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Backward Glance at James Joyce: *Finnegans Wake's* Postmodernist Devices

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Abstract

James Joyce, more known as a well-known modern fictionist who rightly possesses a unique position in the world canon, seems to be an early postmodernist fictionist too. Taking a diachronic approach to literary history, this article views *Finnegans Wake* in the context of literary postmodernism, and presents an attempt to both delineate postmodernist fiction techniques as well as trace them in Joyce's last novel. Joyce introduces a whole series of new themes and techniques in his last novel later drawn upon by post-1940s postmodernist fictionists. *Finnegans Wake* can be considered a postmodernist novel proper.

Key words: *Finnegans Wake*; Literary history; Postmodernist fiction; Parody; Pastiche; Kitsch; Black humor; Metafiction; James Joyce

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It is always worth testing out any literary theory by asking: How would it work with Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* first? (Eagleton, as cited in Lernout, 2002, p.338)

Poetry does not express, but rather is at war with its age, so it makes no account of history (Joyce, as cited in Richardson, 2000, p.1048)

Finnegans Wake is generally credited with the invention of postmodernism (Norris, as cited in Richardson, 2000, p.1037).

I should like to observe that this idea of chronology is totally modern. It belongs to Christianity, Cartesianism, Jacobianism (Lyotard, 2005).

INTRODUCTION

The political gesture of experimental writers underwent radical changes in 1930s when a generation of modernists, Joyce among them, passed from “the age of innocence” into a new phase with a new historical consciousness that Jennie Wang regards as “postmodern” (1992, p.64). James Joyce is a well-known author who holds a unique position in the world canon. Viewed as a single achievement, Joyce's oeuvre recapitulates at least three generations of literary experiment on which Ihab Hassan and Umberto Eco have explicitly commented. Though their ideas of *Dubliners* differ—in contrast to Hassan who looks at the work as premodern, Eco considers it even “more modern” (1984, p.66) than *A Portrait*—both (Eco, 1984, p.66; Hassan & Homepage, 2007) see *A Portrait* as a modern novel, *Ulysses* a modern novel on the verge of postmodern, *Finnegans Wake* as a postmodern novel.

It would be worth mentioning that it is with Ihab Hassan that postmodernism begins to have “a more discernible identity” (Calinescu, 1987, p.280), for, many of the leading figures associated with French postmodernism, including Lyotard and Baudrillard, emerged from “Marxist and Post-Marxist groupings” within France (Spencer, 2001, p.165) and it is through Hassan that some Europeans, Lyotard among them, “discovered” (Calinescu, 1987, p.280) the term “directly” (Anderson, 1998, p.24).

In addition to the aforementioned literary critics, Brian McHale in the last section of his book *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), discusses the possible postmodernism of Joyce. McHale's conclusion is that *Finnegans Wake* is fully postmodern, while the earlier works are not.

All postmodernist theorists, implicitly or explicitly, believe that postmodernism is a mood, a crisis within modernism. To Ihab Hassan postmodernism is “a revenant, the return of the irrepressible” (2001, p.9). Lyotard considers the postmodern condition as one that “occurs again and again throughout history” (Spencer,

2001, p.163). Similarly, Umberto Eco sees postmodernism “not a trend to be chronologically defined,” for, as he says “every period has its own postmodernism just as every period would have its own mannerism” (1984, p.66). So, postmodernism is “much less a programme or intellectual frame work” than it is a “mood or *stimmung*—the *zeitgeist*, a feeling in the air” (Spencer, 2001, p.161). Then, one cannot label a specific era as postmodern and characterize it by a single worldview.

Similarly, Joyce himself rejects the concept of literary history; in his essay on Mangan he affirms that

Poetry [literature] does not express, but rather is “at war with its age, so it makes no account of history”; in his revision of the essay in 1907, he adds that “Poetry considers many idols of the market place unimportant—the succession of the ages, the spirit of the age, the mission of the race” (as cited in Richardson, 2000, p.1048).

In fact, writers like Joyce regularly dismiss an insistently historical approach to type, mode, and genre because it frequently (or perhaps typically) streamlines, oversimplifies, and arbitrarily valorizes one facet of an author’s production or one aspect of the period s/he works within, necessarily undervaluing other directions and constructions (Richardson, 2000, p.1048). Then, “narratives of literary history always need to be complemented and mediated by the untidy chronicle of literary forms. We should never merely historicize” (Richardson, 2000, p.1049).

In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce pioneers a new poetics decades before its discovery and naming by literary scholars. “The elements said to be characteristic of postmodernism cannot be limited to the last half of the century, but clearly reach back—through the works of Joyce—for about a hundred years” (Richardson, 2000, p.1045).

Postmodernism has influenced all literary forms, yet it “seems to have no relevance to modern poetry, and little [relevance] to drama, but is used widely in reference to fiction” (Lewis, 2001, p.124). Although there is not a consensus over the definition of postmodernism, all postmodern theories share the following features and stances: “relativism in everything, parody, pastiche, ironic, anti-ideological stance and, an ethos bordering on kitsch and camp (Hassan & Homepage, 2007, para.10). These, in turn, become postmodernist fictionists’ favorite techniques. They favor such techniques as black humor, parody and pastiche, kitsch and camp, as well as metalanguage and metafiction (Lewis, 2001, p.124).

