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'THE STROKE OF AN OAR GIVEN IN TRUE TIME'

Home • Chronicle & Notices

Pages from ‘Lots of Fun with Finnegans Wake’.

By PETER O'BRIEN.

IN 1967, MARSHALL McLUHAN sat in a rotating chair surrounded by a circling crowd of students from the University of Wisconsin. “I have no point of view,” he said to the students. “I’m just moving around and picking up information from many directions ... A point of view means a static, fixed position and you can’t have a static, fixed position in the electric age. It’s impossible to have a point of view in the electric age — and have any meaning at all. You’ve got to be everywhere at once, whether you like it or not.”



I have been reading *Finnegans Wake* on and off (mostly off) for four decades. I recently decided to annotate / illustrate / disrupt the 628 pages of text. It’s a way for me to attempt a reading of what many consider an unreadable book. (Seamus Deane, in the introduction to a recent Penguin edition of the book, says that *Finnegans Wake* is “in an important sense, unreadable.”) This project is also a way for me to yoke together my twinning interests of the verbal and the visual, the intellectual and the illustrative. And Joyce writes (at 243.1), “come into the pictures” — so I’ve decided to do as he invites, in my own fashion.

Peter O’Brien has written or edited five books, including *Introduction to Literature: British, American, Canadian* (Harper & Row) and *Cleopatra at the Breakfast Table: Why I Studied Latin With My Teenager and How I Discovered the Daughterland* (Quattro). He attended University of Notre Dame (BA), McGill University (MA), and the Banff School of Fine Arts, and has published extensively on writing and art. Pages from *Lots of Fun with Finnegans Wake* have recently been published or are forthcoming in *World Literature Today*, the *James Joyce Quarterly*, the *Joyce Studies Annual* and *Ilanot Review*. He lives in Toronto.

The image, evidently, on this page and the next are joined doubled. I'll From Ellmann's biography of fragmentary, frisky, growth horde from pituitary gland a real manly man, (Old Stone Ages) framing JJ. I received Russian Svyatogor: a myth-after puberty with ethics appropriate Ger. männlich: male my cheap, used copy, in postpuberal hypertituitary type of Heidelberg mannele cavern the mail to day - it is traditional East Slavic oral ethics) jested his slopingforward, bad Sweatagore good mur that I can, literally, taste the words "Sacred mountain!" Dublnotch inserted such as old, musty and dusty, tas- HCE trying to bribe or buy off his accuser risky, precarious Gulf gelt: money seen: them seeing "In retrospect, it seems touchy: in this case the word seem's to inspire touching see the n. 35, and the homo- clear that the 'monster,' (Rabindranath Tagore: Indian poet and novelist) As is usual when glossing that was owl the God's clock it was) and, upon humble duty to these pages, the more I look for the taskmaster received and time of day (not a little token abock all the same that tsk-tsk: shame on you! greet his Tyskminister and he shall gildthegap Gaper and thee still sigh because he did voice, and that mighty his a mouldy voids, went about his business, whoever it was, here described, the language saluting corpses, as a mitter of corse (one could hound him out still approach them more particularly opaque, in hiding. heartmolecules Montagues and Capulets had one hart to for the monticules of scalp and dandruff drop- directly, but it does not appear that this alter native was open to him And if the early bird catches the worm, too late, or if not, too worm and early: and with tag for ildiot repeated pings blaze his trail) accompanied by his trusty snorler and his In Dubliners he had explored the waking consciousness from outside, (only thinks of himself) L. Verbigratis: for instance the same word or phrase in a meaning less way. The Grand and Royal Canals, in Dublin, were known as lovers' haunts words which he could balby call to memory that same kveldeve, 1922. He well knew this "If my eyes do not get better to allow me to work (and what joy there will be in ay in Paris doing nothing ere the hour of the twattering of bards in the twitterlitter between Torquay but I am always making imaginary journeys. The complete ecl- young friend from Oxford, Druidia and the Deepsleep Sea, when supertide and souvenir to warding off by dressing in the three colours of successive stages of cec- Dr Charlatain Mall jointly kem gently and along the quiet darkening night world he was of and black Starr that is dissolution of the retina... my mind has been a coarse aware but af- meting of that kind." J of Grand and Royal, ff. flitmansfluh, and, kk, 't crept if hedge owned on using that ph. between the devil and the deep blue sea? talky-talk: trivial talk softer world as a means of the Angl. pog no théin: kissy kissy Angl. poque: kissy kissy acqiesce nude Laquer: laq- raphy. Joyce's purpose was Giordano Bruno the Nolan poghyogh, Arvanda always aquiascent, while, studying castelles not so didactic; he wished Cowshot: flat, scooping legstroke made by the bat. cow jumps over the moon Koran unassumingly enough sman in cricket Castle. in the blowne and studding cowshots over the noran, he spat in amuse men with it Browne renamed Clongowes Wood cowshit music mosaic Papal: papal heart. The night attracted Browne and Nolan: Dublin careful convertedness a musaic dispensation about his hearthstone, him also for another reason. He had begun his booksellers Again, the closer I read and hear Ir. mo 's do thoile: + up us these words, the more sex ther if you please, (Irish saliva, mawshe dho hole, but would a respect- is. Some of the words: Softtongue, nude, blow, Stug, self, saliva Irish- ancestries difference from other shot, nora, spat, hole, spit, able prominently connected fellow of Iro-European ascendances pthuck, and even the words "Irish Saliva" which I cannot help thinking is connected to sperm Indo- men and now increasing with welldressed ideas who knew the correct thing such as Mr. gly he recognized his sometimes it takes my dim sympathies a white to spit belch? call us similarity to them. This figure these words out. I Shallwesigh or Mr. Shallwelaugh expectorate after such a callous looked at these two proper belcher: neckerchief Ger. Spucker: person who easily demonstrable in fashion, no thank yous! when he had his belcher spuckertuck in his sleeping than in waking words out loud. Such it take out the end there is a thoughts Ger. Spucker: person who easily demonstrable in did they come (lots of pocket pucket, pithuck?) mused with his thockits after having supped life. Sleep is the great olive, food, glorious food, pretty, definitive word here pocket dub- democratizer: in their Ir. pocán: little he-goat of the dish sop and pottage which he snobbishly dabbed. Peach dreams people become Although I am a big readerly fan of Eucan, author of Civil War (and So iDante) Custard (pepper) this word. Puking excellent, and everything about Bombay (it is rawly only Lukanpukan pilzenpie which she knows which senaffed and pibered him), a supreme of excelling peas, them becomes one. Nationalities lose their borders, levels of discourse words but I love his you-balled under minnshogue's milk into whitemalt winesour, a pro- thful, extravagant energy. Proviancally horse radish (milk into vinegar) and 'society are no longer And he did say "All time viant the little bilker hoarsely relished, chaff it, in the sneel season, converges into a single heap" pleased, happy highly chaff: damn it Da. she's snow ace surrender their being as faint o't as your rat wi' fennel; and on this celebrating I'm sure JJ would agree with. bilker: a cheat. Spice. activities begin to fuse bandana/belcher code: a code based on coloured bandanas hanging from one's back pocket, used by men in San Francisco during the 37 Gold Rush to indicate dancing preferences and possibly giving rise to a similar modern practice among gay men: see "Havrah - ban - Annah" on the nextpage. 37 one of the overarching "problems" that I'm having with LOFWFW is that I'm trying to bearing a baby, fighting a war into courting a woman. By day

The image shows a dense, hand-drawn collage on a textured, light-colored background. The text is written in multiple colors (blue, red, green, black) and includes many annotations such as arrows, circles, and underlines. The content appears to be a mix of personal notes, research, and creative writing. Large, expressive orange and yellow brushstrokes are visible at the bottom, partially obscuring the text. The overall style is organic and non-linear.

Ger. Österreich: Austria
connected to Ger.
Europa: Eur-
ope an
page
69

The image is a vibrant, hand-drawn collage on a white background. It features a large, stylized red heart in the center. Around it, there are various pieces of handwritten text in different colors, mostly in red and orange ink. Some words are underlined, and some have small arrows pointing to them. The text appears to be a mix of German, English, and Latin, discussing topics like 'Osterreich Austria', 'Europa Europe', 'Der Fall Adams', 'Zurich Garzrucksichen', 'GPS', 'Hector', 'Brodir', 'Boru', 'Attila', 'Hector', 'Earwicker', 'Dan O'Connell', 'Jesus', 'Amen', 'Irisk', 'Water', 'Whisky', 'Sake', 'Iriskusky', 'Irisk Ale', 'Phoenix Bewley', 'Japanese Sake', 'Isobar', 'Clock', 'Artillery', 'Hilla the Hung', 'Graph', 'Plot', 'Mixed Metaphors', 'Lunch', 'Jew-baiter', 'Anti-Semitic', 'Paradigmatic', 'Metalinguistic', 'Exclusivity', 'Cognitivist', 'Chagrin', 'Grief', 'Screams', and 'Cries'. There are also several small drawings of abstract shapes, including a blue triangle and a yellow circle.

Attempts to provide construction work in Ireland during the famine included "famine walls," one of From a contemporary tourist site: "While visiting the Burren, one may wonder about the solitary walls that creep up the surrounding hills appearing to be there quite "lost" books: for no reason at all [the walls - not the hills]. The truth about those "of the matter of melancholy" particular walls is dismal and heavy spirited. During the infamously Potato Famine beginning in 1845 those walls were built by starving men working for a work scheme king for a work scheme. Although whitening under restraint in the sititout corner of his conservatory behind faminebuilt walls, his thermos flask and whiskey bottle and impoverished man working for a work scheme. A tusk-keep flies off the Blessed ripidian flabel by his side and a walrus whiskerbristle for a tusk-Sacrament. I read the other day that in older Mortanus, Wild Geese; toothpickrun by local churches and days rules would keep the pick, compiled, while he mourned the flight of his wild guineese, mosquitoes away (from them) by coating paradise Lost Prosper Calenus, Irish Jacobites in small amounts of food. Slaves with honey and have a long list (now feared in part lost) to be kept on file of all abusive landlords would pay. They stand next to their august personages - Capriccious continent People and would not receive names he was called (we have been compelled for the rejoicement any charity without this was of course before the invention of DEET (diethyltoluamide). Bright, Ficinus, in 1601 working for it. John Milton of foinne loidies in the humours of Milltown etcetera by Joseph-GPS: The Humours of Milltown (that's a good Joycean word) and Deep Woods off, fine ladies Dublin prostitutes that have written either whole tracts or copiously in Brewster in the collision known as Contrastations with Inkerin. Brewer in the low ink-man: a treatise of this subject. Battle of Clontarf, 23 April 1014, near Dublin, sononward, ladies in low water, flee, celestials, Burton's delightful Apo-Bitter Brian Boru against a Norse-Irish alliance Cladies and their loowater A pretty quick connection one clean turv): Firstnighter, Informer, Old Fruit, Yellow Whigger, between Firstnighter and Ir. Fionne; to knead, bake Inkerman # - collection Waterloo bathroom writer of it in their Several Ir. fionn: fair Crimea 1854 Badannas, York's Porker, Funnyface, At Baggottys Bend He Small birds. At Trinity Church Battle of Clontarf, 23 April 1014, near Dublin, sononward, ladies in low water, flee, celestials, Burton's delightful Apo-Bitter Brian Boru against a Norse-Irish alliance Cladies and their loowater A pretty quick connection one clean turv): Firstnighter, Informer, Old Fruit, Yellow Whigger, between Firstnighter and These lists remind me of those guilty god Djeet goat S. yes, we have No Old Fruit (yes, we've had long, tedious, curiouss We Wheatears, Goldy Geit, Bogside Beauty, Yass We've Had His his ass) wheat-ear: a bunch lists in the Bible: "Now these Begsides: Catholic district of Derry end ostic appellation for Christ; are the generations of the Badannas, York's Porker, Funnyface, At Baggottys Bend He Small birds. At Trinity Church Sons of Noah, Shem Ham, and (bump and grind) Bumper! In openair hospices I met My Doom Vico writes Japheth; and unto them were Bumped, Grease with the Butter, Opendoor Ospices, Cainandabler, about auspices in Roman Sons [not daughters] born after the flood. The Sons of Japheth called the Bank of Ireland "The Wonderful Wonder of Wonders" they are all the same. Ireland's Eighth Wonderful Wonder, Beat My Price, Godsoilman, (God, soil, man: perhaps heth; Gomer, and Magog, Moonface the Murderer, Hoary Hairy Hoax, Midnight Sunburst, made out of the same stuff. and madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshach, and Tiras. And Remove that Bible, Hebdromadary Publication, Tummer the Lame Remove that bauble!"; the sons of Gomer [Pyle]; Remove that Bauble, Revue Hebdomadaire Cromwell ordering removal the Tyrannous, Blau Clay, Tight before Teatime, Read Your of mace In Baile Átha Cliath Shah, and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. Pertatauch (Irish bairn tactics) (or Dublin) - pronounced roughly By these were the isles of Pantojoke, Acoustic Disturbance, Thinks He's Gobblasst the Good "blau clay" god-damn the Berkles [nice internal rhyme] W.G. Grace: cricketer "God Bless the good Duke of Argyle" - Said when Dook of Ourguile, W.D. is Grace, Gibbering Baymouth of Dublin, rubbing one's back against divided in their lands; eve-Dook of Ourguile, W.D. is Grace, Gibbering Baymouth of Dublin, rubbing one's back against cry one after his tongue, after their Mundzuk: father of Attila Behemoth Dublin Bay Hebrew gibbering giant a post! families in their nations His Father was a Mundzucker and She had him in a Growler, sl. growler: 2-wheeled cab And the Sons of Ham; Cush and Bailem and Ger. Mondzucker: moon-seeker, lunatic (mind sucker) Mizraim, and Phut, and Burnham and Bailem, Artist, Unworthy of the Homely Protestant Burnham and Bailey, Artist, Unworthy of the Homely Protestant - ie a Catholic, perhaps Canaan. And the sons of Cush; Sebaterra cotta Patrick Cotter, Irish giant resembled Brian Boru GPS: your and Havilah, and Sabtah and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sl. lobsterpot: cunt Waterford was a Ribbonmen stronghold (19th cent. and Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod. And the sl. lard: copulate Sir Arthur Guinness GPS: Arthur of this Town truly great name): he began Hooshed the Cat from the Bacon, Leathertogs Donald, The Ace GPS: Leathertogs Donnel to be a mighty one in the earth [even GPS: Hush the cat from the bacon GPS: The Ace and Deuce of Piper- with that Stupidname] and Deuce of Paupering, O'Reilly's Delights to Kiss the Man GPS: kiss the maid ing His Father was a Mundzucker and She had him in a Growler, sl. growler: 2-wheeled cab He was a mighty hunter before the Gog and Magog, the Biblical giants Du. Gorrel: behind the Barre / behind the Borrel, Magogagog, Swad Puddlefoot, Gouty Ghibeline, W. B. Yeats: Countess Cathleen Lord: wherefore it is said Martin Luther: "We can't send a fool's errand Ghible line fam Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter suffered from "We can't send a fool's errand Ghible line fam before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon constipation (legend that cock's Mont St Michel) (Guelph must be near) Wedlock, I Divorce Thee Husband, Tanner and a Make, Go to Cromwell: "Go to Hell or Calnch, in the land of Shinar, Out of to St. Helena 31. tanner: Sixpence if you're Connacht" (from a Parliament- that land went forth Assur, Piobald Puffpuff His Bride, Purged any act of 1654) (...puff...) Hellena or Come to Connies, Piobald Puffpuff His Bride, Purged any act of 1654) (Guelph must be near) and builded Nineveh, and the city Burke's Peacock: guide to the aristocrat families of UK, Ireland Behemoth and Calah, And out of Burke's, He's None of Me Cousin, Barebarean, Peculiar and the U.S.A. bore naked Resen between Nineveh and Calah: Grey Owl: G.S. Belaney, who passed himself off as a Native Indian the same is a great city. Person Grunt Owl's Facktotem, Twelve Months Aristocrat, Gladstone: Grand Old Man in the age before Google, these were wolf tick tottem pole nr. "Yankee Doodle went to London just to ride a Lycanthrope, Flunkey Beadle Vamps the Tune Letting on He's Ger. Dorf's village pony" facts and the storie. slovenly, Lord's Cricket Ground, hand Clontarf Ger. Arsch: are Connacht Tribune of 26/4/ straight]. And Mizraim begat Lord's Cricket Ground, hand Clontarf Ger. Arsch: are Connacht Tribune of 26/4/ Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Neptuhim, And Iron Duke Wellington holy... Stage Irishman plagues sl. cabbager: Tailor approval for 9d in Stamps Pathruhim, and Casluhim, Awnt Yuke, