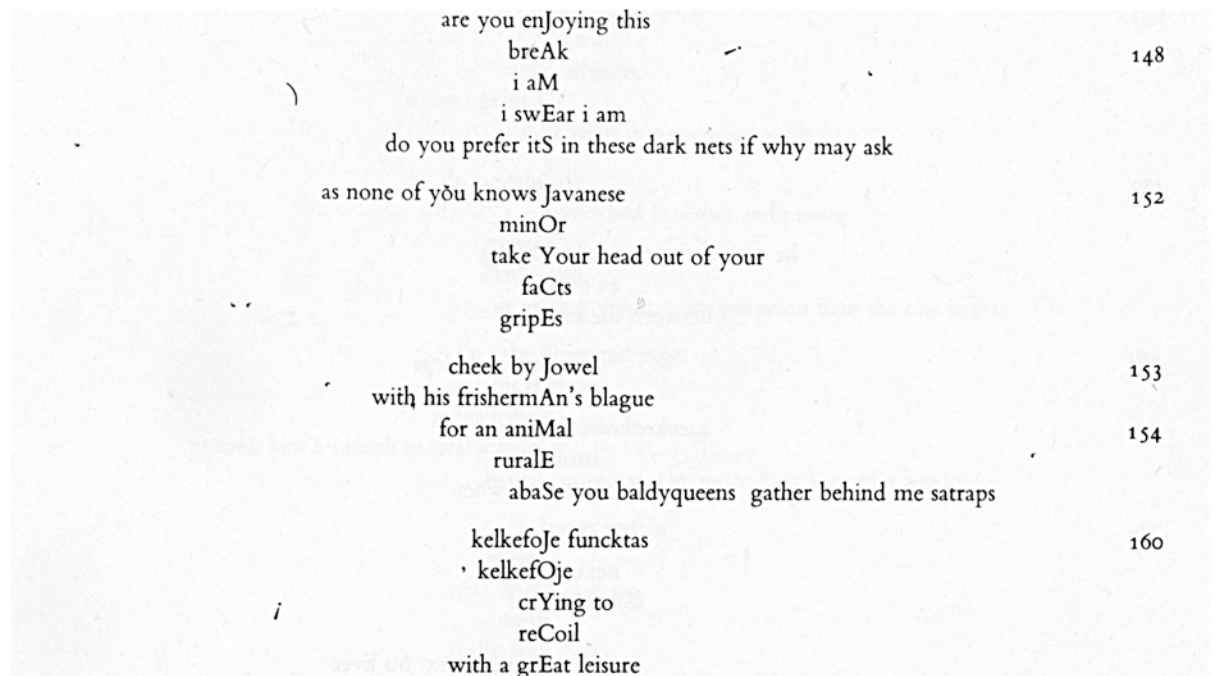


fig. 4. *Writing for the Second Time through Finnegans Wake*<sup>271</sup>

In this sample of the *Second Writing Through*, the text used in *Roaratorio*, the question marks that you would expect from the inquisitional indicators ‘are’ and ‘do’ in the first verse are missing, flanked by an exclamation and a closed bracket at oblique angles away from the text. The pragmatic role of punctuation has become decentered, and the marks lie scattered in the margins like the residual matter left behind an extraction process. The word ‘breAk’ placed beneath ‘are you enjoying this’ could be read as a comment on the mesostic’s breaking up of the text and also a reference to work breaks, time savored between the hours and minutes of labour. This question which does not ask (because it has no question mark) could be iterating the enjoyment of Cage’s ‘breAk’ with the rules of writing, but it could also be a reminder of the violent segmentation of time required by work, casting a sarcastic or desperate tone over the lowercase ‘i’ that ‘swears’ to be enjoying it. There is an ambivalent violence to Cage’s ‘writing through’; an ‘ambiviolence’ (518.02) which throws notions of subjectivity, tone and voice into uncertainty. But in this state of ambivalence, the ‘demilitarisation’ of linguistic rules creates a new certainty: the repetition of Joyce’s name. All previously uppercase first person pronouns have become belittled next to the author’s uppercase letters which ‘breAk’ unevenly into words in order to construct the even, vertical spine of the mesostic. What kind of

<sup>271</sup> John Cage, *Empty Words: Writings '73 - '78* (London and Boston: Marion Boyars, 1980), 151

chaos comes with such regularity and control? The text may have become emancipated from one page to the next, but it bears the traces of another interplay of domination and subservience from which 'poetry and chaos' cannot, if ever, be free.

But how much has Cage actually *broken* with this mesostic? The passage from which this stanza is taken from lies between the end of page 147 and the beginning of 148 in *Finnegans Wake* and is, incidentally, quoted in its entirety in Cage's play *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet* (1982):

Do you like that, *silenzio*? Are you enjoying, this same little me, my life, my love? Why do you like my whispering? Is it not divinely delusious? But in't it bafforyou? *Misi, misi!* Tell me till my thrillme comes! I will not break the seal. I am enjoying it still, I swear I am! Why do you prefer its in these dark nets, if why may ask, my sweetykins? Sh sh! Long ears is flying.

(Cage: 2001, 57 ; FW 147.35-148.05)<sup>272</sup>

In respect to Cage's demilitarizing strategy he has done nothing more between the 'j' and the 'a' than transform a verb into a noun ('I will not break' / 'enjoying this break'). In fact, this instance demonstrates a grammatical structure far less complicated than in Joyce where the unpunctuated question and answer: 'are you enjoying this/break/i am/i swear i am' is more palatable than, 'Are you enjoying, this same little me, my life, my love?'. Joyce's sentence, which employs punctuation to interrupt the flow of grammatical competence, is as disorienting as it is melodious. Cage's removal of the comma between 'enjoying' and 'this' eradicates Joyce's implied transformation of a transitive verb into a halting intransitive verb. The reader is offered the possibility of syntactical coherence by locating the object of the sentence in 'little me' but only at the risk of having to decide whether to agglutinate 'my life' and 'my love' as subsequent objects or to re-ascribe them back to the subject of the clause, 'you'. Without the initial comma this sentence might be as grammatically as coherent as Cage's 'break', but its misconduct as 'policeman' puts a strain on the performance of the reader as they try to maneuver their way between logical coherence and syntactical ambiguity. If this is not 'demilitarized' language, then it is at least 'militarized' language.

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<sup>272</sup> My underlining and bold emphasis

One can argue that a true contestation against the laws of language should take place within the laws themselves instead of outside of them.<sup>273</sup> In Joyce's language there is a layer of performativity which Cage's mesostics would exclude if they truly eradicated the 'law and order' of language. Colin McCabe applies the Chomskyan distinction between grammatical 'competence' (linguistic capability) and 'performance' (the realization of linguistic competence) to an examination of *Finnegans Wake* and finds that 'Joyce is constantly testing our performance against our competence – systematically taking us to those moments where we can no longer hold the grammatical relations securely in place.' (MacCabe: 2003, 178). If Cage had managed to completely remove the 'law and order' of language from the *Wake* then the tension between the reader's or listener's linguistic 'performance' and 'competence' would not exist. The fact that in the *Writing Through* there remain semblances of conventional word arrangements, shows that the inter-relational linguistic interruptions Cage actually performed might still remain fairly close to those that are already latent in Joyce.

MacCabe reads this transgressive and performative linguistic aspect in Joyce as having 'profound political implications for a society based on a notion of the individual as an independent and self-sufficient entity' (Ibid., 152). He argues that, contrary to 'realist texts' which 'confer identity on the reader through an exclusion of language' by becoming 'fixated in meaning', Joyce creates a 'surplus of meaning' which 'enables us to hear the crowd of voices that compose us' (Ibid., 133). This 'surplus' effect, which includes the continuous atomization of the text from phrases, composite words to sounds and individual letters, reflects back onto the reader, creating a 'disruption' of the 'traditional organization of discourses which confer an imaginary unity on the reader' (Ibid., 152). Subsequently they are 'transformed into a set of contradictory discourses, engaged in the investigation of his or her own symbolic construction' (Ibid.). With Lacanian overtones, McCabe ties this disruption of the 'symbolic' order to speech as an acceptance of the 'difference and absence' contained in 'symbolic castration', denying 'the father his self-sufficiency.' (Ibid., 145). 'The father' can be read as holistic authority, the totalitarian police regime of language and subjective identity – but in the *Wake's* patriarchal figure, H.C.E., we

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<sup>273</sup> As Colin MacCabe does: 'It is the extent to which a text subverts a practice from within that it submits the reader to the experience of separation.' Colin MacCabe, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (2nd Edition) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; first published 1978), 154



see this symbolic unity ceaselessly fractured and disintegrated into the surplus identities and permutations that are propelled by 'Here Comes Everybody.' This destabilizing of a master figure, such as the 'schoolmaster' or the artist's ego, ties Cage's attempt to radically alter the way we use language and perceive relations between subjects and objects with a destabilizing motor that runs through *Finnegans Wake*. Both fields are intrinsically engaged in the 'acceptance of movement and process' (Ibid., 152).

But if Cage is also engaged in a process of destabilizing a master figure, who *is* this figure? It cannot really be Joyce because Cage's 'demilitarization' of *Finnegans Wake* does nothing more than intensify the tension that Joyce has already created between *understanding* and *experiencing* language. If anything, Cage *re*-stabilizes Joyce by reinstating the name of the Master through the centre of the text. It might be more accurate to claim that the text of *Writing Through Finnegans Wake* is not a demilitarization but a *remilitarization* of syntax and punctuation. *Finnegans Wake* has been occupied by a new army led by the name of Joyce and contained by a Cage imposing the rigid laws of mesostic procedure.

As McCabe argues, Joyce's language in *Finnegans Wake* employs linguistic mechanisms like 'old syntax' and grammatically competent units of expression, but it is the extreme, excessive performativity of their execution that makes Joyce's text so radical and subversive. The 'demilitarizations' of Cage's text, whilst certainly producing an emancipatory and radical challenge to conventional language-use as a communicative tool, simply duplicate the subversive performativity of Joyce's language. Although this might contest the subversiveness or radical commitment of the politics behind Cage's recomposition of *Finnegans Wake*, I hesitate to dismiss this performance of re-writing because it merely exaggerated a process already at work in Joyce's writing. Rather it is still worth considering this performance of writing as an effective *reading* of *Finnegans Wake*, or, if anything, a reading of Cage's reading of *Finnegans Wake*.

Cage's mesostic technique could be compared to Derrida's 'hypermnesic' machine which 'inscribes you in the book you are reading' (Derrida: 1987, 24), or the 'returnally reproductive' (298.17) material of Joyce's text; the self-reflexive, predictive reproducibility of the *Wake* which Cage's mesostic machine re-enacts as a repetition

with a difference. Extracting a JOYCE from page 180 – where a reader will also find Joyce’s self-mocking portrait, Shem the Penman – Cage recomposed lines 18 to 30 into:

the Jiggjagged page  
his tOngue  
in his belfrY  
it took him a month to steal a marCh  
hardsEt to mumorise more than a word a week  
(Cage: 1980, 153)

By chance, Joyce and his initial provided Cage with a perfect visual description of his mesostic: ‘the Jiggjagged page’ – the double ‘j’ echoing Joyce’s double ‘j’s’ as they fit together like a jigsaw, zigzagging down the page. The mesostic extraction of text creates what Derrida might consider to be a reversed postal situation, like his inversion of Socrates with Plato in *Le Carte Postale*,<sup>274</sup> in which Cage is the writer of *Finnegans Wake* and Joyce the reader; he has signed the text ‘in advance’ (Derrida: 1987, 24) like a revenant returned from the future, ‘returnally *reproducing*’ (reproducing + predicting) the continual recycling of his work. And Joyce’s *work* is also brought to focus as it recalls the slow work of revising his text, partially blinded and memorizing passages to dictate back to his amanuenses.<sup>275</sup> But the mnemonic work in the line, ‘hardsEt to mumorise more than a word a week’, could also ventriloquize Cage’s ‘writing through’ – ‘mumorise’ could anticipate his murmuring reading of the text in *Roaratorio* or the soft mumble of his counting syllables as he composed;<sup>276</sup> or *to mumorise* might be a form of remembering (or ‘redismemberment’ 008.06) through a process of silencing which, having sliced through the majority of the book, Cage performed with his mesostics.

What has been silenced and forgotten by this little verse is also significant. The ‘jiggjagged page’ comes from a listing of Shem’s material and bodily afflictions which affected his working conditions:

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<sup>274</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

<sup>275</sup> Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 2nd December 1928, *LI*, 276: ‘...I had them retype in legal size, twice or three times this, with triple spacing, section three of Shaun, and this, when it has been read to me by three or four people, I shall try to memorise as to pages, etc (there are nearly a hundred) and so hope to be able to find the places where I can insert from the twenty notebooks which I have filled up since I wrote this section.’

<sup>276</sup> At the beginning of his television appearance with Richard Kostelanetz, Cage is captured in the middle of this process which I will discuss at the conclusion of this chapter.

but what with the murky light, the botchy print, the tattered cover, the jigjagged page, the fumbling fingers, the foxtrotting fleas, the lieabed lice, the scum on his tongue, the drop in his eye, the lump in his throat, the drink in his pottle, the itch in his palm [...] the rot in his eater, the ycho in his earer [...] the bats in his belfry [...] and the dust in his ears

(180.17-28)

In this catalogue, which depicts the writer in 'his glaucous den' (179.26) pretending to read his previous work, 'his usylessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles' (179.26-7),<sup>277</sup> Shaun mixes decomposing reading materials with the abjection of the writer's body; even Shem's 'glaucous den' is afflicted with his eye disease, the glaucoma from which Joyce suffered as he wrote. Cage's mesostic also performs a conjunction of the body with an enclosure as it scraps 'the scum' from 'his tongue' and puts it 'in his belfry', condensing Shaun's list into the image of a tongue tintinnabulating inside a bell; a recognizably *Wakean* image which rings out later in: 'Timple temple tells the bells. In syngagyng a sangasongue.' (244.06-07). This stitching together of inanimate matter with afflicted body parts ('sangasongue' could be a singing, bleeding tongue) signals the material condition of Joyce's writing process, such as the degeneration of his eyesight and the 'botchy print' of his notes scribbled with 'fumbling fingers' in the 'murky light'.

Cage's indeterminate excisions make concisions which braid the memory of Joyce's writing process with his. The decomposition of each page into 'Jigjagged' mesostics, centered by the unvoiced recombination of Joyce's name, echoes the decomposition of the writer's body; 'the drop in his eye' which affected Joyce's composition, recalled by the scattered punctuation across the pages of *Writing For the Second Time* which resemble eye-floaters across the retina, repeats itself through the 'poetry and chaos' of Cage's *revision*. The mesostic performs another process of 'decomposition' and 'subsequent recombination' (614.31-35), outlined by the *Wake's* ontology of 'recirculation' (003.02) which is also an echo of Joyce's revision process. Cage enacted extreme inverted revisions of Joyce's revisions; his employment of incremental, indeterminate abstraction<sup>278</sup> was the inverse of

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<sup>277</sup> meaning, *Ulysses*

<sup>278</sup>The Joycean academic, Louis Mink, contributed to Cage's method by recommending that he 'write through' the *Wake* again using 'a pure mesostic' which 'would not permit the appearance of either letter between two of the name' (Cage: 2001, 1). By moving from 'impure' to 'pure' mesostics, each version became increasingly condensed.

Joyce's expansive and often obfuscatory redrafts, but in this distorted mirroring of the book's composition process, the composer repeated the 'unifying and pluralizing [...] processes of writing' embedded in *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>279</sup> Finn Fordham, discussing the 'radical unravelling of character' which Joyce's revisions created by proliferating, rather than condensing, the complexity of his characters' identities (Fordham: 2007, 220), defines the *Wake*'s 'principle of composition' (Ibid., 222) as a 'multiplication of temporal and spatial contexts' in which 'character is refracted and multiplied, stretched across incompatible and incongruous realms' (Ibid., 220). Recompositions like *Writing Through* and *Roaratorio* constituted a further multiplication of the text's 'temporal and spatial contexts' and rather than refracting and multiplying characters in the narratological sense, Cage 'unified and pluralized' the *Wake*'s characters of the alphabetic sense; verbal material recombined, like the recycling process of the 'wholemole millwheeling vicocicrometer' (614.27), 'type by tope, letter from litter, word at ward' (615.01), so that Joyce's 'principle of composition' was extended to the realm of linguistic atomization. As such, Cage's revisions unified *Finnegans Wake* with Joyce's mesostic name, but pluralized it by recomposing its prose into 'poetry and chaos', where notions of character and narrative are abstracted into further multiple ambiguity. But as another mesostic fragment articulates: there is a 'grAvitational pull/chancedrifting through our systeM' (Cage: 1980,147) which brings his decompositions back to the writer's body.

Scott W. Klein also notes a somatic connection between Joyce and Cage's *Roaratorio* by suggesting that the submersion of a singular voice amongst a plurality of other voices evokes blindness:

The use of the human voice as the primary component of the composition, swirled about by the sounds of many other voices, may itself be understood as a canny homage to *Finnegans Wake*. Like Joyce's work, *Roaratorio* presents the human voice submerged within a world of which it is simultaneously a part and apart: both texts are, in some sense, about blindness.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Finn Fordham, *Lots of Fun at Finnegans Wake : Unraveling Universals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 222

<sup>280</sup> Scott W. Klein, 'The Euphonium Cagehoused in Either Notation: John Cage and *Finnegans Wake*' in *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce*, ed. Sebastian D. G. Knowles (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1999), pp.151-170 162.

Klein imbricates different senses of ‘the human voice’ with different forms of texts: the written and the recorded. He implies that ‘both texts’, *Finnegans Wake* and the recording of *Roaratorio*, present ‘submerged’ voices which are constituted and separated from the worlds they create. The binding quality of this, in a ‘sense’, is the removal of a sense: blindness. Joyce’s encroaching blindness permeates the *Wake*, and with Cage, ‘blindness’ is implicit to *Roaratorio*, both for obvious reasons as a radio-play and in *Writing Through*’s erasure of the majority of the text, performing a partial-blindness which would be much closer to Joyce’s actual eyesight which never reach complete obscurity.<sup>281</sup> Even in Cage and Cunningham’s collaborative version of *Roaratorio* there was an element of ‘blindness’ as it was choreographed not in response to a score or recording but to its timing (Cunningham: 2008).<sup>282</sup> Klein’s comparison between both texts is also a comparison between two senses and how they coalesce as ‘the human voice’ performs an intersection between the visual and the audible, on the one hand, and are separated by blindness, on the other. Like the original double-sense of Rancière’s ‘partage du sens’, which denotes both sharing and partition, Klein reads Cage’s recomposing of *Finnegans Wake* as both a separation and integration of the senses in Joyce’s work.

The politics behind Cage’s recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* is weakened by the indeterminate ‘law and order’ of his mesostics, and the supposed ‘poetry and chaos’ of his revisions were not so much a ‘demilitarization’ of ‘old syntax’ but a re-militarization through a repetition of Joyce’s writing which constantly pits ‘performance against competence’ (MacCabe: 2003, 178). But within the composer’s redistribution of *Finnegans Wake*’s linguistic material into various spatial and temporal forms (writing; recording; ballet) Cage also re-enacted the ‘redistribution of

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<sup>281</sup>John Bishop charts the book’s connection between darkness and eyesight in chapter on ‘meoptics’ (139.16) in *Joyce’s Book of the Dark* (Bishop: 1986, 216-263); and while he agrees with Ellman that it was not Joyce’s blindness that led him to ‘write for the ear’ but that opening the eyes ‘would change the book’s postulate’ (*JJ*, 716), and that his eye operations impeded rather than helped his progress, Bishop does not doubt the effect they had on *Finnegans Wake* (Bishop: 1986, 434). John Gordon has also more recently argued that the Euclidian diagram at the centre of the *Wake* (293) and the text that follows it contains direct references to his eye operation (Gordon: 2004, 250-259) in which the ‘Key Signature’ made by the ‘scrope of a pen’ (302.21) refers to the keyhole shape left behind on Joyce’s iris (Ibid., 258)

<sup>282</sup> Cage and Cunningham were also renowned for composing and choreographing their collaborations individually so that they would not be performed together until the first night of the performance. Because Cage composed *Roaratorio* before their collaboration it is unlikely that Cunningham had not heard the composition.

parts and players' integral to Joyce's 'performance' (219.05-7) by redistributing the *sensuous* material of the book. These recompositions of the *Wake* were also *decompositions* as they disintegrated the text into ever smaller fragmented spines and, in the case of *Muoyce* (1982), into a several page long depository of words, letters and phonemes. *Roaratorio* was also a decomposition because it submerged the voice of *Finnegans Wake* into the noise, drastically degrading its coherence. Cage's revisions were inversions of Joyce's revisions: where Joyce had extended and accumulated, Cage reduced and abstracted, but in doing so and by re-producing the reading and writing of the *Wake* into another methodological process, his decompositions brought about an understanding of *Finnegans Wake* as a re-engagement with the atomized components of the text. As I will argue in the final part of this chapter, Cage's performance of 'writing through' the *Wake* not only returned the text to the afflicted vision of Joyce but constituted a *revision* of the work performed by others – a silent *Wakean* community of readers and writers.

### **Performing Composing on Community Television**

In the five iterations of his 'Writing Through *Finnegans Wake*' compositions, the distinction between reading and writing merged into the assimilation of roles between artist and audience, author and amanuensis, reader and writer. For Cage, the only way he was able to read *Finnegans Wake* was to 'write through' it. (Cage: 1980, 133). In writing Joyce's text, rather than adapting it, ('transcribing' rather than 'decoding') Cage repeated a relation that other 'active participants' have had to the text. Although he intended to move the *Wake* towards 'poetry and chaos', his method, which involved copying, counting, cataloguing, listing and arranging was closer to the work of France Raphael, Paul Leon or Lily Bollach performed during its composition, and to the scholarly data collecting of Glasheen, Hart, or Mink, than it was to Joyce's work. This kind of writing, which is also an act of reading, is potentially endless and subject to revision, not only reaching back into *Wake*'s composition process but stretching towards the work of archives, references, glossaries and other reproductions of the text that 'pay attention but stop short of explanation' (Cage: 2003, 53). Despite the noise and incoherence of *Roaratorio*, *Writing Through* and *Muoyce*, these decompositions of *Finnegans Wake* were thoroughly grounded in a performance of disciplined attention. In 1978, this performance of disciplined attention was broadcast on television.

For 'Soho Television' on the 'Artist's Television Network', a community cable channel based in Manhattan, Cage composed and discussed his 'writing through *Finnegans Wake*' in an interview with Richard Kostelanetz.<sup>283</sup> The full title of the broadcast was 'The Initiation of a New Composition 'For the Third Time' by John Cage in Dialogue with Richard Kostelanetz', and opens with the two of them sat at two tables, covered in Cage's books and papers as he performs his writing process. Although we learn that the working title for the composition was 'Writing for the Third Time through *Finnegans Wake*', Cage was actually initiating what would be referred to as the *fifth* writing through and published in 1982 as *Muoyce (Music Joyce)*. The difference with this composition was that instead of mesostics, Cage applied chance operations derived from the *I Ching* over the text so that rather than writing *through* in a linear direction his method had become 'perfectly aerial' as he flew 'backwards and forwards' through the text, landing 'here and then there, or on a letter, or a syllable, or a word, or a phrase'.<sup>284</sup> In the interview Cage gestures with his hands as he describes the process as 'not writing, or riding, or walking through but flying over it and landing here and there' (Third Time, 01:53-02:02); this non-linear approach is perhaps somewhat closer to the writing of *Finnegans Wake* which was generated non-sequentially from episodes and 'nodes',<sup>285</sup> or the rereading process which, as Tim Conley remarks, is 'anything but a sequential activity' as we 'abandon a linear perspective and jump back and forth' (Conley: 2011, 114).<sup>286</sup> However, it is not the recreation of Joyce's writing or a representing of a re-reader's experience that his performance on the television demonstrates but a *working through* of the text performed by those who have encountered or will encounter the book in a particular way – those, like Cage's preferred Joycean scholars who 'pay attention but stop short of explanation' (Cage: 2001, 53), or who must read and write through the text

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<sup>283</sup> John Cage and Richard Kostelanetz, 'For the Third Time', dir. Steve Lawrence (Manhattan: Automation House, 1978) Television Spot, hosted at [http://www.ubu.com/film/cage\\_third.html](http://www.ubu.com/film/cage_third.html) [accessed 18.11.14] hereafter: (Third Time)

<sup>284</sup> Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *John Cage: An Anthology* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1991; first published 1970), 157

<sup>285</sup> David Hayman's term for the 'nodal' units from which Joyce gradually developed the recurring motifs of the *Wake*; see David Hayman, *The Wake in Transit* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp.36-55

<sup>286</sup> With this change in perspective, *Muoyce* condenses all seventeen chapters of the *Wake* into seventeen short paragraphs of corresponding length, creating a bird's eye-view of the book (Cage: 2001, 173)

without understanding it's meaning but enacting a tactile, repetitive engagement with the text's materiality.

The dialogue begins with Cage captured as the studio lights come up in *media res* counting in a hushed whisper. After reaching a certain number he says to himself, 'now I have to count the letters' and begins to count. The second camera cuts to Kostelanetz who is sitting opposite Cage with a microphone before him. He introduces the program in a hushed voice, as if not to disturb the artist in the middle of his counting.<sup>287</sup> The space created by the televisual frame is filled with the whispering and soft voices that normally permeate public spaces like a library – silence of thought and reflection, reading and writing. This texture of silence also anticipates Cage's recital of the final lines of his *Writing for the Second Time* which they discuss later in the interview (Third Time, 10:50):

Just a whisk  
Of  
pitY  
a Cloud  
in pEace and silence

(Cage: 1980, 176)

Cage reads this line (which would become inaudible at the end of *Roaratorio*) to show an instance in which his process had been governed by 'taste' rather than 'chance': he could have found the word, 'Just', earlier in the text and would not have been able to use it in the concluding lines but because he was particularly fond of the sounds he conscientiously saved it for the end.<sup>288</sup> This dialogue presents a very different version of *Finnegans Wake* to the noise and chaos of *Roaratorio*, and it is as if we had caught the composer not only at work but at home in his work in his own cloud of peace and silence (perhaps a 'cloud of unknowing')<sup>289</sup> where the 'whisking' together of these ingredients is performed in a *whisper*, laced with such tender an

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<sup>287</sup> Kostelanetz eventually reveals that he is not whispering out of respect or care but necessity because he was suffering from laryngitis.

<sup>288</sup> see also his introduction to *Writing For the Second Time* (Cage: 1980, 135-6)

<sup>289</sup> At one point in the dialogue Cage suggests to Kostelanetz, 'We do very good work when we don't know what we're doing' (Third Time: 04:05-04:12), a direct paraphrase from his introduction to the text where he also wrote: 'When you don't know what you're doing, you do your work very well.' (Cage: 1980, 136)



emotion as 'pity'.<sup>290</sup> Although Cage was outlining his methodical and impersonal composition process he also showed the interruptions of his own embodied and affective connection to *Finnegans Wake*.

Describing his fondness for this particularly 'evocative' mesostic, Cage began to smile and laugh (Third Time, 11:05-10), in one of the many moments when he shares the joy of his work and embodies the experience of what he described as being 'Joyced' by the *Wake* (Cage: 1980, 136). This television encounter shows what *Roaratorio* conceals: the embodied, affective connection between the composer and his materials. The medium of the television dialogue, the most domestic of performance mediums, also projected a *homely* aspect towards his original community television audience who were not presented with a performance of a composition but the performance *of composition*. They witnessed the hidden activity which usually happens 'off-stage', in the margins of an artwork's composition held *before* performance. Cage offers us a picture of unalienated labour, a work that is happily produced during his 'free time' (when he is not writing music); the ideal fusion of labour and leisure. Like Derrida's writing of *Ulysses Gramophone* in transit, Cage's is also 'the sort of work I can take with me, and when I'm waiting in line or riding in a bus or subway or plane I can continue this work' (Third Time, 25:37-50); it is not only work he can enjoy in the comfort of home but also on the way to work. The metaphors he had used to describe his 'writing-through' as 'riding', 'walking' or 'flying' (Third Time, 01:53-02:02) also extend to the mobility of the work itself; his 'cloud of peace and silence' might hover over a desk for a time, but it can also precipitate on the move. But what exactly *takes place* within Cage's performance of composition, and how did it relate specifically to *Finnegans Wake* and its community?

The television piece opens and closes with counting. As the lights fade up to reveal the composer at work we hear his hushed counting of letters on a page of the *Wake* (Third Time, 00:24-01:16), and as the lights fade out at the end of the dialogue Cage and Kostelanetz calculate an estimate of the amount of hours it will take to complete

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<sup>290</sup> Although Cage would refuse any thematic reading of his writing-through, the 'pity' he extracts from the penultimate page of the *Wake* might easily fit into his own transgenerational recycling of Joyce's work as he repeats the Joycean theme of the young supplanting the old: 'I pity your oldself I was used to. Now a younger's there.' (627.06)

his current project (Ibid., 24:49 - 25:45).<sup>291</sup> His earlier 'writing-through' did not require enumeration but a methodical recording of every extracted syllable on a card index (Cage: 1980, 136); this third iteration, however, required him to read the text by counting out letters, syllables, words and phrases, randomly determined by the numerical possibilities of the *I Ching*. Cage used a computer print-out of the *I Ching*'s multiple determinations (rather than 'throwing the dice'; *ibid.*) and applied it to each stage of the process to 'pinpoint' the various permutations and combinations of letters, syllables, words and phrases (of which there are fourteen) that he would extract. The sequence was made possible by perceiving the *Wake* as a mass of data to be read not for meaning but for number: the four basic linguistic units were obtained by reducing the book to its successive divisions of books, chapters, pages, lines and then one of the fourteen permutations of phrases, words, syllables or letters on each line (*ibid.*). Although Cage's particular treatment of the text was a unique way of re-reading and re-writing, perceiving it as a numerical division of linguistic components is an entirely commonplace way of paying attention to the *Wake*. In order to uphold a coherent grasp of its form and structure readers refer to its numerical divisions constantly: the partitions of its books and chapters (1 book with 8 chapters made of 2 lots of 4; 2 books with 4 chapters each, and 1 book with 1 chapter); the standardized referencing system of page and line number; and the many numerical motifs and patterns that recur throughout the text (for example the 2 twins, 4 observers, 12 patrons and the 29 rainbow girls). The redistribution of numbers plays a big part in *Finnegans Wake*. Although the numbers constitute a code within the book, Cage's use of the *I Ching* does not decode the text but reconfigures it by applying an external code. After Cage describes the procedure, Kostelanetz remarks, 'so it's all coded it's a code' (*ibid.*, 19:35-38), but this 'coded' process performs the opposite of the concealing and revealing of messages, and the resulting text, *Muoyce*, was not a decoded version of the *Wake*, but a recording of Cage's performance of recomposition which utilized (and rendered meaningless) an exterior, indeterminate code. In this respect, Cage was demonstrating how he 'decoded', rather than 'coded', *Finnegans Wake*.

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<sup>291</sup> In answer to Kostelanetz query into how long it will take Cage answered: 'I have the habit now of making a text of this kind until I have completed 4,000 events, and this first business of finding words and letters has 28 events, and I've now in an hour done 8 of them, so you could divide 8 into 4,000 and you could give me an estimate.' (Third Time, 24:49 - 25:45) After Kostelanetz calculates a decimal short (50), they come to an estimate of 500 hours.

In her film about Fritz Senn's *Finnegans Wake* reading group, *The Joycean Society* (2013), Dora García documents them counting their way together through several pages of the book.<sup>292</sup> Reading between pages 210 and 212, they try to determine whether Anna Livia's catalogue of gifts ('her maundy meerschaundize', 210.02) corresponds to the 28 rainbow girls. In the end they find that this particular numerical motif could not be decoded from the passage, but what it shows, like Cage's counting in 'For the Third Time' (which García screened after her film at the London premiere),<sup>293</sup> is how reading the *Wake*, alone or together, is often a process of pattern recognition. While Cage's counting inverts the reading group's counting by recognizing a pattern *upon* rather than *from* the text, this common connection between the two reading processes shows how the specific composition of *Finnegans Wake* requires multiple ways of understanding the same material.<sup>294</sup>

Cage discussed this multiplicity of perspectives in the television dialogue. When Kostelanetz asked whether *Writing Through* is 'a work of literature or a work of music' he answers that it depends 'on whether you pay attention to it as literature or whether we pay attention to it as music' since we are 'capable [...] as human beings [...] of turning one way or another.' (Third Time, 12:35-53) He later refers to the same shifting of attention in relation to the dialogue itself, questioning whether it was 'a conversation' or 'a program', either of which depends upon 'how you pay attention' (Ibid., 22:48-22:56).<sup>295</sup> Although Cage was characterising his own aesthetic philosophy he was also characterising how *Finnegans Wake* in particular demands this ability, a multiplied competence, for 'turning one way or another' as it is read and written. The necessity of paying attention to the world in multiple, decentered ways defined the modern (or postmodern) condition for Cage and is one of the reasons why he declares to Kostelanetz in the middle of the dialogue that 'in this century we live in a very deep sense in the time of *Finnegans Wake*.' (Ibid., 11:40 - 49). But instead of promoting a globalized and universalising sense of multiplicity as he would do with *Roaratorio*, Cage discusses a multiplicity predicated on detailed attention and the tactile re-perceiving of a singular text.

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<sup>292</sup> Dora García, dir., *The Joycean Society* (2013) film

<sup>293</sup> Hackney Picturehouse, London, 2nd December, 2013

<sup>294</sup> In a strange coincidence, whilst the 'Joycean Society' were looking for the number 28, Cage was also looking for the number 28 when he describes to Kostelanetz how the *I Ching* had required him to locate 28 words and letters (Third Time, 20:05-20)

<sup>295</sup> As such, I have decided to pay attention to it as a 'performance'.

The comparison between Cage's community television appearance and the reading group demonstrates how his performance of recomposition tapped into a much more specific community than everyone 'living in the time of *Finnegans Wake*.' The thoroughness of attention to every letter in the *Wake* gave Cage a relation to the text that is usually the preserve of textual editors and genetic scholars, some of whom belong to *The Joycean Society*. Cage also acknowledged this connection when he stated his preference for the scholarly work of Glasheen and Mink who 'pay attention but stop short of explanation' (Cage: 2001, 53). Despite his distinctively 'Cagean' methodology, the composer belonged to a Joycean community of decomposers. An image which also connects Cage's composition performance and Garcia's film is the disintegrated spines of *Finnegans Wake* which have literally started to decompose from uncounted hours of contact. In this community, reading constitutes a tactile and materially contingent relationship with the book.

In the dialogue, Cage demonstrated how this tactile relation to the materiality of the text might occur and connected it to a notion of competence based on *not knowing*. To show how he found the letter 'j' to make his mesostics for his first two 'writing through' compositions, Cage picked up a loose leaf turned upside down and scanned horizontally with his finger for all the 'dots' to locate the 'i's and 'j's and identified the 'j's because they 'dip below the line' (Third Time, 03:27-45). After his demonstration Cage mentioned an editor, Hazel Dreis, who had proofread Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* 'upside down and backwards', and with a shift in tone asserted that 'this means that we do very good work when we don't know what we're doing' to which Kostelanetz replied: 'Ok. I understand that. That comes into a lot of your work.' (Ibid., 03:45-04:20). Reading (and re-writing) the text was not simply a matter of scanning from left to right in order to make sense of Joyce's complex syntax, it also involved perceiving the writing for what it really is: a collection of recurring marks upon a surface. With this notion of 'not knowing what you are doing', Cage was describing the experience of working with a text that resists complete comprehension; the experience of handling, in both senses, a text that does not require exegetic understanding but a tactile, 'unknowing' *understanding* of its material components.

*Muoyce* is the most radical example of Cage's decomposition of the *Wake* into a 'kakography' (120.22-3), and renders the text virtually unrecognizable. There are brief

flickers of recognition when the text seems to speak of its own chaotic reassembling; its anti-grammatical, mistyped parting of words ('Cicely oshis agrammatical partsm typ d'; Cage: 2001, 181), or its 'multilingual tombstone' (Ibid., 175), reduced to a babbling infancy at the hands of Cage and his indeterminate frames ('babblingoredlaghandtheframe'; Ibid., 184). Much of *Muoyce* resembles dismembered language or blindly mistyped errors: 'e ty i n oshgr spe mwhr ndtt ntsp tths' (Ibid., 181).<sup>296</sup> But however abstracted from the 'original' content of Joyce's words they have become (if we believe Campbell and Robinson's claim that, 'there are no nonsense syllables in Joyce!'),<sup>297</sup> the kakography of *Muoyce* recalls, or 'redismembers', the kakography concealed in the book's composition which an archival figure like France Raphael will have encountered: Joyce's handwriting and her erroneous transcriptions. For instance, Joyce's note 'viscounty' became 'tis counly',<sup>298</sup> which mirrored the shape of Joyce's word but emptied it of sense. Elsewhere she transcoded the note, 'atmospheric jamming' into 'atmospheric (ammiary)'.<sup>299</sup> Like the radio 'jamming' (interference) that Joyce had been researching for this note,<sup>300</sup> the signal to noise ratio between Joyce's difficult handwriting and Raphael's deciphering competence created a further confusion of letters with punctuation (replacing the 'j' with an open bracket). Alphonso Lingis describes reading as a 'kind of seeing that vaporizes the substrate' which, like listening for a signal through radio static, requires the 'dematerializing' of 'the hue and grain of the paper' so that communication emerges 'as will-o'-the-wisp patterns in a space disconnected from the material layout of things' (Lingis: 1994, 77). Cage's decompositions of the *Wake* re-performed this material static which Raphael had to attempt to dematerialise into legible transcriptions. The 'kakography' of *Muoyce*, and to an extent the aural illegibility of *Roaratorio*, generated an unconscious recollection of these kakographic details in Joyce's archive – the Raphaelisms that Joyce

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<sup>296</sup> The closest resemblance to this fragmentation of language in the *Wake* occurs towards the end of the Letter chapter in the form of a garbled police report and interpretation of the 'paper wounds' punctured into the paper: 'accentuated by bi tso fb rok engl a ssan dspl itch ina' (124.07-08)

<sup>297</sup> Campbell and Robinson: 2013, 358; Although I agree that virtually every word in the *Wake* has its source, I disagree with Campbell and Robinson's implication that 'nonsense' is 'without meaning'. The *Wake* owes more to the nonsense of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll than the invented syllables of Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate* or Hugo Ball's magic incantations.

<sup>298</sup> Notebooks VI.B.33.001 / VI.C.6.150, James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo

<sup>299</sup> Notebooks VI.B.10.108 (e) / VI.C.5.161 (l), James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo; see also Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout, eds., *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo: VI.B. 10* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2001), 128

<sup>300</sup> Joyce may have got this note from the *Evening Standard* of 8th January 1923 in an article about a device called the 'audiometer' which 'photos sound' (VI.B.10.108 (d))

included in his revisions and the surplus of illegible and mis-transcribed writing forgotten within the archive was brought back to the surface by Cage's decomposition process, rematerialized and 'redismembered' by chance. Cage's repetition of the hidden or invisible forms of 'detailed attention' paid to *Finnegans Wake* engendered a silent, accidental, community between the 'intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators'; in the cacographies and cacophonies of *Writing Through Finnegans Wake*, *Muoyce* and *Roaratorio*, Cage returned *Finnegans Wake* to a condition of materiality haunted by ghosts from Joyce's archive and the work of its countless past and future readers.

### Jumping Ghosts

Cage did not so much adapt *Finnegans Wake* into performance but performed, through his recompositions and decompositions, a transformation of the way that it is read. His project was a reading through of the performance of writing. It was also a methodology in itself, an extension of certain scholarly work which 'stops short of explanation', like the work of Glasheen and Mink, but also an unacknowledged practice-as-research methodology which was both 'a part' of and 'apart' from the Joycean Community. In his introduction to *Writing for the Second Time*, Cage defined his work as 'that of identifying, as Duchamp had, found objects' (Cage:1980, 136), but with this acknowledgement of Dada heritage he also identified a practice fundamental to much *Finnegans Wake* scholarship: the identifying and accumulation of material embedded within Joyce's work. As the revised editions of the *Census* and *Gazateer* or the collaborative work of *Fweet.org* implies, the reading and writing of *Finnegans Wake* is a potentially endless collection of found objects. Cage's various revisions of his 'writing-through', their potentially endless mesostic refinements or *Ching* procedures, also affirm the idea that, like a group of Japanese individuals spending an 'entire evening with a single Haiku poem', we will 'never come to the end' of *Finnegans Wake*. (Schöning, 1982, 37).<sup>301</sup>

Between the mini-society in Dora García's film and Cage and Kostelanetz's community television dialogue, Joyce's book becomes the locus of an 'unworking community'; a transgenerational sharing without the *telos* of a final work. The

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<sup>301</sup>Discussing *Roaratorio*, Cage compared reading the *Wake* to the 'many different directions' that Ancient Chinese and Japanese poetry can be understood by individuals in a group.

decomposition of the book, the disintegrated central spine and loose heavily annotated pages is the ultimate 'found object' of *Finnegans Wake*; it becomes a stand-in for this 'unworking community'. Whether it is the hands of Fritz Senn or John Cage we see handling their decomposed copies, the performance of reading *Finnegans Wake* is bound by a repetition and difference, knowing and unknowing – in every *copy* or *copying* of the text the reader's body repeats an act of writing, but in these repetitions they bring their own form of disintegration to the material; their unique vandalization of annotations, the systematic application of indeterminacy, the ungluing of the spine. Brought together by death - after many years of reading the *Wake* their knowledge or knowing the text will always be braided with their unknowing of the text - reading groups can outlive their founders and because we may 'never get to the end of it' their performances of reading must contend with the limits of their understanding, its impossible competence.

Cage's research methodology placed 'unknowing' and not understanding at the centre of his reading and writing of *Finnegans Wake*. The political philosophy behind his aesthetics, which rejected all forms of 'power', infused itself into a reading of 'powerlessness', a submission of the writer to the performance of their (re)composition. Not only did Cage's conscious 'unknowing' of the *Wake* re-encounter the 'intermisunderstandings' of its unwitting 'anticollaborators' like Madame Raphael, he also performed what Joyce would not have known. The closest thing Cage made to a statement of intent for his mesostic writing-throughs was that his 'work was merely to show [...] the relation of Joyce's text to his name' (Cage: 1980, 136), and although Cage recognised that 'his name was in his mind' when he coined portmanteaux like 'poorjoist' or 'joysis crisis' (Ibid.), the composer's 'redistribution of parts and players' challenged the master's understanding of his own text, (even if that understanding can only exist as the understanding of a ghost). Perhaps Cage was also talking about Joyce when he claimed: 'We do very good work when we don't know what we are doing' (Cage: 1980, 136).

The avant-garde 'masters' that haunted Cage led him to imagine the ghosts of Joyce, Duchamp and Satie all sharing the space of a theatrical stage in his play, *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet* (1983). In this theatre piece which consists of mesostics on the names and excerpts from the texts of Joyce, Duchamp and Satie, Cage imagined 'that the artists whose work we live with constitute [...] an

alphabet by means of which we spell our lives.’ (Cage: 2001, 53). Perhaps the circus of *Roaratorio* or various ‘writing through’ compositions, were a way for Cage to ‘spell’ with an alphabet made up of those silent and ‘erronymous’ ghosts that have become ‘beyond recognition’ (Cage: 1980, 144):

what a Joy  
to hAve  
theM  
on thE  
Same stage same time

even though the subJect  
Of  
the plaY  
is the Curtain  
that sEparates them!

(Cage: 2001, 55)

In this theatre of ghosts who ‘Jump alternately forth and back and forth [...] in time with the Curtain’ (Ibid., 56) Cage imagined an ephemeral community, a space that is set in motion through what these ghosts have in common and yet this can only be conceived through ‘the curtain that separates them’. To misquote Jean-Luc Nancy, ‘they haunt together apart.’

It is through this separating and unifying theatrical curtain that I will now depart from John Cage’s *Finnegans Wake* and move into my own ‘decoded’ performance as research.



## Chapter Four

### **i) *About That Original Hen* A performing archive from *Finnegans Wake***

On the 2nd of June, 2014, in the drama studio at 43 Gordon Square, Birkbeck College, I performed a version of *Finnegans Wake* to an audience of students, poets, activists and academics. The performance was based on my visit to the James Joyce Collection at the University of Buffalo and took the form of a lecture, (accompanied by a silent film) and a tabletop puppetry piece (accompanied by a polyphonic soundtrack). It lasted forty-five minutes.

The performance was entitled, *About That Original Hen*, a line taken from the 'Letter' chapter of *Finnegans Wake* (104-125). The title relates specifically to the scene which begins at 110.22, when a so-called 'original hen' discovers a letter that turns out to be the 'original document' (123.31-32), or 'untitled mamafesta' (104.04) and 'polyhedron of scripture' (107.08), which is both the subject of *Finnegans Wake* and *Finnegans Wake* itself (Epstein: 2009, 51). Like the 'original sin' that echoes through Joyce's 'original hen', this moment in the book represents a primal scene, a foundational event from which the rest of the book is generated. It can be argued that the real 'content' of the *Wake* is not the content of this letter but the *reading* of the content of the letter; a reading process which, through its multi-disciplinary approach and prescient anticipation of the 'modern, postmodern, and genetic criticism[s]' (Ibid., 53) that would follow, sends the text back to the fundamental elements of its *writing* process. In translating this episode from the *Wake* into the limits of a forty-five minute solo performance I hoped to represent the book as a continuous cycle of reading and writing. By paying attention to its genetic composition and to how the *Wake* pays attention to its own composition process, *About That Original Hen* brings Joyce's text into the immediate present through the medium of a performing archive. In this chapter I will situate my performance-as-research project in relation to my previous analyses of *Finnegans Wake* performances, and outline its key methodological and thematic concerns with performing archives, the genetic reading of *Finnegans Wake*, and the political questions which underlie both practices.

### **About *About That Original Hen***

'Who in hallhagal wrote the durn thing anyhow?' (107.36-108.1), asks the philologist in chapter five, and it is this concern with 'establishing the identities of the writer complexus' (114.33) that is at the heart of my performance project. Mary Manning's *Passages From Finnegans Wake* served the language of James Joyce with actor's voices, and John Cage's decompositions of the *Wake* put the name of James Joyce at its silent centre, but *About That Original Hen* is not dedicated to Joyce's mastery of language nor to a conceptual rearrangement of the letters of his name but to those hidden 'identities of the writer complexus', the silent, and almost forgotten hands that also 'wrote the durn thing' but who were subsequently absorbed into the book's 'chaosmos' (118.21).

At the centre of the performance is Joyce's amanuensis, Madame France Raphael, whose errors in transcribing his notebooks were occasionally transmitted into the final 1939 publication (Rose: 1995, 169). She is, along with thousands of other spectral hands in the *Wake*, one of the many 'intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators' (118.25-26) that have ended up in Joyce's 'massproduct of teamwork' (546.15): a ghost in the text and unintentional collaborator in Joyce's complex composition process. Although Joyce did not give her a voice or even hide her name in the *Wake*, she is nonetheless one of the 'identities' of the book's 'writer complexus' and, as the performance attempts to prove, was secretly 'decorded' (482.35) within the dense fabric of the text. It is through a visit to the archive and a re-enactment of the writing that Raphael performed for Joyce that my performing-archive gives a voice to this marginal figure in the composition process. In doing so, *About That Original Hen* broaches much larger questions about reading and writing, power and documentation that are central to *Finnegans Wake*.



### Koshka's Graffiti

Following this braiding of the *Wake* with its own archive, there is a third layer of material which brings Joyce's text directly into the present. At the time of my own composition process an acquaintance of mine, Koshka Duff, was arrested for writing a political slogan on the foundation stone of Senate House with chalk. The slogan read: 'Sick Pay, Holidays, Pensions Now. Support the cleaners' struggle' and was written the day before a strike led by outsourced cleaners from Senate House.<sup>302</sup> At the request of university management, Duff was dragged out of the student union by two van-loads of Metropolitan police officers and taken to Holborn station. She was charged with criminal damage and assaulting an officer. The first charge was passed and she paid a fine but the latter charge did not hold up in court.<sup>303</sup> This was to be one of many examples in the U.K. of a public university suppressing its own students' voices with police violence.<sup>304</sup> In her attempt to forge solidarity with those workers experiencing the brunt of neo-liberal ideology within the university, Duff encountered first-hand the power and violence that underlies the administrative language of institutional spaces. Although this event may seem to be far removed from the world of *Finnegans Wake* and the notebooks of the James Joyce archive, it was for me, as a performance-maker and scholar, an important contemporary *act of writing* to consider alongside Raphael's transcriptions. Through the prism of a political

<sup>302</sup>Jess Denham, 'Police accused of disproportionate force at ULU chalking arrest', 17 July 2013, *The Independent*; Jack Grove, 'University of London chalk protest sparks arrest', 17 July 2013, *Times Higher Education*

<sup>303</sup> Anna Davis and Simon Freeman, 'Student criticises University of London for £800 fine after Senate House chalk protest', 20 March 2014, *The Evening Standard*

<sup>304</sup>see for example: Kevin Rawlinson, 'Police officer accused of punching student at University of London protest', 5 December 2013, *The Guardian*; Caroline Christie, 'Universities and Police Versus Britain's Students', 5 December 2013, *Vice*; Ashley Kirk and Abby Young-Powell, 'Student protest in Birmingham leads to 14 arrests', 30 January 2014, *The Guardian*; John Morgan, 'Police use CS spray to tackle Warwick student protest', 4 December 2014, *Times Higher Education*

act of silent (and silenced) writing, Raphael's silent presence within the archive becomes highlighted by questions of power, gender, silence and community.

Transfusing my research on Raphael and *Finnegans Wake* with Duff's story is also a way of enacting the diachronic, multiple temporality of the *Wake*. Through the use of montage, textual collage and object manipulation, my methodology performs a tripartite conjunction between different temporalities in what Rebecca Schneider refers to as 'syncopated time' (Schneider: 2011, 110) or, in the *Wake*'s anticipation of Derrida's reading of Hamlet, 'disjointed time' (104.05).<sup>305</sup> This diachronic contiguity of past, present and future 'dislocates the linear order of presents' as the past is folded into the future (Schneider: 2011, 108) and the space of performance becomes an 'archive for the revenant' (Ibid., 110) where the ghosts at Joyce's 'funferal' (120.10) co-mingle with the living bodies of the present. Consequently, I refer to *About That Original Hen* as a 'performing archive' because it performs archival research as a continuous process of revision and re-enactment; it attempts to bring archival materials to life through a performative injection of the present. In a similar vein to the 'reminiscence performances' which Baz Kershaw discusses in *The Radical in Performance* (1999), *About That Original Hen* performs a 'reflexive 'dialogue' between past and present through a critical use of doubled memory'.<sup>306</sup>

This methodology participates in an ontology of performance practice which questions the institutional boundaries of archival research by approaching the concept of 'the Archive' as a 'dynamic and generative production tool'.<sup>307</sup> As Simone Osthoff, Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade have recently surveyed, notions of 'the archive as artwork' (Osthoff: 2009, 12) or 'performing archives' have become a common feature in contemporary art, theatre and performance practice.<sup>308</sup> In an age

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<sup>305</sup>In his reading of Hamlet's line, 'The time is out of joint', Derrida considers the different ways 'time is disarticulated, dislocated, dislodged' and 'deranged' as Hamlet evokes a concept of time that is maintained together but 'does not hold together', 'a dis-located time of the present, at the joining of a radically dis-jointed time, without certain conjunction.'; Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Oxon: Routledge, 1994; first published as *Spectres de Marx*, 1993), 20

<sup>306</sup> Baz Kershaw, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard* (Oxon: Routledge, 1999), 186

<sup>307</sup>Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive: The transformation of the archive in contemporary art from repository of documents to art medium* (New York: Atropos Press, 2009), 11

<sup>308</sup>Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade, eds., *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013)

when the drive towards archivization is omnipresent and constitutes a fundamental part of our daily lives more than ever before, the notion of the archive as a stable ‘repository of documents’ (Osthoff: 2009, 12) maintained by the ‘archons’ of states and institutions has radically shifted into a far more fluid, polymorphous and fragmentary condition of autonomy. Archives are no longer solely defined by spaces but by processes. This transition towards ‘generative’ archives has not eradicated the significance of space and place but brings about an exposure of the processes that construct social relations within spaces and places. As a result, artworks and performances which uncover the social and political relations that underlie institutional space and archival repositories may serve a disruptive and antagonistic function. One way for such works to engender this challenge to the power structures that control archival structures is the irruption of multiplicity and heterogenous disorder through equalizing processes; *Roaratorio* is an example of this kind of process. But, as I have argued in Chapter 3, the potential for performing a critical or dialectical engagement with ‘law and order’ through ‘poetry and chaos’ is undermined by subjecting multiplicity to a homogenizing universality. In response to this tendency in Cage’s work with *Finnegans Wake*, *About That Original Hen* employs multiplicity and decomposition in order to interrogate the socially determined power relations contained within *Finnegans Wake* and its archive, rather than sublating them into an apolitical, indeterminate system.

The multiple layering of different ‘scenes of writing’ in *About That Original Hen* – Raphael’s transcriptions, Duff’s chalking as well as Hester Dowden’s séance writing and the ‘active and agitated’ (114.34) writing of an ‘illiterate peasant woman’ performed for the graphologist, Jules Crépieux-Jamin – unfolds a variety of power relations and violences contained in both the writing of *Finnegans Wake* and the institutional space in which I perform this work. Although I have brought material from *outside* the frame of Joyce’s text in order to interrogate social relations of the *Wake*’s ‘writer complexus’, I have done so with the intention of exploring how *Finnegans Wake* proposes a disruption of patrilineal discourses of power and archivization. The *Wake* is a text that is constantly articulating its internal antagonisms which challenge the stability of any singular, authoritative and patriarchal voice. As the visual apparatus of Book II Chapter II demonstrates, the centre of the *Wake* is constantly undermined and subverted by the voices in its margins, and some of these voices are silent, but no less potent in their disruptive assertions of presence: ‘Where flash

becomes word and silents selfhood' (267.17).<sup>309</sup> The important aspect of these silent disruptions in the *Wake* and also in the world outside of the *Wake*, is that they are so often, if not categorically, feminized.

Shari Benstock articulates the feminine presences of *Finnegans Wake* in a way that could be compared to their role in *About That Original Hen*:

The writing of *Finnegans Wake* both inhabits and is inhabited by woman, by ALP and Issy, who are present in the transparent space of the hymeneal folds, in the silences of the historically interweaved, overlapped, and spiralling story, who constitute the absent center of the *Wake* universe, who are to be found inside the mirror, in the bar between the conscious and the unconscious, between dreaming and waking, between signifier and signified – both inside and outside the fabric they weave. These two - who are one in desire - are capable of providing the origin of the text that exists outside the text, the frame for the dreamstory that is both outside and within itself: they are the letter (of desire) that violates and is violated.<sup>310</sup>

It could be said that my performing-archive is an attempt to find a way of articulating 'the silences of the historically interweaved' and overlapping presences which inhabit the absences, gaps and between spaces of *Finnegans Wake* and its archive. My weaving of different fabrics from 'inside and outside' of the *Wake*, the overlapping of the women from its composition process, the women inside its 'spiralling story' and a woman from the future (Duff), iterates the production of an 'origin' (the genetic foundation of its 'original document') that 'exists outside the text'. The submerging of the text with both its past (composition process) and future (my performance) creates a 'frame for the dreamstory that is both outside and within itself'. Furthermore, an important material in *About That Original Hen* is the object of a feminine letter, a conflation of the 'original document' discovered by the 'original hen' with a letter sent to the archive at Buffalo by Raphael.<sup>311</sup> Underscoring these interweavings of materials, the 'feminine clothiering'[s] (109.31) which envelop and are enveloped in

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<sup>309</sup> Whether the *Wake* has a center at all is another question. For feminist and post-structuralist readers like Margot Norris the *Wake* is nothing but 'decentered' (Norris: 1976), Shari Benstock speaks of its 'absent centre' (Benstock: 1985, 231), and Derek Attridge argued that it is a 'book without a center' because it is also a 'book with digressions', even what appears to be its supplementary or marginal material cannot be read as such because there is no center to digress from (Attridge: 2004, 217).

<sup>310</sup> Shari Benstock, 'Nightletters: Woman's Writing in the *Wake*' in *Critical Essays on James Joyce*, ed. Bernard Benstock (Boston: G.K.Hall, 1985), pp.221-33, 231

<sup>311</sup> see A.viii and B.viii

the *Wake* and my performance, is the matter of violence and violation: from the violent assertion of voice to the violent suppression of silence; the violation of patriarchal space and the patriarchal violation of the feminine body.

There is a certain violence, or ‘ambiviolence’ (518.02), in my decision as a solo male performer to reproduce these violations with my own hands. This violating relation between myself (the performer-archivist) and my materials (feminine ghosts) is encapsulated by my use of gloves to stand-in for their disembodied hands, fragmented by their division of labour. But in order for my performing-archive to generate its constellation of gendered, social and economic relations through *Finnegans Wake*, it was necessary to access its memory through its own terms: the violence of ‘redismember[ment]’ (08.06). Jacques Mailhos has argued that Joyce’s ‘text has to be dismembered in order to be remembered’.<sup>312</sup> ‘To forget’ becomes synonymous with dismemberment, and thus ‘to remember’ is to *re-member*; to restitch the limbs onto the body. But in the ‘redistribution of parts and players’ (219.7) of performance it is unlikely that these ‘*re-membered*’ bodies will be identical to what they were before the violent rending of archivization. Perhaps they will find themselves attached to different bodies, as Raphael does in my performing-archive, surrogated in the body of Koshka Duff.<sup>313</sup>

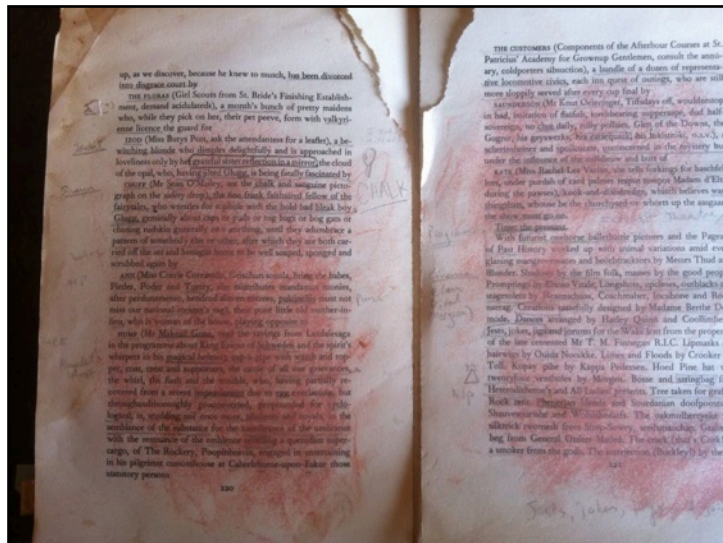
Although Joyce’s ‘vicociclotometer’ (614.27) decomposes and subsequently recombines the ‘dialytically separated elements’ (614.33-34) of the *Wake* to make them the ‘seim anew’ (215.23), *About That Original Hen* is concerned with the continual decomposition and degradation of memory that Joyce’s ‘hypermnestic’ machine creates as it perpetually spins its ‘marryvoising moodmoulded cyclewheeling history’ (186.1-2). In my performing-archive, restoration is marked by the inevitability of decay and disintegration. I use my own work-copy of *Finnegans Wake* throughout the performance to demonstrate this material relation between scholar and text – the slow violence of research; the disintegration of bodies and books under the fracturing division of work; the deliberate violations of performance performed upon the page.

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<sup>312</sup> Jacques Mailhos, “Begin to forget it” The Preprovided Memory of *Finnegans Wake* in *European Joyce Studies 4: Finnegans Wake: Teems of Times*, ed. Andrew Treip (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 41-68, 53

<sup>313</sup> see Part A of *About That Original Hen*

In the spectral constellation that emerges through performing *Finnegans Wake* as a process of ‘redismemberments’ – a ‘decoding’ of hands and skulls fragmented under its division of labour – a ‘transgenerational conversation’ or community is engendered. As with Walter Benjamin’s dialectical image of history, the memory of these bodies that are woven into the fabric of the *Wake* and my own performing-archive are not articulated (or disarticulated) in the way ‘they really were’ but are seized hold of as they ‘flash up at a moment of danger’.<sup>314</sup> Like the performances discussed in previous chapters, *About That Original Hen* decomposes and rearranges *Finnegans Wake* in a way that raises questions about competence, composition and community. But dwelling in the genetic fissures - it examines the violence and precarious materiality involved in decomposing texts for performance.



A ‘Chalk and Sanguine Pictograph’ (220.11)/ my copy of *Finnegans Wake*

### Situating this Research-as-Performance

In this final part of my thesis, elements explored in previous performances of *Finnegans Wake* are reconsidered through my own research-as-performance. Following on from the most recent theatrical explorations of the *Wake* (*Finnegans Wake: Chapter 1* (Caubet: 2012) and *Riverrun* (Fouère: 2013), *About That Original Hen* takes the form of a solo performance dedicated largely to a single chapter.<sup>315</sup> Caubet and Fouère’s choosing to stage the opening and closing chapters was an

<sup>314</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 247

<sup>315</sup> I.v is the performance’s centerpiece, however a significant amount of material from II.ii, I.vii, III.iii and IV is also used.



effective way of presenting Joyce's text as a singular but polyvocal narrative flow from suitable entry points. Their audiences were guided through the unreliable narrative of the *Wake* by reliable performers; unclouding the neologistic fog with their competent filters of breath, voice and gesture. However, both of their productions delivered *Finnegans Wake* through single performer-characters: Caubet's *Wake* is presented as the verbose, comic wit of a masculine, heteroglossic jester; Fouère's *Wake* is the hypnotic, intercultural communion of the dead incanted by a matriarchal (but androgynous) 'seanchaí'. Both of these figures belong to *Finnegans Wake* and they represent two colours from the same spectrum. In *About That Original Hen* I present yet another colour of the spectrum but instead of flow there is fragmentation; instead of memorising and repeating there is reading and writing; instead of the authoritative singularity of the performer's voice there is the interruption and interspersion of the performer's voice with other voices. My performer-character is therefore less singular than Fouère's and Caubet's because it does not depend solely on the articulations of my voice and body but on a network of different voices and bodies. If *About That Original Hen* does represent a particular 'character' or 'voice' of the *Wake* it might be closest to the 'scholar' who attempts to decode the Letter in I.v, but ultimately this voice is brought into dialogue with other voices and silences that populate the world both inside and outside of the book. Unlike the virtuosic deliveries of Joyce's language in *Finnegans Wake: Chapter 1* and *Riverrun*, not to mention Adam Harvey's numerous performances, which display a mastery and authority in performance, my approach treats authority and mastery as something to be challenged within its own frame. *About That Original Hen* is not in the business of celebrating Joyce but remembering the hands that aided his craft.

In Chapter Two, I showed how Manning's theatrical adaptation, *Voice of Shem: Passages from Finnegans Wake*, performed an act of reading comparable with critical and interpretative readings. Manning's recomposition of the *Wake* not only served Joyce's text by transposing its inherent theatricality and performative language onto the stage, but it also presented an historical example of early *Wake* scholarship. My intention behind the analysis of *Voice of Shem*, especially in relation to the work of Adaline Glasheen, Campbell and Robinson and Thornton Wilder, was to reposition the adaptation's place within the archive of *Finnegans Wake* into a document of early criticism and to argue that whilst its distillation of the book into a visible *dramatis personae* was comparable to the approaches of Glasheen's *Census*

and Campbell and Robinson's *A Skeleton Key*, it should be recognized and remembered as a unique contribution to the critical history and afterlife of the *Wake*: a public reading which reflects upon the experience of reading through the medium of theatre. Whilst the work of Glasheen and others sought to establish a transparency and rigorous decoding of Joyce's text, Manning achieved an unfolding or 'decoding' of the *Wake* by embracing the text's obscurity and the affect of this on the reader and spectator's reception of the work. *Voice of Shem* situated the theatre spectator into the place of the bewildered reader and challenged the notion that one will end up more 'informed' than the other. Furthermore, the literary-theatrical (even anti-theatrical) environment in which Manning presented her adaptation (the Poet's Theater) led to the question: to what extent might a spectator of *Finnegans Wake* become a reader of Joyce's text and a witness of its composition process?

Manning's 'decomposition' and 'recombination' (614.34-35) of Joyce's text positioned her into the corresponding roles of both reader/spectator and writer/dramaturge; through her unstitching of the text Manning was able to uncover the traces of the book's composition process (albeit from a 'backwards' (100.28) perspective). With her allusion to the theatricality of spiritualist séances and use of folk songs, I argued that Manning also performed what could be considered an early form of genetic criticism or scholarship, as such, there is a further layer of readership/spectatorship as her audiences in 1955 will have also effectively become spectators of Joyce's composition process as it was translated into theatrical representation. What differentiated *Voice of Shem* in this respect from other works like *A Skeleton Key* was that it initiated a return to the composition process not through a text and manuscript based archive but within the archival space of a performance in which various material such as text, affect, voice, identities, ghosts may encounter one another. The haunted space of theatre became a place in which the ghosts of a text's archive could converse: a performing-archive and space for the revenants to perform.

