Finnegans Wake Study Guide

Finnegans Wake by James Joyce

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

Finnegan's Wake is a classic of modern Irish literature. The author represents the tremendous effort by the Irish to reclaim and reassert their ethnic identity after conquest by the English in Britain. The author was an Irishman who proved the adage that money does not make the man. Ireland had succeeded in establishing high quality schools and through this, thanks largely to this gift, he willingly proved himself to be a literary genius. It may be worth noting that James Joyce was not entirely conventional nor anti-conventional in his lifestyle. He had a decades long romance with Nora Barnacle. However, it is a well known fact that they cohabited for nearly 20 years prior to marrying each other. James Joyce died eleven years after they wed. Finnegan's Wake was a challenge for him to publish and he was able to do this by having a serialized version of it accepted.

There is not anything resembling a normal storyline. The author's writing style and language flow in a way which, while it seems perfectly natural, is also dumbfounding. Sadly, it is not simply because the author is so brilliant but actually because his writing is like a game in itself. Reading it is akin to listening to speech in an unfamiliar accent intermingled with root literary sources of references such as the jabberwocky—famous nonsense. The Irish wake has been an important ritual for some time. The author is largely showing off and having fun with this piece of literature. It was sure to please some audiences, but was best suited to the worldly sort who sports a great sense of humor. The author did not come from great wealth and as such combined humble beginning and natural genius with an excellent education. North American readers will have some sense of familiarity with this condition as it is about a sort of uplifting of the lower classes of people. Temperaments, behaviors and attitudes formed by economic realities melded with the capacity for far reaching thought and erudition of the highly educated classes can make for a sometimes puzzling mix of characteristics. Joyce's reality was that of a well educated Irishman from the lower classes living on the European main continent. This in itself is a specifically Irish condition; even today, one of Ireland's most valuable exports is its young people—grown, educated and sent from their small island of Ireland into the greater world. Finally, readers should bear in mind that Joyce marks the transition from the 19th century into the 20th.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake Summary

The book begins. Very quickly it becomes apparent that the language used is not the standard. The work was actually written while Joyce was living on the European Continent rather than in Britain. It is not apparent to those ignorant of Irish whether he is using nonsense words or Irish in many places. The author's writing style is well suited to storytelling. The rhythm of the spoken word is magically built into it. The sentences are lengthy, a fact which may initially take the reader by suprise. The story opens with a blend of reality and the mythic. The author takes readers to a castle. A man returns from serving in a war on a peninsula. The language is highly unusual. The author uses garbled versions of words along with a rare form of expression. He describes Howth Castle as being around a river bend and beyond Adam & Eve. Readers realize that to understand this it will be necessary to decipher Joyce's code. This is probably part of the great appeal of his work. The subject matter meanders, but there are some themes running through it that are decipherable. One of these is that there is a background of warfare and of validating the brave warriors who have fought in various lands. Later on, but still relatively early in the chapter, Joyce shares some of the challenges of international living by displaying a dialog with a Jute and a character named Mutt; there is a language barrier but they at least attempt to have a conversation anyways. Anyone who has struggled in a foreign language knows how appreciated it is when others let you at least try in a strange language; further, everyone adept in a tongue knows how ridiculous a foreigner or beginner in that language seems to one who knows it well already. Mutt & the Jute try. Joyce enjoys garbling things when he later refers to "roman patholicks" to mean the Roman Catholics. This playfulness can be enjoyable or annoying depending upon what else is happening. This treatment of the language makes it abnormally difficult to follow the plot. On page 26, the author shifts from the discourse with a foreigner to a brief description of economic changes. He continues to do this using extremely long, rambling sentences. There are moments when it is easier to get the hang of Joyce's main means of communication and other times when it has grown strangely difficult. The second chapter also has no title. There is no number listed on the opening page. Nevertheless the separation is clear. James Joyce is obviously making fun of history. He begins to write about the science of geneology and includes nonsense on "the prodomarith period of surnames" (p. 30). There are four parts to the book.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake Analysis

The book is over 600 pages long. There is no table of contents with a more detailed listing of the chapters. The chapters do not have titles. Due to the length of the book, multiple chapters are covered by each summary chapter. Where this is not the case it is so that readers can experience greater depth about at least part of the book. This chapter of the summary includes the bulk of the first 3 chapters of the book. This is a

work of prose but it fails to have all of the qualities of a normal novel. In fact, over 50 pages into the text, it is readily apparent that there is not even a plot. One is called to judge whether the work is garbage or something extraordinary. What it seems to be a prose collage so massive as to be forced to be called a novel—but not because it really is, but because that is the closest thing we have a name for.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 2, Part 1 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 2, Part 1 Cont. Summary

Part 1 continues in this puzzling and mysteriously entertaining manner. Joyce seems to be sharing in a comical revelry about the great sense of history that Europeans have. He is both making a joke of it and enabling pretensions of some kind. The flow is greatly affected by this. There are highlights to these next chapters but they lack the linear cohesion normally associated with novels. This second chapter continues to be a wide-ranging piece. The language flows smoothly and charmingly. The topics actually change to such a degree that there is little sense of real plot line. Joyce is actually supplying a broad image; he is presenting a kind of landscape. This landscape is cultural and what would ordinarily be plot would in this case be devoted to further descriptions of what this culture is actually like. The first sentence of the third chapter is a great example of this: "Chest Chee! 'Sdense! Corpo di barragio! you spoof of visibility in a freakfrog, of mixed sex cases amongst goats, hill cat and plain mousey, Bigamy Bob and his old Shanvocht," (p. 48). Again, through the use of a phrase of Italian, the author shows that he is dealing with the European energies and cultures. He brings up matters typically found to be offensive. He is intentionally rude. He introduces and includes complete nonsense in the discourse. Characters from more than one nation are introduced. These include a few Germans and the occasional Scandinavian or someone from elsewhere. He introduces the O' So-n-Sos and proceeds to write about European culture yet again, continuing in the garbled manner that he has established with the readers during the first pages. For those who attune to it properly, it becomes clear that what really is at issue that reading this book is a bit like listening to someone who has a strange accent. You can understand it, but getting the hang of it, so to speak, means that you have to make an adjustment described as "bending your ear." The author writes about some real or fictional scandals, including a political hostage, whose story was reported in the Dublin Intelligencer. The nonsense, by this point in the novel, develops a sense of consistency. It continues to be as strange as it seems. In this case the reality is that, "his biografied, in kills him very soon, if yet not, after," (p. 55). This is typical; those readers wishing to take things seriously will probably be greatly displeased.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 2, Part 1 Cont. Analysis

This work of literature is in fact bizarre. It is able to stand apart easily for this reason. It requires a special psychology to be able to handle it. Readers can get "a feeling" for it by reading along. It is pleasurable, but sadly the plot line does not really come into

being in any ordinary manner. This makes it confusing. The author seems to be poking fun at education and the educated by delivering characters that sound as though they are pretending to have an education. In this sense it is very much like a form of comedy. It may come from some comedic tradition with which the author is familiar but this is not explained. For anyone expecting a perfectly normal, competently written book, Finnegan's Wake comes as a shock.

The author introduces some elements of plot. Joyce introduces a location and some characters. There is a historical element; he creates resonance with the oral tradition without exactly mimicking it. This is shown immediately by the way that he combines a reference to Adam and Eve with the introduction of the first character Sir Tristram.

This naturally will not make any sense to those who are not familiar with the Bible, but for readers that are part of a culture where this is prevalent, the reference is apt to be readily understood. The author is mingling a number of elements of his life and times into the work. His Irishness and the Irish languages are built into the situation as is Joyce's awareness of life on Continental Europe.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 3, Part 1 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 3, Part 1 Cont. Summary

"Is now all seenheard then forgotten?" (p. 61). The closest thing to a plot in this long piece of prose is that the author is still writing about culture. He does this through writing in a manner that is as distorted as the more contemporary Simpsons cartoon television series. However, unlike that show, this novel is not even held together by narrative episodes in a story, but repeats the poetic method of simply placing one well constructed image after another.

Another example of how this works can be found on page 129. "Roderick, Roderick, Roderick, O, you've gone the way of the Danes; variously catalogued, regularly regrouped; a bushboys holoday, a quaker's mating, a wenches' sandbath...." Here he shares with readers what is either a well known attitude towards the Danes as a people, or something else. If it is something else, then it is that he is revealing his own identity through the narrator or expressing narrative voice, but not his own, through this type of opinion. The same stuff carries on, culminating in another cultural stereotype—"Finn MacCool!" (p. 139).

Chapter 6 begins on 169. There is a message in it, about how someone does not have a good future awaiting him. The author writes that predictions are made that he will come down with tuberculosis and such things. The majority of the work at this point comes across as gossip. First Joyce writes about a character named Shem. Unfortunately, the words that follow tumble out and are essentially blithering gibberish yet again. One gets the impression that perhaps one is allowed to flit one's eyes across this novel as though it was never meant for any deep reading in the first place. The chapter ends with more of this: "Quoiquoiquoiquoi!" (p.195). The next chapter begins with writing about another character: Anna Livia. He goes on, this time more coherently. He writes both sides of a fairly ordinary dialog about people confiding in one another. Here again is gossip—all the gossip on Anna Livia. Again, it makes sense for a page or so and then degrades back into the incomprehensible.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 3, Part 1 Cont. Analysis

The fact that James Joyce has come to be recognized late in the 20th century and early in the 21st century as a literary figure might strike readers as an enshrinement of an anomaly. Late 20th century art includes an entire subclass that many will disparage; it is this category of work that Joyce's "Finnegan's Wake" actually belongs in. It is a type of

art that appears to be intentionally bad. It is focused more upon destruction and the problem of how to find new uses for discarded waste than it is upon excellence via abiding by standardized forms.

It is easy, too easy, to get lost in the nonsense of Joyce. It is so thick that one begins to feel a sense of relief and of joy when things start to make sense again. For example, one begins to read about Anna Livia and at first it makes sense but by the next page one becomes confused and must reflect: "Did my mind just wander from the subject at hand or has Joyce reverted to writing jumbled sentences that seem to serve more as filler than as actual story content for the book?" Examples of sentences are: "In a gabbard he barqued it, the boat of life, from the harbourless Ivernikan Okean, till he spied the loom of his landfall and he loosed two croakers from under his tilt, the gran Phenician rover," (p. 197). Upon a second or third reading, one finds that there is some sense to it, but it remains mystifying.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 4, Part 2

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 4, Part 2 Summary

This is the first of those chapters of the summary devoted to Part 2 of the novel. The sad news is that over 200 pages into the work there is still no obvious plot. There are a number of descriptions of individuals, but most of them cease making sense after about a page. Readers get the feeling that they are under a spell, intoxicated, trying to read in the dark, are losing their minds or that James Joyce's writings fall from the comprehensible back into the ridiculous.

Part 2 begins with a sentence that actually makes sense. It introduces a play at a live theatre. He explains that they open at dusk. There is a short dialog in this chapter, as has been found in many of the others. In this case the characters of the dialogue are: Glugg and The Floras, and Izod, Chuff, Ann, Hump, The Customers, Saunderson, and Kate. Then there is a sentence that gives one the feeling that someone is joking. Here it is funny because it is still easy enough to understand: he has spelled weekday differently. He may have done this to express his Irish accent, but is still much too afraid to write in Irish. The first chapter of Part 2 is 41 pages long. There is an increase in the number of female characters during this chapter. For once, females are receiving needed attention. They are not all identical. There are a number of young ladies who are all protective of one of their own number - Izod. The author describes her as absolutely beautiful: she has managed to jilt one man and to be fatally drawn to another. Once they get past these introductions James Joyce describes the show after the manner of a leaflet. There is no way of knowing from the book itself whether James Joyce was a big fan of the theatre or if he had so little money that he did not even bring his wife to such things. Harley Quinn is mentioned as the dance choreographer. The reason she comes up is this same name is used for a television cartoon series designed for children. There is a character called Harley Quinn and she is dressed in the manner of a traditional harlequin. This is used simply to show the continuity of cultural forms and the use of humor in society, but also the use of images through history in order to convey and preserve certain ideas.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 4, Part 2 Analysis

When James Joyce writes "cellelleneteutoslavzendlatinsoundscript" it reads like an inside joke, rather than like one that anyone and everyone can understand. As such, those amongst his audience who do understand will feel like they have inside information.

Later in the same chapter, the author makes a show of knowledge encapsulated, somewhat garbled, into an almost occult-like presentation. Here, knowledge is shared in

a manner that also represents art: complete and well ordered or piecemeal, it still has the same effect. Geometry is included: there is one symbolic graphic. The author also shows that he has at least some knowledge of actual German by including a few words of this language. The editor explains that Joyce actually lived much of his adult life in Germany.

The author continues to do a wonderful job of using this ability of individuals to assess a group meaning using other well known references. The example used in this chapter is the Humpty Dumpty rhyme. Shortly after his Humpty Dumpty reference, the author makes what might be a joke about the German language, but one cannot know that unless one knows a little something about German. In this case, the jest is the creation of an incredibly lengthy modular word. German, as a language, is as modular as bricks or legos and the names of things have a potent literal quality at all times.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 5, Part 2 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 5, Part 2 Cont. Summary

The chapter that follows breaks form from all that precedes it. Here, there are notes written in the margins, and there are the rather normal rows of text. In this case, the rows are a little narrower than they had been before, in order to make room for the writing that is in the margins. Again, there are messages that obviously mean something—as long as you can read the language and the script it's in, the message is clear. "With his broad and hairy face, to Ireland a disgrace," (p. 260).

It seems to be about having company over. In a margin, the author provides a note for decoding: "Imaginable itinerary through the particular universal," (p.260). He gives directions to a location, which are again delivered in some kind of code. He does what it states in the margin: he writes using relatively universal terms for things that can occur for so many individuals within specific contexts. The author resorts to one of the Germanic languages briefly on page 263. Again, the novel resumes its British trends. He introduces some Os and some Macs leaving the ignorant uncertain about whether these are Irish or Scots, Catholics or Protestants. Again the impression is of many inside jokes. This is followed by a reference to a Sire Jeallousy Seizer who apparently has plenty of money and a full two druidesses. He completes page 271 with another one of these. Later, on page 278, there is something that might actually be a description of Irish weather or even of traditions that are no longer permitted public acknowledgment. There is a substantial chunk of Latin on page 287.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 5, Part 2 Cont. Analysis

There is a great deal of continuity between Part 1 and Part 2 of the work. The main difference between the two is that Part 2 has the words written in the margins whereas there is no such thing in Part 1. There are also a few graphs. Much of the rest shows continuity.