Indeed, Joyce’s last novel, *Finnegans Wake*, to which the term postmodern has been applied by prominent critics of the postmodern, exhibits strong elements of postmodernism. This essay proceeds with (a) a theoretical overview of postmodernist fiction terminology and (b) examples of *Finnegans Wake*’s postmodernist techniques.

1. A SHORT POSTMODERNIST FICTION TERMINOLOGY

Postmodernism ‘is used widely in reference to fiction.’ Postmodernist fictionists’ favorite techniques include parody and pastiche, kitsch and camp, black humor, metafiction and metalanguage all of which are to be elaborated upon respectively. “

1.1 Parody

Parody in literature is a comic or satirical imitation of a piece of writing, exaggerating its style and content, and playing on any weakness in structure or meaning of the original. It also means to use the manner and diction of high texts (literary, philosophical, religious, etc) and apply them to a trivial subject. Parody is an essential technique in postmodernist fiction. Postmodernist parody is “doubly coded” (Hutcheon, 1988, p.101) both legitimizing and subversive: it does not destroy the past but “both enshrine[s] the past and ... question[s] it” (Ibid, p.126). This should not be understood in a way that the critique is not effective. Although postmodernist parody may be “complicitous with the values it inscribes as well as subverts, but the subversion is still there” (Ibid, p.106). Then, postmodernist parody both challenges and celebrates.

Parody, a literary technique favored by modernists as well as postmodernists, takes on further connotations in postmodernism. Postmodernist parody suggests the possibility of respecting a tradition—or at least to take it seriously-while undermining it. Postmodernism challenges the modern view of parody as mocking imitation trying to both neutralize parody, in a way that the element of mockery be subordinate, and preserve the comic element of it. In the former case parody would become more like the practice of pastiche.

1.2 Pastiche

The etymological root of *Pastiche* is the Italian word *pasticcio* meaning “a medley of various ingredients: a hotchpotch, a farrago, jumble” (OED). Pastiche refers to the composition of art-works out of the literary, philosophical, religious tradition and lacks the satiric impulse of parody. Pastiche has been given particular postmodern currency by Fredrick Jameson in *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), in which he distinguishes pastiche from parody in that pastiche takes no critical distance from the material it recycles: pastiche, in fact, is “blank parody” lacking “parody’s ulterior motives” (117).

Pastiche reflects the frustration of the inhabitants of postmodern society that everything has been done before. The contemporary writers and artists, as Frederick Jameson says, “will no longer be able to invent new styles and worlds . . . only a limited number of combinations are possible; the most unique ones have been thought already” (Jameson, as cited in Lewis, 2001, pp.125-126).

Under postmodern condition, even authors worry that they would not be producers but consumers. They worry that they would not be able to create anything unique: "A close scrutiny of world literature demonstrates the fact that no poet or writer is original in his/her work or as T. S. Eliot has stated: 'bad poets imitate and good poets steal'" (Meghdadi, 2005, p.147). Postmodernist literary devices reflect variant degrees of parody: from neutral parody of pastiche to excessive, intense parody of black humor.

1.3 Black Humor

Another bizarre technique characteristic of postmodernist fiction is black humor which aims at black or severe parody. Here the adjective black might be suggestive of the intensity and wide scope the technique operates in, i.e., black humorists exceed borders and conventions and 'blackparody' almost everything. In *The Fabulators* (1967), Robert Scholes says that black humorists in the 20th century, the century of historical horror, deal with the absurdity of "the human situation" seeing it "as a cosmic joke" (p.45). He argues that in contrast to the acquiescent existentialists, the black humorist offers an alternative. To the black humorist, "the best response is neither acquiescence nor bitterness" but playing

One's role in the joke in such a way as to turn the humor on the joker or cause it to diffuse itself harmlessly on the whole group which has participated in the process of the joke (Ibid, p.44).

Black humor asks man to take such a close look at catastrophe that only laughter will relieve the tension.

1.4 Kitsch and Camp

Kitsch and camp are two more techniques enthusiastically drawn upon by postmodern fictionists. The spirit of these two techniques which are hard to be distinguished from one another is in line with postmodernism's humanistic, non-religious outlook. Though "implicit throughout the long history of mimesis" (Gumpert, 1999, p.157), kitsch is an elusive term whose etymology is uncertain. However, Calinescu (1987, p.234) suggests three possibilities as to its meaning:

a. That the German word *kitsch* derives from the English word *sketch*.

b. That its origin is the German verb *verkitschen* meaning 'to make cheap'.

c. That it comes from the German verb *kitschen* in the sense of collecting rubbish from the street which can also mean "to make new furniture from old" ones. In the third sense the meaning of pastiche gets closer to pastiche.