*About That Original Hen* resembles *Voice of Shem* to the extent that it involves a decomposition and recombination of the text with the inclusion of 'genetic' materials (songs in *Voice of Shem*; Joyce's notebooks in *About That Original Hen*). Both performances invoke some of the 'content' of *Finnegans Wake* through bodies and objects. Manning indicated characters and narrative through actors and gestures and presented the conflation of different times and places through multi-purposed stage

props. In *About That Original Hen* I use objects and puppetry to point towards certain moments in the *Wake*, such as the Hen's discovery of 'the Letter' (110.22-113.22). But where *Voice of Shem* presented *Finnegans Wake's* content with a cast of actors, my performance presents various voices and characters from both within and without the *Wake* using recordings to accompany the actions of a solo performer. 'Content' in *About That Original Hen* is not so much the representation of a dramatic or narrative dialogue or actions extracted from the text but the *translation* of what is contained in *Finnegans Wake* into matter and material. From the visual and audio representation of 'the Hen' to the re-enactment of an archived textual variant, to the literal presentation of *Finnegans Wake* as a book, my translation of the text into a performance is primarily concerned with returning to certain material foundations of Joyce's composition. *About That Original Hen* is not only a performance of a reading of *Finnegans Wake* but also a performance of a reading of its archive. Whilst *Voice of Shem* began with the theatrical and touched upon the archive, *About That Original Hen* begins in the archive and moves touches through the theatrical.

In Chapter 3 I argued that John Cage's recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* presented performances of reading as performances of writing (or rewriting). In comparison to *Voice of Shem*, Cage also extended Joyce's text into the frame of theatre and offered the translation of the *Wake's* obscurity rather than a paraphrastic, hermeneutic decoding of its narrative. But the 'theatre' into which Cage transposed the *Wake* was radically different to Manning's theatre and the 'obscurity' of *Roaratorio* and *Muoyce* was much closer to a form of opacity. Whilst Manning repeated the uncertainty of the reader's position but maintained clarity by cutting and rearranging the text, Cage cut *through* and *recomposed* the text in order to replace the 'law and order' of Joyce's language with the 'poetry and chaos' of indeterminacy and noise. Manning's adaptation rendered the *Wake* more accessible to 'uninitiated' readers or non-readers of Joyce's book by aiding them with stage directions and fleshing out the language with actors' bodies and voices. Cage, on the other hand, rendered *Finnegans Wake* accessible to everyone because he made it virtually *inaccessible* to the point at which the notion of an 'initiated' or 'ideal' reader became irrelevant. Whereas Manning's 'redistribution of parts and players' was a translation of the book's *dramatis personae* into a living *dramatis personae* of a post-Surrealist, Poet's-theatre drama, Cage's 'redistribution' translated hidden, indeterminate material patterns within the book – an indeterminately uncovered trace of Joyce's name

(*Writing Through*) and then an aleatoric scramble of linguistic elements achieved with the aide of the *I Ching* (*Muoyce*) – into the materials of several compositions. While Manning materialized *Finnegans Wake*'s characters (*personae*) into theatre, Cage used the characters (*phonemes*) of *Finnegans Wake as the* material of his theatre.

It was Cage's emphasis on the materials of *Finnegans Wake* – its linguistic and organic materials as a book – rather than the anti-pedagogical politics underlying his process which opened up these performances towards an encounter with the ghosts of its production and thus enacted a repetition of previous performances of reading and writing within the archive. *Voice of Shem* placed genetic material side by side (i.e. Irish songs with their Wakean metamorphoses) spurring an affective connection to a shared embodied memory of Irishness. In *Writing Through* and *Roaratorio*, the genetic material was language itself (*mesostics*) and the sonic texture of the globe (field recordings), and despite the subtitle, 'An Irish Circus on *Finnegans Wake*', the interlacing of information and noise promoted a shared memory of global multiplicity, an initiation of the pluralistic, hyper-connected community to come. But Cage's attention to the material components of *Finnegans Wake* and his performance of *writing* through the book also touched upon another hidden community: he repeated the acts of reading and writing by those held in the margins of the book's archive; a *Wakean* archive which spans from the book's composition process to future 'recomposition' processes like catalogues, databases and other methods which 'pay attention but stop short of explanation'. The performance of *Finnegans Wake* in the hands of John Cage was on the one hand a flawed, utopian disintegration of language, but on the other, an aperture through which we might glimpse the dead labour which remains invisible in the margins of the *Wake*. *About That Original Hen* follows on from Cage's decomposition of Joyce's text but instead of opening the text to nebulous indeterminacy in honor of an emancipatory politics, it uses 'decomposes' *Finnegans Wake*, both textually and materially, in order to pay attention to very specific acts of reading and writing in its margins, re-contextualized through a contemporary critique of power within institutional space.

The following chapter takes its cue from both of the previous chapters: it will analyze a performance of reading and writing *Finnegans Wake* which offers a re-reading and re-writing of the book's composition process. But rather than indicating how the performance of *Finnegans Wake* as theatre (from Manning's poet's theatre to Cage's

compositional theatre) moves towards or accidentally encounters Joyce's archive, the subject performance of this chapter begins in the archive and moves towards theatrical performance. The archive is both a space for performance and a space *to* perform (or re-perform).

Questions concerning *Wakean* competence and theatrical translation, the comparison between readership and spectatorship as well as gendered power relations discussed in Chapter 2 will re-emerge here. From Chapter 3, this chapter will also expand upon the political and social questions raised about composition and materiality, in particular how a 'decomposition process' or 'decording' of *Finnegans Wake* with a direct emphasis on the book's materiality might engage with forgotten, invisible and silent voices from the margins of its composition process.

### **In her genestic field: Raphael and performing Genetics**

*About That Original Hen* can be viewed as a contribution to the field of genetic Joyce studies. The ambiguous, 'ambivalent', between-space of its performance methodology is very much an attempt to function within the textual 'no man's land' in which Dirk van Hulle designates the practice of textual genetics (van Hulle: 2004, 4). The task of my performance is not 'at the service of scholarly editing' and it is more concerned with drawing 'attention to textual trouble-spots than to produce a restored text' (Ibid.). As with genetic criticism, my research is sensitive to the conditions of *Finnegans Wake's* composition process in establishing an impression of its *avant-texte* – a spectral 'text' which can never be restored (because it is a process), but can be imagined, investigated and even, through a performing-archive, *re-enacted*. The contingencies of textual production are both the concern of various genetic critics and my performance-research, in particular the effect of Joyce's eyesight on the way he composed his book. In *About That Original Hen*, the contingent effects of health upon Joyce's competence and performance as a writer became my subject and, in particular, how this contingency was transposed onto the competence and performance of a very minor figure in the book's composition process: Madame. France Raphael.

To some extent this figure could have been one of many others – Lucia and Nora, Harriet Weaver, Paul Léon, Samuel Beckett – I could have pursued my project

through the ‘decording’ of an entire assembly of archival presences and traces. However, I decided to focus on Raphael because she represents a unique role in the *Wake*’s composition, and one in which the various concerns that I have had in my previous chapters can be re-examined by basing a performance project on her. Firstly, the presence of ‘Raphaelisms’ (her ‘errors’ in transcribing Joyce’s notebooks which were later transferred by Joyce into his revisions) in the archive bring up the notion of competence, Raphael was a reader and a writer of the *Work in Progress* during its composition and in this position her ‘competence’ and ‘incompetence’ as a reader was brought into dialogue with her ‘competence’ and ‘incompetence’ as a writer/transcriber. Whilst the role that her accidental writing plays in the *Wake* was beyond her control (the fact that her errors were used by Joyce did not give her any more agency than she would otherwise have had). It is precisely this unique performance which she gave as a hired transcriber that grants her the role of a Wakean ‘anticollaborator’ – becoming sucked into the cogs of Joyce’s ‘hyerpmnesiac’ machine.

Secondly, Raphael is a rare example of a woman employed specifically by Joyce to help in the *Work in Progress*. The very nature of her work was premised on a level of ‘alienation’. With this in mind, the project not only considers Raphael’s role as a reader/writer of the *Work in Progress*, but expands upon the notion of an invisible community that I have previously explored in Cage’s redistribution of the *Wake*. As such, this notion offers a political aspect to the genetic appraisal of Joyce’s work. This reflection upon Raphael’s role as a worker in the *Wake* is explored through the ‘disjointed’ (104.05), ‘syncopated’, double time of my own performance. An historical correspondence is drawn between the silent, marginal act of writing performed by Raphael and a contemporary *silenced* act of writing performed in the margins of the institution in which my own work was performed: the case of Koshka Duff. In making this connection in my performance, I explore a social and gendered relation within the *Wake* by representing its production within the frame of my performance’s field of production and the social relations and conflicts that may converge or diverge in making this transhistorical connection.

Thirdly, the violence and collisions which underscore these associations (of varying implications and intensities) translate into a consideration of materiality and embodiment. Raphael’s job as amanuensis was not only an economic role but was

necessitated by Joyce's encroaching blindness; her performance (and failings), a performance of the hand, was directly related to the failings of Joyce's body. The disintegration of eyesight can also be considered through the subtle violence contained in Raphael's experience as Joyce's employee – from the violence of alienation, the task of transcribing difficult, near illegible writing divorced from content and meaning, to the event of her skull fracture from a car accident during the period of her employment – my performance takes the notion of decomposition and disintegration of *Finnegans Wake* into the realm of materials and bodies. The presence of a decomposing book (my work copy of *Finnegans Wake*) in relation to precarious objects and materials in my performance becomes a performative reading of this spectral constellation of embodied and material collisions and decompositions in the *Wake*'s archive.

Fourthly, the impetus behind my research-as-performance was to demonstrate another example of how performance can contribute productively to the formation of a textual archive; it constitutes an act of memory which both draws from the archive and actively produces it. In the repetition of Raphael's performance of reading and writing I intend to further forge the link between genetic scholarship and performance with the intention of enacting what might be conceived as a genetics of performance: a mutation which takes place across texts through time and an archival mutation concerned with the gaps and silences in the *Wake* of *Finnegans Wake*'s genesis.

#### **'Postreintroducing': *About That Original Hen***

*About That Original Hen* consists of two halves. The first half takes the form of a lecture accompanied by a silent film running simultaneously. The second half takes the form of an object-theatre and puppetry performance accompanied by an audio recording. Both of the recorded elements, film and audio, consist of a combination of documentary, archival and textual materials from *Finnegans Wake*, Koshka Duff's court-case and a student led occupation of Senate House performed in December 2013.

Documentation of this performance is to be found in the appendix where I provide two tables outlining its structure and content, two links to a digital archive (two videos), followed by the textual archive of the performance (a script illustrated with

images from the digital footage). All references to *About That Original Hen* in my analysis will either refer to the digital archive or the textual archive, depending on whether I am referring to specific visual or textual content. References to the film from Part A (*F*) and the from Part B (*T*) use time-codes from the videos (for example: *F* 10:30 - 11:30). References to the script for Part A and Part B take the form: Part / Section / Page (for example: *A.i.1*). However, in my analysis I make sure to provide the relevant context for all examples which are further iterated by integrating images from the archive.

The lecture (Part A) tells the story of my visit to the James Joyce Archive in Buffalo to look at (and transcribe) Mme. France Raphael's transcriptions of Joyce's notebooks. The story recounts one of the 'discoveries' that I made about a particular 'Raphaelism'. I compare Danis Rose's decipherment of Joyce and Raphael's handwriting with my own initial decipherments which sometimes differed. My research into Raphael's transcriptions is also accompanied by brief discussions of other acts of writing by women that can be found in the notebooks: Hester Dowden's spiritualist transcriptions of Oscar Wilde's ghost and the 'active and agitated' handwriting of an 'illiterate peasant woman' performed for the graphologist Jules Crépieux-Jamin.<sup>316</sup> Both of these women, which Joyce used as source materials for his revisions, provide a thematic context for Raphael as examples of other unnamed female hands contained in the *Wake* that either manipulated or were manipulated to produce acts of writing. The lecture ends mid-sentence, on a note of excitement about a possible (although resolutely speculative or 'spectral') hidden dedication from Joyce to his amanuensis. The film, which shows a re-enactment of my time in the archive, accompanies the re-enactment of my 'archive fever' with an accelerating succession of close-ups of my face and my transcriptions of the transcriptions. Throughout my live narration of this story, however, I use digression (in the lecture) and interruptive montage (in the film)<sup>317</sup> to create a constellation of my archival visit, Joyce and Raphael's composition process with the outsourced cleaners' campaign at

<sup>316</sup> James Joyce, *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo VI.B.14*, ed. Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), 15, 238-9; James Joyce, *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo: Notebook VI.B.6*, eds. Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout (Antwerp: Brepols, 2002), 5, 52, 56

<sup>317</sup> This form of montage harks back to the Soviet montage of early cinema which did not show a passage of time but to suggested a dialectical association of images as a 'collision of independent shots' or, as with Dziga Vertov's 'Kino-eye', suggested 'a condensation of time, and also its decomposition'; cited in P. Adams Sitney, ed, *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 11



the University of London and Koshka Duff's chalking and subsequent arrest. Whilst the effect involves distraction and interruption which threatens to divert the flow of the narrative, connections are made between the social-relations of Raphael and Joyce with out-sourced cleaners, students and the University; Raphael's act of writing and Koshka's act of writing and also the bodily suffering experienced by Raphael when she was hit by a car and Koshka and many students at the hands of the police. Underlying my performance as an enthusiastic and otherwise oblivious amateur-genetic scholar are the specters of violence, inequality, silencing and power threatening to distort the clarity of my account.

Part B can be defined as a table-top puppet performance or object theatre and functions as an abrupt contrast to the preceding section.<sup>318</sup> My performance as a lecturer or academic story-teller shifts into a silent performance in which my primary action is the handling and articulating of various objects in response to or as a commentary upon the audio component. Whilst my treatment of the objects (eggs, hats, gloves, chalk, my copy of *Finnegans Wake*) is predominantly theatrical, it could be considered as a representation of the other, usually concealed and private side of academic performance: the process of reading, writing and thinking – the time spent within an archival space gathering ideas – but the boundaries of this space are ambiguous and porous as it might suggest both a public and private time and space, a performance and a preparation of a performance, a library in a university or a desk at home. The audio consists of several voices: my voice reading from selected passages from the *Wake*; another voice (Rob Kiely) reading a letter from Joyce to Raphael; and Koshka Duff reading from Raphael's letters and also providing a testimony about her arrest, spliced together with her reading of lines from *Finnegans Wake* and Hester Dowden. All of the scenes performed on the tabletop revisit

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<sup>318</sup> Examples of companies working at the intersection between puppetry and object-theatre and whose work has influenced my own include: *Les Ateliers du Spectacle* (France); *Faulty Optic* and *Invisible Thread* (UK); *Compaigne Moussoux-Bonté* (Belgium); *Compaigne Philip Genty* (France), and *Akhe* (Russia). The performers, Jeremy Hardingham, Mischa Twitchin and Neenagh Watson, who work closely with the materials and objects in relation to text and with whom I have either collaborated or been supported by, all derive, in their own unique ways, aesthetic influence from Joseph Beuys and Taduesz Kantor. Kantor, like Derrida and Joyce, is a spectre that haunts my own performance practice and although I do not outline this influence explicitly, *About That Original Hen's* concern with memory, death, decomposition and the returning of text to a condition of matter does trace a debt back to Kantor's various manifestoes and his concept of 'reality of the lowest rank'. The *tanztheater* of Pina Bausch, with its attention to objects, materials and voice through the merging of dance and theatre also holds an influence work as does the post-dramatic and Brechtian contexts from which her work emerged. But perhaps the most obvious theatrical precedent for Part B of *About That Original Hen* is Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958).

materials from the lecture except that they are represented with a radically different sense of time and space. The characters and actors presented in the film have now become fragments of clothing (hats, gloves) or animated through materials like eggs and paper. The performance concludes where the end of lecture leaves off: Raphael's absent signature is discovered by the 'original hen', her letter to the Buffalo archive is thus a surrogation of the 'original document' uncovered in I.v and which stands-in for the entirety of *Finnegans Wake* itself.

## ii) Analysis of *About That Original Hen*

‘an afterreenactment by a Magnificent Transformation Scene’  
(222.16-17)

In the following analysis I will treat the June 2014 performance of *About That Original Hen*. I will discuss intentions and concepts behind certain decisions that I made before and during the performance process to illuminate my methodological approach, but most of my analysis will be the result of observing the performance with hindsight and with a critical distance. Although many hours of research, writing, drafting and re-drafting were spent in constructing this performance, it is only in this space of reflection – ‘an afterreenactment’ of my re-enactment of my visit to the archive – that I have been able to gain a sense of its broader political, historical and aesthetic implications. Much of this process is imbued with a sensitivity to the performance's marginal details, contingencies and accidents which are very much a determining feature of its relationship to its subjects and objects (such as Raphael's transcription errors and car accident; Joyce's eyesight and so on). If anything, this analysis is an account of *About That Original Hen's* failures and imperfections and whilst my performance methodology could be considered to belong to what Sarah Jane Bailes has termed a ‘poetics of failure’,<sup>319</sup> there are various imperfections that I will attempt to ‘fail better’ in the final *viva-voce* incarnation of the performance.

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<sup>319</sup> Sarah Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (London: Routledge, 2011), passim

There were many trajectories I could have taken to navigate my way through my memory and the documents of *About That Original Hen*: I could have divided my analysis into the three recurring themes of this thesis (Competence, Composition, and community) but I found that too often these concerns overlap. I could also have repeated an approach I took for two conference papers in which I performed an account of my practice with the aid of my copy of *Finnegans Wake*,<sup>320</sup> taking particular wounds and blemishes upon its surface as prompts for discussion, but this would have limited the scope of the chapter. Instead, I have decided to take a perspective that integrates both the larger conceptual concerns of the thesis with the specificity of focusing on the trajectory of a single object: the glove. In pursuing an almost linear analysis of the performance by paying close attention to the way I use gloves as fragmentary stand-ins for the various figures in the performing-archive I am able to unfold its different layers of meaning and show how the material properties of the performance deal with the *Wake*'s concerns with authority, manipulation, competence and performance, community and memory.

#### **'And you know what aglove means' (374.12)**

Gloves appear in both parts of *About That Original Hen*. They are the most evident visual link between the film and the tabletop as they stand-in for various hands that have participated in the production of the *Wake* and its archive. The glove serves as a dismembered *memento mori* of the division of labour contained in the *Wake*; as both an imitation of the human hand and a mark of its absence, this object 'redismembers' different hands that have performed acts of writing within the book's composition process.

The four pairs of gloves which recur throughout the performance are: white cotton gloves, red leather gloves, green gardening gloves and disposable latex gloves. The cotton gloves represent Mme. Raphael's hand; the red leather, Hester Dowden; the gardening gloves, Crépieux-Jamin's 'illiterate peasant woman' and the latex gloves represent the hands of an anonymous archivist, director and puppeteer.

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<sup>320</sup> Ollie Evans, 'I always adored your hand': Joyce Crossing out the hand of Raphael in *Finnegans Wake*, University of London, Crossing the Space Between Conference. 18th July 2014. Conference Paper; 'About That Original Hen: Performing *Finnegans Wake* through Textual Genetics', Royal Holloway, TAPRA Conference. 3rd September 2014. Conference Paper.

Alongside representing particular roles from the archive, the gloves also delineate a set of hierarchical class and gendered relations. The latex glove is a cipher of authority puppeteering the bodies in his archive. This disposable glove draws associations with forms of control and manipulation, in particular, the handling of delicate archival materials and the sterilized dexterity of medical examination and surgery. The ephemeral materiality of the gloves is also significant because it demonstrates a process of decomposition as they discolour from white to yellow as the film progresses and the tabletop gets messier with egg and soil. This effect gives the latex glove an obsessive and even perverse dimension whilst it also emphasizes the mortality of the hands which produce meaning in archives. They signify the decomposition of archontic authority. Because these gloves maintain a fairly consistent presence throughout *About That Original Hen*, they will be the most prominent object of this chapter's analysis, taking relevant detours with the other gloves and materials as they occur. I will return to their role and how it transforms throughout the performance in the next section.

The white cotton glove, associated with Mme. Raphael, alludes to the feminized labour of the secretarial classes in the 1930's. The glove's delicate texture offers a counterpart to the aggressive disposability of the latex glove, and its blank whiteness associates it with the blank space of Raphael's unsigned letter.<sup>321</sup> In the film the glove is worn by Koshka Duff as Mme. Raphael with an accompanying white hat. Both the hat and gloves reappear on the tabletop but are not worn or animated so they function as a pair of ghostly presences. In the second part, the glove is found inside the copy of *Finnegans Wake* and is used to clear up the debris of eggshell, chalk and soil; and finally buried beneath a mound of dirt on top of page 302 where Joyce inserted her 'Raphaelism', 'jeu d'inspiration'. (A.viii.18)

In this class-system of gloves, Raphael's gloves represent the secretarial, feminized labour of copying and transcription in which productivity is divorced from creativity. This kind of work requires a competent performance of reading and writing as a passive medium rather than an intrusive, active editor of information. The work, usually performed by women in the 1930s, constitutes a tableau or a scene of composition based upon the inequality of a gendered power relation: the male

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<sup>321</sup> Letter from France Raphael to Peter Spielberg, 28th September 1959, XVI.2, The James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo

employer creates from the well of his inspiration and dictates whilst his female employee dutifully transcribes language that is not her property and from which she is consequently alienated. However, it is this aspect of alienation which brings significance to Raphael's hand in *About That Original Hen* as it places a pressure upon her competence as a reader (and decoder) in such a way that transforms her into an accidental writer of the *Wake*. It is a precarious trace within the archive which the cotton glove echoes as it is buried and unburied throughout the performance.

The red leather glove belongs to the figure of Hester Dowden, the spiritualist medium. As an active medium between the spirit world and the real world, channeling the voice of Oscar Wilde with the naked hand of her acquaintance, 'Mr. V', the scene of writing that Dowden's glove represents inverts the passive mediation of Raphael's glove. The glove presents a counter to Raphael, emphasizing a sensual eroticism and manipulation of a male hand. It also represents a more socially liberated feminine hand, perhaps a manifestation of the subtle performative empowerment which female spiritualists were able to exert amidst the chauvanisms and repressive sexuality of bourgeois drawing-rooms.<sup>322</sup> Like Raphael's cotton glove, Dowden's red leather glove is worn by Koshka Duff in the lecture-film (A.iv.13-14), and in the séance section of Part B.ii, the red glove is used to 'scrope' and violate the pages of my copy of *Finnegans Wake* as Duff's voice can be heard as a collage of both Dowden's and her own acts of writing (B.ii.23). The red leather glove can therefore be seen as a conflation of Dowden with Duff and, in contrast to the passive silence of the white glove, offers a bright symbol of empowerment and resistance 'decorded' by an 'ambivalent' collage of erotic sensuality and sexual violation.

The green gardening glove sits at the bottom of the class hierarchy and represents the hand of the 'illiterate peasant woman' from Crépieux-Jamin. It is the most basic emblem of the division of labour in *Finnegans Wake* and presents the most aggressive variation of the gendered tableaux of writing: a woman's hand made to write under increasing conditions of pressure by a male authority, Jules Crépieux-Jamin, the graphologist. Because the detail from this source which ended up in the *Wake* describes the peasant woman's competence under pressure ('active and

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<sup>322</sup> Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in late nineteenth century England* (London: Virago, 1989), *passim*

agitated'),<sup>323</sup> the gardening glove can also be seen as a grubbier companion to Raphael's cotton glove – they both indicate acts of writing performed under pressure and conditions which test their competence: the competence of the peasant woman (being 'illiterate') is stretched by writing quicker, whilst Raphael's competence is tested by transcribing Joyce's illegible heteroglossic scrawl.

The gardening glove can also be associated with Joyce himself. In the lecture film, Rob Kiely plays both Joyce (A.i.3-4) and the 'illiterate peasant woman' (A.vi+vii. 16-18) in a gender swapping act of doubling as Koshka takes over the role of patriarchal authority by playing Jules Crépieux-Jamin (A.vi.16). This doubling of the peasant woman with Joyce suggests a dialectical element to the author's composition process; a conjunction between being both master and slave of his own work in which he is identified yet alienated by his labour. This dialectic is further indicated on the tabletop (B.vi.27) when the glove (combined with an egg and the peasant woman's scarf) becomes the hands of a puppet which re-enacts both the writing of *Finnegans Wake* and the writing demanded by Crépieux-Jamin. The puppet writes with an enormous red pencil (held by Joyce in the film at A.i.3) which alludes to the *Wake's* comparison of writing with tilling the soil (114.16-18) and soon becomes the instrument of the puppet's self-inflicted destruction as the pencil crushes its head, symbolizing exhaustion from the pressure of competence and performance. In the recording that accompanies this sequence I read from a passage in I.v which points towards this dialectical relation that Joyce may have had within his own work – when the text asserts its class consciousness ('I am a worker, a tombstone mason'; 113.34) against an 'unctuous' 'poorjoist' (113.36). This momentary outburst against Joyce designates him as a smooth speaking but deceptive figure of indecisive authority ('unctuous to polise nopebobbies'; 113.36) but also reduces him to a feeble architectural component, a 'poorjoist'. Much later in the *Wake* this internalized class-conflict is synthesized when Shem and Shaun (as the television double-act, Butt and Taff) become 'desprot slave wager and foeman feudal unshackled, now one and the same person' (354.7-8). The 'desprot slave wager' is a synthesis of a desperate despot, both wage slave and wage enslaver, whilst the 'foeman feudal unshackled' is both foreman and feudal yeoman, unshackled and without a shekel to spare. This

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<sup>323</sup> James Joyce, *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo: Notebook VI.B.6*, eds. Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout (Antwerp: Brepolis, 2002), 56

coalescence is not so much a revolutionary synthesis as a state of ambivalent doubling, a point at which social and economic conflict is not resolved but assembled into a revolutionary potentiality; perhaps a version of Benjamin's notion of 'dialectics at a standstill'.<sup>324</sup>

At these points in *About That Original Hen*, it is not revolutionary action and resistance but exhaustion and disintegration which the dialectical image of the gardening glove provokes as a conjunction of Joyce and peasant woman, master and slave. John Nash has argued that 'for Joyce, writing is a process of exhaustion' and that the *Work in Progress* was exemplary of how 'he even exhausted his own materials in the process of writing', citing the example of his notebooks 'with their recycled pages and coloured crossings' as 'that state where work is unavoidably incomplete but already expended [...] that odd amalgam of ceaseless labour and enforced leisure, common to writer and reader'.<sup>325</sup> This conception of Joyce's work and its composition process offers a materialist gloss on the *Wake*'s cyclical and regenerative design: we cannot read of the book's 'commodus vicus of recirculation' (003.02) without acknowledging the enormous expenditure of energy and exhaustion of bodies and materials that go in to the reproduction and circulation of commodities. For Nash, the exhaustion of 'self', 'language' and 'materials' that Joyce's work creates is also bound to what is 'common to writer and reader' (Nash: 2006, 122). In *About That Original Hen*, objects like the gardening glove are used to articulate this commonality between divisions of labour which can exist both inside and outside the individual. As an expression of the material exhaustion that Joyce's hypermnestic machine requires well into the future of its archive, my performance's disintegration of materials enacts a form of solidarity across social and historical divisions. In this way it formulates a transgenerational conversation, an embodied 'redismembering' of the expenditure of energy shared by the named and unnamed writers and readers in and outside of Joyce's *Wake*.

Each of these gloves that transfer between the film and the tabletop also in some way perform the book's return to matter and a condition of materiality. The green

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<sup>324</sup>Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (London: Belknap Press, 1999), 462-463

<sup>325</sup> John Nash, *James Joyce and the Act of Reception: Reading, Ireland, Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 122

glove does this distinctly by connecting the labour of writing with the labour of fertilizing the earth. The latex glove, wearing an egg to become the 'Hen' from the same chapter (I.v), repeats the retrieval of the 'letter' from the midden heap dump, amongst bits of orangepeel and soil.<sup>326</sup> The red glove intensifies the materiality of the page by turning it into a 'chalk and sanguine pictograph' (220.11) with a red chalk and enacts a tactile association between the violation of the book and the violation of a female body by tearing out its pages; and the white cotton gloves perform various material constellations from its sepulchral dismemberment into the 'tombstone' (A.viii. 21 + B.v.26; 114.34) of *Finnegans Wake* to its silent solidarity with the outsourced cleaners of Senate House as they clean up the mess made on the tabletop (B.v.26/T, 11.48-55). Rather than showing how the composition process of *Finnegans Wake* can be repeated in performance through its disintegration, the gloves perform this repetition through its (exhausted) remains.

### **'Enter the cop and how': The Disposable Latex Glove**

The latex gloves first appear in the film as I introduce the subject of Mme. Raphael and her transcriptions of Joyce's notes (A.i.4). For this sequence the camera frame acts as the POV (point-of-view) of the researcher traveling through the 'archive'.<sup>327</sup> The camera enters a corridor (*F*, 2:20) and turns to a series of doors to the left. The latex hand emerges into frame from the right and proceeds to unlock each door, quickly closing them after discovering nothing but cardboard boxes stacked on shelves. The hand moves with an agitated sense of purpose but betrays a clumsiness as it opens each door, subtly undermining its agency and fluency as it has difficulty immediately locating the keys and handles. This clumsiness emerged from the strain on my hand-to-eye co-ordination as I was filming. It would have been possible to re-shoot the take after practicing the sequence to make it more precise but I decided to maintain the imperfection so that the strain of the filming process itself became part of its own documentation. Allowing for this accidental, contingent imperfection to slip into the fixed form of the film was one way of introducing the work's concern with competence and performance; a filmic gesture towards the

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<sup>326</sup> *FW* 110.29-31: '...a few spontaneous fragments of orangepeel, the last remains of an outdoor meal by some unknown sunseeker or placehider *illico* way back in his mistridden past.'

<sup>327</sup> A 'simulation' of the archive at Buffalo filmed in the basement of 36 Gordon Square, the Derek Jarman Lab.



lecture's discussion of the imperfections and slips of the human hand such as Joyce's half-blind drawings (A.i.3) or Raphael's 'errors' in transcription (A.i.4-5). The image of my latexed hand, struggling under the defamiliarizing condition of taking a POV shot, also anticipates the material on Jules Crépieux-Jamin and his 'illiterate peasant woman' (A.vi.16-17 / B.vi.26-28) whose 'active and agitated' handwriting is recorded to determine her 'character' by observing how the pressure of time constraints affected the characteristics of her writing (A.vi.17/Crépieux-Jamin: 1923, 210). Although the latex glove represents a figure in control of the archive it also accidentally creates a silent bridge between itself and the 'imperfections' of the figures it manipulates within the archive.

The latex hand is captured in a relation to another force - the invisible 'hand' of the editor. To condense the scene's duration and instill a sense of efficient movement the scene is cut-up so that the tempo of the frame is quicker than the hand's movements. As a result the narrative of the screen slips ahead, as though the technological sophistication of the camera were impatient with the lagging incompetence of the latexed hand's onscreen performance. This intervening presence of the editor's hand (the same hand, my hand, but from a later time) dictates the flow of the film. At this point in the lecture I discuss Joyce's failing eyesight (another connection with the clumsiness of the latex hand) and his hiring of Raphael to transcribe his notebooks (A.i.3-4). The combination of these elements addresses the interplay of the competences and incompetences that occur within a composition process; the relationship between mastery and inefficiency; control and contingency.

The latexed hand becomes a silent, visual echo of my voice as I deliver the lecture which, through the comic register of the edit, offers a divergence from the narrative authority of my live performance. Whilst the latex hand has a forward moving agency and power over the other bodies in the 'archive', the impatient fragmentation of its movement by the editing process shows that it is ultimately subject to a process outside of its frame and influence. The oscillation of mastery and submission between these 'hands', the latexed hand, the editor's hand and the lecturer's 'hand', steering the live narration, takes place within the same body (mine). David Hayman recognised a similar oscillation between mastery and submission in both Joyce's writing method and use of language and the reader's own effort to 'win a self back

from the language over which he repeatedly gains and as often loses mastery'.<sup>328</sup> Between these juxtapositions of times, spaces and materials, the latex glove re-performs an aspect that is characteristic of both Joyce's composition process and the process of reading *Finnegans Wake* – an ambivalent oscillation between upholding and relinquishing mastery, a play between power and powerlessness.

In the next part of this sequence (*F*, 3:05 - 4:15) the camera approaches a heavy, white metal door with a sign reading, 'No Entry'. It looks like the door to an official vault and once the hand leads the viewer in, carefully switching on the light, we discover Joyce (Robert Kiely) and Raphael (Koshka Duff) cooped inside little alcoves, writing into notebooks, as this 'scene of writing' is introduced in the lecture (A.i.3-4).



The 'No Entry' sign was not a deliberate detail made especially for the film but it was deliberately kept in the shot. It is an example of one of the various accidental components of the film, the sign introduces the notion of crossing boundaries and violating forbidden spaces. This anticipates the 'forbidden' act of chalking by Koshka (A.ii.9) which is mentioned in the lecture shortly after this moment. It could also be related to the restriction on copying Joyce's archival materials with cameras (but not paper and pencils). This unspoken connection to archival rules, such as the forbidding of using pens in the vicinity of the notebooks, could also extend to the fact

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<sup>328</sup> David Hayman, *The Wake In Transit* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 55

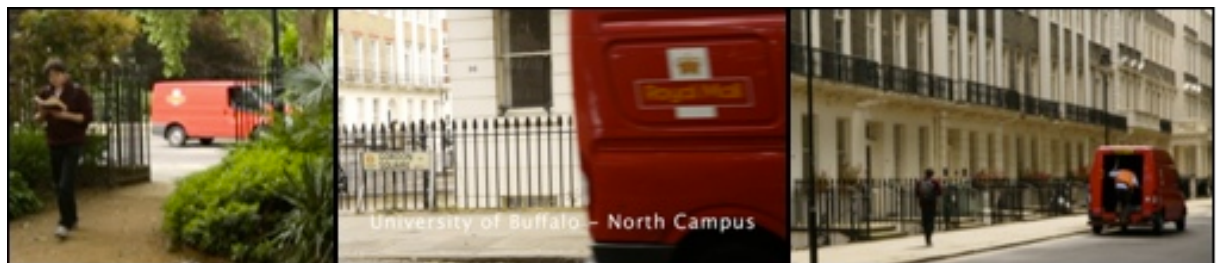
that Raphael uses a pencil to re-enact her transcriptions even though she actually performed them with a pen. But the latex glove's opening of the door that says 'No Entry' demonstrates how entry through the door does not extend to everyone. Perhaps the latex is permitted entry because of its position within the archive's hierarchy; or perhaps it is taking advantage of the absence of an authority that would otherwise have barred its entry; maybe the authority overseeing the contents of the archive vault has disappeared or been overthrown or, like the hand of the Joyce estate, its absolute control over the archive has expired. The ambiguity of the sign thus functions as a cipher for the ambiguity of power-relations that run throughout the performance: does the film have more authority over the narrative than the lecture? Does the latex-glove, an emblem of my transitional role between phd-student and academic –archivist and performer – handle these materials legitimately or illegitimately? The 'No Entry' sign is also a reminder of the arbitrary limitations of language as it attempts to control and legislate the body: the gesture of entering a space as a negation of a sign which negates 'entry', places different modes of representation into conflict. Not only is the representation of the lecture strained by the contiguous representation of the film, but, within the film itself, language and object are brought into tension with each other. As a result the film asks its audience to distrust it and, by association, to distrust everything else that is being represented.



This is a tension at work from the beginning of the lecture-film. The opening scenes (shot by Koshka Duff under my direction) establish a comic disjunction between the 'truth' of the lecture and the fakery of the film. Before the depiction of my 'arrival' at the 'University of Buffalo - North Campus' (which is shown to be Woburn Square and Gordon Square by street signs), the title of the piece, 'About That Original Hen', is introduced with a montage of myself reading my copy of *Finnegans Wake* in a children's playground (F, 0:00-0:21).<sup>329</sup> Whilst the image of spinning around in a

<sup>329</sup> Located in Woburn Square Garden at the heart of Bloomsbury and the various campuses of the University of London.

roundabout and falling from a bouncy horse can be linked to the *Wake*,<sup>330</sup> the aim of this little sequence was to establish the function of play in the performance as something inseparable from the ‘serious’ task of reading a book and visiting its archive as a scholar. It suggests that in this kind of work one must return to the logic of childhood and its objects whilst maintaining their adult dimensions and thus not being entirely able to *fit* into them perfectly once more. In one sense, it is a way of disrupting ‘unidirectional’ time by collapsing the linear progression of maturity with a cyclical return to infancy, in another sense it challenges the appropriateness or seriousness of the work about to be presented within an academic environment: to what extent can the audience *trust* the information they are about to be presented with and how are they supposed to receive it? This uncertainty about what is being ‘sent’ and ‘received’ ties this aspect of *About That Original Hen* to what Derrida has termed the ‘postal effect’ of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>331</sup>



For Derrida, the ‘postal effect’, or ‘postality’, is a ‘Babelization’<sup>332</sup> and disruption of the ‘unidirectional flow’ of linear time and cause and effect.<sup>333</sup> As Andrew Mitchell has recently re-articulated, ‘postality puts Plato behind Socrates, and even Freud behind Plato [...] numerous temporal directions and dimensions now intersect and intercept

<sup>330</sup> The roundabout as Shem’s ‘cyclewheeling history’ (186.2) or the ‘vicociclometer’ (614.27) and falling from the horse as both ‘the Fall’ (e.g. 3.11) and Humpty Dumpty (‘And not all the king’s men nor his horses’ (47.26); ‘after humpteen dumpteen revivals. Before all the King’s Hoarsers’ (219.15)) or one of the many references to horses in the *Wake* such as in the scenographic introduction to *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies* (II.i): ‘With futurist onehorse balletbattle pictures and the Pageant’ (221.18)

<sup>331</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 3 & 7; Andrew J. Mitchell, ‘Meaning Postponed; *The Post Card* and *Finnegans Wake*’ in *Derrida and Joyce; Texts and Contexts*, Eds. Andrew J. Mitchell & Sam Slote (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013), pp. 145-162,

<sup>332</sup> According to Derrida, his book *L’Carte Postale* was an attempt ‘to restage the Babelization of the postal system in *Finnegans Wake*’; Jacques Derrida, ‘Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce’ (1984), trans. François Raffoul in Mitchell, Andrew J. & Slote, Sam (eds.), *Derrida and Joyce: Text and Contexts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), pp.41-86, 44

<sup>333</sup> Andrew J. Mitchell, ‘Meaning Postponed: *The Post Card* and *Finnegans Wake*’ in *Derrida and Joyce; Texts and Contexts*, Eds. Andrew J. Mitchell & Sam Slote (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), pp.145-162

the flow' (Mitchell and Slote: 2013, 148). Notions of origin and destination are plunged into confusion like a Babelization of temporality and the poles of sender and receiver are rendered unstable and out of joint – 'for everything sent, there is the ineradicable possibility of non-arrival.' (Mitchell and Slote: 2013, 146). Accordingly, the language of *Finnegans Wake*, with its neologistic challenge to linear conceptions of meaning, 'is sent and is constantly traveling toward meaning, though never arriving at a meaning' (Ibid, 145). Mitchell expands on this notion of 'postality' in *Finnegans Wake* by recognizing 'Shaun the Post' as the reluctant bearer of this 'upsetting postal situation' in the book as he is 'charged to deliver a message that is not his own' and which is doomed to non-arrival but constantly subject to appropriation and 'the posting of meaning' (Ibid, 145 & 155). Shaun represents a figure of authority who, in his 'demand for stability and fixity', fears the consequences of alterity and refuses 'to see in identity a matter of appropriation' (Ibid, 154). Yet it is this figure of authority in which 'postal-effect' takes place.

Unknown to myself or Koshka Duff, who shot the footage of my 'arrival' at the 'University of Buffalo - North Campus' (which is shown to be Woburn Square and Gordon Square by street signs), we had captured a Royal Mail postal van in two separate shots and I did not realize until later that I had edited these two shots together so that it seemed that the postal van had been following me to the entrance of the 'North Campus' (43 Gordon Square). Like the red telephone box, the red Royal Mail van is a distinctive symbol of the United Kingdom and its national borders, thus immediately bringing into contention the narrative of the lecture (set in Buffalo) with the representation of the film (made in London).<sup>334</sup> The unplanned arrival of the postal van at the location which I was presenting as the James Joyce Collection also provides a foreshadowing of the role of letters in my performance and in *Finnegans Wake* itself. The combination of letters arriving in the present-day and the reading of letters from the past implies a circularity that confuses unidirectional, linear time with multidirectional, cyclical time. Might the Postman arriving at the archive be delivering the material that I am about to receive? Are the letters and notebooks sent from Paris to Buffalo in 1950 about to be delivered from Buffalo to London in 2013/2014? But

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<sup>334</sup> The 'dogmestic' nationalism of Shaun the Post is referred to in III.iii after he paints Dublin 'a wearing greenridinghued' (411.24), alluding to the painting of all postboxes green following Irish independence; Roland McHugh, *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* (3rd Edition) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 411

most importantly, was the appearance of the postal van deliberate or an accident and to what extent does the presence of *Finengans Wake* and its postal effect in the performance complicate the implied opposition of the two terms?

Like the letter that Shaun is charged to deliver, the arrival of the post-van and its contents does not belong to me, *About That Original Hen* was not its intended destination yet its presence and arrival belongs entirely in the frame of the film. Just as the location of Gordon Square belongs in the project but is at the same time dislocated by the fiction that it is another location, the Buffalo campus, the arrival of meaning and naming is bound by a process of appropriation and ontological slipperiness; it is a case of doubled, simultaneous identity as much as it is a case of doubled negation: the erasure of thing with name and name with thing.

It is relevant that the arrival of the postal van was an entirely unintended consequence of my inability to see the whole picture from the beginning. During the process of composing this performance out of *Finnegans Wake*, signs, allusions and messages are sent out like this all the time but there is no one fixed point at which they will arrive, if they arrive at all. There is often a confusion as to who is sending and who is receiving, whether it is *Finnegans Wake* sending a message through my project or if I myself am sending a message back to Joyce, or even, in this context, to Mme. France Raphael. This is a confusion that mirrors the relationship between Joyce's authorship and the 'Raphaelisms' of his amanuensis: the errors in Raphael's transcriptions become unintended messages sent to Joyce who may or may not recognize them as such, as the contingently crafted letters (figuratively and literally) of her employment during the *Work in Progress*. The 'messages' that these glitches in the transcriptions send-out are nothing other than the errors themselves, traces of the pressures exerted upon the copyist's hand, and they may never arrive and be received because the 'poles' of this correspondence can never be clearly defined. In the end this scenario is about a question of an indeterminate power relation, between agency and submission: between *Finnegans Wake* and the re-performance of *Finnegans Wake*.

## Opening The Vault

Returning to Joyce and Raphael (*F*, 3:05 - 4:15): The latex glove moves out of frame as the camera slows down to approach Joyce and Raphael. Joyce is writing with an oversized red pencil in the alcove above Raphael who can only be seen by her hat. The camera moves in towards Joyce and the hand re-emerges to tap him on the knee. Then it cuts to Raphael, who is transcribing between two notebooks using a normal sized pencil; the hand taps her on the knee as well. The scene cuts to another room and the hand clicks them into action as they re-enact a 'scene of writing' between Joyce and Raphael in pantomime. The scene is sped up in the editing process so that it recalls the pace of early silent comedies as a mediated signal towards the historical diachrony of the piece.



In the vault these characters are stored in a way that reflects their social relation to one another (or at least to the extent that I have decided to present them within the archive). Joyce sits in his alcove directly above Raphael – they are both subjected to the enclosure of this imaginary archive; imprisoned in their purgatorial cells, but with Joyce given priority above the amanuensis beneath him. When the camera enters the storeroom both are visible but it moves directly to Joyce as Raphael slips out of view. He writes with an oversized red pencil, which recurs part B as a 'shillelagh' (B.i. 22) and the 'illiterate peasant woman's' writing tool (B.vi.27-28), suggesting an inflated authorial ego and a perverse token of phallic authorship. (Perhaps this is the 'pronged instrument' that punctured the 'paper wounds' (124.03) (his 'wordwounder'; 075.19) which release 'a hidden voice pleading and suffering in purgatory' (A.vi.14). The camera lingers and it soon becomes evident that Joyce is not *writing* but *crossing out* as the pencil moves in straight lines across the page. This is a reference to how Joyce would cross out Raphael's notes after using them in a redraft (A.i.4); the colour of the pencil also alludes to the coloured crayons that he used to cross

them out.<sup>335</sup> The shot then cuts to Raphael in her alcove which is considerably darker than Joyce's. Her writing implement is a pencil and she is performing a transcription from one notebook to another. (The 'props' she uses are my own Phd notebooks). After the hand taps her the scene cuts to another room (*F*, 3:55). The latex glove is positioned between Raphael on the left and Joyce on the right and clicks them back to life as they stand inert, eyes-closed like robots and switch into action, performing the scene of writing as a comic pantomime.

The clicking of the fingers puts the latex glove into the role of 'director' or a puppeteer whose puppets run automatically to work once triggered. If we see them as prisoners then this scene might serve as their designated 'yard-time' or, in the manner of Beckett's equation of *Work in Progress* with a 'spherical' purgatory (opposed to Dante's 'conical', and therefore, emancipatory Purgatory),<sup>336</sup> this scene might constitute their endlessly repeated comical torment in the eschatological rotations of film and 'decoded' repetition.<sup>337</sup>



Another accident picked up by the camera can be found at the beginning of the pantomime sequence. Behind Raphael and Joyce can be seen an old film editing machine. As soon as this appears between them the frame rate of the digital film footage is accelerated so that it resembles the rapid frame rate of silent comedies

<sup>335</sup> Although not all of the crayons were red.

<sup>336</sup> For Beckett, Dante's 'conical' purgatory is 'unidirectional' and implies a forward moving 'absolute progression', whilst Joyce's 'spherical' or cyclical purgatory is 'multi-directional' and 'a step forward is, by definition, a step back' (Beckett: 1972, 21-22)

<sup>337</sup> The theme of purgatory subtly runs throughout the performance. The lecture makes its most direct reference to it in relation to the 'paper wounds' and the notion of the punctured surface of the paper releasing a 'hidden voice pleading and suffering in purgatory' (A.vi.14) – the lecture is timed so that this remark coalesces with CCTV footage from Holborn Police station of Duff reading in a cell awaiting her interrogation. Coincidentally, she was reading Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*.



from the 1920s and 1930s. All the while the scene is clearly shot within a 21st century office space without any pretense towards creating an ‘historically accurate’ interior or a neutral, historically indeterminate space. As the camera turns to follow the characters an Apple Macbook and projector come into view along with the uninspiring furniture of a typical institutional space. But the momentary glimpse of the film editing machine haunts the frame with a trace of the medium’s history: the accelerated frame rate, achieved digitally (using Final Cut Pro 7 on the computers that appear earlier in the film (*A.i.2/F*, 1:25-1:55)), enhances this silent connection between the subject of the film, a composition process that emerged out of the golden age of silent cinema, and the history of one of the means of production (film) used to regenerate silent traces and figures concealed within the archives of that subject. The presence of the editing (cutting) machine recalls a time when editing and cutting a film was literally a process of cutting and pasting together strips of film. Showing these manual and digital tools together alerts us to a material inheritance which haunts the language of composition.



The image of this cutting machine, echoed by a 21st century cutting machine, Final Cut Pro (*F*, 1:24-1:55 & 8:50-9:06), is a reminder of the manual labour performed in the process of composition; the handiwork with tools and machines which constellate between different forms of writing and editing. Joyce was fond of drawing comparisons between these different forms of manual and mechanical labour in the complex collaborative production of the *Work in Progress* and would swing between regarding himself as an engineer (‘one of the greatest engineers, if not the greatest, in the world’; Van Hulle: 2008, 15) to the more modest title of ‘scissors-and-paste-man’ (ibid). In a letter to T.J. Brown (transcribed by Harriet Weaver), Joyce spoke of

having to ‘chop up’ a draft of “The Hen” chapter (l.v) with his son (Giorgio) using ‘three magnifying glasses’ and then ‘sew[ing] it up again on [Mr. Morel’s] sewing machine’ (Atherton: 1959, 62). Never shy of inflecting reports of the process with melodrama, Joyce depicted the construction of this ‘massproduct of teamwork’ (546.16) as a kind of performance, as though he was putting into practice Weaver’s criticism that he was wasting his genius as the chief-foreman of his ‘wholesale safety pun factory’ (Joyce: 1966, 153). Rob Kiely’s performance in the silent-movie pantomime presents Joyce as a comic portrait of a befuddled, genius entrepreneur looking for a remedy to improve his output. Whilst the representation is a fictional speculation and exaggeration of Joyce’s relationship to his employees and volunteers, it re-enacts the image of the troubled bourgeois-master-craftsman-cum-quixotic-engineer that he often played in his letters.

Joyce’s performance as an eccentric ‘Bygmyster’ (004.18) also involved an element of faith in the controlled autonomy of his grand project. From the early days of the *Work in Progress* he characterised the work as ‘not fragments but active elements’ which would eventually ‘begin to fuse of themselves’,<sup>338</sup> and the following year he described the activity of these autonomous elements as two ‘tunnelling parties’ that had finally made their way between a ‘partition’ that had been causing structural problems.<sup>339</sup> This sense of the work’s autonomy, a result of the author’s industry and reliance upon other hands, is similar to the flux of control and contingency which constituted my own composition process for *About That Original Hen*. Elements like the film or the tabletop puppetry were under my control as composer and performer, but the different aspects of their media and the manner in which I chose to present materials allowed for a certain autonomy within the elements themselves, whether they were accidental arrivals like the postal-van or unpredictable materials like eggshells. Whilst Joyce spoke of this autonomy as a metaphor for the performance of his own work it also extends to the work in and of itself as an autonomous entity which also includes the contingencies of his helpers and ‘anticollaborators’ like Raphael. I would not go so far as Ian MacArthur who argues that Joyce deliberately hired

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<sup>338</sup>Letter to Weaver, 9 October 1923, *Letters I*, 204

<sup>339</sup> Letter to Weaver, 9 November 1924 in Richard Ellman (ed), *Selected Letters of James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 304

Raphael so she would make ‘Raphaelisms’,<sup>340</sup> but I would say that he performed his work as a process of controlled collaboration and knew how to balance the play between mastery and submission, power and powerlessness. Similarly, there was a moment in filming for *About That Original Hen* when I allowed one of my collaborators (Kiely) to follow through with an impulse with a cigarette which I decided to keep in the film. Although it is as imperceptible a detail as the ‘no entry’ sign or the postal-van, the detail provides a useful constellation point for how the aspect of authorial competence that I have been discussing (between mastery and submission, control and contingency) intersects with the use (and abuse) of materials in my project and how they ultimately relate to the notion of the decomposition of authority.



This shot (*F*, 3:54-3:57) taken over Joyce’s shoulder with his profile to the left, a cigarette, miraculously materialized and hanging from his mouth, surveying Raphael as she performs her transcription work. It is as though the POV shot has now granted Joyce with the authority of the film’s gaze. The cigarette does not appear in the previous frames and the effect is that it seems to appear from out of nowhere and sticks out intrusively in the flow of the edit. It is unlit and points in a diagonal directly towards Raphael’s head. Like the giant red pencil, the cigarette suggests a phallic implement of power but, like the disposable, yellowing material of the latex glove,

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<sup>340</sup> On what he calls the ‘Mutant Units in the C notebooks’, MacArthur writes: ‘It is one of Joyce’s techniques following the commonplace idea that dreams are distortions of everyday life. The notebook units represent such life. At first (during the early stages of composition) Joyce is content to rearrange them. Later he distorts them more and more, making them less easy to recognize, finally he uses the accidental mistranscriptions.’ (cited in van Hulle: 2004, 106)

also signals towards the mortality of the master figure – the implied decomposition of the authority’s body through the unhealthy habit of smoking.<sup>341</sup> However, as it remains white and unlit, its sterile presence in the archival frame gives it a condition of frozen potential; there will be no fire and smoke in this archive, materials at risk of damage but protected by the control of the one who puts them at risk. This dynamic repeats itself later in the lecture when I introduce Koshka Duff’s arrest and the *3 cosas* campaign: after a rapid montage of footage connecting the policing of both Buffalo and University of London with protests from students and cleaners at UoL and footage of the arrest (used as evidence in her court case/appeal), ending with Duff reading a book in a cell, the film cuts to a mid-shot of myself, sitting at a desk (the same desk that she will sit at as Raphael in the film) wearing a pair of fresh, clean latex gloves, examining the notebooks, whilst taking a sip from a cup of tea.<sup>342</sup> (A.ii.9/F, 8:12-8:19)

The juxtaposition from Koshka Duff reading in her cell (incidentally, with her own cup of tea sitting by her foot in a polystyrene cup) to myself reading at an ‘archive’ desk as though I were in the comfort of my own home, echoes the relationships between Joyce and Raphael as well as Crépieux-Jamin and the ‘illiterate peasant woman’ in the performance: the male figures ultimately have control over writing and documentation whilst the female figures are either alienated, placed under pressure or precariously handled and incarcerated as they are fragmented into an archive.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> In the *Wake* Joyce refers to cigarettes as ‘sinnerettes’ (457.22; 587.07) and ‘the clove or coffinnail you chewed or champed’ (115.05), despite his own penchant for smoking.

<sup>342</sup> An unconscious reference to the distinctive tea stain on the ‘letter’ in the *Wake*: ‘The stain, and that a teastain’ (111.20); ‘signed Toga Girilis (teasy dear)’ (112.30); ‘The teatimestained terminal’ (114.29-30); ‘With a capital Tea for Thirst’ (302.9-10); ‘have teaspilled all my hazeydency’ (305.4); ‘to Michal for the latter to turn up with a cupital tea before her’ (369.32).

<sup>343</sup> The ‘archive’ in Koshka Duff’s case, aside from my own archivisation of her story for *About That Original Hen*, would also include police records. This is directly alluded to during the lecture (A.ii.12/ F, 11:06 - 11:25) when CCTV footage of a Police administrator typing at a computer with Duff waiting beside him is juxtaposed with my discussion of how Raphael’s notes were crossed out ‘from the record whilst remaining *in* the record’ (A.ii.12). Furthermore, Duff’s archivization into police records is also equated with the ‘illiterate peasant woman’s’ place in Crépieux-Jamin’s study (and thus the archive of the *Wake*), when footage of Duff being taken to an interrogation room directly precedes my discussion of Graphology (A.vi.16 / F, 14:26 - 17:19). The assessment of Crépieux-Jamin’s criminal and vulgar ‘canailles’ character through their handwriting is thus associated with the Police’s systematic recording of Duff’s ‘criminal’ character.



When the frame returns to me sitting amongst the notebooks (*F*, 8:12-8:19), the latex gloves on my hands share the blank hue of the white cigarette in Joyce's mouth (*F*, 3:54-3:57). They both indicate a sterile but potentially destructive manipulation of the materials and bodies in the archive. Joyce's unlit 'sinnerette' points aggressively towards Raphael as she transcribes under his watch; my disposable gloves protect the notebooks from the danger of dirt from the skin or inky fingers but at the same time hold the cup of tea that could spill at any moment. Both of these objects become symbolic of power and privilege. Their implied sterility also reflects the sterility of the representative medium: the perfectly safe re-enactment of the archive on film in which every object and location is a stand-in for the 'real thing'.<sup>344</sup> The only 'authentic' documentation of precarious bodies in this performing archive occurs in the fragmented glimpses of the very real violence performed by police upon the bodies of students (cf. *F*, 6:19-6:30; 6:54-6:57; 7:17-7:35 & 13:27-13:45) and of students directed against university property (*F*, 6:43-6:48).

The underlying dialectic at work beneath these different materials attached to the bodies of male figures of authority in this performing archive is one of protection and threat; preservation and decomposition. The dictatorial cigarette is impotent and white but contains the fuel for the immediate disintegration of flammable documents and the accelerated decay of the smoker's body; the disposable latex gloves protect the materials and bodies they handle but, as eventually becomes apparent towards the conclusion of the film and in the second half of the performance, are subject to their own decomposition and can easily become complicit in the decomposition of the objects that are at their disposal. The yellow and brown stains of decomposition, marks of the object's ephemerality and disposability (and *deposability?*), inevitably

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<sup>344</sup> It is no coincidence that the 'master's' gloves are made from the same material as condoms.

threaten to invert the authoritative power of their white sterility and thus imbricates them with the same precarious condition of the materials under their 'care'.

The film's frame highlights the latex glove's condition of disposability and demonstrates a process of decomposition coterminous with the narrative climax of the lecture. At *F*,9:30-9:42 a static mid-shot shows my hands at the desk, my copy of the *Wake* displayed to the right as I perform a slightly 'stagey' process of putting the gloves on. At first my hands lie palms down, side by side, on the surface of the desk in a neutral, preparatory pose. I take each glove one at a time, pulling on each digit so that it slides smoothly onto my fingers. As I momentarily hold each glove above the table the viewer might discern the fleeting image of a figure as the crumpled flesh-like material of the loose latex forms a raggedy ghost with the digits becoming limbs, anticipating their eventual transformation into anthropomorphic gloves at the end of the performance (*B.viii* / *T* 21:35-22:24).



This minor detail reinforces how the supposed binaries of animate/inanimate, living/dead, body/material which run throughout the performance are in a constant fluctuation with one another. These sorts of ambivalent fluctuations also render the 'ambiviolences' (518.02) of the *Wake*'s form and content into *About That Original Hen*. There are moments at which two contraries coalesce and, whilst maintaining their distinctions, become conjoined. Once the gloves are on my hands the quality of the digital image and the lighting makes them appear a smooth, almost porcelain white, no longer the wrinkly yellow skin from a moment before. My hands now look soft and benign as the fingers appear slightly puffy and rotund when returned to the neutral pose. The purpose of this deliberately stylized performance between my hands and the latex gloves is to point towards the artificiality of their role as masters over the archive's materials whilst setting up the contrast between their preservative

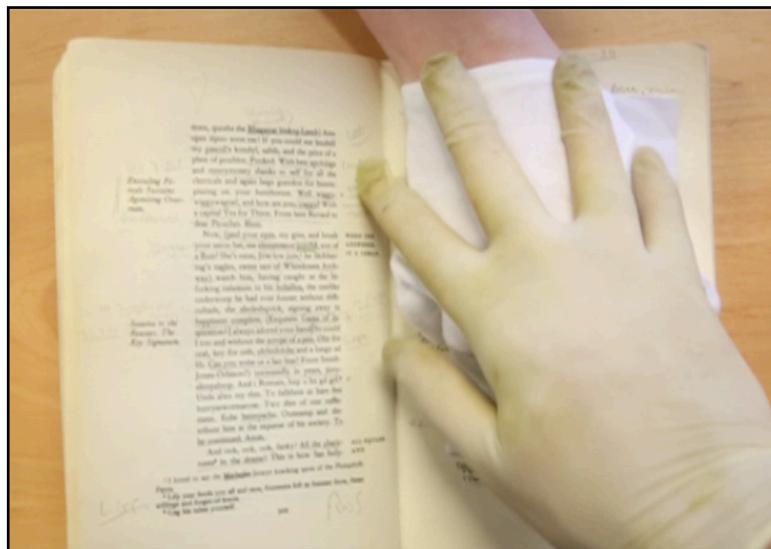
and destructive qualities: their soft, porcelain whiteness soon transforms into a rough, decomposing yellow.



**The Jouissance of the Latex Glove**

‘The scene, refreshed, reroused, was never to be forgotten ‘  
(055.10-11)

By the end of the film (F 20:20-21:30), as I feverishly make conjectures about the ‘message’ left behind by Joyce to Raphael’s ‘hand’ on page 302 (‘Game of Inspiration. I always adored your hand’/A.viii.20-21), the manipulative stage-managing role of the latex gloves becomes more apparent. The camera returns to a POV shot overlooking the open copy of *Finnegans Wake* and with a roughly edited cut, Raphael’s hand appears upon the page bearing the secret message. The camera begins to tremble and the latex hand re-emerges from the right.



But unlike the smooth porcelain of before, the glove is an ugly yellow with varying shades of smudgy hues – it is even possible to glimpse traces of pink flesh as the sweat from my hand glistens through the latex. Along with a previous shot of myself smelling the notebooks in the the ‘archive fever’ montage (20:55-20:57), the latexed hand is given a perverse, obsessive aspect. The way it lifts Raphael’s lifeless hand to discover the letter and lingers on Raphael’s hand before closing them back up into the book, makes [him] resemble a disturbed forensic investigator (or someone disturbingly posing as a forensic investigator) tampering with evidence. The combination of this suggestively perverted material encounter with the bodies concealed in the archive with the lecturer’s excitable acceleration into erotically charged conjecture tips the performance towards the edges of ‘sensible’ academic commentary and begins to let the fantasy of a phantasmagoric erotic encounter determine the intermediary conclusion to the narrative:

Was Joyce in love with the hand of his amanuensis? Had the familiarity of her 'handworded grace' become the object of his affection as he held it close to his 'gnose's glow', 'scroping' his crayon across her smooth curves and opened vowels, letting it guide him deeper into the night, the accumulating obscurity of the work?

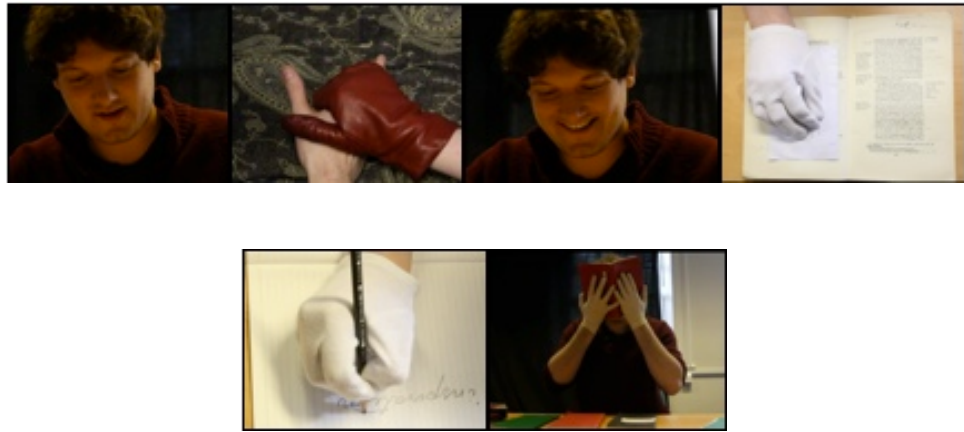
(A.viii.20)

These lines can barely contain their jouissance in playfully fusing the language of the *Wake* with an erotic anthropomorphism of Raphael’s handwriting.<sup>345</sup> In the delivery of these lines as a performer I decided to commit to their intensity but it was difficult to avoid the comic effect of the accompanying film from creating a protective layer of ironic detachment; as though the montage of my facial reactions to discovering various erotic ‘figments’ (096.26) in the archive was silently mocking the sincerity of the lecturer from behind his back.

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<sup>345</sup>In this respect I repeat the philologist’s gendering of writing in chapter I.v in which he discusses the Letter’s ‘feminine clothiering’ (109.31), a sexualisation of writing’s materiality which Suzette Henke has identified as a frequent occurrence in the *Wake* when ‘the literal text is (en)gendered as an eroticized sexual/textual object open to the specular gaze of a lascivious-minded male.’; Suzette Henke, *Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), 187





Nonetheless, the lecturer is asking his audience to take this intermediary conclusion seriously not because he has presented a logical conclusion to a determined arrangement of archival material but because he has presented a conclusion to an affective material encounter with a presence in the Joyce archive. This is not simply a re-enactment of a research visit but a heightened repetition of desires and thoughts experienced during the performance of the research itself.

### **An aside on racialisation**

I am aware that the language used to describe these objects and their role in *About That Original Hen* is subtly racialised. Racism has been an important part of the outsourced workers' campaigns as the majority of them are migrant workers who have been involved in struggles against forms of racial discrimination within the workplace.<sup>346</sup> Whilst I am highlighting the 'porcelain whiteness' of my latex gloves as a symbol of patriarchal sterility and by implication, the neutrality of white supremacy which is destabilized by my emphasis on materiality and decomposition, I am also aware of the project's overall 'whiteness' which risks effacing the differences in race and class that constitute the particular political situation in which I chose to contextualize my performance. Because this project has been primarily concerned with an aggregate of singular 'acts of writing' by women within patriarchal spaces and institutions it was necessary to focus specifically on Koshka Duff's act of writing in order to make the constellation between the different hands clear. As a result the

<sup>346</sup> For example the occupation at Capgemini UK in September 2013 brought claims of racial slurs against the international contractor, ISS; <http://iwgb.org.uk/2013/09/05/iwgb-cleaners-say-no-to-redundancies-no-to-racism-no-to-poverty-wages-yes-to-a-living-wage/> [accessed 19.09.15]

performance is potentially troubled by perpetuating the marginalisation and silencing of the outsourced workers at the University London by restricting their presence to a momentary glimpse at *F*, 7:50 - 8:04 (in footage of a *3cosas* demonstration at Senate House; see fig below), rather than letting them speak for themselves. The footage of this demonstration was taken on the same day that most of the material for the film was shot and although the two events were practically unrelated their subsequent ‘recombination’ into the montage of *About That Original Hen* shows how practice-based research can actively participate in the divisive politics of the institute in which it is performed. Whilst the piece risks enacting an effacement (by harnessing the *3cosas* campaign to the work but not permitting them a voice) the primary purpose of *About That Original Hen* was not necessarily to raise awareness of the campaigns but to show how these micro-political events have influenced my work as a post-graduate practice-based researcher and archival reader of *Finnegans Wake*.



I want to highlight my work’s failure to address the question of race more fully not only because it risks repeating a form of silencing that the project wants to contest but also because *Finnegans Wake* is itself a text concerned with racial and cultural heterogeneity and employs its linguistic hybridity as an anti-colonial, anti-fascist mockery of racist discourse.<sup>347</sup> Len Platt identifies Shaun, ‘the fine frank fairhaired fellow of the fairytales’ (220.12-13), with a ‘complex concatenation of Aryanism and

<sup>347</sup>This conception probably begins with Philippe Sollers’ famous summary of the *Wake* as ‘the most formidably anti-fascist book produced between the two wars’ (Philippe Sollers, ‘Joyce and Co.’, *In the Wake of the Wake*, ed. David Hayman and Elliot Anderson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 109) Also see: Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, Race and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1995); Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, ‘Phoenician genealogies and oriental geographies: Joyce, language, and race’, *Semicolonial Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.219-239; Len Platt, *Joyce, Race and Finnegans Wake* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

fascism with Celticism and Irish republicanism' (Platt: 2007, 61) and his chapter length assassination (and assignation) of Shem's character in I.vii is infused with the language of social snobbery and racialised abjection. The social Darwinism that Joyce directs some of his mockery towards has one of its sources in Jules Crépieux-Jamin's *Les éléments de l'écriture des canailles*, which, in the traditions of paleoanthropology and phrenology, used graphology to categorize the identities of various 'canailles' that constitute the 'lower' strata of society.<sup>348</sup> Crépieux-Jamin's book was also used as a source for *About That Original Hen* and I could have drawn a connection between the criminalisation of writing if I had noted how some of the 'canailles' in Crépieux-Jamin's study were classed as criminals and tied this to the assessment of Duff's writing during her trial when a prosecutor tried to argue that the illegibility of her writing did not intend convey meaning and was therefore solely an act of vandalism and not protest.<sup>349</sup> However, in the end I primarily drew a connection between Crépieux-Jamin's 'illiterate peasant woman' and the other female writers rather than focussing on the patriarchal language of criminal categorization and its racialized and oppressive discourse. Whilst *About That Original Hen* engages in a politics that articulates gender and class-based antagonisms, the racial aspect of these antagonisms are left to silently resonate beneath.

### The Scrope of a Chalk

'he scabbled and scratched and scribbled and skrevented nameless'  
(182.13-14)

Having recognized this aspect of failure in representation, my reflexivity about the problem of erasure and silencing in my own practical work is, however, an extension of a reflexivity about the same issue within *About That Original Hen* itself. Through the gestural motif of *scraping*, there are moments throughout the lecture-film and

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<sup>348</sup>Joyce made reference to this text when he has Shaun refer to Shem's 'entire low cornaille existence' (173.20) conflating Crépieux-Jamin's 'canaille' (a derogatory term for the masses), the frequently impoverished playwright, Pierre Corneille, and the Hôtel Corneille where Joyce stayed during his visit to Paris in 1902 (McHugh: 2006, 173)

<sup>349</sup> see A.vii.18: 'this one word 'Pensions' uhm was written in orange and yellow uhm chalk and uhm ah so the prosecutor tried to argue that because the the uhm foundation stone had gold lettering, one word from what I'd written was in what she thought was gold lettering then ahm uh it obviously was not intended to be *read*. uhm and she extracted from this one word being in her view not clear enough the idea that I that I did not intend to convey any meaning with the words at all, but only to damage the stone.'; extracted from a personal interview with Koshka Duff, July 2014.

tabletop performance which embody an ambivalent (or ‘ambivalent’; 518.2) set of relations between power and resistance, naming and erasure, noise and silence.

The close-up image of the latexed hands (*F*, 9:10-9:40), no longer taken as a point-of-view shot, occurs at the point in the lecture when I describe my process within the archive (A.iii.10-11) and how errors can lead to interesting discoveries. The reversed frame, now looking upon my body instead of from my body, suggests that I am able to look upon my work from different angles; to reflect from different positions as well as perform different roles. Whilst the admission of errors and mistakes in my research aligns myself with those made by Raphael, the framing of both the film and the lecture’s ‘transparency’ about the accidents of scholarly performance show that I also have the freedom, unlike Raphael, to choose which errors to embed into the work, and which to forget.<sup>350</sup> The fact that this moment in the lecture concerns Joyce’s insertion of the note ‘scrape out name’ (VI.B.11:066/VI.C.1:136) and the erasure (or suppression) of letters in ‘-i..’. .o..l.’ (514.15), as the viewer sees the blankness of the latex gloves, creates a constellation between the gloves and the act of erasure and, in the scenes that also feature red chalk (A.v.15 and B.ii.24), the act of *scraping*. Throughout *About That Original Hen*, the gesture of scraping, signaling the subtle violence of writing and erasure, complicates the presentation of power relations and becomes a dialectical image for creation and destruction to intersect.



Between parts A and B of the performance, there are three acts of ‘scraping’ performed with red chalk. The first occurs in the film (A.v.15 ; *F*, 13:53 - 14:26) when the latex hand emerges from outside of the frame to represent Raphael’s car accident with a pool of blood scraped with red chalk onto the pavement. The second instance (B.ii.23 ; *T*, 2:45 - 7:00) takes place during the ‘séance’ of Part B as the red

<sup>350</sup> For example there is a mistake in Part A (A.i.5 / *F*, 04:20) in which I forget that Danis Rose had listed Joyce’s note, VI.B.11:056, as ‘fruitflavoured tea’, and which, for some reason, I recall as ‘fruitflavoured lap’, a misreading much closer to the Raphaelism, ‘fruitflavoured lip’ (Rose: 1995, 178).

leather glove, representing both Hester Dowden and Koshka Duff, guides my other ungloved hand as it scrapes over two pages of my open copy of *Finnegans Wake*. The third occurs in the subsequent scene (B.iii.24 ; *T*, 08:30-09:00), with the latex glove returning to scrape the red chalk on top of the book rapidly, producing clouds of dust which momentarily resemble smoke from a fire.

I pay particular attention to these different iterations of ‘scraping’ because they are examples of how my performance suggests polyvalent resonances of Joyce’s portmanteau words. In this instance, the ‘scrape’ of the red chalk can also be referred to as the ‘scrope of the chalk’. In the lecture (A.viii.19) I discuss how Danis Rose ‘restored’ the word ‘scrope’ to ‘scrape’ in his edit of the passage in which I ‘discover’ Raphael’s hand (‘So could I do and without the scrope of a pen’; 302.21). I argue that it is impossible to determine which variant is correct, but I make the case for ‘scrope’ because of its multiplicity and its iteration of the theme of sight that begins the passage (‘scope’ / ‘Now peel your eyes’). In the way that ‘scrope’ has a number of associations (scrape, grope, scope, rape, ope(n), crop, rope, stroke), this specific gesture in *About That Original Hen* also packs its own constellation of meanings, allusions and possibilities.

This act of scraping serves various functions: it presents a comic representation of the artificial manipulation of the latex glove, and when the same event (Raphael’s accident) is recalled in Part B (B.v.26 ; *T*, 10:00 - 11:50) the glove repeats the act of scraping to represent her fractured skull with a knife and egg, highlighting its clinical cruelty. Furthermore, the image equates Raphael’s skull-fracture with chalk, the common writing tool of protest (and child street artists), recalling not only Duff’s act of writing but the chalked slogans on the pavement outside of the student union where she was arrested and which appear in the film momentarily with a police officer walking over them (*F*, 7:02 - 7:13). This connection between chalk, blood and protest is also an allusion to the image of blood on a paving stone which I recall earlier on in the lecture (A.ii.9).<sup>351</sup> The act of scraping presents a multilayered act of memory embedded within the fabric of the performance as it aggregates a constellation of

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<sup>351</sup> ‘I also remembered the picture of a paving stone on Malet St. decorated with a little pool of blood after a policeman had punched a protestor in the face.’; A.ii.9. This image, as with some of the images of protest and police violence used in the film, comes from *Occupy Senate House* (5th December 2013). An event which I was not present for but witnessed via twitter and youtube. This digital memory of the event is thus interwoven with the rest of my performing archive.

associations. It 'memorialis[es]' different 'disjointed times' (104.4-5), not only Raphael's skull fracture, Koshka's chalking and the student's blood but also, as a compact gesture, it speaks to much less specific points in time: the practice of chalking protest slogans, the omnipresence of police violence and the overall association of Raphael with the accidental, her 'Raphaelisms' in the archive.



When the latex-gloved hand appears to continue scraping the chalk on the pavement after the 're-staging' of Raphael's accident the pool of pink blood that emanates from her head becomes doubly artificial as the 'reality' of its fiction is exposed. The entire scene is comically staged: Madame Raphael runs in melodramatic fashion, as though being chased or running incredibly late for work, and in her distraction she collides with a light green parked car. Everything from the absurdity of her 'collision' to the anachronistic car and costume is consciously *inauthentic*; the audience are not supposed to be convinced that this is an accurate or 'correct' restoration of the event as they are required to negotiate between two different representations of memory. The pool of blood on the curb resembles a chalky, blank thought bubble and highlights the levity of this slapstick representation of what could have been a fatal accident.<sup>352</sup> When the latex glove re-emerges into the frame like a punchline and continues chalking the blood on the pavement, the pretense of re-enactment is broken further by the interruption of the film's artificial framing; a reminder that there is always a hand behind the frame, however neutral the perspective. The 'truth' of this re-enactment is not in its content but in the manipulation of its content. The 'scraping' of the chalk across the pavement is combined with the manipulative 'scope' of the camera's frame so that in this example of 'scroping' the viewer

<sup>352</sup> Another editing accident: From the beginning of the sequence (*F*, 13:53 - 14:26) the 'pool of blood' can already be seen on the pavement before Raphael falls. Whilst this constitutes another instance of a mistake left into the editing of the film, the slippage adds to the notion of Raphael being caught in my performing-archive's purgatorial loop, as if to represent the endless, comic repetition of her 'accident' as she dwells in this skewered version of the after-life.

becomes complicit in the fiction's constellation; an alienating effect which buries the 'truth' in its layers of representation.

I chose to present this scene as a whimsical slapstick sequence to reflect the brevity of Joyce's letter to Raphael after he had heard about her accident:

Dear Mrs Raphael,

I am very sorry to hear of the dreadful accident. Your niece says you are now out of danger. But what a frightful shock! It is well you are not disfigured, and I understand that it is not likely to leave any serious trace. I do hope you will get some compensation in spite of the lack of witnesses and that your suffering is not too great. Let me thank you once again for your quick and excellent transcriptions. You have rendered me a very great service. With my very best wishes for your speedy and complete recovery.  
Sincerely yours,

James Joyce

(JJ, 672)

Although the letter expresses his humane concern for her well-being, it is marked by its business-like tone. Its brevity reflects its emphasis on speed and efficiency: 'your quick and excellent transcriptions'; 'your speedy and complete recovery'. These two phrases, tied together with reference to the 'service' she had performed for him, directly mirror each other: a synonymous pair of hendiadys ('quick and excellent'/'speedy and complete') modifying their equivalent nouns ('transcriptions'/'recovery'). With the formal stroke of a pen, Joyce compresses Raphael's work with her body; both are intertwined with the necessary speed and efficiencies of urban modernity. Couched within this note of humane concern lies an act of archival dismemberment: the body of Raphael can only exist within this archive as a fractured being, defined solely through her work and her accident and, ultimately, the accidents in her work. The faultlines of her transcriptions ('Raphaelisms'), the fracturing of her skull and the fractures in her handwriting to the Buffalo Archive in the late 1950's (A.viii.21; 'Her handwriting seemed more fractured'), imbue her identity (at least in my performing archive) with the violence of division. Her entire role within the *Work in Progress*, as it exists as an archive, is defined by this compression of professional efficiency and bodily suffering. To remember her is to dismember her. To 'redismember' (008.06) her.

The swift and distanced representation of Raphael's accident in my film is shaped by the alienating effects of urban modernity (the demand for speed and efficiency) which subtly underscores Joyce's letter. The levity of the scene is also an echo of another line in the letter when Joyce hopes that the accident will not leave 'any serious trace'. He is referring to her allegedly lucky escape from disfigurement but it also serves as an accurate description of the accident in relation to Joyce's archive. Raphael's transcription errors did not have a 'serious' impact on the progress of the *Work in Progress*, and neither did the potential disruption caused by her accident. Joyce also mentions a 'lack of witnesses' to her accident, another appropriately archival term which further highlights the lack of detail, the gaps and silences within the archive that she represents. Raphael's body, unlike Joyce's eyes or Lucia's mental health, can only suffer just outside the frame of these documents or hidden quietly amongst them.<sup>353</sup> With this lack of seriousness and witness accounts to constitute an 'accurate' re-enactment of the accident, levity and invention take its place.<sup>354</sup> The scene, therefore, does not become a documentation of an event but a documentation of a document's response to an event. The frame, which soon returns to the point of view of the manipulative latex glove, does not represent an objective unfolding of fact but a projection (via my own authorial hand) of Joyce's written response to the fact of Raphael's accident. As with any 'fact' or historical event in *Finnegans Wake*, it becomes an 'unfact' (057.16) through its means of representation.<sup>355</sup> The 'scroping' of the pavement with red chalk can be viewed similarly as a silent commentary on Rose's editorial decision to scrape out 'scrope' in his 'restored' *Wake* and replace it with 'scrape'.<sup>356</sup> The authenticity of his restoration is predicated on his position as a professional editor, whilst the 'truth' of the 'original' word inserted during the revision process (by an unidentified hand) is that it is indeterminable; it could be either

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<sup>353</sup> It is significant that the my lecturer-persona 'discovers' Raphael's hand, or Joyce's dedication to her hand, buried within a passage that, as John Gordon has suggested, may directly refer to having the macula scraped from his eyes during his glaucoma operations; John Gordon, *Joyce and Reality: The Empirical Strikes Back* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp.250-259. This detail would further justify keeping 'scrope' rather than 'scrape' as it also links Joyce's work with his bodily suffering: the scrape of the pen with the scraping of his eye *scoped* into an optical-scribal portmanteau.

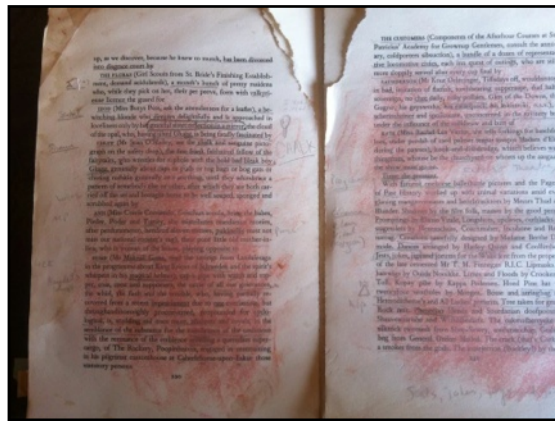
<sup>354</sup> This is very much how 'events' and 'facts' are often presented and 'redismeber[ed]' in the *Wake* (Kate's 'Willingdone Museyroom' (8.9-10.23), or the four master's recounting of the kiss (II.iv), for example), although their comic retellings usually be a result of an *abundance* of witnesses.

<sup>355</sup> 'Thus the unfacts, did we possess them, are too imprecisely few to warrant our certitude, the evidencgivers by legpoll too untrustworthily irreperible where his adjudgers are semmingly freak threes but his judicandees plainly minus twos.' (057.16-19)

<sup>356</sup> James Joyce, *The Restored Finnegans Wake*, eds., Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon (London: Penguin Classics, 2012), 232



'scrape' or 'scrope' because the ambiguous shape of the amanuensis's vowels permit both interpretations (see A.viii.20). Rose's editorial hand thus enters the frame of Joyce's imperfect text as an authoritative reader re-enacting the lost 'truth' of the original. Whilst the chalky pool of blood contains several layers of associations (Raphael and Students' blood; Duff's protest) and 'scrope' is a packed up portmanteau, the latex-glove and Rose's editorial hand both 'scrape' across these 'ambivalent' objects with their own 'facts': the *fact* of their corrective interference in the frame of the text. The only 'truth' that this performing archive fully represents is its process of archiving.



### Séance (B.ii.23 ; T, 2:55 - 7:35)

The assembling of different memorial traces into a gesture is even more pronounced in the second act of scraping/scropeing which occurs at B.ii.23 / T, 2:45 - 7:00, when my copy of *Finnegans Wake* is used (and abused) to a collage of text which weaves lines from the 'séance' chapter (III.iii), Hester Dowden's *Psychic Messages of Oscar Wilde* and Koshka Duff's account of her chalking and arrest. In this sequence the red glove takes control of the chalk and since it has been previously seen in the lecture film being worn by Duff playing Hester Dowden (A.iv.13-14 / F, 11:35 - 13:10), the audience may associate it with both the female spiritualist and Koshka Duff. My ungloved right hand can also be traced back to Dowden's companion, 'Mr. V', played by Robert Kiely who also plays Joyce in the film. This transgenerational chain presents a commentary on Joyce's composition process in which the hand of the author is connected both materially and spectrally to a diachronic web of hands; the objects articulated in my performance become a literal representation of the book's 'writer complexus' (114.33). In this sequence of the performance, Joyce's book is

'decorded' and destroyed by the ghostly hands and voices of women, and whilst the scraping of the pages with the red chalk signifies the autonomous agency of Duff's act of protest and Dowden's manipulation of Mr. V's hand, the gesture is also bound by a violation and 'redismemberment' of the book as the pages are torn out in a disquieting allusion to the violence experienced by Duff at the hands of the Metropolitan police when they threatened to extend her strip search into a cavity search (B.ii.23).<sup>357</sup> This combination of gestures becomes another example of the 'ambiviolence' which typifies *About That Original Hen* and my reading of Joyce's composition process. The echo of 'scrope' is even stronger in this sequence as the *scraping* is coupled with an unseemly *groping* of the book's pages which, in conjunction with the details of Duff's account, becomes suggestive of sexual violation. The 'ambiviolence' of the gesture emerges from the disquieting conflation of the eroticism of Hester Dowden's séance with the bio-political invasion of Koshka Duff's body by the police.



This oscillation between different associations is highlighted by the collage text that plays over the top of this 'scrope' séance. The overlapping of three different sources (Duff; Dowden and Joyce) echoes the visual overlapping of materials in the film's use of montage and iterates the theme of editorial manipulation. In the collage (B.ii.23), Duff discusses the Police's 'manipulation' of objects to suit their version of events ('Suitor's hat fell off [...] that was another assault'; B.ii.23) and reads from Hester Dowden's manipulation of 'Mr.V's' pencil to release the voice of Oscar Wilde, interspersing these texts with excerpts from a passage in the *Wake* (482.31-483.3)

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<sup>357</sup> There are several allusions to female genitalia in the performance which foreshadow this moment: My representation of Joyce's drawing of the 'geomater' which is shown in the film and discussed in the lecture (A.i.3 / *F*, 1:55 - 2:30) and the repetition of this drawing at the opening of Part B (B.i.2 / *T*, 00:25 - 55).

which offers a gloss on the constellation of these ‘manipulations’ when it characterises the re-appropriation of texts as ‘[twisting] the penman’s tale posterwise’ (482.2-3). Whilst Duff discusses the way that the Police twisted the course of events to fit into their narrative, the careful selection and juxtaposition of texts performs its own twisting of ‘the penman’s tale posterwise’ by generating resonances in Dowden’s and Joyce’s texts which were either suggestive or non-existent. Perhaps the most provocative moment of tactile understanding in this sequence is when I begin to ‘grope’ and peel back the pages, bruised by the pink chalk I had just scraped all over them,<sup>358</sup> as Duff’s voice moves between the *Wake*, Dowden’s intimate writing session with ‘Mr.V’ and Duff’s frank account of her strip search by the police:

**// I perpetually kept my ouija ouija wicket up//** His pencil was so firmly controlled that I found it very difficult to move it from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. // And the justification for strip searching me was because I refused to be searched. But while they were doing the strip search they did continually threaten to do a cavity search because they kept on going on about what people have in their vaginas which might include chalk. // ***What can’t be coded can be decoded if an ear eye seize what no eye ere grieved for.*** // I do now see Senate House from the perspective of the CCTV cameras. //

(B.ii.23 / T, 6:20 - 6:40)

The audience may be able to discern the difference between each fragment by listening carefully to the shifts between Duff’s ‘reading’ voice and her ‘speaking’ voice; it is evident that the collage has been edited from three different recordings but they are spliced together in such a way that it may not be immediately apparent when one fragment ends and the other begins. In the above example the line from the *Wake* (‘I perpetually kept my ouija ouija wicket up’) is followed immediately by Dowden’s description of ‘Mr. V’s’ pencil. Aside from those with intricate knowledge of Joyce’s text, the audience are unlikely to be able to distinguish between both sources, and their combination produces an erotic innuendo that is only faintly

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<sup>358</sup> In probably the most ‘hypermnestic’ coincidence of the performance, I discovered afterwards that the pages which I had randomly selected to bruise with chalk contained a startlingly appropriate description of the damage: ‘see the chalk and sanguine pictograph on the safety drop’ (220.11-12)

present in their original contexts.<sup>359</sup> It is clear when the collage returns to Duff's account because her delivery has the traits of an extemporized interview (from glottal stops and elongated vowels to the occasional affirmative hums of the interviewer), but the effect is not entirely disjunctive because the previous lines may seem to illustrate the content of her speech, highlighting the forms of sexualised control that the police held over her. This juxtaposition of different texts through the same voice could also provide a gloss on the line which follows Duff's recollection of her strip search: 'What can't be coded can be decorded if an ear aye seize what no eye ere grieved for.' 'Decorded' could refer to the nature of the collage recording itself, especially in relation to the live visual elements which are being performed contiguously. It is also at this point in the performance that I tore the pages from my book: a *literal* 'de-cording' of the book's material. The word could also refer specifically to the coupling of a recorded element with a live process of destruction. 'What can't be coded' might be the very relation between the repeatable recording and the unrepeatable act of dismemberment. The second part of the sentence – 'if an ear aye seize what no eye ere grieved for' – might also be read as specific commentary on this relationship between audible and visual elements: what can be *heard* 'seize(s)' what can be *seen* and ascribes the visible action with its meaning. The subjunctive mood of the threatened 'cavity search' and the imagined chalk housed inside a vagina is projected onto the image of the book which bears the incriminating chalk scraped onto its surface as it becomes, momentarily, a 'vagina' through tactile suggestion. The recording ('ear aye' – the ear's 'eye?'), seizes the materials with a projection of something that had hitherto not existed, 'what no eye ere grieved for',<sup>360</sup> and, in this live assemblage of the audible and the visible, the *threat* of sexual violation upon Duff's body is transferred into a *real* violation performed upon the pages of *Finnegans Wake*. The process of 'decording' thus becomes a process of transforming perceptions – maintaining separate materials side by side whilst the process of this live fusion of inanimate or dead (recorded) elements with animated materials generates a transformation of perspective. Thus,

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<sup>359</sup> The line from the *Wake* is in fact used by HCE to assert his 'cleanliving' faithfulness to his spouse and instead of sexual indiscretion it implies (via a cricket metaphor) mastery and control over his libido: '...I am as cleanliving as could be and that my game was a fair average since I perpetually kept my ouija ouija wicket up. On my verawife I never was nor can afford to be guilty of [...] malfeasance [...] with the person of a youthful gigirl frifrif friend...' (532.16-20). While the sexual connotation of 'keeping one's wicket up' is implied, its decontextualisation in my collage inverts its supposed innocence.

<sup>360</sup> I read 'what no eye ere grieved for' as something along the lines of 'what no eye has ever seen before, and therefore has never lost'.

for Duff, her perception of Senate House has been transformed into ‘the perspective of the CCTV cameras’. The violent and invasive embodied encounter with the police has transformed, or perhaps, ‘decorded’, her relationship to the stones that constitute the institutional monument of Senate House and as result she cannot view this building without recalling the perspective of the very means of recording that would incriminate her. This constantly shifting, ‘ambiviolent’ way of perceiving Senate House – from beneficent centre of learning and solidarity to patriarchal locus of neo-liberal ideology and oppression – is carried through into the subsequent sequence (B.iii.24) when my final example of scraping transforms my copy of *Finnegans Wake* into a burning monument to education and authority.

### **If Standing Stones Could Speak (B.iii.24 ; T, 7:40 - 9:05)**

‘Is the puppet a weapon or a comrade?’

-Radio Lacis<sup>361</sup>

In the next sequence on the tabletop (B.iii.24 ; T, 7:40 - 9:05), the latex-gloves make their return. I put them on after the recording switches back from Duff’s voice to mine, introducing the next scene with the words: ‘Enter the cop and how’ (B.iii.24/*FW* 306 R1). It might seem that, following the chalk based vandalism of the book, the latex gloves have returned to enforce order and authority upon the objects which have now become pieces of evidence from an irreparable act of violence. The text from the final pages of II.ii (306.8 - 307.12) which accompanies the scene might also seem to iterate this call for the restoration of a paternalistic, (multi-)disciplinarian order as the voice lists the names of historical patriarchs (and several matriarchs), whilst proclaiming the pillars of civilization: ‘Art, literature, politics’ etc; ‘Duty, the daughter of discipline’ (the ‘Dublin Metropolitan police’ even get a mention; 306.24-25) – but rather than restoring order, the freshly latexed hands proceed to vandalize the book further by scraping the exposed edges of paper with chalk.

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<sup>361</sup> ‘Radio Lacis’, <http://radiolacis.tumblr.com/> [accessed 15.5.15]. A reworking of Alexander Rodchenko’s demand that ‘Our things in our hands must be equals, comrades, and not these black and mournful slaves’



Dust forms clouds from the vigorous scraping and resembles smoke billowing from a fire. Instead of deciphering traces within this performing archive, the latex glove is now creating ephemeral traces of its own. Like the red glove previously, the latex glove participates in the performance's transformative 'decoding' of materials; a process which generates a fleeting, theatrical re-appropriation of material through a destructive encounter that accelerates its gradual decomposition.<sup>362</sup> The act performed upon the material is *recorded* not by preservation but disintegration. This time however we have moved from the book as a violated female body to a desecrated monument of power and pedagogy: Senate House.

Although the audience are not directly told that my copy of the *Wake* is now supposed to stand in for Senate House, there are several elements which should activate the association from their memory of the previous part of the performance. Firstly, the use of chalk to vandalise the book (which is now closed and standing vertically like a tower on the tabletop) should draw an association back to Duff's act of chalk-writing. The latex glove, whilst principally associated with the intrusive hand of the film's archivist, has also been set up for this moment when Duff's hand, wearing a latex glove, portentously places itself across the foundation stone in the film (A.ii.7 ; *F*, 6:01-6:05): a subliminal foreshadowing of the latex's destructive role to come.

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<sup>362</sup> Whilst I will continue with the resemblance to smoke from a fire, the gesture could also be interpreted as a rigorous cleaning process and thus an act of preservation. However, this would also further prove the gesture's 'ambivalence' as it relates to Duff's case since, in a brilliant example of litigious absurdity, the only fine that she had to settle was for the damage caused to the foundation stone not by her chalk (which could have been cleaned off with water) but by the high-pressure jets the University used to restore the stone. Further proof that the force of preservation contains the force of destruction.



In the previous shot (*F*, 5:58 - 6:00), as I enter the gates of Senate House (masquerading as the entrance to the Buffalo Campus), the camera, positioned at the same angle as the one above, overlooks a graffito on the gate that reads: 'Burn Cuts'. The 'illegitimate' inscription of a protest graffito is directly paralleled with the 'legitimate' inscription of Senate House's foundation stone and, through the montage's simultaneous separation and combination of these two types of writing, they signal towards the absence of Duff's palimpsest which is alluded to (but suppressed) within the film.



The scraping of the book in B.iii.24 can be seen as a subsequent symbolic irruption of the images in Part A; as though the fleeting transformation of *Finnegans Wake* into a burning building fulfills an unconscious (or not so unconscious) wish to set alight the monument which had become an emblem of austerity, outsourcing and the neo-liberalisation of Higher Education for the students and workers involved in *3cosas* and *#OccupySenateHouse* in 2013. Perhaps my simulation of a burning object that had also suffered the slow but determined violence of dismemberment realized the graffito's impossible demand to 'Burn Cuts'. The image for the *#OccupySenateHouse* Facebook group – Senate House, photoshopped with apocalyptic volcanoes and a

fire-breathing Adrian Smith (Vice Chancellor of UoL) – certainly articulates a version of this wish fulfillment:



**December 5th 2013<sup>363</sup>**

There is another moment (A.ii.7 ; F, 6:07 - 6:12) which performs a similar *detournement* of the building when the camera pans up the central tower as I describe the enormous Church of Scientology building in Buffalo that I would see on my way to the campus. This equating of Senate House with the Church of Scientology not only comically misappropriates the identity of the building but equates Scientology's despotic monetization of Religion with the monetization of Education.<sup>364</sup> The rechristening of images with a contrary narrative is a technique often employed in the essay-films and docu-fictions of filmmakers like Chris Marker and Patrick Keiller.<sup>365</sup> In Keiller's *London* (1992), the narrator's bitterness against the increasing commodification of the city's contours with towers and brand names finds a momentary release when he informs the viewer that the BT tower in Fitzrovia is in fact a 'monument' erected 'in the memory of Rimbaud and Verlaine' who once lived in the hotel that had been demolished to make room for it.<sup>366</sup> Whilst the moment is a narrative act of idealised historical re-inscription, this imaginative detourning of the city's landscape shares a similar impulse to Tom Youngman's erupting Senate House, Koshka Duff's chalking over the letters on the foundation stone and my echoing of it by scraping over *Finnegans Wake*. They all constitute acts of inscriptive

<sup>363</sup>Image courtesy of Tom Youngman from <http://occupysenatehouse.tumblr.com/post/69067296562> [accessed 15.5.15]

<sup>364</sup> It also a well known fact that Senate House was the model for George Orwell's 'Ministry of Truth' in *1984* and would have served as Hitler's HQ had he successfully invaded London.

<sup>365</sup> See for example Chris Marker's dialectical alternative glosses on the same sequence of images in *Lettre de Sibérie* (1958); Sarah Cooper, *Chris Marker* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 23

<sup>366</sup> Patrick Keiller, dir., *London* (1992) film



re-imagination which, through their destructive irreverence, attempt to expose the destructive historical forces that are concealed within them, coupled with the desire for a historical transformation of social relations.



**‘The giant Church of Scientology headquarters outside my bedroom window’ [A.ii.7]**

These acts of re-inscription do not seek to completely annihilate the object of their discontent but to jolt them into life, to activate them into a new constellation of social relations that, for the time being, can only be imagined. Duff’s writing over the regal inscription of George V’s foundation stone with her multi-coloured chalk highlighted a present day conflict contained behind the stone; it brought the marks of its official, foundational history, the contours of its gold lettering, into direct contact with the rough, and ephemeral lettering of protest. The stone’s *history* is re-activated by its confrontation with the present and, like Adorno’s conception of archives, the past has been ‘[tainted] by the present’s turbid flood’.<sup>367</sup>



<sup>367</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E.P.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005; first published 1951), 166

These reactivations of Senate House [and my copy of *Finnegans Wake*] can be compared to Rita Sakr's notion of the 'countermonument' in which monumental objects and spaces are '[awakened] from a static sanitized perpetual past into the material and mobile fluidity of everyday life.'<sup>368</sup> Sakr argues that in *Ulysses* Joyce 'signal[s] an atypical iconoclastic vision of the monument as a living body resisting its paradoxical ontology of dead materiality and epistemology of nonperformative immortality' (Sakr: 2012, 41). Dead 'stones' are activated by 'the rhythms of human life that build, conserve, ignore, insult, awaken, attack, and destroy monuments' (Sakr: 2012, 79). Monumental statues, spaces and stones like in the cemetery of 'Hades' or Nelson's Pillar in 'Wandering Rocks' and 'Circe' become destabilized by the ambivalences, irreverences and subversions of Joyce's Dubliners who's 'circulation of bodies, words and dreams' transform these monuments into a vibrant 'landscape-theater' of the everyday (Ibid.). Duff's act of writing continues this relationship to monumental space by alerting the dead stone of Senate House to the everyday struggles of those who work inside. The performative, 'countermemorial' scrape of the ephemeral chalk against the permanent inscription of the foundation stone brings the workers' quotidian needs – sick pay, holidays and pensions – into the 'immortal' frame of the building's regal christening by King George V in 1933.

This notion of the 'countermonument' can certainly be found in *Finnegans Wake*, but it is far more diffuse than the relatively concrete 'countermemorial' episodes in *Ulysses*. The *Wake* performs its subversions of monumental objects and spaces through the play of its language. For instance, the Wellington memorial in The Phoenix Park becomes the 'big Willingdone mormorial' (08.34-35), re-inscribing the name of the monument with a pun on phallogocentric desire. But unlike in *Ulysses* where, even in 'Circe', the reader knows *where* they are, we are never certain of where and what we are looking at in the *Wake*. The 'wellingdone momorial' might indeed direct us towards the obelisk in Phoenix Park but we are also supposed to be on a guided tour through an imaginary 'Wellingdone Museyroom' (08.09) with a retelling of the battle of Waterloo; as with Joyce's neologistic lexis the reader must always be prepared to encounter objects and spaces as multiple and often contradictory things. The 'museyroom' could be an 'actual' museum that the narrative passes through; it could also be a Parnassian evocation of the event itself, with our

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<sup>368</sup> Rita Sakr, *Monumental Space in the Post-imperial novel: An interdisciplinary Study* (London: Continuum, 2012), 41

'museyroom' tourguide, 'Kathe' (08.07), as the muse of history, Clio; or perhaps her description of the battle could be her own retelling of the plaques engraved onto the corners of the obelisk.<sup>369</sup> Regardless of the reader's uncertainty about the monument and the history that it 'redismembers' (08.06),<sup>370</sup> the distinctive quality of such a passage is the irreverence and ambivalence of its language. When the guide directs us to look at 'his big wide harse' (08.21) we cannot dissociate the image of a mounted imperial authority from the call to look at his 'big wide arse'. This kind of linguistic countermemorial is at work throughout the book and it could be argued that *Finnegans Wake* presents one enormous countermonumental flow of irreverently ambivalent, polymorphic language over the monumental spaces of Dublin and its environs; from 'Howth Castle' (003.03) to 'Fiendish Park' (196.11) and beyond. The underpinning feature of this language is not that it undermines or destroys monuments and monumental space but that it re-awakens them with a vibrant, multi-faceted instability that simultaneously remembers and dismembers them. If these continuous, iconoclastic dis-articulations mean that nothing is sacred, then at least everything becomes open to scrutiny.

My scraping of *Finnegans Wake*, igniting it into chalky flames, echoes this ambivalent irreverence and 'countermonumental' aspect in the book's language. It is not only monumental places and objects that receive countermemorial adjustments in the *Wake* but the hundreds of monumental (as well as marginal) books that litter its 'dirt-dump' (615.12). The collocation of Koshka Duff's scraping of a monumental building with my scraping of *Finnegans Wake* positions the book within my performing archive as a desecrated, or at least partially vandalised, monument; the 'countermonumental' language inside the book has now become externalised and transformed into a fleeting gesture as the book itself becomes the object of a countermemorial performance. However, before appraising the image of a burning *Finnegans Wake* as another accidental encounter within the performing archive, I

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<sup>369</sup> Kate's pointing out the scenes of the battle with the repetition of the deictic pronoun, 'this', could be related to a witness's testimony – another way in which the *Wake* linguistically unfolds the monument since it is customarily known as the 'Wellington Testimonial'. She could also be taking her audience through 'her war souvenir postcards' which 'help to build me mural' (27.32-33).

<sup>370</sup> The term that I have been using throughout the thesis to collocate remembering with dismemberment, 'redismember', originates from this sequence in the *Wake* as part of the prologue to Kate's tour of the 'museomound' (008.5). The line, 'Redismembers invalids of old guard' (008.06), in its context here, could refer to the 'several limbs and weapons [that] have fallen off over the years' from the plaques depicting famous battles from Wellington's career that adorn its sides; Christine Casey, *Dublin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 309

must not forget Heine's sentence: 'Dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen.'<sup>371</sup> In presenting this fleeting image of countermonumental burning by scraping across the surface of the book, the 'ambiviolence' of the gesture risks transforming an image of resistance into an image of nihilistic arson.



### The 'Book-Bloc' storming the gates of Senate House<sup>372</sup>

But the suggestion of a burning book/building is only a momentary, and accidental, result of this iteration of the scraping gesture and, whilst its 'meaning' is deliberately ambiguous (as the latex gloves signal a confusion of preservation and destruction), my copy of the book finds itself related to a strategy which employs books as tools of resistance rather than oppression. In another brief moment of the performance during rapid montage section of the film discussed above (*F*, 06:42 - 06:45), there is footage of a 'book bloc', a now common sight student protests since 2010, who use polystyrene and cardboard 'books' as both shields from police batons and to assault the philistinism of the state. A statement by 'Arts Against Cuts' summarizes the book bloc's conscious imbrication of material and symbolic violence:

When the police kettle us, baton us or charge us we will not only see police violence against individuals but the state's violence against free thought, expression and education. [...] Books are our tools – we teach with them, we learn with them, we play with them, we create with them, we make love with them and, sometimes, we must fight with them.<sup>373</sup>

Exposing these symbols of learning to the automatic, impervious violence of the state and the policed institution becomes a symbolic gesture of resistance. But it does not

<sup>371</sup> 'Where they have burned books, they will burn human beings'; Thanks to Jacob Bard-Rosenberg who swiftly repeated this line to me after asking him what he thought of this moment in the performance.

<sup>372</sup>Image courtesy of <https://artsagainstcuts.wordpress.com/2010/12/09/book-bloc-comes-to-london-2/> [accessed 15.5.2015]; note Joyce's *Ulysses* to the left.

<sup>373</sup> 'Statement by Arts Against Cuts', 9th December, 2010 from <https://artsagainstcuts.wordpress.com/2010/12/09/book-bloc-comes-to-london-2/> [accessed 15.5.2015]

sentimentalize the ‘culture’ at risk of decimation by presenting it as a defenseless object. Instead, the books are mobilized and transformed into weapons and shields as they actively participate in an ideological struggle. The book bloc, in essence, activate these books as fragments from the past, violently woken - in *media res* - by the conditions of the present. Although the ‘theatre’ of *About That Original Her’s* differs considerably to the ‘theatre’ of the book bloc at Senate House, both are examples of performances in which the symbolic is confronted with the phenomenological; when the symbolic value of the book is met with the violence of a material encounter, exposing the hierarchical social-relations concealed within the bodies and objects concerned. Like the polystyrene books pushing at the locked gates of Senate House, my disintegrating copy of *Finnegans Wake*, scraped and scroped irreparably in my performing archive, re-awakens the author’s and his ‘anticollaborators’ dead labour to the present. The almost forgotten, voiceless presence of Madame Raphael is revived and re-fleshed as the monumental ‘tombstone’ that holds her ghost is seized ‘at a moment of danger’.<sup>374</sup>

### Here’s Lettering you Erronymously

‘It is more difficult to honor the memory of the anonymous than it is to honor the memory of the famous, the celebrated, not excluding poets and thinkers. The historical construction is dedicated to the memory of the anonymous.’

–Walter Benjamin<sup>375</sup>

Although we have a name for the amanuensis who transcribed Joyce’s notes into the VI.C notebooks held at Buffalo, Raphael’s presence within the archive is marked by a combination of error and anonymity. The ‘errors’ of her transcriptions are couched within the memory of *Finnegans Wake*, but her name is forgotten and scraped out amidst the decompositions and recombinations of Joyce’s ‘hypermnestic’ machine. The traces of her hand become anonymous and the letters she mis-transcribed are hidden ‘erronymously’ throughout the text. Reading her letters at Buffalo, I discovered that this *Wakean* collocation of error and anonymity had found its way into her own correspondence with the Joyce archive. At the end of a 1959 letter to Peter Spielberg

<sup>374</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 247

<sup>375</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘Paralipomena to “On the Concept of History”’ (1940) in *Selected Writings*, Vol.4: 1938-1940, trans. Edmund Jephcott, eds. Howard Eiland & Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), pp.401-411, 406

in which she summarized the extent of her contribution to the composition process, she signed off with, 'Yours truly', and left the page blank without signature.<sup>376</sup> This is likely to be an accidental act of omission, but it could also be read as a gesture of self-erasure;<sup>377</sup> a dislocation of her name from the 'important work' (B.viii.28) performed by archivists in the name of James Joyce for the sake of self-effacement. This detail became the crux of *About That Original Hen* and constitutes the conclusions to both parts of the performance. In each instance, the 'erronymous' absence of her name is inscribed with new 'stuttering signature[s]' (Conley: 2003, 96) made from extra-linguistic materials. Raphael becomes a sequence of fragments and interruptions (gestures, eggs, paper, gloves, puppets and so on) which constitute her disappearance. But ultimately, *Finnegans Wake*, the monument in which she is namelessly buried, becomes the means for her *reappearance*; a re-materialization through decomposition, 'decording' and 'redismemberment'.

The conclusions to parts A and B both make use of the same material, Raphael's letter to Peter Spielberg (28th September 1959), but present it in very different ways. At the conclusion to the lecture-film (A.viii.21) Raphael's anti-signature is represented as an unfinished sentence; the absence is substituted by the feminine pronoun, 'she', caught mid-sentence as I am about to remark upon the significance of her absent sign-off. However, because of this interruption, it remains unclear to the audience that this is what I am about to discuss. The audience will not find out about the absent signature until the final sequence of the tabletop puppet performance (B.viii.29-30) when the letter is delivered in (almost) its entirety through Koshka Duff's voice in the soundtrack. This time, the anti-signature is presented as an ellipsis (rather than a verbal interruption) and 'elucidated' by a fragment of text from the *Wake* which appears to be commenting on the 'habit' of not signing letters (B.viii.30/*FW* 114.36). Silence constellates between these two representations of the anti-signature: a

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<sup>376</sup> Letter from Raphael to Peter Spielberg, 28 September, 1959, XVI, James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo

<sup>377</sup> ALP also performs a self erasure in using the word 'erronymously' as she effaces the first syllable of 'anonymous' which is also the first syllable of her regular name, Ann, with the verb 'err' – this effacement of the self with error is therefore a deliberate feminine act of writing in the *Wake* and whatever the unobtainable truth of Raphael's absent signature, reading it *through* *Finnegans Wake* grants it with an element of autonomy. 'One can easily enough generate from the letters 'an' the name Anna which can be said to represent the unconscious of the signifying errors that make up the symbolic surface of the text'; Patrick McGee, 'Errors and Expectations: the ethics of desire in *Finnegans Wake*', *James Joyce and the Difference of Language*, (ed.) Laurent Milesi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.161-179, 161

silencing through the interruption of a suppressed ending and the silence of objects which re-enact Raphael's writing of the letter, and it is in this silence that *About That Original Hen* 'redismembers' the hand of Raphael.

The final paragraph of the lecture follows the account of discovering Raphael's 'hand' on page 302 of the *Wake* and ends with a question: 'Was this to be her secret signature?' (A.viii.21) My question alludes to the marginal comment on page 302, 'The Key Signature' (302.L2), which sits parallel to the 'Raphaelism' that I discuss ('jeu d'inspiration' into 'game of inspiration').<sup>378</sup> Whilst the image of Raphael's cotton glove (filled with Duff's hand), resting upon the page with a white envelope beneath, remains on the screen, I discuss the 1959 letter by describing the fractured quality of her handwriting and end, mid-sentence, just before I can mention the absence of her signature.<sup>379</sup>

After finding what I took to be her hand I discovered a letter from Raphael to the one of the archivists at Buffalo sent in 1959. Her hand writing seemed more fractured than in the 1930s notebooks; her 'p's looked like 'f's but what really struck me about her letter was the way it ends. After writing: 'I am sorry not to be able to give you more interesting details, and hope you will be fully satisfied with your important work. Yours Truly', she  
(A.viii.21)

The fact that this letter contained no signature is not mentioned but substituted by the abrupt cutting off of the lecture. By ending on the pronoun, 'she', the conclusion to the lecture becomes ambiguous and incomplete. This performance which deals with fragments from an archive has now become a fragment.

Ending mid-sentence is also a deliberate reference to the final page of *Finnegans Wake*, but instead of a neutral definite article, the lecture ends abruptly on the gendered pronoun. If the word is to be taken as the beginning of a sentence that will be completed by the next section of the performance, it will be evident that the subject of the sentence is feminine (but represented by a man). This translation of the *Wake's* (non)conclusion into the lecture's interrupted conclusion demonstrates how *About That Original Hen* is not solely a lecture about the *Wake* and its archive

<sup>378</sup> John Gordon suggests that 'Key signature' alludes to the keyhole shape left on Joyce's pupil following his eye surgery (Gordon: 2004, 258)

<sup>379</sup> In performance the interruption of the lecture is signaled by a lighting change from a general wash to several spots focussed on the table at the centre of the performance space. The projector displaying the film is also switched off.

but is also a translation of the book into a performance. The next half of the performance which takes place on a tabletop, with its complete shift in tone and performance methodology, could be seen as more of a performance *of Finnegans Wake* than a performance *about Finnegans Wake*, as we move deeper into the obscure constellations of the ‘dream drama’.<sup>380</sup> Furthermore, for the few audience members who may be aware of this structural allusion to the book’s ending which is also its beginning, this transition in the middle of the performance could also be considered as a return to the beginning; a ‘decoding’ of the ‘original documents’ and ‘scenes of writing’ which compose *Finnegans Wake* and have been unearthed by the lecture. (It is, after all, the home of ‘that original hen’ (B.vii.28-29)). The opening of part B alludes to this return (which is also a repetition of what has come before) with words taken largely from the final chapter of the *Wake* which summarize the central concerns of the entire performance: memory, forgetting and gesture (‘Begin to forget it. It will remember itself from every sides, with all gestures’); hands (‘to hand in sleep’); ‘erronymous’ letters (‘here’s lettering you erronymously’) and police (‘we were treated not very grand when the police and everybody is all bowing to us’) (B.i.22). The actions accompanying the opening are performed like a ritual séance,<sup>381</sup> and offer a symbolic pantomime version of various details from the lecture film. The blindfold with two paper eyes is the same blindfold used by Hester Dowden to cover Mr.V’s eyes in the film (A.iv.13), implying that we are returning to the material about séances, but it also recalls the details about Joyce’s eyesight and his attempt to draw the ALP triangle (A.i.3) since the first action performed in this invocatory ritual is the re-enactment of this failed drawing (T 00:20 - 00:55). Unlike the form of the lecture-film, where details are described, examined or associated through the juxtapositions of montage, the objects, words and gestures performed on the tabletop always represent an assemblage or composite of simultaneous details. In a sense, the form of part B presents *Finnegans Wake* as a writing process, a reconstructing of Joyce’s

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<sup>380</sup> This transition into the dream-theatre of the *Wake* is emphasized by the opening scene on the tabletop (B.i.22) which begins with the theatrical ‘silence’ from III.iii when the curtain rises during the séance of Yawn (501.6-7) and it is announced that ‘we are again in the magnetic field’ (501.15). The language of the performance is now led by the *Wake* rather than the lecturer and it should be clear to the audience that this ‘magnetic field’ contains a new layer of semiotics for them to contemplate.

<sup>381</sup> In an earlier version of the performance (at ‘Short Fuse’ in the Camden Head, January 2014) the opening ritual was performed with a metal vacuum cleaner tube as the ‘supershillelagh’ (25.15) or ‘lifewand’ (195.05) which makes the ‘dumb speak’ (195.05). I blew through it like a digeridoo to make a deep drone which animated a piece of paper across the table with the vibrations. The tube, which was also extendable, then turned into a totem pole with an egg placed on top to represent the rise and fall of HCE or ‘Bygmester Finnegan’ (4.18). I decided to scrap this sequence and replace it with the red pencil and perform a different ritual in order to maintain a visual link between the film and the tabletop.



polysemic language of portmanteaux and neologisms using the materials that he packed inside his words. Thus the pace is far slower and more meditative than the quick, discursive mode of the first part. If the lecture-film constitutes a performance of reading and decipherment, the tabletop sequence constitutes a performance of writing and 'decording'. Amidst this obscure assemblage of materials the 'hand' of Raphael is buried. By the time Raphael's letter to Spielberg is revisited (B.viii.29-30) it is as though her 'secret signature' has finally been revealed as her voice emerges through the 'fog' of Joyce's language.

The letter is presented as the 'anomorous letter' discovered by 'that original hen' from the 'heart of the orange-flavoured mudmound' formed upon my open copy of *Finnegans Wake* by soil, orange peel, chalk, grass, eggshells and old latex gloves (B.vii.28-29). This scene is the closest the performance gets to representing a 'scene' from the book. The 'Hen' (or 'kindly fowl'; 112.9) is a puppet played by my latexed hand wearing a hollowed out egg on the middle-finger. The hand-puppet does not resemble a hen and its movements only faintly imitate the jerky pecking of poultry as it stalks about on four legs. The puppet does however resemble some kind of prehistoric, primeval creature (the 'coerogical hen'; 616.20) which in keeping with the *Wake's* diachrony suggests a transgenerational genetic connection to the bird, since chickens are purportedly descended from dinosaurs. An 'original hen' indeed.<sup>382</sup>

The egg-head has also been hollowed out using the same method as the peasant puppet's head (B.vi.26-28), in which two incisions are made on either end and the contents are blown out, so an automatic material association is made between the Hen and the other female writers in the performance; Raphael's skull fracture was also previously represented by an egg (*T*, 10:00-11:55). In the way that the Hen is a composite of various feminine figures in the *Wake* (e.g. Kate; ALP), this puppet Hen – a 'portmanteau puppet' – is a composite of all the women in the performance, but

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<sup>382</sup> This kind of 'hand puppet' is not a new invention and has been used by many puppeteers like Sergei Obraztsov's or Philip Genty as well as featuring in several of my own performances with the *Dummy Company* (see for example my 'golemmy' puppets for a puppet performance of Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate* (London, 2010; 'Ursonate@Shunt, 13 February 2010' [http://dummycompany.blogspot.co.uk/2010/02/ursonate-shunt-13th-february-2010\\_15.html](http://dummycompany.blogspot.co.uk/2010/02/ursonate-shunt-13th-february-2010_15.html) [accessed 20.9.15]) Kenneth Gross refers to this form of manual puppetry as an example of how hands can be both 'a language and a voice', 'a body and a face' which gives it a 'double-ness in which 'the hand creates and is itself a created thing' (Kenneth Gross, *Puppet: An Essay on Uncanny Life* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 52-3).

more specifically the women whose suffering is repeated and explored by the performing archive of *ATOH* - whose acts of writing assert simultaneously their presence and absence in the *Wake*; the voices that do not speak but write. (Raphael, Dowden, illiterate peasant woman). As with all of the eggs previously, the Hen is destined for transformation and disintegration ('her volucrine automutateness'; 112.12), but unlike the violent fates of Raphael's skull (B.v.26) and the illiterate peasant woman (B.vi.28) the puppet-hen's egg-head signifies its cyclical composition – neither the chicken nor the egg come first, they are simultaneous, self-generating and self-destroying. This internal duality of the puppet in which it contains its own beginning and end, its origins and destruction, is a materialization of Raphael's presence and absence in this performing archive of *Finnegans Wake*. She is composed by two things at once, her signature and her erasure, her noise and her silence.

The Hen pecks around the middenheap and uncovers the letter. The recorded voices (myself and Duff) switch from the simultaneous reading of the episode (from *FW* 110-112) to only Duff's voice reading from the letter. Silence surrounds her voice as the sounds of clucking and gardening disappear from the soundtrack. Along with Duff's delivery, which is tender and almost passive, the silence gives her voice a semblance of authenticity, as if the language games of Joyce had been peeled back to reveal a more sincere voice – words waking up from their 'nat language' (083.12) of the dream. Whilst the recording plays, the hen-puppet switches from reading (by pecking at the letter with its head) to writing over it with a pencil. The pressure from the pencil, held against the fragile head, starts to crack the egg until it falls from the finger. The Hen disappears as the egg is placed on the paper and the latexed hand begins to scrape the pencil agitatedly on the top of the shell. Recalling the gestures of the illiterate peasant woman's 'active and agitated' writing, the scraping of 'scrope', and the tapping of Mr. V during Dowden's séance ('Mr. V taps or writes'), the egg begins to collapse. The tapping is performed as though it had become an involuntary spasm (by tensing the muscles in the arm) – the hand which had hitherto been the imposer of manipulation and violence appears to have become possessed by an uncontrollable tension – perhaps it is the ghost of Raphael, or an accumulation of embodied experiences of writing touched upon through the performance, pinpointed into a climactic, unsettling gesture.

Once the letter has been read, ending on the unsigned 'Yours Truly' - I perform the final action of the piece by placing Raphael's hat on top of the book to retrieve a fragment of paper from the yolk inside (from the two eggs cracked at B.iv and B.vi) and read the sentence from page 114:

Its importance in establishing the identities of the writer complexus (for if the hand was one, the minds of active and agitated were more than so) will be best appreciated by never forgetting that both before and after the battle of the Boyne it was a habit not to sign letters always.

(B.viii.30)

This is the first and last time that I speak in part B. This return to live voice might also suggest a return to a more wakeful, truthful space; a re-emerging from the dreamspace of puppets and disembodied voices to the waking space of the present. But Raphael's absent signature is not directly commented upon other than the citation from the *Wake* so the unfinished sentence which ended the lecture of part A remains incomplete. If the return to the living voice which delivered the lecture is a return to waking consciousness, then the use of the *Wake's* language to offer an elucidating conclusion to the performance adds ambiguity to this waking state: are we yet to emerge fully from the fog of the dream? or is this language in fact the language of waking rather than sleep? Whilst the statement enacts a clear, conclusive tone to the performance, it also leaves behind a sense of incompleteness and ambiguity. The moment a connection between Raphael's signature and Joyce's book appears and is recognized it swiftly disappears and returns to obscurity. These final words speak of 'establishing the identities' of the complex web of writers of the *Wake*, which must include Raphael, and it also highlights the detail which had so 'struck' (A.viii.21) the lecturer in the first part of the performance by mentioning a habit of not signing letters. But what has the 'battle of the Boyne' got to do with all this? and could the sentence actually be describing not a habit of *always* not signing letters, but of signing letters with '*always*'? In the end, *Finnegans Wake* does not manifest the presence of Mme. Raphael but maintains the possibilities of *both* her presence and her absence; she is caught at the point of her discovery and occlusion and remains one of the multiple ghosts that haunt every word and possible association at the wake.

In both parts of *About That Original Hen* that make use of Raphael's 1959 letter her presence in the performance is characterized by her evanescence. As she is summoned, at the point of materialization, she disappears. She can either only be represented by a modern day surrogate (e.g. Koshka Duff as recorded body or voice) or as an animation of fragments and objects (eggs, gloves, hats, text, gesture) which swiftly transform into other associated bodies as they return to the plurivocal silence of disintegration, decomposition and redismemberment. She either disappears into the crowded 'eschatology' of 'our book of kills' (482.33) or splinters into mute matter. The letter itself, or at least the tone of the letter, is complicit in this process of partial erasure. at the end of the lecture (A.viii.21) I cite the last words of the letter which apologize for her minor part in the composition process: "I am sorry not to be able to give you more interesting details, and hope you will be fully satisfied with your important work. Yours Truly." The audience are led to believe that I am about to reveal something that *is* 'more interesting', a detail which 'really struck me' but I cut myself off immediately after: "'Yours Truly.' She/" – it is as though Raphael's insistence on her lack of importance and interest to the archive had emerged to cut the lecturer off mid-sentence: a ghostly suppression of what this future scholar might discover and find interesting about her otherwise private correspondence with the 'archons' of the Joyce collection. But as a trace of this haunted encounter, the suppression of her signature is marked by an interrupted feminine pronoun – a 'she' that hangs in the air and fades away leaving behind a multitude of unknowable possibilities in her wake. "She what?" the audience may be asking without realizing that '*she*' is now nothing more than the surrogation of her signature, a feminine, verbal repetition of the *Wake's* own interrupted pronoun ('the'; 628.16) which, for Hélène Cixous, 'is not that infinity of Joyce's dream but rather the suppression of the ending'.<sup>383</sup> This 'she' is a word which, like the definite article, 'points out but which by itself means nothing, a dead word, a sign which depends upon what follows' (Çixous: 1976, 735), except that this dead word is feminine<sup>384</sup> and stands in for a specific 'she', a 'she' that stands-in for the absence of a name. This word, then, effectively becomes a gesture – it does not *name* but *points*. It is unclear to the audience that they have already been given the detail that the lecturer found most interesting about

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<sup>383</sup> Hélène Cixous, *The Exile of James Joyce*, trans. Sally A. J. Purcell (London: John Calder, 1976), 735

<sup>384</sup> Although the English definite article is neutral the last word of the *Wake*, 'like the final phrase of *Ulysses*, [is] a feminine ending' landing on an unstressed syllable. (Epstein: 2009, 288)

her letter – the absence of her signature – instead they are most likely to think that the naming or revelation of this detail is being suspended and that the entirety of the next half of the performance will constitute its revelation. The ‘she’ points towards the identity of Raphael’s place within the performing archive which will be subsequently unfolded, ‘decorded’ by a sequence of gestures combined with texts and materials. The performance’s (dis)articulation of Raphael’s absent signature will move from words to gesture, from gesture to the silence of matter.

If there is one question the audience might have when faced with *About That Original Hen*’s conclusion of decomposed materials and the iteration of a silent absence within the archive, it could be: ‘To what extent does this do what the lecturer had originally set out to achieve? Has he contacted this hand that lingered silently in the Buffalo collection?’(A.i.5) Contact has been *made* – literally *made* as tactile contact with objects and materials which either surrogate or ventriloquize Raphael’s voice or the dismembered remains of her silent ‘hand’. Thematically, *contact* is forged between other silent or silenced writers, illuminatingly or distractingly, from the spectres of Dowden and Crépieux-Jamin’s ‘illiterate peasant woman’ to Koshka Duff’s chalking hand. The contact with Raphael’s ‘hand’ has been achieved by placing hands (and the gloves that conceal them) at the centre of the performance, sometimes breaking the silence of the hand by articulating it as an articulation of a voice. The final incarnation of the latexed hand embodies the voice of Raphael as it becomes a tiny figure, struggling to articulate its finger-limbs under the pressure of an oversized pencil against the head which eventually disintegrates into fractured eggshells (B.vi-vii). Contact has been made with the silence of Raphael’s hand by materialising her absent signature into an articulation of a hand amongst objects.

But there is no ignoring the fact that this hand belongs to the performer who articulates it. All its errors and frailties belong to the author of the performance, and the strain between competence and performance that it presents is not the same strain that Raphael encountered amongst her employer’s illegible notebooks, nor, for that matter, the strain that Joyce experienced between his competence as a writer and the performance of his eyesight. The contingencies of the *Wake*’s composition and the contingencies of *About That Original Hen* made ‘contact’ only to the extent that their articulation in performance enacted the impossibility of reenactment; re-incarnating the traces of Raphael and Joyce’s archived imperfections cannot *re-*

member their material, tactile relationships to *Finnegans Wake*, but only *re-dis-*member them as a process of destruction, decording, and decomposition.

On the one hand, *About That Original Hen* achieves various forms of contact with the ghosts it set out to encounter and represent. Its methodology, and the politicized aspects of its method, meant that it served to *give a voice* to a voiceless presence in *Finnegans Wake*. Like Koshka Duff's chalked slogan on the foundation stone of Senate House, *About That Original Hen*, gives voice to the work that has been hidden in the margins of an institution; voice is materialised upon the surface of a university building or the pages of *Finnegans Wake* in the silent form of writing. On the other hand, this 'contact' achieved by *giving voice* to previously unvoiced traces is also a *return* to silence. Perhaps my performance's insistence on returning the *Wake's* archive to a state of silent materiality is not only an echo of Taduesz Kantor's 'Informel Theatre', which employed processes of decomposition with 'materials and objects at the threshold of becoming matter' to uncover an 'aspect of reality' in its 'elementary state',<sup>385</sup> but the recollection of the words of another revenant from the book's composition process, Samuel Beckett, who wrote that, 'to restore silence is the role of objects'.<sup>386</sup> As much as Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon's 'restored' *Finnegans Wake* is an assertion of their authority as editors and a 'restoration' of a text that has no 'original document', *About That Original Hen* restores nothing but the silence – the separation between the archivist and the bodies that haunt the archive – by returning Raphael, Joyce and *Finnegans Wake* to a state of objects. There is perhaps, then, what Jean-Luc Nancy refers to as a 'distanced proximity' (Nancy: 2000, 98) at work in this performance's tactile *understanding* of its material; in this attempt to generate a communal interface with silent and concealed hands and voices through a performing archive we discover that 'the law of touching is separation' (Ibid., 5) and that 'contact is beyond connection and disconnection' (Ibid.).

The audience might be disappointed by *About That Original Hen's* fugitive ending – it is unclear whether the questions raised by the interrupted ending of Part A have been answered by the voices and actions in Part B. It offers an inversion of the

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<sup>385</sup> Taduesz Kantor, *A Journey Through Other Spaces: Essays and Manifestos, 1944-1990*, trans. and ed., Michal Kobialka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 55-56

<sup>386</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, trans. Patrick Bowles & Samuel Beckett (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 13

conventional path of academic discourse which begins with obscurity and ends with lucidity, or at least guides its audience towards a sense of conceptual affirmation. Instead, *About That Original Hen* begins with a digressive, but clearly guided discursive path which is disrupted by a radical shift, demanding a different form of attention from the audience. There are echoes, recollections, ‘redismemberments’ of the lecture’s discursive content, but they are no longer guided through them with the same hand. Perhaps the lecture could be considered as a *reading* of the archive whilst the tabletop performance presented a *writing* of the archive; in Part A the performer *reads* his composition and in Part B the performer *writes* a *decomposition*. With the former, the audience are offered a performance of competent reading in which textual and archival material has been recomposed for its audience to digest, but, with the latter, their competence as readers of the *scholar’s* reading of the archive is challenged by a dream-like and tactile representation of writing – the composition is unravelled into a decomposition, as the focus moves from the performer’s reading voice to his writing hands.

But making this distinction risks repeating a binary between ‘reading’ and ‘writing’; the reading of the archive performed in the lecture also pays attention to processes of writing – from the recalling of my cataloguing notebooks to the four ‘scenes of writing’ that it reflects upon, whilst the tabletop piece features recordings of reading voices and concludes with reading a strip of paper covered in egg yolk. Although *About That Original Hen* is structured around formal separations – its two modes of performance and its separation of live voice and live object animation from recorded film and sound – it also collides the distinction between the two and throws them into a diachronic confusion. Like the ‘original hen’ hand puppet’s marriage of the chicken with the egg, the linear succession of writing to reading is rendered contiguous: writing does not precede reading in the way that a document does not precede a performance, they are both involved in each other’s production. Joyce and Raphael were both readers and writers of each other’s *work*, regardless of how marginal or serious one was to the other, and it is this diachronic relationship between reading and writing which also underlines the relationship between documentation and performance in this thesis. *About That Original Hen* is neither a document of a performance nor a performance of documents but a collision of both – until the line has been drawn by the academy, it is an ongoing *performance-document*, *documenting-performing* the reading and writing of *Finnegans Wake*.

## **'This one for the code': A Conclusion**

At the James Joyce Collection in Buffalo, the archivist, Jim Maynard, showed me Joyce's reading script for his performance of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, recorded by C. K. Ogden in 1929.<sup>387</sup> The text consists of the last 10 pages of the 1928 Fountain Press edition, photographically blown up to cater to Joyce's weak eyesight. I decided to perform my own revival of this reading by listening to Joyce's recording whilst following the original reading script. Unfortunately, the original vinyl copy was too fragile an object to be handled and playing it on a gramophone would have been out of the question. So, as with the notebooks, I used a digital copy.

I approached this moment in the archive as a performance in which I was both audience and participant. The role I was to play was not of Joyce, but his eyes. It was a way for me see what he had seen; to encounter, through the combination of his recorded voice and this script, the writer as a reader performing his own work in progress; to take part in this process as a kind of medium. Much as I had copied Raphael's copies of Joyce's notes to re-enact the embodied experience of her writing, I would re-enact the performance of Joyce's recording. I hoped to gain some experience of archival memory that extended beyond simply listening to the now widely accessible recording or reading the apocryphal stories surrounding it (*JJ*, 617). I hoped that this simple combination of materials would make the recording more authentic, to see if it would activate the recording into a tactile 'decording', a spectral double reading.

But I knew that the performance would be a failure. If I was to re-enact Joyce's 'eyes', I would also have to re-enact his glaucoma. Would squinting my eyes be enough to reproduce the optical restraints on Joyce as he read his own work? Furthermore, if I was to re-enact Joyce's optical incompetence I would also have had to repeat the contingencies that were made in preparation for the recording: memorizing the text and having it whispered to me by a prompt. Supposedly, Joyce memorised the passage for the recording but it is impossible to ascertain how much and how fluently he had memorized the text. The fact that he required a blown-up

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<sup>387</sup> 'Reading script for reading of ALP', IX.A.5, The James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo



copy for him to read suggests that his memory of the passage was imperfect. The other contingency – Ogden’s whispered prompting of the text into Joyce’s ear – was even more difficult to imagine. Listening to the recording it was hard to believe that Joyce was following the prompting of another voice, at least throughout its entirety. Perhaps Ogden was sitting on standby in case Joyce made a slip, but the recording, performed in one take, bears no evidence of this. In the end, the only contingencies I considered were occasional deviations from the text. Rather than errors or mistakes I refer to these as variants, presenting the recording not only as textual variant (thus further ‘destabilizing’ the notion of an ‘original document’) but as a record of the author in the live process of *recomposition*.

On two occasions Joyce swapped the order of a hendiadys (‘folded and sprinkled’ for ‘sprinkled and folded’; 213.25; ‘gaffer and gammer’ for ‘gammer and gaffer’; 215.14-15); elsewhere he reverted a verb into the present tense (‘howmulty plurators *make* eachone’; 215.25), unbound an elision (‘But all *that is* left’; 214.03) disambiguated ‘living sons or daughters of’ into ‘living sons *and* daughters of’ (216.02); he missed out one of the final calls of ‘Night! Night!’ (216.03); said ‘Shaun or Shaun’ instead of ‘John or Shaun’ (216.01), and seemed to change a third person feminine pronoun into the second person (‘till *you* rounded up’ for ‘till she rounded up’; 214.01). But the most striking of these minor, barely noticeable variants was his substitution of the clause, ‘and this for the code’ (213.28), with ‘and one for the code’.

This is the only moment at which Joyce reverted to a version that he had previously discarded. In the margin of an early proof Joyce wrote ‘nine to hold to the fire and this for the code’ as an insertion between ‘Six shifts, ten kerchiefs’, and, ‘the covent napkins twelve, one baby’s shawl’, but before he decided on ‘this for the code’ he crossed out the variants, ‘this one for the code’ and ‘this one’s the code’.<sup>388</sup> He probably did not need to keep ‘one’ because the number occurs later in the sequence (‘one baby’s shawl’) and by removing the extra syllable the line runs smoother; the fact that the variation in the recording sticks to the same number of syllables rather than reverting to the earlier version with the extra syllable, shows the importance of

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<sup>388</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake: Book I, Chapter 8: A Facsimile of Drafts, Typescripts, & Proofs*, ed. David Hayman, Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon (London: Garland Publishing, 1978), 203

the chapter's musicality. The revenant of a past revision, 'decorded' into the rhythm of the recorded present.

The washerwoman speaking in this passage is making an itinerary of the washing she is about to dry (six shifts, ten kerchiefs, twelve napkins and one baby's shawl; 213.27-29) of the 'ten kerchiefs' she counts 'nine to hold to the fire' and the tenth 'for the code'. The published variant, '*this* for the code', introduces a diegetic aspect to the voice as we imagine the washerwoman not only counting her washing but gesturing directly to an object. '*This*' is specific because it points, but also non-specific because it is incomplete as an utterance without the object to hand; it presumes a witness to the pointing, an audience (the other washerwoman) that can see 'this' kerchief, but for the reader 'this' merely signals their blindness to what is being indicated. Joyce's variant from the recording, '*one* for the code', retains the ambiguity but is more precise because it is not pointing an object that we also cannot see. 'One' also reflects Joyce's reading performance, with his eye condition he also literally could not see 'this' kerchief clearly upon the page and supplanted it with the recollection of another version of the kerchief, discarded in revision but lodged in the memory of his voice. 'One', instead of 'this', presents the faintest echo of the text's process. Not only does this performance captured on record present *one* of many possible readings, but *one* of many possible writings.

But what is the 'code' in both versions? Should we assume that, because the other items are 'for the fire', the 'code' is also a code for 'cold' and thus the kerchief is being sent to the 'cold'? We might imagine that 'code' is code for 'cold' but what is the cold? A dustheap? The outdoors? An alternative cleaning method? Or does the 'cold' instead refer to the sniffing symptoms of the kerchief's owner? And what marks this one specific kerchief apart from the others? Is it soiled with snot, dirt, or something worse? Is 'this' a special hanky reserved for special use? Or is it just 'one' of many discarded materials flung into the 'code' of *Finnegans Wake*? The ambiguity of the meaning of 'code' and Joyce's deviation from the print in front of him displaces the authoritative certainty of *decoding*. As with most words in the *Wake* or in the contingent ambivalence of performances, writing and reading is not a simple process of encoding and decoding. This recorded document performs the transgression from a perfect translation; the glitches, faults and idiosyncrasies of languages, bodies and

materials continually disrupt the purity of codes so that ‘what can’t be coded can be decoded’ (482.34-35).

My re-enactment of this performance (now a re-enactment of a re-enactment because I am re-performing my memory of it through writing) was not an accurate reconstruction of Joyce’s original recording conditions but a staging of archival materials in order to pay attention to the symbiosis of reading and writing. By simultaneously listening to Joyce’s recording and viewing the blown-up text of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, I was re-reading Joyce’s performance as both a reader and a writer; his voice read from the text, but in his half-blind state his voice also *wrote*, inscribed in the grooves of the record, revising from the automatic promptings of his memory. The record captured Joyce’s voice but it also captured something which had not been coded: the performance of revision. Joyce’s performance of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* produced two divergent documents – the blown up text and the vinyl record – but they were bound by the minute variants which separated them. The recombination of these materials in my performing archive offered another gloss on the *Wake*’s phrase, ‘What can’t be coded can be decoded’ (482.34-35): somewhere between decoding and recording the performance of reading and writing takes place. This performance is a deviant which eludes confinement; its materials – paper, language, voice, text, wax, ink or digital code – all harbor fugitive deviations from a fictitious ‘original’. The deviancy of ‘performance’ – which has the habit of misnaming, ‘redismembering’ and ‘intermisunderstanding’ things – returns to the original scene of the crime, but in doing so, like the *Wake*’s return to HCE’s transgression in Phoenix Park or the ‘original hen’s’ permutating ‘original document’ (123.31-32), produces further deviation, revision, and performance. As Joyce articulated in his recording of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, performing *Finnegans Wake* provokes ‘Teems of times and happy returns. The seim anew’ (215.22-23).

This ‘recirculation’ of documents from Joyce’s archive into a performing archive shares the kind of *repetition* that Mary Manning’s and John Cage’s recompositions of *Finnegans Wake* and my own project have performed. Søren Kierkegaard (in the costume of Constantine Constantius) marks a distinction between *recollection* and *repetition* and claims that:

Repetition and recollection are the same movement, just in opposite directions, because what is recollected has already been and is thus repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forwards.<sup>389</sup>

'Recollection', which recalls the Platonic notion of *anamnesis*, implies an act of memory which sidelines history for a return to an *eidōs*, a fixed 'original' object. Constantius compares recollection to 'discarded clothing' which 'however lovely it might be, no longer suits one because one has outgrown it' (Kierkegaard: 2009, 3). We might think of the 'kerchief' discarded 'for the code', the original fabric which is now no longer of any use. But 'repetition' recollects *forwards*, it is 'clothing that never becomes worn, that fits snugly and comfortably, that neither pulls nor hangs too loosely' (Ibid.). Constantius's bourgeois concept of repetition fits like the perfectly tailored suit, the most up to date in fashion, its newness evokes the 'blissful security of the moment' (Ibid.). But this cosy depiction of repetition – a plush echo of Nietzsche's 'eternal return' – doesn't last long for Constantius when he discovers, in attempting to experience this 'repetition' in a theatre, that 'the only thing that repeated itself was that no repetition was possible' (Ibid., 38). In his attempt to recapture the memory of a previous visit, this early version of 'performance-as-research'<sup>390</sup> fails because it repeats the backwards-looking ideality of Constantius's definition of 'recollection' by seeking an identical re-encounter with the Königstädter theatre. But in the theatre, repetition repeats with a difference; it cannot be performed without the infusion of 'the present's turbid flood' (Adorno: 2005, 166). Constantius's nameless young friend, in the wake of another misjudged experiment in repetition, discovers whilst re-reading the Book of Job that this 'repetition' which moves *forwards* does not retreat to an outworn past but encounters new 'originals' each time; 'Time after time. The sehm asnuh' (620.15-16):

Even though I have read the book again and again, each time every word is new to me. Each time I come to a word, it is again made original or becomes original in my soul.

(Kierkegaard: 2009, 64)

'The scene' of reading, as it is in *Finnegans Wake* or at a performance, is 'refreshed, reroused' (055.10-11); the copy becomes the original. Repetition, in Kierkegaard, puns on the Danish version of the word, 'gjentagelse', which means literally 'to take

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<sup>389</sup>Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, trans., M.G.Piety (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3

<sup>390</sup>I owe this characterization of Constantine Constantius's experiment to Alan Read from his conference paper, 'Theatre's coming home: it's coming home', 'And so on: On Repetition' Conference, Anglia Ruskin University, 30th November 2013, unpublished paper

again'; as such, repetition becomes a force in a theatricalised scene (whether on stage or the page) which *takes again*. Repetition not only produces new originals but does so with an autonomous, appropriative force.

This is the kind of repetition that I have found in performances of *Finnegans Wake*. In contrast to other contemporaneous 'recollections' of Joyce's text, performed by the keepers of the book's mytho-poetic 'skeleton key' (Campbell and Robinson), critics demanding the recognition of their own 'Joyce' (Lanters; Gerber), or editors claiming to have 'restored' the text to its original, fixed state (Rose and O'Hanlon), Mary Manning's *The Voice of Shem*, John Cage's decompositions, and my *About That Original Hen* all performed deviant *repetitions* of Joyce's text. These repetitions re-performed *Finnegans Wake* not as an unfolding of the book's 'plot' and 'dramatis personae'; an unriddling of its secret codes; or as an unveiling of its 'original', genetic document, but as autonomous originals of their own 'refreshed' and 'reroused' appropriations of Joyce's text, performed through methodologies of their own making and understanding inscribed in the 'returnally reproductive' (298.17) *hypermnnesia* of *Finnegans Wake*.

Each performance paid close attention to Joyce's text with different modes of understanding and competence: Mary Manning's competence as a theatrical and lyrical adapter; John Cage's tactile, 'unknowing' understanding of the book's components; and my own material understanding of *Finnegans Wake* and its archive through the lens of a contemporary political context. These repetitions returned *Finnegans Wake* back to the insides of its composition by recollecting it forwards and outside, towards the deviant recompositions, decompositions and recombinations of performance. In these contingent, 'erronymous', and, at times, unreliable permutations of the memory of *Finnegans Wake*'s composition, the forgotten hands and voices embedded in its 'massproduct of teamwork' (546.15) flickered back to life as community of silent voices; articulating redismembered hands.

The ghost of James Joyce haunted these permutations: when the actors of the Poet's Theater served the idiosyncrasies of his language with clarity of diction, and when 'Shem' and 'Shaun' sang his lyrical, genetic transmutation of the 'Exile of Erin'; or when John Cage spent hundreds of hours searching tenaciously and

systematically for the author's name hidden in the text; or as I sat in the James Joyce Collection, listening to him reading a revision of his own writing, the author's ghost was surrogated in these re-appropriations of his textual materials . But these performances also decentered the authority of Joyce. In Manning's translation of passages from *Finnegans Wake* into theatre she touched upon spectral traces of Hester Dowden and the legacy of women performing spiritualist 'monopolylogues', re-transcribed by France Raphael into the notebooks. In Cage's decompositions of *Finnegans Wake* his iterations of Joyce's name became silenced by the heterogenous and indeterminate noise of *Roaratorio*, and by performing an understanding of the text not through scholarly interpretation but a tactile atomization of its material and linguistic components he repeated the work of Joyce's amanuenses and editors. In *About That Original Hen*, the centrality of Joyce's ghost is shifted and displaced by either the emphasis on his amanuensis, Raphael and the other 'redismembered' hands of women from his archive (Dowden; the 'illiterate peasant woman'). The interruptions of the present across the fabric of the performance – the arrest of Koshka Duff and the 'ambiviolences' of institutional and archival space – recollected *Finnegans Wake* 'forwards' into the present by bringing its composition into contact with the material violences and struggles embedded in both the silent community of its archive and the institutional space in which *About That Original Hen* was conceived and performed. But these glimpses of community and ghosts encountered in reading, writing and performing *Finnegans Wake* are always marked by silence and separation. In the performance the performer must contend with their own powerlessness against the absurdity of their project; in their errors, accidents and misreadings of performing the *Wake* these flickers of communication with the revenants of its composition can only remain a dream.

The performances of *Finnegans Wake* that I have studied and made in this thesis resist the demand to explain and domesticate Joyce's book. By paying attention to its composition as material to be decomposed and recombined into theatre, music, performance-lecture and puppetry, performance brings something which 'can't be coded' to the surface: lost performances of reading and writing, the blemishes of the text's collective labour lodged in the memory of its archive, the contingent, precarious materiality of composition. Performance doesn't smooth out the complexity and noise of such an impossible text; it repeats the 'ambiviolences', appropriations and accidental 'intermisunderstandings' upon which it is composed but with a difference.

And whilst performance has the capacity to ‘decord’ the embodied, affective and material memory of the *Wake*, evoking its spectral community of past and future readers and writers, it also does so with the violence of forgetting. Performance ‘redismembers’ *Finnegans Wake*.

But *Finnegans Wake* also reconfigures performance. It forces the medium to stretch beyond its conventional understanding of itself: ‘waking’ the stage with passages from *Finnegans Wake* pushed Mary Manning’s theatre towards a mystifying composite of poetry, music, dance and drama; John Cage used *Finnegans Wake* to demolish the categorization of his work, moving it away from music and towards ‘music in the sense of *Finnegans Wake* (Schöning: 1982, 41); and *About That Original Hen* was the result of a literary research thesis gradually pushed into a multi-media research-performance project. The unique, impossible singularity of *Finnegans Wake* has the power to transform *performance* into *perfumance*.

In a diary entry written during my visit to the James Joyce Collection, I recounted a dream about the ‘Raphaelism’ which would become the central focus of my subsequent research-as-performance project.

I also dreamt last night that I was in a space with what must have been Danis Rose and James Joyce (plus a few others, maybe Becky) - Joyce had his back to us - I was having a dispute with Rose about whether the correction of ‘Scrope’ to ‘Scrape’ in II.ii was accurate. He manages to dampen my enthusiasm for the ambiguity in Joyce’s vowel (a or o) by showing me the handwriting in his draft - now when I look at it it is clearly an *a* because it has a tail rather than an upward flick - but then Joyce, still with his back turned, begins to pronounce the true word = and it is neither ‘scrope’ nor ‘scrape’ - I can’t properly describe the word he uttered because although it made sense in the dream - if I try to recall it now it doesn’t - all I can imagine now is something like ‘srape’ or ‘srope’ or ‘srap’ or ‘sape’ - in the dream though the word wasn’t a particularly ‘wakean’ word - not a neologism or anything but quite a regular, everyday word that Joyce pronounced as though it was nothing special and that our wrangling over the ‘correct’ form was utterly irrelevant and pointless.<sup>391</sup>

Perhaps even more than the research I was performing during my waking hours, it proved to me that authority and the dream of a perfect restoration of an original are arbitrary illusions, and even if one does encounter *the* authority and *the* original, you are most likely to misremember the details in the wake of encounter.

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<sup>391</sup> Private diary entry 30th September 2013

## **Appendix: *About That Original Hen* (2014)**

### **A Note on the Performing-Document**

Unlike the previous chapters, the object of this final analysis is a performance that is still in progress. The live component that will accompany the submission of this thesis is likely to differ from the performance work that I document and analyze in the present chapter. However, in order to perform an analysis of my own practice I have had to treat the documentation of this work as an historical object, restricted to the specific confines of its composition and performance between the Autumn of 2013 and the Spring of 2014. The live component, coterminous with the examination of this thesis, will function as a revision and dialogical response to the work documented and analyzed in this current chapter.

What follows is a version of my script for *AboutThat Original Hen* recomposed in the wake of its performance. It presents a reference point for the recorded documentation (see links below) and provides references for the various sources I have used. But it is not the 'script' from which I worked on the 2nd of June and some of the text presented was not transcribed until *after* I had made the audio recordings for the puppet part of the performance. The reason for this is because an element of my composition process, especially for Part B, involved improvisation. For example, the insertion of 'Exquisite Game of Inspiration' into page 302 of *Finnegans Wake*, transcribed in B.iv.25, was improvised and recorded as I looked between my notes and my copy of the book. The sounds in the audio-recording for B.v.26-28 were also improvised and did not follow a score.

The manner in which I have decided to represent this script loosely resembles Joyce's layout for II.ii of *Finnegans Wake*, the 'Nightlessons' chapter in which the main body of the text runs in a column through the centre of the page and is accompanied by marginal commentaries on either side and in footnotes at the bottom. One reason for alluding to this layout has to do with my original intention to make a performance adaptation of this chapter in which the pedagogic mode of the text and the satirical distractions and disjunctions of its marginalia would be reflected in a performance lecture. But since this earlier conception, the emphasis of my work has shifted from Joyce's comic parody of pedagogy into a consideration of his archive as a starting point for performance. Where previously I had sought to enact a



critique of the pedagogical institution in which my research was being carried out through a performative imitation of the *Wake's* satirical parody of pedagogy (in the form of a bewildering lecture), by 2013 I decided to move from confronting power structures of the university in the shape of teaching practices to considering the division of labour within the university space as well as in the production process of *Finnegans Wake* itself.

A practical reason for returning to the visual aesthetic of the 'Nightlessons' chapter here is because it demonstrates how certain elements have transferred from one stage of my process into the next. In this instance the element has to do with distraction and the division of the senses. In my previous lecture performance (Birkbeck, November 2012) I experimented with the division of speech and writing on stage whereby the audience had to follow a recorded speech that was being commented upon by live writing projected onto a screen. This was intended as a way of translating Joyce's division of the page onto the stage as a form of Brechtian disjunction between speech and writing. This division of visual and audio elements became a central component in the composition of *About That Original Hen* when I decided to structure its two halves according to an interplay between recorded and live, spoken and visual elements.

The other feature of this chapter layout in relation to my earlier performance lecture and *About That Original Hen* is the role of margins and marginal space. In the 2012 lecture the 'margins' of the performance were established through distraction; elements which threatened to disrupt the central discourse but ultimately remained peripheral.<sup>392</sup> But in *About That Original Hen* marginality became a much more integral feature of the performance from the distraction of the film during the spoken lecture to the source material itself which focused on a marginal figure in the Joyce Archive (Mme. France Raphael) and a contemporary political conflict that takes place in the margins of the University (outsourced cleaners and student protest around Senate House). These details factor into my decision to represent the script for *About That Original Hen* as a column with margins in which the authoritative discourse of

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<sup>392</sup> For example, I provided the audience with a metronome to affect the speed at which I delivered the lecture, and during the performance's conclusion, which consisted of a pre-recorded lecture about applause, I typed a live commentary onto a screen which both iterated and subverted the content of the lecture in the spirit of the two marginal columns in II.ii of *Finnegans Wake*. I have documented this conclusion to the previous performance in the appendix.

the central text is accompanied and at times complicated by its marginal content. Much of this content includes stills taken from the Lecture Film (part A) and the puppet piece (part B) but it also includes text and information that did not occur during the performance. Some of this may provide elucidation on certain details or acknowledgements of errors in the text discovered with hindsight (cf. A.i.6), commentary on the text which might lead to further analysis or eventual redrafting in the next performance. This document does not show a perfect document but a *work in progress* arrested in an intermediary stage of development.

### Digital Documents

Part A (Film): <https://vimeo.com/139245407> (password: shem)

Part B (Tabletop): <https://vimeo.com/97571937> (password: shaun)

There are two digital links to both parts of *About That Original Hen*. Although part of these documents were recorded during the performance at Birkbeck on the 2nd of June 2014, they should not be regarded as an objective record of that performance but as an *a posteriori* document which can be used as an audio-visual guide for my analysis which follows. Part A is the film used in the lecture with a voice-over recorded on a later occasion (complete with its own verbal slips and stumbles). Part B is a single perspective recording of the tabletop puppet piece with the audio used in the performance layered on top.<sup>393</sup> Specific references to these videos made in my analysis will use the letters, F (for Film) and T (for Tabletop), followed by the relevant time-codes. References to the scripts take the form of: part, section and page number (i.e. A.i.1, or B.ii.23). Below I provide three tables which outline the structure of *About That Original Hen*, display thematic connections between the two parts and indicate the content of each part and section.

I have decided to document my research-as-performance work like this because it interweaves different stages of my process into a diachronic object. The distinction between ‘performance’ and ‘document’ is blurred and enfolds different layers of ‘liveness’ and contingency into the presentation of my work, which I intend to be a contestation, rather than a maintenance, of binary categorizations.

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<sup>393</sup> With special thanks to Ali Dunlop for filming Part B

**About That Original Hen: Outline Tables**

**A. Lecture**

- i Day 1 / Introduction (1-6)
- ii Day 2 / Outside Archive (7-9)
- iii Day 2 / Inside Archive (10-12)
- iv Day 2 / Hester Dowden (13-14)
- v Raphael's Accident (15)
- vi Day 3 / Jules Crépieux-Jamin (16-17)
- vii 'establishing writer complexus' (17-18)
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**B. Table**

- i Viciciclometer (22)
- ii Séance & Chalk (23)
- iii 'If standing stones could speak' (24)
- iv Raphael's Hand (25)
- v Raphael's Accident (26)
- vi Graphology & Tilling (26-28)
- vii About That Original Hen (28-29)
- viii The Letter (29-30)

## I Day 1 / Introduction (1-6)

- Arrive at Buffalo
- Copy Joyce's ALP
- Mme. Raphael
- 'fruitflavoured lip'
- Copying the catalogue

## II Day 2 / Outside Archive (7-9)

- Traveling to Campus
- Two acts of chalking
- The Police

## III Day 2 / Inside Archive (10-12)

- 'Jim's Hotel'
- 'Scrape out name' - Shem?
- Remaining in the records

## IV Day 2 / Hester Dowden (13-14)

- *Psychic Messages of Oscar Wilde*
- 'Mr. V taps or writes'

## v Raphael's Accident (15)

- 1934: Street Scene / fractured skull
- Joyce's letter to Raphael

## vi Day 3 / Jules Crépieux-Jamin (16-17)

- *Les éléments de l'écriture des canailles*
- the 'illiterate peasant woman'

## vii 'establishing writer complexus' (17-18)

- Collage: FW; Crépieux-Jamin; Koshka

## viii Day 4 / Raphael's Hand (18-21)

- Game of imitation: I always adored your hand
- 'scrope'
- 'Archive fever; 'she...'

## i Vicodinometer (22)

- Shillelagh ritual
- 'The magnetic field'
- 'Eggburst, eggblend, eggburial...'
- Blindly drawing ALP

## ii Séance & Chalk (23)

- Collage: FW; Dowden; Koshka
- Red Glove
- 'scrope'

## iii 'If standing stones could speak' (24)

- chalking the book
- chalking the monument (II.ii)

## iv Raphael's Hand (25)

- '*Jeu d'inspiration*' (II.ii.302)
- Latex Gloves
- Cotton Gloves
- Cracking Raphael's skull (egg)

## v Raphael's Accident (26)

- Skull-shells become wheels
- Drive over Joyce's letter

## vi Graphology & Tilling (26-28)

- Illiterate peasant puppet
- Tilling the page
- Writing till crushed

## vii About That Original Hen (28-29)

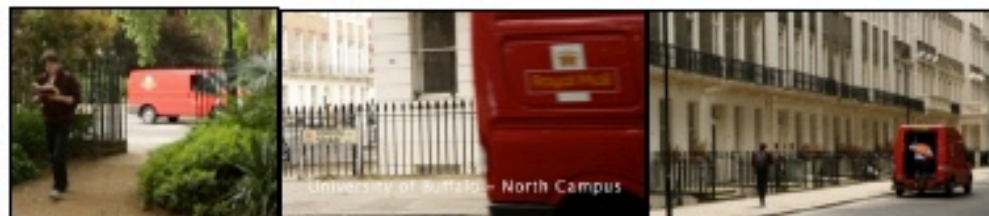
- Hen discovers letter (I.v.110)

## viii The Letter (29-30)

- Raphael's skull tapped/pierced
- Raphael's letter to Archive

## ABOUT THAT ORIGINAL HEN (Part A)

i. In the Autumn of 2013 I flew over to the University of Buffalo to perform some archival research in the James Joyce Collection. I had come to look at Joyce's notebooks that he kept during the 17 years that it took for him to compose his final work, *Finnegans Wake*. Genetic Joyce scholars refer to these items as the 'Buffalo Notebooks' because they have been housed at Buffalo since 1950 when Margaretta F. Wickser sent them over as a generous gift in memory of her deceased husband, Philip J. Wickser, who had acquired them at an exhibition in 1949 in Paris, where the Joyce family had exhibited the archive in order to make ends meet after the war. This panoply of documents and memorabilia, from marked galleys and first editions to Joyce's spectacles and ashplants, remains to this day generously and welcomingly handled by the staff at the Poetry Collection in the North campus of the University of Buffalo.



1

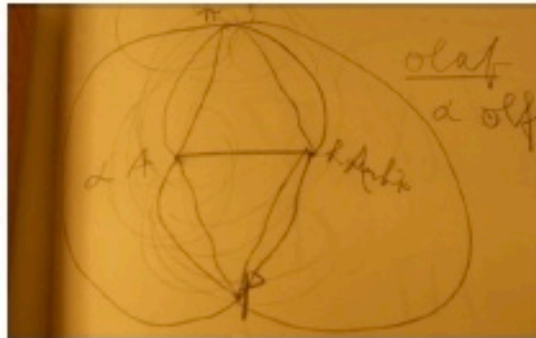
(A.i.1)

When I arrived I was surprised to find how eager the staff were to show me Joyce's material and noted how it was never referred to as an archive, but as a collection.



Despite the pleasantness of the visit however, it came as a disappointment to find that most of the notebooks that I wanted to look at could only be closely examined via jpegs stored on their computer station. I had travelled thousands of miles, spent several hundreds of pounds and committed to waking up early enough every morning to catch the two incredibly slow buses to the North Campus in order to scan through a bunch of jpps on a screen. Furthermore, I was forbidden to take photos or obtain digital copies. As a solution I decided to copy them by hand so that I could represent them to you here today, semi-legally. I did, however, get to handle many other of Joyce's materials.

The first thing I decided to copy was a drawing Joyce had made for Sylvia Beach. It was supposed to be a representation of the the Euclidian Triangle that bisects through the centre of *Finnegans Wake* in the 'Nightlessons' chapter, in which the twins, Shem and Shaun draw their mother's vagina; the 'muddy triangular delta' hidden



beneath her 'maidsapron'. Due to his increasingly poor eyesight and lack of appropriate tools, Joyce's rendering of this 'geomater' is poorly executed, yet eye-catchingly provocative.

It was Joyce's failing eyesight that had led me to the Buffalo Notebooks in the first place. As he was writing the *Wake*, Joyce had to rely on the help of his family, friends and, occasionally, people that he employed.

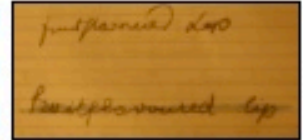


Helpers like his wife, Nora, his daughter, Lucia, or the young Samuel Beckett, would read to him or take down his dictation. But the helper I was primarily interested in was his amanuensis, Madame France Raphael. In the early 1930s Joyce started to 'revise' the chapters and fragments that he had written in order for them to fuse into what would eventually become *Finnegans Wake*. 'Revision' and 'editing' for Joyce did not mean cutting and rewriting, but accreting and expanding. It was in his many notebooks, which due to his glaucoma were practically illegible, that he mined hundreds of allusions, references, words, motifs and other miscellaneous odds and ends to add to this growing heap of text. So he hired Mme. France Raphael to transcribe the notes into a new set of notebooks. Raphael had to copy any notes that had not been crossed out with one of Joyce's coloured crayons. Inevitably, she had difficulties interpreting these complex scribbles that her employer had written in the fog of half-blind inspiration and frequently made what textual scholars have termed, 'Raphaelisms'.





For example, Danis Rose found that  
**VI.B.11:056** Joyce's note, 'fruitflavoured lap', was  
**VI.C.1:127** transcribed by Raphael as 'fruitflavoured  
**JJA 61:154** lip' which finally ends up on page 444 of  
*Finnegans Wake* as:



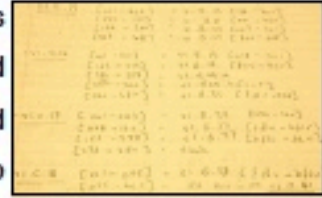
**444.22 / JJA61: 34** 'I'll smack your *fruitflavoured*  
*jujube lips* well for you, so I will  
 well for you, if you don't keep your  
 civil tongue in your pigeonhouse.'

It was these instances that I had come looking for in the collection - these accidental moments of 'anticollaboration' that were scattered 'erronymously' throughout the text and in the layers of its archive. I wanted to see if I could somehow contact this hand that lingered silently in the Buffalo collection

One of the problems with this new set of notebooks was that, although they were numbered by someone, they were not dated and were not transcribed in chronological order. Each Raphael notebook contains on average three or four of Joyce's notebooks but she never marked the transitions between them.



Thankfully, much of the source materials used by Joyce in these notebooks had already been ascertained from the hard work of those before me. But I still had to make an efficient reference system for myself. So I made a catalogue of the Raphael notebooks, classed VI.C.1 to 18, and listed the Joyce notebooks which were transcribed into them, classed VI.B.1 to 49. Along with the VI.B notebooks, the VI.C notebooks also contained material from the VI.D notebooks - these were 'missing' notebooks which meant that the originals had been lost or were yet to be discovered. My catalogue also included the corresponding page numbers in the Raphael notebooks with the Joyce notebooks, so for example, for VI.C.1, I noted that page numbers 1 to 74 contained page numbers 13 to 146 of VI.B.16; 75 to 208 contained pages 1 to 170 of VI.B.11 and 209 to 280 contained pages 1 to 172 of VI.B.34. Then my first day at the archive was over.



ii. The next day I went back to the collection to follow up these accidental 'Raphaelisms' that scholars like Danis Rose claimed Raphael had made. I shot footage of the journey to the North Campus which took at least over an hour, but I lost it all so I cannot show it to you today. You would have seen how sad and ghostlike Buffalo is; a rust belt city with a thousand empty theatres; the giant Church of Scientology headquarters outside of my bedroom window; the bus ride up endless roads and sick people shuffling across the streets; then there's the University itself with its strategic 'spine' that runs through the campus, keeping everything connected but without a centralized space in which students could assemble or demonstrate.

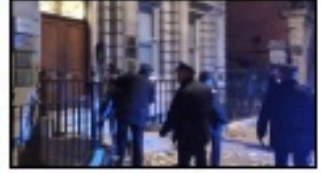


7

(A.ii.7)



I saw campus police officers recruiting at lunch time outside the Starbucks and the fast-food megalopolis where, as I searched for the administration office to inquire about the possibility of obtaining a visitor's pass, I noticed the hand prints of students from the various college frat houses outlined on a notice board with the words, 'I PLEDGE NOT TO HAZE', written above. As I was about to re-enter the Joyce collection, I noticed a young woman, most likely a student, writing with chalk on the brick wall opposite the entrance. I stopped to see what she was writing. I didn't think to take a photo or even write it down because at the time I thought I'd remember the words exactly, but I think they said something like: 'YOU SEEK INFORMATION BUT WHAT YOU NEED IS IMAGINATION.'



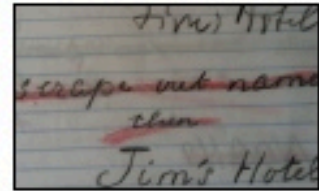


For the duration of my stay at Buffalo this inspirational adage remained on the wall, untouched by cleaning staff or reported to the campus police. It got me thinking back to a few months previous when a woman had used chalk to write on University property at Senate House in London, but instead of being permitted she was met by full-on police intervention after chalking a slogan which called on students and staff to support a strike by outsourced cleaners, she was arrested by over a dozen Metropolitan police officers, charged with criminal damage and 'assaulting' a police officer. I also remembered the picture of a paving stone on Malet St. decorated with a little pool of blood after a policeman had punched a protestor in the face.



–Were you or were you not? Ask yourself the answer, I'm not giving you a short question. No, not to mix up, cast your eyes around Capel Court. I want you, witness, of this epic struggle, as yours so mine, to reconstruct for us, as briefly as you can, inexactly the same as a mind's eye view, how these funeral games, which have been poring over us through homer's kerryer pidgeons, massacred as the holiname rally round took place. (515.19-25)

iii. Back in the collection I delved into some of Raphael's errors. Danis Rose demonstrates one of Raphael's 'inspired inventions' when Joyce's entry in VI.B.11:66, 'scrape out name / then / Finn's Hotel', was transcribed by Raphael in VI.C.1:136 as 'scrape out name / then / Jim's Hotel'. This is an instance in which I agree with Rose because Joyce originally planned on calling the book 'Finn's Hotel'. However, I went looking for Joyce's use of the phrase 'scrape out name' in *Finnegans Wake* since he had crossed out Raphael's transcription with his red crayon. On the back of this notebook (VI.B.11) Joyce had written the name 'Shem'. This refers to one of the twins in the book, who might also be a cartoon version of Joyce himself. This led me to Chapter 7 of Book 1, the 'Shem' chapter, which begins: 'Shem is as short for Shemus as Jem is joky for Jacob.' Joyce had jotted the note between September and November 1923 and written his first draft of the Shem chapter by February 1924. so it made sense to be found here.



Soon enough I found a candidate on page 182: 'he scabbled and scratched and scribbled and skrevented nameless shamelessness about everybody ever he met'. Here Joyce had stretched out the 'sk' sound in 'scrape' to convey the destructive quality of writing production in relation to a form of censored or enforced anonymity - a scraped out shameless (shemless - james joyceless) namelessness. But then I realized that Joyce had not crossed out the note until after Raphael had transcribed it. This meant that it would only have been used well after Joyce had written this line into the Shem chapter. I looked up the word 'scrape' in Clive Hart's concordance to *Finnegans Wake* and this took me to page 514, the third chapter of the third book, known as Yawn, or the 3rd watch of Shaun wherein Shem's twin brother, Shaun, ventriloquises various ancestral voices during a seance that takes place around his prostrated, snoozing body.

225

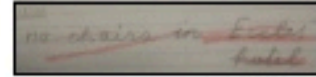


In the final draft, Joyce had rendered  
the note into:

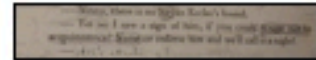
'-Yet an I saw a sign of him, if you could scrape out his  
acquintence? Name or redress him and we'll call it a  
night!'

(514.16-17)

This usage was also confirmed by  
the presence in this passage of other  
phrases lifted from Notebook VI.B.



11: 'no chairs in Eccles' Hotel'  
became the line 'Ninny, there is no  
hay in Eccles' hostel' (514.15) whilst  
'Finn's Hotel' became an actual  
scraped out name when it appears  
as an unfinished game of hangman:



'-i..'. .o..'. I was dispirited to find  
that my first solution had been  
proven wrong, but also pleased that I  
was able to have proven myself  
wrong. I got to thinking about how  
there seemed to be a motif, in both  
solutions, dealing with a dialectic of  
inscription and erasure; particularly  
with regard to these notebooks and  
Raphael's transcriptions. When they  
had been used and *inscribed* into  
*Finnegans Wake* they would be  
*erased* from the record with Joyce's  
coloured crayon, but it was an  
erasure that remained. They had  
been crossed and scraped out *from*  
the record whilst remaining *in* the  
record.



*K in Holborn Hotel.  
Name scraped into the  
Record.*



iv. I dwelled on this specific chapter for a little longer. Months previously I had been looking at facsimiles of the Buffalo Notebooks in the Cambridge University Library. Some of the notes in VI.B.14, which had been transcribed by Raphael into VI.C.12, ended up in his redrafting of the 'Yawn' chapter and had been taken from a book published in 1923 called *The Psychic Messages of Oscar Wilde* by Hester Travers Smith (aka Hester Dowden). She was a famous spiritualist amongst the modernists and on several occasions received Samuel Beckett to her house. In this book she recorded a series of 'messages' from Oscar Wilde that she obtained through various séances using Ouija Boards and automatic writing. From this reading, Joyce used the notes 'ouidja board' and 'impersonating medium' in the Yawn-Séance chapter. In Raphael notebook VI.C.12, the notes 'planchette' and 'Mr. V - taps or writes' are left untouched. The last note refers to a Mr V, one of Dowden's 'mediums' and alludes to her recounting of the moment when she discovers his 'talent' for channeling the words of Oscar Wilde through writing.



But his 'voice' can only be transcribed after she places her hand onto the back of Mr. V's hand, which, up until this tender form of contact, had been agitatedly tapping on the paper:



'I lifted my hand from his; the pencil stopped instantly; it merely tapped impatiently on the paper.'<sup>385</sup>

Although there might not be a directly traceable use of this note in *Finnegans Wake*, there is a moment in Book 1 Chapter 5 where the connection between a violent tapping and writing might be made:



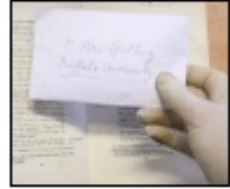
These paper wounds, four in type, were gradually and correctly understood to mean stop, please stop, do please stop, and O do please stop respectively... (124.3-5)

In this decipherment of a letter (which could actually be *Finnegans Wake* itself) writing becomes a violation upon the page; puncturing its surface with a series of stabs and gashes, releasing a hidden voice pleading and suffering in purgatory.

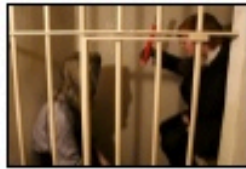


<sup>385</sup> Hester Travers Smith, *Psychic Messages from Oscar Wilde* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1924), 79

v. I should mention here that one of the few direct communications between Joyce and Raphael, apart from the notebooks themselves, consists of a very brief letter sent on the 24th of April 1934 after Raphael had been involved in a car accident. One day, during the course of her employment under Mr Joyce she had crossed a street and was hit by a car. As a result she fractured her skull. In his letter, Joyce expressed how he was relieved to learn that she survived and that the accident would not leave behind any serious disfiguring trace. He also hoped that she would be able to obtain compensation despite the lack of witnesses to the accident. He then thanked her for her service and the 'quick and excellent transcriptions' that she had rendered for him.



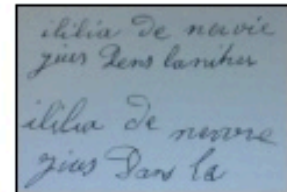
[As chalk is my judge! it was pierced but not punctured (in the university sense of the term) by numerous stabs and foliated gashes made by a pronged instrument. These paper wounds, four in type, were gradually and correctly understood to mean stop, please stop, do please stop, and O do please stop respectively, and following up their one true clue, the circumflexuous wall of a single-minded men's asylum, accentuated by bits of broken English as displayed in a – Yard inquiries pointed out --> that they had been "provoked" by a fork, of a grave Professor; at the break – fast – table; ; acutely professionally *piqué*, to = introduce a notion of time [upon a plane (?) surface 'face'] by puncturing holes (sic) in iSpace?] (200.16-17 / 124.1-12)



vi. Elsewhere in the notebooks I discovered another scene of writing that seemed to echo Raphael and Joyce. Joyce took notes from another book published in 1923, Jules Crépieux-Jamin's *Les éléments de l'écriture des canailles*, which translates into something like 'Elements of writing by scoundrels or vagabonds'. This material either ended up in both the 'Letter' chapter and the 'Shem' chapter. Whilst the scenario between Hester Dowden and Mr. V inverts Joyce and Raphael's gendered power dynamic, this scene, between a Graphologist, and, according to Crépieux-Jamin, an 'illiterate peasant woman', offers a variation on the theme of a man asking a woman to write for him.



In this instance the inaccuracy of what is written is important since the peasant woman's failure to write efficiently under pressure provides the graphologist with the perfect demonstration of the difference between agitated and active writing. The content of her writing is difficult to decipher, and it is never explained whether she was actually illiterate or was pretending to be literate by imitating the act of writing and therefore inventing her own form of secret writing. All that Crépieux-Jamin was interested in however was the effect of his instruction upon her ability to perform.



vii. Its importance in establishing the identities of the writer complexus (for if the hand was one, the minds of active and agitated were more than so) ...[Energy is shown in writing by the quickness of the movements and the pressure of the hand]' ...every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anway connected with the gobblydumped turkery was moving and changing every part of the time: the continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators, the variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled, changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns ... it is not a miseffectual whyacinthinous riot of blots and blurs and bars and balls and hoops and wriggles and juxtaposed jottings linked by spurts of speed: ... before our eyes under pressure of the writer's hand ... the one and only time when our copyist seems at least to have grasped the beauty of restraint. I'd written on the stone in various different colours of chalk, trying to make it as colourful as possible uhm and ah one of the arguments that the prosecution tried to make was that uhm ah so what I'd written was "Sick Pay Holidays Pensions Now - Support the Cleaners' struggle" uhm and 3 cosas uhm and this one word 'Pensions' uhm was written in orange and yellow uhm chalk and uhm ah so the prosecutor tried to argue that because the the uhm foundation stone had gold lettering, one word from what I'd written was in what she thought was gold lettering then

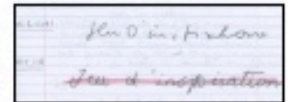
17

(A.vii.17)

ahm uh it obviously was not intended to be *read*. uhm and she extracted from this one word being in her view not clear enough the idea that I that I did not intend to convey any meaning with the words at all, but only to damage the stone. If standing stones could speak. Till tree from tree, tree among trees, tree over tree become stone to stone, stone between stone, stone under stone for ever.<sup>386</sup>



viii. But none of these examples have so far dealt with authentic Raphaelisms. According to Rose, in VI.B.11 Joyce had written 'jeu d'initiation', Game of initiation. But Raphael transcribed this in VI.C.1 as 'jeu d'inspiration', Game of Inspiration. I wanted to see whether Rose had interpreted Joyce's original note correctly. Upon recovering the note however, I thought that it read neither 'initiation' nor 'inspiration' but 'imitation.' I transcribed it into my notebook to feel it out for myself. I was intrigued by the constellation that had formed amongst our decipherments in Rose's expert opinion, Raphael had failed Joyce's 'game' since she was not an 'initiated' reader; whilst Raphael could only rely on her inspiration in the act of transcription, and for me, this transcribal indeterminacy was compelling material for my own experiments of failed 'imitation'.



## 18

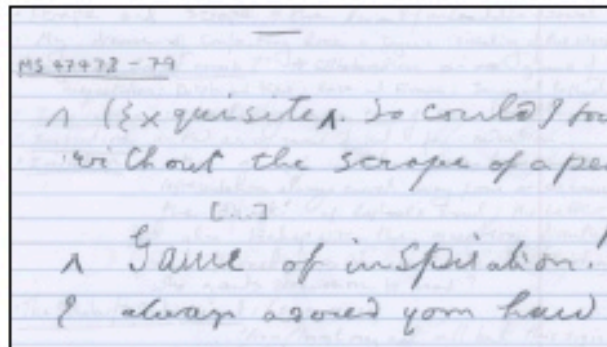
<sup>386</sup>FW 114.32-35; 118.21-31; 121.25; 121.30; 259.1-2; 306.22-23; Jules Crépieux-Jamin, *Les éléments de l'écriture des canailles* (Paris : E. Flammarion, 1923), 210; James Joyce, *The Finnegans Wake Notebooks at Buffalo: Notebook VI.B.6*, eds. Vincent Deane, Daniel Ferrer, Geert Lernout (Antwerp: Brepolis, 2002), 52; and transcription of interview with Koshka Duff [18.6.2014]



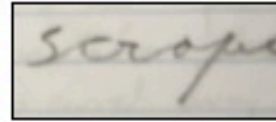
Then I decided to trace the exact steps in the process that led to Joyce's insertion of the note and to see whether Rose, who has recently 'restored' *Finnegans Wake*, had made any changes this passage.



When Joyce came to redraft this chapter, an amanuensis, possibly Raphael, inserted a couple of lines between the phrases: '...signing away in happinext complete' and 'can you write us a last line?'. The first insertion read: 'Exquisite. So could I too without the scrope of a pen.' In Rose's restored *Wake* he changes 'scrope' into 'scrape'. This is purely based on his interpretation of the handwritten vowel on the manuscript - it could just as much have been an 'a' as it could have been an 'o'..



There is also a list of corrections that Joyce made to this page and when given the second chance, he kept it as 'scrope', which I think is a better word since it implies 'scrape' as well as 'grope' and 'scope', like a half-blind man scraping and groping about in the dark, much like Joyce himself. But later on in the revision process, Joyce decided to make a further insertion between 'Exquisite' and 'So could I to,' and this is where he inserts, 'Game of inspiration. I always adored your hand.'



Was this a message from Joyce to Raphael? Did he know somehow that Raphael had altered his original note? Was this a secretly orchestrated manifestation of what the *Wake* refers to as an 'intermisunderstanding of the anticollaborator'? Had Joyce developed an affection for his amanuensis? Was Joyce in love with the hand of Raphael? Had the familiarity of her 'handworded grace' become the object of his affection as he held it close to his 'gnose's glow', scroping his crayon across the curves and opened vowels of her script, letting it guide him deeper into the night, the accumulating obscurity of his work?



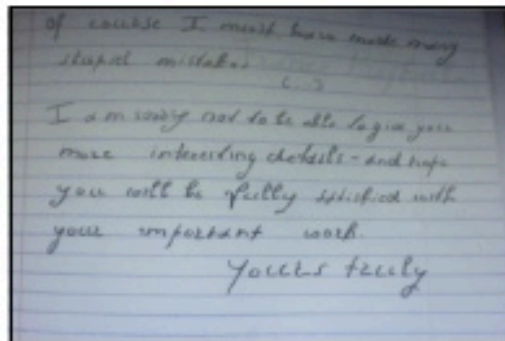
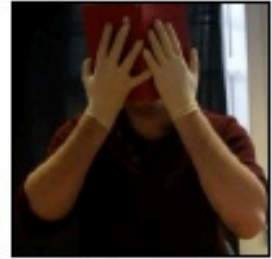


*The Key Signature*  
(302.L2)



Was this to be her secret signature?

After finding what I took to be her hand I discovered a letter from Raphael to the one of the archivists at Buffalo sent in 1959. Her hand writing seemed more fractured than in the 1930s notebooks; her 'p's looked like 'f's but what really struck me about her letter was the way it ends. After writing: 'I am sorry not to be able to give you more interesting details, and hope you will be fully satisfied with your important work. Yours Truly', she



## ABOUT THAT ORIGINAL HEN (Part B)

### i. Vicociclocrometer

SILENCE.

Act drop. Stand by! Blinders! Curtain up Juice, please! Foots!

Yes. Very good now. We are again in the magnetic field.

What has gone? How it ends?

Begin to forget it. It will remember itself from every sides, with all gestures, in each our word. Today's truth, tomorrow's trend.



Forget, remember!

Forget!

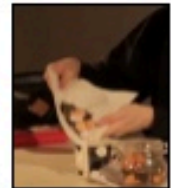
Our wholemole millwheeling vicociclocrometer, a tetradomational gazeboctroticon autokinatonetically preprovided with a clappercoupling smeltingworks exprogressive process, (for the farmer, his son and their homely codes, known as eggburst, eggblend, eggburial and hatch-as-hatch can) receives through a portal vein the dialytically separated elements of precedent decomposition for the verypetpurpose of subsequent recombination so that the heroticisms, catastrophes and eccentricities transmitted by the ancient legacy of the past; type by tope, letter from litter, word at ward, with sendence of sundance, in fact, the sameold gamebold adomic structure of our Finnius the old One, as highly charged with electrons as hophazards can effective it, may be there for you, Cockalopratoraloomenos, when cup, platter and pot come piping hot, as stre as herself pits hen to paper and there's scribings scrawled on eggs.

Don't forget! The grand fooneal will now shortly occur. Remember.

The remains must be removed before eaight hours shorp. With earnestly conceived hopes. So help us to witness to this day to hand in sleep.

Well, here's lettering you erroneously anent other clerical fands allieged herewith.

That we were treated not very grand when the police and everybody is all bowing to us when we go out in all directions on Wanterlond Road with my cubarola glide.



FW 501.06-15;614.19-617.30

*The prouts who will invent a writing there ultimately is the poeta, still more learned, who discovered the raiding there originally // We were chalking about the demonstration which was gonna be the next day it was the 3 cosas demonstration, thats , the 3 cosas is three things in Spanish - Sick pay, holidays and pensions for the outsourced workers, primarily cleaners, porters and other low paid staff at the university of London. So I took my chalks and wrote on the foundation stone of Senate House. // At the third meeting Mr V wrote for the first time. I rested my hand on his, while he held the pencil and a sentence or two were written slowly. // they grabbed my arms and pulled me to the floor and then I was kind of resisting them from putting handcuffs on and kind of like tensing up and wriggling around to try to get them off and cause them trouble and it was pretty painful so I was shouting about it aswell sometimes. // Mr V held the pencil, I sat beside him and rested my fingers lightly on the back of his hand. Before we had started he asked me whether it would make any difference if he closed his eyes. I was pleased at his suggestion.//I was kind of just kept to the ground next to the van, occasionally like having a little bit of an argument with them because they kept telling me I had a choice which I objected to because the final outcome wasn't really being determined by me. // *That's the point of eschatology our book of kills reaches for now in soandso many counterpoint words.* //While I was being put into the van one of the specials was - he was a guy called Sutor, Liam sutor who was kind of groping my crotch while they were putting me into the van and while they were doing that then they like ripped the bag with the book out of my hand, and it was also at that point that they started shouting about me assaulting them and that I was going to be arrested for that as well.//*to twist the penman's tale posterwise.*// At first his pencil tapped repeatedly on the paper, then it began to move more rapidly than at our last meeting.// I just said no comment to everything including the question of whether I thought my behavior was 'ladylike'.// I looked at Mr. V. He seemed only half conscious, his eyes were closed. // While I was in the interview room I could hear lots of noise from outside because there was a solidarity protest with people shouting to let me go and that was really great because I could hear them whilst I was in the interview room and all the cops could hear them too. // I perpetually kept my ouija ouija wicket up.// His pencil was so firmly controlled that I found it very difficult to move it from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. // And the justification for strip searching me was because I refused to be searched. But while they were doing the strip search they did continually threaten to do a cavity search because they kept on going on about what people have in their vaginas which might include chalk. // *What can't be coded can be decoded if an ear eye seize what no eye ere grieved for.* // I do now see Senate House from the perspective of the CCTV cameras. // I lifted my hand from his; the pencil stopped instantly; it merely tapped impatiently on the paper. At one point while he was handcuffing me and generally copping a good feel, sutor's hat fell off uhm and uh I mean it wasnt really my fault cos he'd just like shoved his face into my legs when I was on the floor and his hat was on back to front anyways so it's not really very surprising that his hat fell off but that was another assault. // *Now, the doctrine obtains, we have occasioning cause causing effects and affects occasionally recausing altereffects.* // I do also have other memories though of for example of uhm ah demos right in senate house where the police were completely outmanouevered. // *Or I will let me take it upon myself to suggest to twist the penman's tale posterwise.**

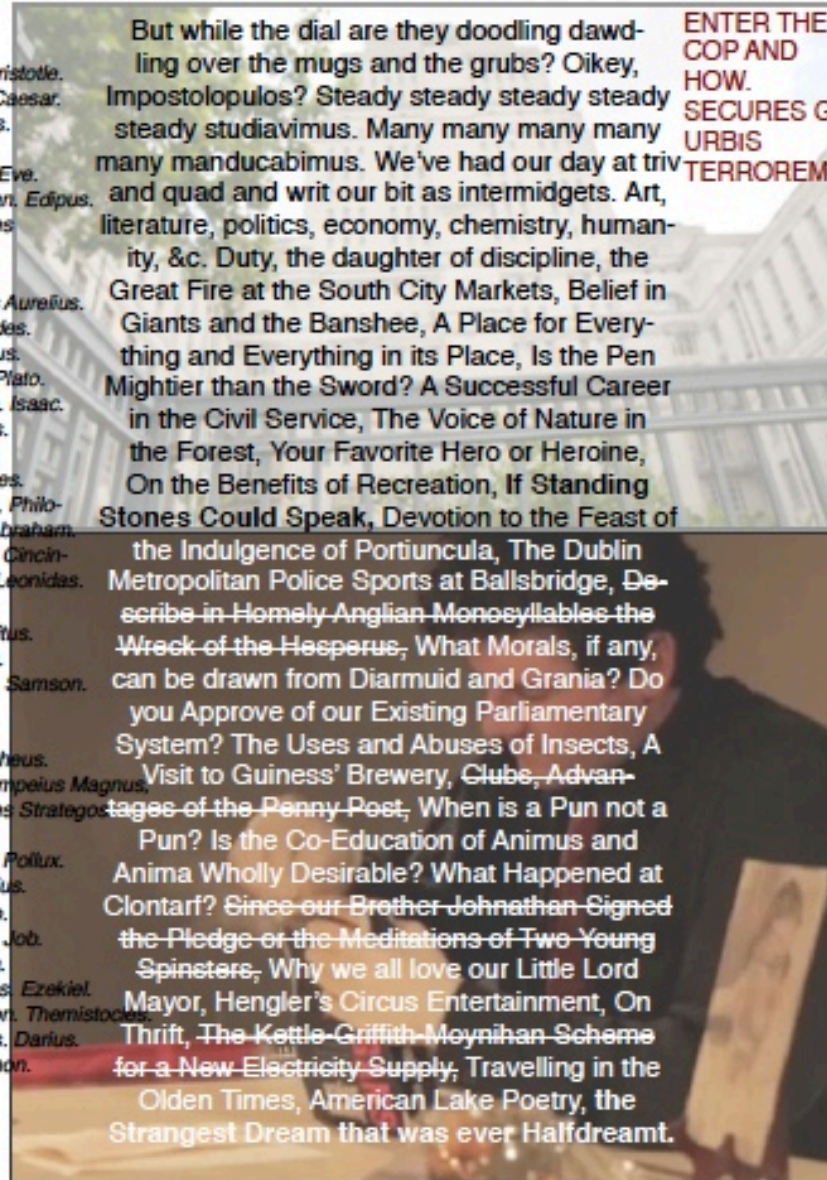
ii. Séance  
& Chalk  
Account

On the  
Record:  
K's Voice

Text from  
482.31-483.3;  
Psychic  
Messages of  
Oscar Wilde,  
79-80; K's  
account

3. If Standing Stones Could Speak [306.8-308.1]

Cato.  
Nero.  
Saul. Aristotle.  
Julius Caesar.  
Pericles.  
Ovid.  
Adam, Eve.  
Domitian. Edipus.  
Socrates.  
Ajax.  
Homer.  
Marcus Aurelius.  
Alcibiades.  
Lucretius.  
Noah. Plato.  
Horace. Isaac.  
Tiresias.  
marinus.  
Diogenes.  
Procne, Philomela. Abraham.  
Nestor. Cincinnatus. Leonidas.  
Jacob.  
Theocritus.  
Joseph.  
Fabius. Samson.  
Cain.  
Escop.  
Prometheus.  
Lot. Pompeius Magnus.  
Miltiades Strategos.  
Solon.  
Castor, Pollux.  
Dionysius.  
Sappho.  
Moses. Job.  
Catilina.  
Cadmus. Ezekiel.  
Solomon. Themistocles.  
Vitellius. Darius.  
Xenophon.



ENTER THE  
COP AND  
HOW.  
SECURES GUBERNANT  
URBIS  
TERROREM.

ii. Séance  
& Chalk  
Account

On the  
Record:  
K's Voice

Text from  
482.31-483.3;  
Psychic  
Messages of  
Oscar Wilde,  
79-80; K's  
account



'chalk and sanguine pictograph' (220.11)

**4. Raphael's Hand:  
Game of Inspiration**

Koshka: Now, (peel your eyes, my gins, and brush your saton hat, me elementator joyclid, son of a Butt! She's mine, Jow low jure,<sup>1</sup> be Skibbering's eagles, sweet tart of Whiteknees Archway) watch him, having caught at the bifurking clamum in his blosillos, the onelike underworp he had ever funnet without difficultads, the aboleshqvick, signing away in happinext complete, (Exquisite Game of inspiration! I always adored your hand. So could I too and without the scrope of a pen. Ohr for oral, key for crib, olchedolche and a lunge ad



*[simultaneous]*

Ollie: Now, (~~peel your eyes, my gins, and brush your saton hat, me elementator joyclid, son of a Butt! She's mine, Jow low jure,<sup>1</sup> be Skibbering's eagles, sweet tart of Whiteknees Archway~~) watch him, having caught at the bifurking clamum in his blosillos, the onelike underworp he had ever funnet without difficultads, the aboleshqvick, signing away in happinext complete, (~~Exquisite Game of inspiration! I always adored your hand. So could I too and without the scrope of a pen.~~ Ohr for oral, key for crib, olchedolche and a lunge ad lib. Can you write us a last line? From Smith Jones-Orbison?)



Signing away in happinext complete ...

Exquisite. So could I too and without the SCROPE of a pen.

Ohr for oral, key for crib, olchedolche and a lunge ad lib...<uh>...olchedolche...

signing away in happinext complete...<ha>

EXQUISITE. GAME. OF INITIATION. I ALWAYS ADORED YOUR HARD. So could I to and without the scrape of a pen. Ohr for oral, key for crib, olchedolche and a lunge ad lib....

Signing away in happinext complete. EXQUISITE GAME OF INSPIRATION. I ALWAYS ADORED YOUR HAND. SO COULD I TOO AND WITHOUT THE SCROPE OF A PEN. Ohr for oral, key for crib, olchedolche and a lunge ad lib. Can you write us a last line?

[pause]

## 4. Raphael's Accident

On the Record: Robert Kiely

Rob Dear Mrs Raphael,

I am very sorry to hear of the dreadful accident. Your niece says you are now out of danger. But what a frightful shock! It is well you are not disfigured, and I understand that it is not likely to leave any serious trace. I do hope you will get some compensation in spite of the lack of witnesses and that your suffering is not too great. Let me thank you once again for your quick and excellent transcriptions. You have rendered me a very great service. With my very best wishes for your speedy and complete recovery.

sincerely yours,

James Joyce<sup>387</sup>

## 5. Graphology &amp; Tilling

K: Illiterate Peasant woman, 70 years of age, in good health.

O [Crépieux-Jamin]: The study of the movements of Handwriting may rightly be considered as a branch of Psychology, since this latter has been defined as the study of behaviour. The gesture of handwriting is certainly a mode of behaviour, but while other movements are fleeting and intangible, that of writing is permanent – it is a fixed representation, an inscribed gesture. It is this fact which makes it so valuable as an index to character, for although attitude, gesture and voice betray the personality of a man, and are even capable today of being recorded by means of the gramophone and cinematograph; yet none of these methods has the same simplicity as the registration by means of writing (which is of universal and daily use), and so are not comparable with handwriting as an index of human nature.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>387</sup> Letter from Joyce to Raphael, 24th April 1934, in James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. III, ed. Richard Ellman (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 301

<sup>388</sup> Jules Crépieux-Jamin, *The Psychology of the Movements of Handwriting*, trans. L.K.Given-Wilson (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926), 1-2

**K:** Elle est plus agitée mais par cela même ralentie. On ne saurait trouver un meilleur exemple de la différence qu'il y a entre l'agitation et l'activité.<sup>389</sup>

**O [Philologist]:** Lead, kindly fowl! They always did: ask the ages. What bird has done yesterday man may do next year, be it fly, be it moult, be it hatch, be it agreement in the nest. For her socioscientific sense is sound as a bell, sir, her volucrine automutativeness right on normalcy: she knows, she just feels she was kind of born to lay and love eggs. In her genestic field it is all game and no gammon; she is ladylike in everything she does and plays the gentleman's part every time. Let us auspice it! Yes, before all this has time to end the golden age must return with its vengeance. Man will become dirigible, Ague will be rejuvenated, woman with her ridiculous white burden will reach by one step sublime incubation, the manewanting human lioness with her dishorned discipular manram will lie down together publicly flank upon fleece. No, assuredly, they are not justified, those gloompourers who grouse that letters have never been quite their old selves again since that weird weekday in bleak Janiveer (yet how palmy date in a waste's oasis!) when to the shock of both, Biddy Doran looked at literature.<sup>390</sup>

**K:** The writing is more agitated but slower as a result of this. I would not know where to find a better example of the difference between agitation and activity.<sup>391</sup>

**O [peasant woman]:** I am a worker, a tombstone mason, anxious to plice avery-buries and jully glad when Christmas comes his once ayear. You are a poorjoist, unctuous to polise nopebobbies and tunnibelly souully when 'tis thime took o'er home, gin. We cannot say aye to aye. We cannot smile noes from noes. Still. One cannot help noticing that rather more than half of the lines run north-south in the Nemzes and Bukarahast directions while the others go west-east in search from Maliziies with Bulgarad for, tiny tot though it looks when schtschupnistling alongside other incunabula, it has its cardinal points for all that. These ruled barriers along which the traced words, run, march, halt, walk, stumble at doubtful points, stumble up again in comparative safety seem to have been drawn first of all in a pretty checker with lamp-black and blackthorn. Such crossing is antechristian of course, but the use of the homeborn shillelagh as an aid to calligraphy shows a distinct advance from savagery to barbarism. It is seriously believed by some that the intention may have been geodetic, or, in the view of the cannier, domestic economical. But by writing thithaways end to end and turning, turning and end to end hithaways writing and with lines of litters slittering up and louds of latters slettering down, the old semetomyplace and jupetbackagain from tham Let Rise till Hum Lit. Sleep, where in the waste is the wisdom?<sup>392</sup> 27

<sup>389</sup> Crépieux-Jamin: 1923, 211

<sup>390</sup> FW 112.09-17

<sup>391</sup> Crépieux-Jamin: 1923, 211

<sup>392</sup> FW 113.34 - 114.20

*Elle est plus agitée mais par cela même ralentie. On ne saurait trouver un meilleur exemple de la différence qu'il y a entre l'agitation et l'activité.*

[Graphologist] Another point, in addition to the original sand, pounce powder, drunkard paper or soft rag used has acquired accretions of terricious matter whilst loitering in the past. The teatimestained terminal is a cosy little brown study all to oneself and, whether it be thumb-print, mademark or just a poor trait of the artless, its importance in establishing the identities in the writer complexus (for if the hand was one, the minds of active and agitated were more than so) will be best appreciated by never forgetting that both before and after the battle of the Boyne it was a habit not to sign letters always. Tip. And it is surely a lesser ignorance to write a word with every consonant too few than to add all too many. The end? Say it with missiles then and thus arabesque the page. You have your cup of scalding Souchong,

[Glove] I know by heart the places he likes to saale, duddurdy devil! Scorching my hand and starving my famine to make his private linen public. Wallop it well with your battle and clean it. My wrists are wrusty rubbing the mouldaw stains.

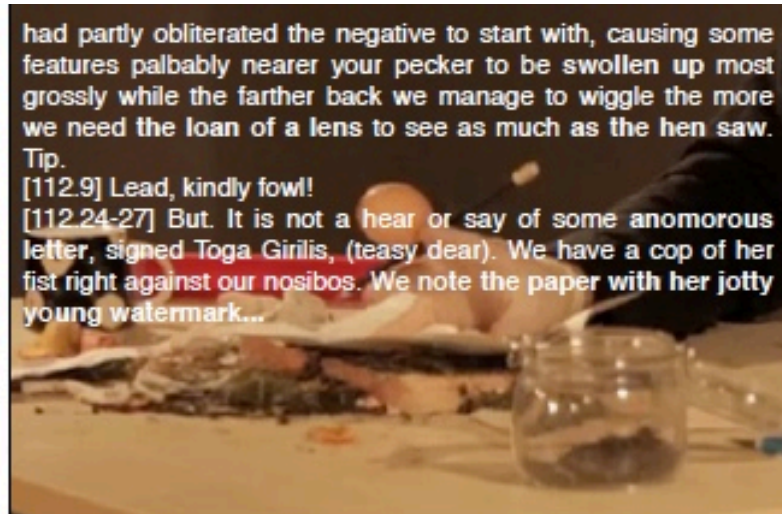
When will they reassemble it? O, my back, my back, my bach!  
 ...oso sweet and so cool and so limber she looked ... in the silence, of the sycomores, all listening, the kindling curves you simply can't stop feeling, he plunged both of his newly anointed hands, the core of his cushlas, in her singimari saffron strumans of hair, parting them and soothing her and mingling it...The writing is more agitated but slower as a result of this. I would not know where to find a better example of the difference between agitation and activity

**Ollie & Koshka:**

[110.22-31]About that original hen. Midwinter (fruor or kuur?) was in the offing and Premver a promise of a pril when, as kischabrigies sang life's old sahatsong, an iceclad shiverer, merest of bantlings observed a cold fowl behaviourising strangely on that fatal midden or chip factory or comicalbottomed copsjute (dump for short) afterwards changed into the orangery when in the course of deeper demolition unexpectedly one bushman's holiday its limon threw up a few spontaneous fragments of orangepeel, the last remains of an outdoor meal by some unknown sunseeker or placehider *illico* way back in his mistridden past.

[111.30- 112.2] Well, this freely is what must have ocured to our missive (there's a sod of a turb for you! please wisp off the grass!) unfiltered from the boucher by the sagacity of a lookmelittle likemelong hen. Heated residence in the heart of the orangeflavoured mudmound





**K [Raphael]:**

40 rue Boissonade, Paris XIV  
 DAN. 73 - 39

28 - 9 - 1959

Dear Mr Spielberg,

When I began working for Mr Joyce I saw him personally and asked explanations when I was uncertain. I remember

one day saying to him that I did my best but very often felt that I was in a fog and could not be at all sure of what I was writing.

Very quickly he answered "Don't trouble, you understand it much more than the most of my readers will understand it.

This was extremely kind but did not seem quite satisfactory to me.

As I wrote to you I begin working for Mr. Joyce at the end of 1932 or beginning 1933. I have found in my papers 2 Christmas cards - one dated 35 - and the second 36 - with thanks and greetings -

Before that I had received a letter dated 24 - IV - 1934 - written after he had heard of a serious accident, and which he wrote "Let me thank you again for your quick and excellent transcriptions. You have rendered me a very great service -

I do not know why I did not see Mr. Joyce after a certain time towards the middle of 1935. the note books were given to me by Mr. Léon and I brought them back to him.

29

(B.viii.28)

When I told that to Mr Stuart Gilbert, he said that he was not surprised, Mr. Joyce frequently acted like that.

Of course I must have made many stupid mistakes.

I would have made them in any case, but the terrible quantity of languages (I counted 12 or 13) some of which I did not know the first elements, increased the difficulty.

I am sorry not to be able to give you more interesting details - and hope you will be fully satisfied with your important work.

Yours truly<sup>393</sup>

O [live]:

*Its importance in establishing the identities of the writer complexus (for if the hand was one, the minds of active and agitated were more than so) will be best appreciated by never forgetting that both before and after the battle of the Boyne it was a habit not to sign letters ... always.*<sup>394</sup>




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<sup>393</sup> Letter from France Raphael to Peter Spielberg, 28th September 1959, XVI.2, The James Joyce Collection, University of Buffalo

<sup>394</sup> FW 114.32-115.01

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