The author is again working out themes of British culture and tradition. However, this is a case where readers who know about these cultures are going to have the easiest time understanding what really occurs. Joyce seems to be giving something of an overview of his native culture through a narrative that involves movement through time. This may be a reaction to the English repression of the native Irish culture—the very forces that enable him to receive his education in the English language and to increase the market for his later writings as a grown man.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 6, Part 2 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 6, Part 2 Cont. Summary

There is a decipherable joke word used on page 289. Readers may or may not know that there was a massive and far-reaching sociological project to standardize the spelling of words. This was done to make books and writing accessible to a wider audience. This distorted the capacity to use phonetics as the one right way to figure out how to spell a word. The reason for this are variances in pronunciation. James Joyce seems to be making a joke about this yet again when he writes, "medeoturanian" (p. 289). Most people can tell he means the Mediterranean Sea. His phonetics are near perfect but the spelling, from a standardized perspective, is lousy. Here we see that the author is resorting to 18th century behavior in the 20th century, and somehow he is getting away with it.

The author mentions Gulliver's Travels. A note in the margin includes a reference to Hindu philosophy. Here, there is also German in the margins. The reader's relationship with the language will have a tremendous impact upon how he or she is affected by these few words, "Zweispalstung as Fundemaintalish of Wiederherstellung" (p. 296). In order to determine whether or not this is rubbish or perfectly clear proper German requires that readers actually know their German. When you do not, you cannot even make this judgment reasonably. With James Joyce the knowledge of the reader has direct bearing on what can and cannot be accurately interpreted by reading it.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 6, Part 2 Cont. Analysis

Certain sections of the summary cover fewer pages of the actual novel. There is not a pre-arranged pattern to this but is simply due to what happens when the system of the summary structure is overlaid with that of the novel. Readers should simply understand that some parts of the novel are covered in greater details than others. The motivation for doing this is that there may be some parts that are easier to explain. Something like this might occur when there is a highly complex subject matter or it could occur when the real issue is that Joyce includes so much nonsense and crosses the boundaries of what can be made sense of and what just really makes no sense throughout the work.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 7, Part 2 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 7, Part 2 Cont. Summary

The author brings up Guiness. Readers may know this as a type of ale. James Joyce does not clarify about Guiness, but mentions it more than once during the novel. He proceeds; he is addressing someone through his writing. Here there is more the perception that he is using the style of a letter or of part of a dialog. Maybe the question is rhetorical. He asks—possibly readers but maybe an invisible character—about Guiness and about the Parson and then goes on about how the other person in this dialog is one of the bright ones and should perhaps become part of the police department. By the end of the same page there is a reference to German culture. All it says is "No Sturm. No Drang," (p. 300). This is a direct reference to 19th century literature of Germany. This is a reference to stormy weather, but is also a reference to drama. "Storm & Drama" is either exactly or pretty close to what is meant here. This shared many elements of Romantic literature but was not identical in attitude nor nature of the subject matter. This is another case where James Joyce is emphasizing the international flavor of Europe. Joyce may be indirectly referring to the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism in Europe as he begins with the Germans—hey have a dividing line between the two religions that was effectively established through decades of open warfare. The South of Germany is Catholic, whereas the North is Lutheran. Joyce proceeds from his German reference to writing about the Mass—readers must speculate about whether this means that he meant the Catholic Germans of the South or if it is simply that he has changed the topic and has fallen into making Catholic presumptions.

Joyce has also mentioned the O'Surnames and the summary writer is acutely aware of ignorance surrounding which Irish names are Catholic and which are the Scotch Protestant, "the Orange," and which surnames indicate not religion at all but location within Ireland. For those who do have this knowledge, the chapter ends with two pages of famous names from the Western historical tradition of knowledge. Meanwhile the bulk of the regular text is full of phrases, playfully put together of comprehensible cultural symbols.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 7, Part 2 Cont. Analysis

These include items such as: the daughters of discipline; the uses and abuses of insects; advantages of the penny post; when is a pun not a pun; the value of circumstantial evidence; outcasts in India; and if you do it do it now, (p. 308). This is

followed by a separate note marked Nightletters and there are images on the lower left hand side of the page. There is no immediate way to distinguish between whether or not these two images were placed by the author or editorial staff. As no note has been attached, it is assumed that these were intended by the author.

The author continues to make something of a mockery of world literature and tradition. He does this with a unique blend of being extremely funny and good-humored. It is evident that he treasures his education, even though he can throw off pretension. In this case, he is again moving some characters through a few paces in order to display or to express something, but that something is still plotless. It may be that this is an intentionally made point: James Joyce may simply be countering thinkers such as Hegel and the whole belief in "progress" as heralded with the rise of technology in cultures during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. He may be claiming that even with all this knowledge, there is not this hoped for movement towards a clear finish, to any arrival at the desired goal of a better world. It may all be an illusion wrought by these efforts to make order from history and culture. Readers need to be aware that this is a speculation, not a known and certain fact. The writing style itself invites readers, in fact, forces readers to guess, to speculate.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 8, Part 2 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 8, Part 2 Cont. Summary

The novel at this point is somehow able to be quite entertaining and incredibly frustrating. It is so difficult to understand at so many points that readers might easily give up. The author often sinks into using nonsense. Readers who do give up can enjoy zooming their eyes over this work as the fluff and filler for which it can pass. Readers who relish the fact that Joyce is actually toying with knowledge and meaning will just love this. He will make the most of what the reader does know, and he will have fun revealing whatever the reader does not know. There is still no ordinary plot line. This means that Joyce's Finnegan's Wake is to novels what the virus is to life forms. By definition, it is not really a novel because there is no plot. A virus cannot reproduce without a host body and therefore is not a real life form but has most of the characteristics that define a life form. Suddenly, he writes, "Knock the bloody knickers," (p. 301). There is a supposedly helpful editorial note which reads, "Excuse theyre christian brothers irish?" (p. 301).

The author describes one of the old, seasonal pagan festivals: Lammas. He associates it with faeries and explains that it is led by washwives. He follows this up by writing in French for a paragraph. There will be more in this for those who also understand French. For those that do not, it stands apart because of the fact that the publishers have put it in italics. Deciphering it depends entirely upon what you know. Further, the chance that it contains intentional mumblings and other jumbling of the proper language is highly likely.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 8, Part 2 Cont. Analysis

This chapter, like the others is confusing in that there is no clear plot to the novel. What is clear is that James Joyce uses some characters, but virtually all of them occur only briefly. He uses them to create short lasting images and anecdotes. He also seems to like to parade his knowledge through this work. It is suggestive of something. One of the things it suggests is that it is possible to play around with understanding and the lack of understanding. This also gives rise to recognitions about pretending to know and having no idea. It also brings up the matter of not listening, or of not listening well or listening attentively. Some of the incomprehensible material works as if it is the reader's fault for not paying enough attention.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 9, Part

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 9, Part Summary

There is a discernible difference that becomes apparent early in this chapter. The author seems to be alluding to technology. There are times when the reality that he is a man moving from the 19th into the 20th century really shows. Here, he begins to write about magnetics and suggests science fiction—the genre, or actual science—through the daily device of the umbrella. This makes readers think that they are getting somewhere. The text continues to have a lilt to it; while it is not direct poetic verse, there is something akin to it, some milder form of it that is a sign of James Joyce's writing style, at least in this piece. It may be an imitation of his Irish accent or something else. There are a number of things going on. It is not entirely clear what exactly it all is. It involves real life puzzles and how to solve them. One issue is resolved by a man when he uses his sense of sea food and listens to his own thinking or something like it. There are multiple references to Norwegians at this time. This dovetails with the international attitude of James Joyce.

One of the characters in this chapter is named Bud Budderly. He emerges into the work much the way people appear to any of us in real life. They just show up in our lives. This part of the text has the exact same issue as the rest in that it initially makes sense and then readers may become confused about whether the trouble is their own lack of concentration when reading it. However, a re-read reveals that, once again, the author has resumed his bizarre manner of writing and expressing himself; there was sobriety and coherence for a sentence or two, then one of these meaningful allusions that one can actually understand and then some stuff that just does not make sense to the reader. One wonders: is Joyce drunk? There is another dialogue during this portion of the book just as there was the one dialogue during the first Part. This time is a dialogue between someone called Butt and the other named Taff. This runs pages in length.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 9, Part Analysis

There is still no plot in the ordinary sense of the term. There are characters and numerous cultural anecdotes and observations. As with most cases of familiarity these begin to be decipherable and to give the feeling of having more meaning than they held before. The author is taking readers on a culture tour. There is a sense in which this is merely a sweeping gesture that has little or no meaning: this is what gives rise to the lack of plot. Still, James Joyce has shared information about various cultures. The editor realizes that this comment has been made of every chapter because it seems to be one of the main real threads, so to speak, holding this large body of writing together.

The style of writing seems to becoming increasingly comprehensible. The way it is designed gives mixed messages of some kind. In one sense, it seems to aim to please as light entertainment. You do not need to read it seriously, but can instead skim over it, as though flipping through a fashion magazine. There are times when he almost seems to have run a successful scam with this novel. He manages to receive the amount of pay for a serial novel when in reality he is just writing short filler pieces and masquerading them as having unity and of being a novel. There is some confusion for readers in that one is not always sure whether the book is actually making any more sense in the normal way of actual comprehension, or if it only that one has grown accustomed to the nonsense and the allusions along with the clear language used.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 10, Part 2 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 10, Part 2 Cont. Summary

The beginning of the next chapter occurs on page 382. This one begins with 14 lines of italicized shortened lines, giving a poetic effect not found in other cases. This one remains more coherent for a longer period of time. He writes about four men, described as waves. He writes of this as definitely a group of people, united for some purpose. He writes of their dining habits. The next chapter begins with italicized writing. For the first time, this really is poetry. Included is a reference to Tristan and Isolde, from a Shakespearean play. However, this is yet another one of those times when the message has been encoded and is only accessible to those who recognize the reference for what it is. In the book it actually reads Trustan and Usolde. Like with many inside jokes, if you do not understand the reference it is nothing but gibberish. James Joyce is making the most of a reality: that there is a mystery associated with language, especially with written language. It is easy for people to become complacent and to take for granted one's own ability to use whatever language one is familiar with. For the second time in the book, James Joyce writes of the four master waves of Erin. These appear to be a group of four men but there is also something about them that is anything but normal; in a sense they also serve to represent waves of the sea—they have a symbolic relevance as well as being characters.

He again seems to mainly focus upon writing briefly about individuals. By page 389 he writes about a woman who was a very popular instructor of women's oriented education. It is suggested that he is writing again about actual places in Ireland or else that he is writing about these "realms of the mind." These so-called realms are typically not confusing when experienced, it is rather only that devising a clear language for talking about them may be difficult in itself. He has already alluded to the role of the convent in the education of girls within European culture. The chapter ends with another variation: there is more italicized poetry during this section. It starts with a Latin reference to Christianity which is gibberish unless you know enough Latin. The author maintains a pleasurable lilt and flow to the sound that would emerge if anyone were reading his writing aloud. Again, the only certainty is that he is involving readers in a multi-cultural perusal through a mind. This landscape is a distinctive blend of reality, knowledge and imagination. This gives it a specific and unique quality.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 10, Part 2 Cont. Analysis

The recurrent theme of inside information prevails. Finnegan's Wake only makes sense to anyone because of the readers' own pre-existing knowledge. Even so, it can only make sense the same way it made sense to Joyce if readers have pretty much the same knowledge that he had. Readers cannot be sure they do. If they are North American or European and have some familiarity with foreign cultures then they will be able to decipher as much of this novel as can be reasonably expected. Even in such a case, Finnegan's Wake is so full of jumbled and encoded information that the majority of readers will discover that the author has written this so that even a genius can feel like an idiot.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 1, Part 2 Cont. & Part 3

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 1, Part 2 Cont. & Part 3 Summary

The author brings up money and Ulster; this indicates some issue about the Scottish land settlement bought from the English that wedged Protestants into Catholic [post-druidic] Ireland. Then there is the issuance of a protective and possessive threat against suitors that includes a reference to Trinitarian Christian doctrine. The writing is calling out to women, appealing to their opportunities to community and informing them that their beaus will be sent to perform military service but assures them that there will companionship despite their absence. It rings true, but at the same time is slightly foreboding. It is hard to sense whether it is another man being, or trying at least to be, charming or if it is more like a protective but mildly cynical father figure forewarning the pretty girls of what he is going to do to the young men. Readers are apt to react with two basic kinds of feelings about this. They may feel they do not have the knowledge needed to make sense of this; emotions relating to inadequacy may emerge. There is apt to be some natural confusion created by Joyce's writing style. Then there is the confusion created by the author's intentional use of complete nonsense, thus duping readers into thinking they have been outsmarted when really the author is just writing rubbish. All that is certain is that something political happened and that there is a reality involving auctions.

This Part opens on page 403, without any encouragement whatsoever of this getting any easier to understand. "Hark! / Tolv two elf kater ten (it can't be) sax. / Hork! / Pedwar pemp foify tray (it must be) twelve." Readers by now may feel as they have begun to go mad, unless their sense of humor is great and have a special knack for deciphering James Joyce's coded messages. The good news is that there are events during this chapter that can be deciphered. Most of it centers around a character named Shaun. He has a fiery temperament, which has both advantages and disadvantages. It still gets peculiar, but by now readers can tell that "teom bihan" means "time being." Joyce seems mainly to be writing that Shaun has done something because of his fiery temper, but at other times it seems that he is on the defensive.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 1, Part 2 Cont. & Part 3 Analysis

Once again, characters who are either great inventions of the authors or men of great fame in the history of Ireland are referred to once more. Two of the Masters of the four waves are mentioned: Matt Gregory and Marcus Lyons. Joyce writes that if he has incredible luck he would be able to have the heads of these two men working for him,

along with Tarpey and a reverend Mac Dougall. During page 410, the author seems to be writing about his identity. Some find it a struggle to preserve their identity within a foreign culture. There are people who feel they never fit into the culture they were born in and by traveling can find one in which they really do fit better. For many others, each culture supports a great portion of the individuality of a person but not all of it. In these cases, foreign experience allows the person to continue with the same identity but also to unfurl a bit here or there, rather like a bud or a leaf rather than a flag, because a small aspect of the identity that had not previously been supported now is, and so grows.

The author's writing has become slightly more coherent for longer periods of time. There are a few recurrent characters at this time. Nothing has been heard from Sir Tristam since the beginning, but the Masters of the four waves have recurred during Part 2 and Part 3. Readers either have the inside knowledge needed to recognize them or they do not. If they do not, then they are left to speculate or to perform research just to find out whether or not these are descriptions of actual political events in Ireland or if they are fictional symbols for the Irish based upon the desire to create this novel rather than to reveal the truth.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 6, Part 3 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 6, Part 3 Cont. Summary

The subject of the writing shifts to a Miss Anders and suddenly once again, the readers meet with one of these mysterious sentences. "What I say is (and I am neon roehorn or culkilt permit me to tell you, if uninformed," (p. 414). In this case the summary writer does not know how to interpret "neon roehorn."

There is another short section of poetics during this chapter. This is a case where those who have a little experience with verse and like it are apt to enjoy it quite a bit. Those who have a great deal, however, may even be offended. The reason for this is that the verse is charming and fun but it does not come across as awe-inspiringly perfect. The character Shaun recurs, after the poetic verse. Here, readers can only guess whether or not this Shaun is the same one or is simply a different one as the one who has appeared earlier in the novel. Later, dueling is strongly discouraged. This takes place in the form of an argument based in objections about not wanting to watch horrible things.

During this late section of Part 3, Joyce attempts to tell something like a story. He is writing about a man named Johnny and Matt Gregory of the four waves. He describes a woman well known for her legitimate work as an auctioneer but he also calls her a prostitute and he associates her with a Trinity College. There is more than one place called Trinity College, but he is very possibly writing about Dublin, Ireland again. This meanders into a discussion of more international matters and the clothing styles of men. He has intimated what might have been class issues but again he leaves it to the reader to have the necessary cultural and historical knowledge to know what he means. There is something more about how Johnny is a patrician who has something to do with the four waves, and how they might intermarry with O'So-n-So as opposed McSo-n-So or Mac So-n-So. Still, we know these are Brits because no one tries to marry a Von GermanicTribesman or his Dutch brother Van So-n-So.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 6, Part 3 Cont. Analysis

One hopes and desperately wishes that the book made more sense at this point. Readers tend to feel almost tearfully frustrated as intense and persistent efforts to understand have either failed or been disappointed or both. Readers are likely to be confused: does Joyce mean anything more but I do not "get it"...or is it that he does not but I keep trying to see sense to this novel that just is not there? Why is the entire thing

orchestrated after the manner of an inside joke? The language that does make sense come across almost as if it were just a tease to the reader.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 13, Part 3 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 13, Part 3 Cont. Summary

Pages 450-500: The author refers to a pagan name, and gives the initials KC to account for them. This harkens to an ancient naming tradition that felt the effects of Christianity and the giving of Christian names. This can suddenly be viewed in a whole new light. Later, having meandered through people and topics of conversation, the author does something a bit different. He sets up another version of a dialogue. This time the opening line is preceded by a hyphen in the case of each speaker and no names are given. The topics meander, however, rather than having the customary sharp comprehensibility that one would normally associate with plot. Again, readers are forced to ask themselves: did my mind wander or did the author's mind wander and hence, what he has written is more of a winding path of a conversation that never succeeds in reaching a point.

Much of the conversation is of someone who seems to know about a local area and someone else, who does not, asking about things. One such item is a living tree. One asks after a tree, the other reports that there had been an ash tree nearby. They then communicate about what was or was not seen. One of them asks if the other made observations from a hiding place—the answer includes a correction. There was no hiding place. One character explains that it is just that there was an invisible point from which observations were made.

There is also a brief interlude of clarity during which there emerges a short conversation about watching. There may be someone watching. There may be someone watching one person who is watching someone else. This results in a discussion about watchers, and about watching but little is remarked upon other than that. Is there a difference when the one watched is also a watcher? A page or so later, while this dialogue style has been maintained the subject matter has shifted entirely. There is something about a Norwegian sports team and how something important to one individual is of no interest to the other.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 13, Part 3 Cont. Analysis

For readers who have no other knowledge of James Joyce, this novel is only good for foolishness. No real sense can be made of it. It has either become hilarious or has long since ceased to be funny.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 14, Part 3 Cont.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 14, Part 3 Cont. Summary

Part 4 is rather short. It runs from page 593 to 628. There is only one chapter in this Part. This begins with a call to the Danes, asking that they come forth and begin their days. Next he suggests God, by saying that a chart has been handed out by an arm reaching out from a cloud. He goes on about an individual, but it is not even clear who he is writing about. He seems again to be loosely and creatively making multiple cultural references at once. He may have been doing something akin to what occurs when present day authors invent stories that use the mass media and other contemporary literature and film as their main resource. James Joyce consistently uses European and Christian cultures as his creative source. Here, soon after he has called forth the Danes, he refers to Arthur and shortly thereafter he is writing about the kilts and shillegleighs of Scotland. Next he writes of sod and of the importance of a man's return. After that there is something about the proper procedure and religious rites to be used for a funeral. He makes indirect references to Catholic methods, but as has been he case throughout the entire novel, one must use guesswork and without cultural knowledge this work will make even less sense than it already does.

Here near the very end is the re-emergence of a dialogue between two characters. This time the characters are Muta and Juve, reminiscent of Mutt & Jute from the beginning of the novel. At this point their conversation is about etiquette and proper decorum. One special distinction is included. In this case the two have a special understanding. This includes an ability to understand the other when the reader cannot necessarily make head or tail of what the other has "said." This goes on for nearly two pages and then the work transforms back into regular prose. Even so, there is some confusion that Joyce never does clear up for readers. Either the last character to speak goes from speaking in short dialogues to an incredibly lengthy monologue or else the author just stops writing that dialogue and begins again in the more standard prose format.

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 14, Part 3 Cont. Analysis

Neither editors nor publishers have included any kind of line breaks or anything that would give readers a clue as to what this is about. He brings the novel to an end by doing something that is clear: he is calling the Catholics by another name, by a silly name. He calls them Patholics. The first time he does this it is surrounded by nonsense words, and then later, it is found amongst slightly more coherent text. Finally, there has been a case where a reader can tell what Joyce seems to mean. Unlike most books,

reading Joyce's Finnegan's Wake is more akin to people panning for surface nuggets in streams...one hopes to find meaning amongst everything presented. The whole thing just peters out at the end, the last sentence is never even completed. It may have been left unfinished intentionally, but that is only speculation.

The main conclusion is that the first impression that this book has no plot in the ordinary sense has held up, disturbingly, throughout hundreds of pages of text. In this sense, readers are left mystified as to how it is that this piece of prose has been labeled a classic of 20th century literature. Some would dare to suggest that this work symbolizes the decline of art and literature that characterizes the 20th and 21st centuries. While many have observed that there is some excellent contemporary art, there are also strains of it that are very much along these lines of "the destruction of art as an attempted form of art" or "artist renderings involving greater use of destructive processes over carefully creative ones".

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 15, Part 4 Cont. & Conclusions

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 15, Part 4 Cont. & Conclusions Summary

He writes of the sides of things, here, there is a cultural usage with which readers of North America will be familiar. He writes of the right side, and the wrong side of things. He writes of the sour side—which would apparently go along with the sour side. What follows that is something a little peculiar about sea-sickness and soldiering. This is followed by a visit to a tavern in the town. Shortly thereafter he is making racial and cultural comparisons. He writes of the Alieni, of how they are an accursed and inferior race but by the next page he has moved on to music. There are references to daughters and this is followed up by a list of names that, the best guess is, are names of popular composers of the time. There is an editorial admission that there may be some mistake here since understanding James Joyce seems to demand a depth of knowledge that most lack. There is an actual mention of a Finnegan's Wake on page 607. There is mention of a Mister Ireland, a revelation of cultural stereotypes; their sources and limitations. There is some dialog between Muta and Juva. This is followed by some mention of someone's archdruid. On page 620 he is writing about people worrying themselves over trifles. He makes a reference that seems to be a reference to Gulliver's Travels but that may well be a cultural misperception created by having been born decades after he had finished writing this novel. The ending disappoints in that it merely drifts off while moving in the same vein..."Till thousandenthsee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the..." (p. 628). At that point the writing just stops. Below, on the same page is marked, "Paris, 1922 -1939."

Book 1, Finnegan's Wake : Chapter 15, Part 4 Cont. & Conclusions Analysis

As already explained, there are trends in this so-called novel that can be grasped and defined. These have already been mentioned, and a careful exploration of the entire work renders more details of what is in fact, more of the same thing, rather than any real change. The kind of change hoped for has not taken place. The work has not suddenly coalesced into something more cohesive. What there is, is Joyce's ability to apply his own insights and cultural knowledge to this creative stage. He forms impressions, and anecdotes, almost a flowing version of vignettes. He makes great use of the wealth of cultural and historical knowledge available to his mind, thanks in part to his fantastic Irish education.

This is the comical work of a broadminded and international fellow. His native Irishness shows and he uses it intentionally. He has been able to make a joke of it. The author

has a pronounced sense of humor that pervades the work. James Joyce has created something that can be enjoyable in more than one way. For those who like to dig for cultural artifacts, this work is made of these things and therefore is quite rich. This novel is also good for people who want such light reading that they do not even so much want to read it, but want to have something to look over. In this regard, this novel is the largest piece of magazine filler ever published in the disguise of being all one piece of work. James Joyce has written this as one of largest pieces of nonsense ever known. Perhaps this is because he is one of a generation of Irish who were forced to learn English and forced to abandon their native language of Irish and Finnegan's Wake is his way of protesting that fact.

Characters

Sir Tristram

This is the first character to appear in the story. He is described as a man of love. He is also described as a warrior. He sports a coat of arms and lives at a castle clearing, indicating that he is of high rank. He is introduced on the very first page of the novel.

What is peculiar is that by page 5 no one is hearing about him or from him anymore. Novel readers are cast adrift. Once introduced it would be natural to assume this was a main character, but as it turns out, he does not turn out to be.

Finnegan

Finnegan is introduced within the first two pages. He is described in what amounts to a garbled international language. He is called some kind of meister, after the German term Burgermeister. He is referred to as being of "the Stuttering Hand" which is itself rather puzzling. Later on he is called Mr. Finn who is going to become Finnegan. This is one of the main figures in the book.

Sampatrick

Like many of the characters and speech in this novel this reads like a linguistic error, or a joke, or drunken speech. It is a casual reference made in chapter one to Saint Patrick. Sampatrick is not described in any detail. He is mentioned only briefly and in passing. One of the features of Joyce's writing is that the reader is forced to make a number of presumptions and to creatively speculate about the real meaning of the assemblage of words.

While it cannot be absolutely guaranteed that Sampatrick is Saint Patrick, it is the most probable answer. He is also called Christpatrick during a section of the text.

Essie Shanahan

This lady is introduced in chapter 1. Like so many of the characters in Joyce's novel, she is fleeting. She is described for having "let down her skirts." Within a paragraph or two it becomes clear that she seems to have some type of work; there is no clarity about whether her dropping her skirts and her work are or are not interrelated.

Essie was known to have attended a convent boarding school for girls where she was able to attract some admirers. Joyce describes how she was a called a few different things, partly based upon her own behavior and partially based upon the hopes and

attitudes of her admirers. Obviously, those looking for friendship and work colleagues were a bit different from those just looking, hoping, for love.

Canavan of Canmakenoise

This character is introduced in the beginning of chapter 2. He is mentioned with respect to writing that he did regarding some Italians. He is described as a learned scholar but in Joyce's typical manner. This produces a partially encrypted ramble about his writings on the Italians.

Michael Manning

This is the Italian Joyce refers to of whom the character above has written. His was a family famous for pure doctrine and for conducting business as usual. He is written about for one page during chapter 2 of the novel. Although the name does not suggest it, he is written of as being an Italian. He is reported to have had a family.

Giubilei

This is referred to as an Italian excellency. He is described in a shared context with the two characters preceding this. There is the suggestion that they are a Catholic family. This information is given in a fashion that is bizarre yet typical of the speech in this novel. "...purchypatch of hamlock where the padish preties grow and remarked dilsydulsily," (p. 31).

Earwickers of Sidleham

This group is part of a list of people that the author mentions at the beginning of chapter two. James Joyce likes to poke fun at many of the traditions of which he is proud to be a part. His education and lifestyle show that he actually values these highly. At the same time, it is quite clear that they are the brunt of the majority of his jokes, probably because he has greater knowledge of them than most. These are included as prestigious ancestors.

Matt Gregory

He appears in more than one disparate location during the course of the book. He is one of the master waves of Erin. He is part of this group of four. He is presented as a mortal man but at the same time he is presented as one of these waves. As such, he is symbolic of something that is not mortal in the ordinary sense, at least not in the human sense. He is presented as a Christian who says prayers and who eats fish in a manner that smells of Christianity in itself.

Marcus Lyons

This is another of the four Master waves found in the novel. He is safely presumed to be a Christian; he uses prayer extensively in his work. He is normally found in close association with the others. He appears in Part 1 and Part 2 of the book.

Luke Tarpey

This is another of the four Master waves. He is one of the three who are named by name. He is mentioned more than once in the book and is found in association with both Ireland and Christianity and some Sea or Ocean.

God

God is mentioned here and there throughout the novel both directly and indirectly. Often he is simply a reference: he is thanked for doing this or that for someone. Given the whole situation of the book, there is the hint of something a little unclear. James Joyce does mention Christianity and druidry. He does not write about whether or not he personally believes that God has had anything to do with druidry or not but he does make it clear that God does have something to do with Christianity. Religions are attributed to the reality of God as a kind of public service that provides a means for the people to be in communication with God despite some confusion.

Objects/Places

Dublin

This is the capital city of Ireland. It has been famous for having excellent education for well over 1000 years. The druids established schools in Ireland and centuries later, the restructured Anglicized and Christianized version of higher education was successful. As such, this city is teeming with university students. In the 19th century as well as in other centuries, Dublin was a fantastic city to receive a superior education. The author James Joyce is amongst the throngs of people who benefited from just such an education.

Ireland

Ireland is an island nation. It is part of the British Isles; it is in fact that largest of the "other" islands in the group, the largest of which has England, Scotland and Wales on it. During the 19th century Ireland was under English domination; in that respect it was just like Wales and Scotland. The union of Britain has influenced Ireland through the centuries. Ireland has been independent of England, and subject to England. Conditions have not been the same all the time in that regard. The island has its own people who have at least one native language. The ancient culture is Celtic. The pre-Christian religion is druidry. Forced and enforced unity with England has occurred at times, with many political benefits and sufficient trauma that the Irish of today still complain about mistreatment by the English.

Howth Castle

This is one of the first locations mentioned in Finnegan's Wake. It is located in Britain. It is the home of Sir Tristram. It is abandoned as a place of interest or concern after the first chapter.

Herrick

This is a location mentioned in chapter 2. Here, the author is writing comically about illustrious ancestors. Herrick is mentioned as one location where some vikings have settled. This seems to be a mixture of genuine appreciation for history, geography and family history and making light of this same subject for its abject helplessness in the face of the living present. The past has made the present and yet it rests helpless against the present and the future. Herrick is simply a location in Britain, but where exactly is not clarified.

Television

Strangely enough this word turns up in chapter 3. James Joyce wrote the novel prior to the invention of the television set with which we are all familiar. In a bizarre two sentences he writes that the television will supplant the telephone. How he came up with this idea when he wrote the novel in 1913 defies ordinary explanations. It is not clear what he means by television here. There is the implication that there may have rumors of its development as a new technological device when he wrote the novel or else simple speculation.

Thunder

This is also mentioned in chapter 3. This is a reference to the powerful sound associated with two strong fronts of air coming together and then blending their energies. It is simultaneously used as a metaphor in this case. It comes up within the context of the phrase, "to steal another's thunder" which means that when someone was going to do something impressive, someone else suddenly does. Normally, this makes it so that the person who had planned on "making the thunder" feels disappointed that it has been stolen.

The Four Master Waves

These appear at least twice during the novel. They are represented by four individual men. Whether they are waves of the Irish Sea or are more symbolic of social waves is not entirely clear. Regardless, what is certain is that they appear during the novel as characters. They are Matt Gregory, Marcus Lyons, Luke Tarpey, and another, left unnamed.

Themes

Nonsense

This is a main theme throughout the novel. There is an especial literary tradition of nonsense, even though that is silly. The summary writer is not an expert in nonsense but does have some knowledge on this subject. There was at least one 19th century set of children's fiction that integrated a great deal of intentional nonsense. This was done purely for the sake of entertainment and it served no other purpose. This reveals that for authors, a certain amount of nonsense and a tolerance of it is a necessity. Otherwise it would be next to impossible to come with the more exotic works of fiction. Not everyone is limited in this way. It is because of this that it would be best to understand this novel as having been a cult classic during his lifetime.

There is another use of nonsense. Actually, there is more than one. One was the use of intentionally coding messages. This is done to placate public censors. Many of the Grimm's tales and other German stories were done for this purpose. Given the temporal distance, only specialists in the cultural history would even know which turns of phrase had well known meanings, meanings that were not literal, at the time. There are instances during this James Joyce novel where cultural references may or may not have been tweaked to evade censorship. The way he writes of Ulster, for example, telling only about how much money they have in the bank—from this cultural and temporal perspective it is not clear, but for Irish or British people of 1920 this might be as clear as day.

The other aspect of nonsense is something of a game in itself. Here, the author plays with meaning the way that he might play with some other toy. He shows readers what can be understood; how people correctly right small wrongs and fill in the blanks correctly in numerous cases. He simply does this and readers do what they can to make heads or tails of it, or else they enjoy the comedy found in the absence of understanding. The other is simply to stretch it as far as it can, to see for whom the information is incomprehensible and who is still able to follow it?

British Culture / Irish Culture

There is something genuinely British about the whole book. The author is known to have been an Irishman during the transition from 19th to the 20th century. He is a famous person known to have emerged from the lower classes of society rather than having stemmed from the higher. He is known to have been conceived, born, raised and educated in Ireland. The universities of Dublin have been for the past few centuries at least as famous and well respected as the Athenian universities were 2500 years earlier.

James Joyce expresses his knowledge of this culture in a number of ways. One of these ways is that he uses terminology that refers to Irish things, or that simply turn the language after the manner of the Irish accent, perhaps even that of the author himself. Another way is simply how often he refers to basic icons: the islands of Britain, druidry, the Roman Catholic Church, features of green and of rolling hills. These appear repeatedly throughout the novel although it was written while the author lived in France, where he was cohabiting with his girlfriend with an unspecified amount of support or lack thereof.

It is a well known fact that the English suppressed the native Irish culture at least as seriously as the Christian Church suppressed druidry and goddess worship in part as an attack against false gods, against matriarchy, and in an effort to weed out some profoundly unpleasant rituals such as human sacrifice. The Irish language was another major component of the culture that was repressed by the English. There were reasons for this, some of which were good and some which were anything but. Here is a case where unity and submission were viewed as being one and the same thing. Such realities meant that people such as Joyce were cut off from many elements of their native culture in some ways, but a new international worldiness had been granted them along with that loss. People like Joyce had to find ways to think of themselves as Irish in English. Many of his references to cultural forms throughout the work indicate this desire to perpetuate his Irish identity while living abroad.

Knowledge and Meaning

The author makes a great exploration of knowledge and meaning throughout this novel. In fact, it is the closest thing resembling a purpose that he can come up with. The novel emphasizes that knowledge is needed to make any sense of the world. Language is an important medium through which meaning is transmitted. Literacy is something that once mastered is easily taken for granted until one runs loggerheads into a foreign language at which point everything suddenly ceases to make sense. There are degrees to which this can occur. Joyce makes use of several layers of this.

Joyce has written this novel so that it makes diverse impressions at once. Given the knowledge that Joyce was living in France with his girlfriend at the time the work was written and published, it seems as if he may have forgotten much of his English but muddled through as if this was not true. He also behaves as if he wants to sell the novel to people who speak French but not much English. Since they will not understand, there is no reason to worry too much about his writing making any sense. The French consumers will find it charming and it will give them the joyful but false impression that they have read an entire novel in English.

The novel makes another impression. This is that he is somehow a master of secrecy and mystery. He has hidden much of his meaning, but has revealed just enough to impress people and to make them want more. The thing is that in truth, he does not give much in any one place. He gives a little meaning throughout the novel.

Style

Point of View

The author creates a narrative viewpoint. It is not immediately possible to determine how similar or dissimilar this is to the author's own viewpoint. This book is certainly neither an autobiography nor a biography. Fiction authors often create a point of view that is radically unlike their own. There is so much gibberish throughout the novel that it can be difficult to develop an accurate sense of what it really is.

The point of view seems to be of someone who is either falsely pretentious to a ridiculous extreme or who is intentionally very funny. The narrative voice is reminiscent of what it is like when young children pretend that they work when in reality they have no idea of what it is like to do so. The narrator seems to be pretending to be well educated. The trick of it is that the author actually is and this what seems to bring some levity to the situation. This brings up what is socially easy enough for most people to understand. Ignorance often yields errors; learning is about eradicating error through correction and being able to do the right thing. The other side of this same thing is when people know very well what do to, and are adept at doing something correctly, they can then decide to imitate ignorance for the sake of humor. The trouble is that it can actually be hard to distinguish between the two when the audience is ignorant of the performer.

Setting

The setting of the book is not absolutely clear. The only thing definite about it, is that it seems to take place somewhere in Europe. There is significant emphasis on the British. The most direct expression of the remaining attributes of the location would be "consciousness." This is an admittedly peculiar location, but is the best fit. Culture is one of the most important features of the setting.

Joyce appears to be emphasizing a fixed set of so-called realms. One is the realm of education. One is culture. The third is that of history. He is toying with these. He is well versed in all of them. He also seems to be drawing from the old tradition that led to the development of encoded tales. The German fables are presently some of the most famous of these. These were tales that the common populace invented to criticize the political leaders despite powerful and very real censorship. These were often presented after the "fool's manner"—that is, as nothing but foolishness in an effort to get the truth across without incurring the wrath of those in very real powerful places in society.

The novel is similar to poetry in that this realm of the mind as the dominant setting is very clear. In this respect it is abstraction and distraction in contrast to being a journalistic account of facts and events. The author somehow portrays this as an acceptable pseudo-location.

Language and Meaning

These are both tools of the author. He uses them in a manner that goes far beyond what most do. He distorts language the way that taking off his eyeglasses might distort what he is able to see clearly and what he cannot. However, Joyce plays with meaning throughout the book. He does this using at least one culturally prevalent technique not normally available through literature: humor.

James Joyce plays off the fact that most people, given knowledge of a language and of a set of facts, are able to determine the meaning of something indirectly. This can be done in a variety of ways. Some of this emerges through schoolyard play and the teasing that both children and adults sometimes experience, especially between different cultures. Thanks to the structure of the mind it is possible for people to overcome minor lacks of clarity in order to get precise results of understanding. This is dependent upon understanding the meaning of an action or set of facts. Joyce uses this ability pervasively. It is for this reason that there are characters called Sampatrick and Paddy and Christpatrick dispersed throughout the novel. It is only through the use of this decoding process that the novel is able to make any sense whatsoever.

The author is also well aware of the various languages spoken throughout Europe and some of the cultural beliefs attached to them. Just as there are cases where use of the same language indicates strong unity, in other cases there are other lines of demarcation. He makes some use of this knowledge, but not so much that readers dependent upon the language cease to have any chance of divining the meaning of what he has written.

oyce toys with language and with the human ability to make sense of partially garbled messages. He seems to also enjoy plain old ordinary nonsense. Here, the means of distinguishing between garbled gibberish and decipherable meaning are themselves displayed and toyed around with. Those who were fans of Joyce during the early part of the twentieth century were apt to have been rather lighthearted than seriously literary in their intentions and enjoyment of his published writings.

Structure

The structure of the novel is at least reasonably straightforward. There are four Parts to it. In the edition of the book used to create the summary these are delineated with a separate page bearing a Roman Numeral at the front. Each Part has a number of chapters. Unlike many other novels this one has chapters that do not even have numbers. These chapters have no names, no numbers and are not listed in their own Table of Contents.

The structure of this novel is also so far from the norm that to call it a novel is virtually a misnomer. There is no decipherable plot, which makes it obviously not a novel. However, it is the length of a novel and does have the separations into chapters and parts typically associated with novels. The book was initially published in a serialized

format. One can see why: this is the sort of writing that in the contemporary world might become popular as a kind of "cult fiction," but is literary foolishness for more conventional academics.

Quotes

"Shize? I should shee! Macool, Macool, orra whyi did ye diie? of a trying thirstay mournfn? Sobs they sighed at Fillagain's chrissormiss wake, all the hoolivans of the nation, prostrated in their consternation and their duodisimally profusive plethora of ululation," (p. 6).

"With Kiss. Kiss Criss. Cross Criss. Kiss Cross. Undo lives 'end slain," (p. 11).

"Forgetful of all save his vassal's plain fealty to the ethnarch Humphrey or Harold stayed not to yoke or saddle but stumbled out hotfaced as he was (his sweatful bandanna loose from his pocketcoat) hasting to the forecourts of his public in topee, surcingle, solascarf and plaid, plus fours, puttees and bulldog boots ruddled cinnabar with flagrant marl, jingling his turnpike keys and bearing aloft amid fixed pikes of the hunting party a high perch atop which a flowerpot was fixed earthside hoist with care," (p. 31).

"Sweet bad luck on the waves washed to our island / The hooker of that hammerfast viking / And Gall's curse on the day when Eblana bay / Saw his black and tan man-o-war," (p. 46).

"Dispersal women wondered. Was she fast?
"Do tell us all about. As we want to hear allabout. So tellus tellas allabouter. The why or whether she look alottylike like ussies and whether he had his wimdop like themses shut?" (p. 101).

"As my explanations are probably above your understandings, lattlebrattons, though as augmentatively uncomparisoned as Cadwan, Cadwallon and Cadwalloner, I shall revert to a more expletive method which I frequently use when I have to sermo with muddlecrass pupils. Imagine for my purpose that you are squad of urchins," (p. 152).

"I shall shiver for my purity while they will weepbig for your sins," (p. 188).

"O tell me all about Anna Livia," (p. 196).

"Every evening at lighting up o'clock sharp and until further notice in Feenichts Playhouse. (Bar and conveniences always open, Diddlem Club douncestears," (p. 219).

"Are we there are where we are we there from tomittot to teetootomtotalitarian," (p. 260).

"Ecclasiastical and Celestial Hierarchies. The Ascending. The Descending," (p. 298). [Inserted on the left hand margin]

"Theirs theres is a gentlemeants agreement. Womens plodge," (p. 318).

"Knock knock. War's where! Which war? The Twinns. Knock knock. Woos without! Without what? An apple. Knock knock," (p.330).

"BUTT: (giving his scimmianised twinge in acknuckledownedgment of this cumulikick, strafe from the firetrench, suddenly drobs led, sationiseels ouchyotchy, he changecors indunforms as he is lefting gat out of the big: his face grows green, his fair greys white, his bleyes bcome broon to suite his cultic twalette)," (p.344).

"...like the good man you are, with your picture pockets turned turned knockside out in the rake of the rain for fresh remittances and from that till this in any case, timus tenant, may the tussocks grow quickly under your trampthickets and daisies trip lightly over your battercops," (p. 428).

"In the humanity of my heart I sent out heyweywomen to refresh the ballwearied and then, doubling megapolitan poleetness, my great great greatest of these charities, devaleurised the base fellows for the curtailment of their lower man: with a slog to square leg I sent my boundary to Botany bay and I ran up a score and four of mes while the Yanks were huckling the Empire: I have have been reciping om omominous letters and widely-signed petitions full of pieces of pottery about my monumentalness as a thingabolls and I have been inchanting causeries to the feshest cheoilboys so that they are allcalling on me for the song of a birtch," (p. 543).

"We think its a gorsedd shame, these goddoms. A lark of limonladies! A luck of orangetawneymen! Your backleg wounted, budkley mister, bester of the boyne!," (p. 361).

Topics for Discussion

What do you think of the author's bizarre use of language throughout the novel? Either defend this or object to it, giving some reasons for doing so.

Do you think this book is really a novel despite its lack of clear plot? Defend your answer.

Why does the author refer to Sampatrick and the Patholics?

Did you find this funny?

Do you get the impression from the book summary that you would actually like to read the book yourself? Why or why not?

Do you think this book is a real novel? Defend your answer.

What is your favorite part of the novel?

Do you think it matters that the chapters did not have names?

What makes this a twentieth century novel?

How important is it that the author is an Irishman? Give 3 reasons.