Whatever its origin, kitsch implies "repetition, banality, triteness" (Calinescu, 1987, p.226) and the lack of originality: it focuses on "imitation, forgery, and counterfeit" (Calinescu, 1987, p.229) suggesting the reign of the simulacrum or the loss of the real. Then, kitsch might be likened to a process whereby the mundane is raised to the level of the eternal, and so, it looks at everything as trite.

In literature we can distinguish two comprehensive categories of kitsch. Calinescu (1987, pp.235-236) classifies these two categories as follows:

a. Kitsch produced for propaganda including political kitsch, religious kitsch, etc.

b. Kitsch produced mainly for entertainment including love stories, potboilers, slicks, etc.

Being the consequence of modern technology's interference in the world of art, kitsch is compatible with the "status-seeking" desire of the dwellers of the postmodern society (Calinescu, 1987, p.251). It embodies the lifestyle of counterculture and represents "the aesthetic system of mass communication" (Ibid, p.258). Under this aesthetic system a kitsch-person (artist, man, or woman) is that who tends to experience as kitsch even non-kitsch works or situations, a person who mocks everything. Kitsch nourishes the religiously dangerous claims to innocence or purity. Then, lying is the fundamental characteristic of kitsch which is "the element of evil in the value system of art" and implies "a basic moral ineptitude" (Ibid, p.259).

Camp is so similar to kitsch that it is very difficult to distinguish them from each other. Camp "cultivates bad taste" (Calinescu, 1987, p.230) and "makes no distinction between the unique and the mass-produced object" (Sontag, as cited in Gumpert, 1999, p.156). Then, camp means to approve of trash literature.

1.5 Metafiction

In 1970, William H. Gass wrote an essay in which he dubbed the novel's self-reflexive tendency "metafiction" (Waugh, 1984, p.2). Metafiction is the

"fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Ibid, p.2).

Metafictional works, as Waugh suggests, are those which "explore a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction" (Ibid, p.2). In metafiction, the technique of composition becomes to some extent the subject of fiction itself. Metafiction is self-reflexive fiction foregrounding its self-reflexivity, a kind of fiction aware of itself as fiction dramatizing its own construction.

Metafiction goes beyond the traditional tenets of fiction trying to dissolve borders between fiction and non-fiction, art and life. It focuses on the technique of composition and talks about it. Metafiction or "narcissistic narratives" emerge "as potent means of religious, cultural contestations" to express "dissident cultural values" (Stirling, 2000, p.82), and contribute to the means of "cultural critique" and "self-definition" (Ibid, p.100).

As an early twentieth century novel *Finnegans Wake* introduces various techniques later on named as postmodernist. Taking a diachronic approach, these techniques are to be elaborated upon and exemplified from *Finnegans Wake*. It is ripe to proceed to the second

stage of this essay, i.e., to trace postmodernist devices in *Finnegans Wake*.

2. FINNEGANS WAKE'S POSTMODERNIST DEVICES

Finnegans Wake introduces and draws upon almost all the aforementioned postmodernist techniques. *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's postmodern novel, is divided into four books that are not named but numbered from I to IV. Book I, the longest book in the novel, consists of eight chapters; books II and III consist of four chapters and the last book, the shortest book of the novel, has one chapter. It is a record of the fantasies and dream-thoughts of a family whose head is Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (H.C.E.). He has a wife named Anna (A.L.P.), a daughter, Isabel (Issy), and twin sons Shem and Shaun who go by many names and who are all forces in opposition. In *Finnegans Wake*, which has not much plot or characters to speak of, man's experience is viewed as fragmentary.

Joyce's last novel is "the end of a beginning—the end of modernism and the beginning of postmodernism in experimental fiction" (Wang, 1992, p.63). By displaying a "whole set of new subjects and techniques that clearly break away from modernism," *Finnegans Wake* informs "the modes and motifs in postmodernist fiction" (Ibid, p.64). Similar to Postmodernist fictionists, Joyce in this novel experiments with parody and pastiche, black humor, kitsch and camp, metafiction, and metalanguage.

2.1 Parody in *Finnegans Wake*

Postmodernists almost always parody and to them almost nothing is sacred. The scope of parody in postmodernism, as we also see in *Finnegans Wake*, is wider than in modernism, so that all metanarratives and consequently their manifestations are its target. Profiting from parody, Joyce questions the world's literary, religious, and philosophical tradition.

Joyce parodies Jungian and Freudian psychology by punning on their names and making hybrids of their names: this is the "law of the jungerl!" [connoting Jung and jungle] (Joyce, 1942, p.268) or "grisly old Sykos who have done unsmiling bit on alices, when they were Yung [connoting Jung and young] and easily freudened [connoting Freud and freudened]" (Ibid, p.115). By asking the question "Is the Co-Education of Animus and Anima Wholly Desirable?" (Ibid, p.307). Joyce parodies Jungian concepts of Anima and Animus. Yet postmodern Joyce at least accepts one Jungian term, for, his concept of the collective unconscious "permeates" *Finnegans Wake* (Benstock, 1965, p.231). Joyce's treatment of Jung is ironic. He seems to be against the practice of psychoanalysis on the individual, yet ironically, "psychoanalyze[s] the entire race through the depiction of the sleeping mind of the individual" (Ibid, p.232). Then,

similar to postmodernist's, Joycean parody is double-coded.

Joyce parodies Shakespeare by punning on his name. In *Finnegans Wake* Shakespeare's name appears as: "Shapesphere" (Joyce, 1942, p.295), "shaggspick" (Ibid, p.177), "Shakefork" (Ibid, p.274), "shakespill" (Ibid, p.161), "Shakhisbeard" (Ibid, p.177), "Sheepskeer" (Ibid, p.344), "Shopkeeper" (Ibid, p.539) and, "Skikespower" (Ibid, p.47). In the same way Joyce parodies John Milton. His name appears as "Milltown" (Ibid, p.71) and the Garden of Eden as "Milton's park" (Ibid, p.96). Joyce also puns on Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It is referred to as "paradox lust" (p.263), "peredod last" (Ibid, p.610), "lost paladays" (Ibid, p.69) and, "parroteyes list" (Ibid, p.493). *Finnegans Wake* is Joyce's story of the night and is as parodic as his story of the day, *Ulysses*.

Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan is parodied too. In Hobbesian notion a nation is "a great identity that can contain the multiple identities of all its constituents" and H.C.E. "whose giant corpse lies beneath Phoenix Park and then, alternately, under all of Dublin character is an associative parodic extension most like a Leviathan" (Burns, 1998, p.249).

In an act of self-parody, Joyce parodies both his life and works. In the guise of Shem, Joyce is portrayed as

Gray at three, when he made his bow to the public, and was barnacled [an adroit pun on his wife's name, Nora Barnacle] up to the ears when he repented at seven" (Joyce, 1942, p.423).

English is dough in Joyce's hand. In addition, Joyce parodies his previous works that had become a significant part of literary heritage. Maybe, Joyce imagined that his previous works were "enshrined" (Bowen, 1996, p.263) in the literary canon. In a let say *meta*-parodic way, parodies his previous works referring to his *Chamber Music* as "shambred music" (Joyce, 1942, p.164) and "chambermade music" (Ibid, p.184). Then, the self-parody as a postmodern habit applies to Joyce. *Finnegans Wake* is a "gargantuan burlesque not of any other given work but of the entire cultural heritage" (Levin, 1960, p.160) including its author's oeuvre.

2.2 Pastiche in *Finnegans Wake*

Finnegans Wake where its author draws upon almost every imaginable source can be interpreted as a pastiche on the world canon. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce draws upon *Arabian Nights*, Shakespeare's works, Romantic poet's poems, the Bible, etc. The capable only at pastiche society (Booker, 1991, p.191) of *Finnegans Wake* is in full accordance to the postmodern condition where nothing is new; everything has been said. However, it is a unique novel that has no equal in the literary canon and, ironically, is the literary canon itself.

It took Joyce seventeen years to write *Finnegans Wake* where he imitates innumerable writers and styles. Joyce admits that

It is not I who am writing this crazy book [*Finnegans Wake*]. It is you and you and you and that girl over there and that man in the corner.” (Eugene Jolas, as cited in Conley, 2004, p.189)

Finnegans Wake “does not narrate but elaborates a project of poignant series of cross-references” (Levin, 1960: 165). Compounded of so many tales and legends that have fascinated mankind, it has no story, and paradoxically numerous stories, to tell. Joyce’s “last word in stollentelling” (Joyce, 1942, p.424), connoting *storytelling* and *telling stolen story*, steals from (pastiche) on the entire cultural heritage.

The following passage from *Finnegans Wake* shows how Joyce dexterously uses the poems of English Romantics as well as Shakespeare:

Methought as I was dropping asleep somepart in nonland of where’s please (and it was when you and they were we) I heard at zero hour as ‘twere the peal of vixen’s laughter among midnight’s chimes from out the belfry of the cute old speckled church tolling so faint a goodmantrue as nighthood’s un seen violet rendered all animated greatbritish and Irish objects nonviewalbe to human warchers save ‘twere perchance anon some glistery gleam darkling adown surface of afflual flowandflow as again might seem garments of laundry reposing a leasward close at hand in full expectation. (Joyce, 1942, p.403-404)

The sources to the quoted passage are the works of English Romantics as well as of Shakespeare. The voices of Gray, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats are also discernible in the novel (Beckman, 1991, p.492).

Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is another source for Joyce. “Methought as I was dropping asleep” (Joyce, 1942, p.403) reflects the voice of Bottom in the play: “Methought I was—and Methought I had” (IV, i, 203-7, as cited in Beckman, 1991, p.496). The “unseen violet” (Joyce, 1942, p.403) is a condensed form of a line from Wordsworth’s “She Dwelt Among the Untrodden ways”: “violet ... Half hidden from the eye!” (as cited in Beckman, 1991, p.496). “Chimes”, “goodmantrue” and “leasward” have been taken from Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (Ibid, p.496) and absorbed into *Finnegans Wake*.

Two other English Romantic poems of which “so far unnoticed ghost” haunt the passage are Coleridge’s “Eolian Harp” and Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale” (Ibid, p.496): “as ‘twere the peal of vixen’s laughter” (Joyce, 1942, p.403) echoes “such a soft witchery of sound/As twilight Elfins make” (“Eolian Harp” II. 20-21, as cited in Ibid, p.498). Similarly, “all animated greatbritish and Irish objects” (Joyce, 1942, p.403) is developed from the beginning of the same poem: “[a]nd what if all of animated nature” (“Eolian Harp”, I, 44, as cited in Ibid, p.498). Further, Coleridge’s opening line of “Eolian Harp”, “My pensive Sara! the soft cheek...”, might be a reference in “Saras the saft as” on page 600 of *Finnegans Wake* (as cited in Ibid, p.497).

Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale” itself draws upon *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: the word “darkling” (Joyce, 1942, p.404).

Common to Shakespeare’s play and Keats’s ode—‘Darkling I listen’ (Keats’s opening of stanza 6) must derive from ‘O, wilt thou leave me darkling’. One or both of these are heard in ‘some glistery gleam darkling’ [*Finnegans Wake* 404]. Another fairly plain echo is “save ‘twere perchance anon some, glistery gleam” (Ibid, pp.403-404), recalling the darkling Keatsian persona’s wry complaint: ‘But here there is no light, / Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown/Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways’ [“Ode to a Nightingale” stanza 4] (Beckman, 1991, p.500).

Also, Joyce directly pastiches on *Macbeth*: the sentences “For a burning would is come to dance inane. Glamours hath moidered’s lieb and herefore Coldours must leap no more. Lack breath must leap no more” (Joyce, 1942, p.250) are pastiches on “For Birnam Wood is Come to Dunsinane” (*Macbeth*, pp.44-45) and “Glamis hath murdered sleep and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more” (*Macbeth*, pp.43-44). Also on page 469, Jaun (Shaun) bids farewell with Macbeth’s last words: “Lead on, Macadam, and danked be he who first sights Halt Linduff!” Joyce dexterously absorbs the original Shakespearean sentence “Lay on, Macduff, / And damned be him that first cries, ‘Hold, enough’” (*Macbeth*, pp.33-34) into his last novel that is both original and “forged” (Joyce, 1942, p.181) and again this is Joycean irony.

Further, Joyce draws upon John Donne’s “The Flea” as another source to his last novel; Talking about Shem, Shaun yearns that they (Shem & Shaun) “were tucked in the one bed and bit by the one flea” (Ibid, p.168). Joyce artistically draws upon his predecessors’ works and yet has his own voice.

Joyce not only draws on others’ works but on his own. Practicing self-parody which is symptomatic of postmodernism Joyce draws upon his own previous works. The opening sentence of *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man*, “Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow”, is parodied and ‘pastiched’ several times in *Finnegans Wake*: “Eins within a space and a wearYwide space it wast ere wohnd a Mookse” (Ibid, p.152); “Once upon a drunk and a fairly good drunk it was” (Ibid, p.453); “Once upon a grass and a hopping high grass it was” (Ibid, p.516); “once upon a wall and hoohoog wall a was” (Ibid, p.69).

In another practice of self-parody and pastiche, Joyce lists a punned version of the episodes of *Ulysses* which appear as:

Ukalepe [“Calypso”]. Loather’s leave [“Lotus eaters”]. Had Days [“Hades”]. Nemo in Patria [“Nestor”, and “Proteus”]. The Luncher Out [“Lotus eaters”]. Skilly and Carubdish. [“Scylla and Charybdis”] A Wondering Wreck [“Wandering rocks”]. From the Mermaids’

Tavern ["Sirens"]. Bullyfamous ["Oxen of the sun"]. Naughtsycalves ["Cyclops", and "Nausicaa"]. Mother of Misery ["Circe", and "Penelope"] (Joyce, 1942, p.229).

Then, Joyce consciously parodies and 'pastiche' on his previous works. The postmodern reply to the modern would be that the past, "since it cannot really be destroyed", and because of avoiding silence in representation, "must be revisited but ironically, not innocently" (Eco, 1984, p.67). *Finnegans Wake* draws upon the world canon (literary and non-literary) yet bitterly criticizing it.

2.3 Black Humor in *Finnegans Wake*

Finnegans Wake is a great comic text, a text which makes us laugh aloud on nearly every page. It is a novel filled with black humor where even the sublime is the target of Joycean humor. The movement from the sublime to the ridiculous is easily and clearly noticeable in *Finnegans Wake*; Joyce's art "is the best example of bathos" (Levin, 1960, p.154).

Finn MacCool breaks rules and laws. And he is subversive. In *Finnegans Wake* Tom Finnegan's death and his immediate resurrection typify the best example of black humor. When Tom Finnegan comes to life during his funeral-watch, the mourners ask him to lie down again and play dead. Tom Finnegan obeys the mourners who order him: "Now be aisy [easy], good Mr Finnimore [Tom Finnegan], sir. And take your laysure [leisure] like a god on pension and don't be walking abroad (Joyce, 1942, p.24). Tom Finnegan's action has the comic, ugly and bizarre qualities of black humor and so does Glugg's (Shem's) actions who lies dead in his grave but suddenly rises and makes a mock repentance by which he mocks the Resurrection, and the Confession (Ibid, p.240). Glugg participates in the cosmic joke and his behavior is an instance of black humor. Another movement from the sublime to the farcical can be traced concerning the Thunder.

Rewriting the myth of the fall in a parodic way, Joyce begins *Finnegans Wake* with a polysyllabic word that is "the sound of thunder and the voice of God" (Booker, 1991, p.192). However, in a manner reminiscent of the practice of black humorists, H.C.E.'s "illconditioned ulcers" (Joyce, 1942, p.521) produces the Thunder which is in sharp contrast to the treatment of the same theme on the first page of the novel, and so, the divine bitterly and blasphemously turns into the mundane. Further, this scene may be considered as an example of kitsch, another postmodernist technique here merged with black humor, whereby H.C.E is introduced as a kitsch-deity, i.e., his participation in His infinite existence.

2.4 Kitsch and Camp in *Finnegans Wake*

His process of desacralization fulfilled properly, Joyce banalizes everything in *Finnegans Wake*; in the post-apocalyptic world of the novel ordinary human beings

participate in almost every existence and so uniqueness and sanctity is diluted. H.C.E. is an ordinary pub-keeper experiencing everything, meeting extremes. The lifestyle of counterculture or anti-elitist culture, embodied in kitsch, is the exact situation of *Finnegans Wake* where the sophisticated and the naïve are joined together.

Kitsch, which is the element of evil in the value system of art, abounds in *Finnegans Wake* where H.C.E. participates in God's infinite existence and other relatively finite existences including that of Adam, Christ, and mayor of Dublin, to name only a few. H.C.E.'s participations are examples of kitsch revealing his schizophrenic frame of mind.

In book I, Earwicker (H.C.E.), being tempted at midnight in Phoenix Park, stands for Adam and the Park stands for the Garden of Eden (Campbell and Robinson, 1944, p.16; Tindall, 1950, p.60): H.C.E. participates in Adam's existence and Joyce introduces Phoenix Park as a kitsch-Eden, H.C.E. as a kitsch-Adam.

H.C.E., who thinks he is Jesus Christ manifests a typical symptom of schizophrenia, is a kitsch Christ. H.C.E., "Christ in Irish times" (Joyce, 1942, p.500), has his own crucifixion. Tragically, the postmodern temper of the culture of hyperreality is compatible with H.C.E.'s "christlikeness" (Joyce, 1942, p.33) who blasphemously dramatizes Christ's situation. "The loss of the real and the appearance of the culture of hyperreality" (Baudrillard qtd. in Selden and Widdoson, 1993, p.180), where models both determine and undermine the real, are two sensationalist messages of postmodernism. Then, though bitter, under postmodern condition, H.C.E. as a simulacrum is a model as valid as the real, and yet mocks it.

In another scene in *Finnegans Wake* H.C.E. has his last supper. Standing behind his bar, H.C.E., the pub-keeping hero, now representing Jesus Christ (book II.3), disposes drink to his twelve clients in a manner reminiscent of Christ serving bread and wine to the twelve disciples. While H.C.E. (the kitsch Christ) speaks to them, one of his disciples asks him to repeat his last sentence since they didn't understand it: "we dinned [didn't] unnerstunned [understand] why [what] you sassed [said] about thirteen [thirteen] to a loafen [a loaf], sor [sir], kindly repeat" (Joyce, 1942, p.378). In the quoted sentence, hints of Last Supper are present. H.C.E. again participates in a holy existence and these twelve ordinary citizens are introduced as his disciples as he himself is introduced as a kitsch-prophet. Joyce has concluded that the savior is asleep in the grave: Blasphemous winds do blow in the alleys of *Finnegans Wake*.

Further, Earwicker, now living in the third phase of the Viconian order, i.e., Democracy, imagines himself mayor of Dublin welcoming the king of England to Ireland presenting him with the keys of the city. H.C.E., the "Meynhir Mayour", meets the king in a ceremony witnessed by a crowd of people (Joyce, 1942, p.568).

In addition to the abovementioned, kitsch implies art of

low quality, i.e. trash literature: trash since elitism is gone and the banal becomes important, and so, the postmodern condition approves of ordinary literary figures such as ignoble Shem. In the biography of Shem the penman (Joyce, 1942, book I.7, pp.169-195), Shem's meanness is repeatedly emphasized through the repetition of the word "low": Shem was a low Sham and his lowness crept out via food stuffs" (Joyce, 1942, p.170); "O! the lowness of him was beneath all up that sunk to!" (Ibid, p.171); "he was in his bardic memory low" (Ibid, p.172); "the whole life-long swrine story of his entire low cornaille existence, abusing his deceased ancestors" (Ibid, p.173); "the noxious pervert's perfect lowness" (Ibid, p.174); "but the pleb [Shem] was born a Quickflow and sank allowing till he stank out of sight" (Ibid, p.175).

Shem the penman, an "impassible abject" (Ibid, p.340), is a true kitsch-artist writing his book, *Finnegans Wake*, with his own excrement connoting art of low quality. Shem, whose house is known as "the Haunted Inkbottle" (Ibid, p.182), and is a most "disinterestingly low human type" (Ibid, p.179) is denied candles and stationary by

"Robber and Munsell, the public dictators, on the nudgement of their legal advisers, Messrs codex and podex and under his own benefiction of their pastor Father Flammeus Falcorer" (Ibid, p.185).

Reacting to those public dictators who "boycotted him of all mutton suet candles romeruled stationary", Shem makes "synthetic ink" (Ibid, p.185) of his own excrement and writes his book, i.e. *Finnegans Wake*, by it. *Finnegans Wake* is written by Shem "for his own end out of his wit's waste [his shit]" on "sensitive paper" (Ibid, p.185): the most mundane matter of life is sublimated by Shem into art. Thus the origin of Shem's book is the lowest matter and he typifies the best example of a kitsch artist. What Shem does, cultivates bad taste, and thus, we are allowed to consider his doings as the best example of camp as well, for, he makes no distinction between the unique and the low.

Shaun, the kitsch-artist, tries to seize Shem's voice. Indeed, it was Shem who found the letter which later becomes *Finnegans Wake* but Shaun tries to suppress his twin brother's voice. Shem the penman, a low character, pens *Finnegans Wake* and his brother Shaun the postman representing elitism tries to suppress him and seize his voice (book II.2). Though Shem pens *Finnegans Wake*, Shaun also calls himself a writer and refers to his "publishers, Nolaner and Browno" (Ibid, p.412) and is said to have "Browne's Thesaurus Plantarum from Nolan's" (Ibid, p.503). So, Shaun is a kitsch-artist as well. His doings are in accordance with the "status-seeking" (Calinescu, 1987, p.251) desire of the inhabitants of the postmodern society as implied from kitsch. Kitsch is a multi-faceted concept. In *Finnegans Wake* kitsch exists in its various guises. The answer to Joyce's question put forward in *Finnegans Wake* "It [the letter as the origin of *Finnegans Wake*] was free but was it art?" (Joyce, 1942, p.94) would be a big YES, for, it is postmodernist art, kitsch-art.

In the realm of the postmodern, the distinction between the real and the unreal is problematized, as are the correlative lines that attempt to separate fiction and nonfiction, history and fabrication, homage and parody, subject and object, self and other, text and world.

2.5 *Finnegans Wake*: A Text of Metafiction

As a text of metafiction, *Finnegans Wake* focuses on its technique of composition. To emphasize artifice and fictitiousness, *Finnegans Wake* employs three techniques:

- a. Focusing on the technique of composition
- b. Authorial address
- c. The splitting of narrative

Metafiction comments on its own process of production and so does *Finnegans Wake*. Similar to metafiction, it builds into itself a moment of self-reflection and alludes to its own fictional practice:

Hen [A.L.P.] trievied it [*Finnegans Wake*] and plight pledged peace. It [letter as the novel itself] was folded with cunning, sealed with crime, uptied by a harlot, undone by a child [Shem] (Joyce, 1942, p.94).

A.L.P. has Shem write down the letter [which later becomes *Finnegans Wake*] to help H.C.E.: "Letter, carried of Shaun, son of HeK [H.C.E.], written of Shem, brother of Shaun, uttered for [Shem by] A.L.P., mother of Shem, for Hek, father of Shaun" (Ibid, p.420). Found on a dunghill the contents of the letter (*Finnegans Wake*) are the news of a wedding, a funeral and other family matters (Joyce, 1942, p.111). Joyce's last novel is a self-reflexive (metafictional) text.

Interestingly enough, with regard to its origin and maintenance, Joyce's metafiction reflects strong feminine connotations: A.L.P. is both its progenitor and preserver. It is A.L.P. who gives "The keys" to its process of production (Ibid, p.628). Then, *Finnegans Wake* is a site where Joyce fights not only "a metafictionist's war" (Wang, 1992, p.77) but also a feminist war. Drawing upon metafiction, A.L.P. as both a metafictionist and a symbol of the feminine principle (as an egalitarian feminist), redefines and extends her, and therefore, the typical female's role. Her metafiction signifies the female's movement from modernist sexuality to postmodernist textuality.

Authorial address is the second technique used for emphasizing artifice. In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce addresses his readers directly. The reappearance of the 18th century intrusive or manipulative author in *Finnegans Wake* emphasizes both self-reflexivity and metafiction. Joyce, like the author of *Tristram Shandy*, frequently addresses his readers throughout *Finnegans Wake*, advising, teasing and even mocking them. Since the language of the novel is "nat language" [night language or not language] (Joyce, 1942, p.83), the reader is advised to "here now chuck English and learn to pray plain . . . to think in his/her stomach" (Ibid, p.579). *Finnegans Wake* addresses its reader in a teasing way: "This lay readers and gentlemen, is perhaps the comments of all cases" (Ibid, p.573).

Furthermore, the reader is mocked: "patience; and remember, patience is the great thing, and above all thing else we must avoid anything like being or becoming out of patience" (Ibid, p.103).

Conversely, *Finnegans Wake* refers to itself and idealizes its reader: *Finnegans wake*, the "nightly novel" (Ibid, p.54), is "to be nuzzled over a full trillion times for ever and a night till his noddle sink or swim by that ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia" (Ibid, p.120). Joyce's "last word in stolentelling" (Ibid, p.424) is "above your understanding [idealization]" (Ibid, p.152) "and you shall be misunderstood if understood" (Ibid, p.163) because it is "where all terms begin" (Ibid, p.452).

By addressing the reader directly, *Finnegans Wake* ideally idealizes its reader and blurs the traditional distinctions between narrator and reader: "We [narrator and reader] shall perhaps no so soon see" (Ibid, p.2); "We seem to us (the real US!) to be reading ... in the sixth sealed chapter of the going forth by black" (Ibid, p.62). *Finnegans Wake* challenges its reader to talk back to it: "Describe her! Hustle along, why can't you?" (Ibid, p.207) Indeed, both author and reader make *Finnegans Wake* up "as they go along" (Ibid, p.268). Surely, the most important implication of direct address is liberty of speech since "the very idea of controlling artist, has been condemned as politically reactionary even fascist" (Barth, 2000, p.311).

To emphasize artifice in the process of production, *Finnegans Wake* splits its narrative into two narratives, Shem's and Shaun's, both trying to introduce themselves as the author of the letter, i.e. *Finnegans Wake*, and therefore, their competitive relationship becomes full of aggression so that each of them tries to seize the other's voice.

At the end of book I. part 5, it is Shem who is accused to be the stealer of notes (A.L.P.'s Letter): "that odious and still today insufficiently malestimated notesnatcher. . . Shem the Penman" (Joyce, 1942, p.125). In fact, this is the voice of Shaun denigrating his antagonist twin brother (Shem) since at the beginning of book I. part 5 it is suggested that it was "keepy little Kevin" (Shaun) who obtained for himself a reputation of "future saintity" by outwitting his brother and taking from him ("euchring") what Shem, "another heily [holy] innocent", had found (Ibid, p.110).

In postmodernist fiction, words sever themselves from things and, as demonstrated, language refers to itself. Modernists, de Saussure among them, look at "art as salvation" but Joyce, similar to postmodernists, regards "language as hope for rebirth and recreation" (Wang, 1992, p.65). Metalanguage is the language of metafiction. Metalanguage is a sort of narcissistic language which is aware of itself as language and exceeds language rules. In this new kind of language words are so carefully arranged that various interpretations are possible, and thus, it appeals to the intellect as it does to the instinct.

Joyce changes the body language found in *Ulysses*

to metalanguage in *Finnegans Wake* (Wang, 1992, p.64). *Finnegans Wake's* language is orchestrated or metalanguage (experimental language). The novel reflects upon its language calling it "nat language" (Joyce, 1942, p.83) that is composed out of "once current puns, quashed quotatoes, messess of mottage" (Ibid, p.183).

The startlingly new and revolutionary iconoclasm of *Finnegans Wake* is "the ultimate step in the development of creative language", begun officially in 1798 by Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads" (Magalaner & Moleain, 1956, p.217). *Finnegans Wake* is the greatest single effort to transcend language beyond itself.

Joyce achieves not only intellectual freedom but freedom from its raw material, i.e., language as well as its rules. He turns *Finnegans Wake* into the linguists' paradise where experimentation in language has been carried out as far as possible. Although Joyce gives *Finnegans Wake's* language nearly unlimited freedom, his linguistic audacities may provide a source of pleasure for a few professional readers.

CONCLUSION

The postmodern mode is present in *Finnegans Wake*. "The postmodern needs to be sought and recognized in decades that had previously been placed out of bounds, particularly concerning Joyce and his contemporaries" (Richardson, 1050), for postmodernist fiction devices including parody and pastiche, kitsch and camp, black humor, metafiction and metalanguage are all in their best existent in *Finnegans Wake*. From among Joyce's oeuvre it is his last novel that restores the "political unconsciousness" (Wang, 1992, p.65) and is one of the "early specimens" (Nicol, 1999, p.295) of British Postmodernism.

Postmodernism suggests the opening up of multiple narratives and possibilities and tries to challenge the hegemony of grand narratives in order to reject elitism and authoritarianism. Having achieved these aims, postmodernist literature becomes pluralistic and resists definite meanings and interpretations. Neither the world nor the self any longer possess unity, coherence and meaning in *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce's last novel seems to welcome postmodern condition. The novel's language comments upon itself; hence its metalingual and metafictional aspect. Joyce's strange, unique book displays a whole set of new subjects and techniques clearly breaking away from modernism informing postmodernist modes and motifs. Postmodernist devices are present enough in *Finnegans Wake* to make James Joyce a postmodernist author too. In addition, *Finnegans Wake* can be considered as a/the manifesto of 20th century postmodernism.

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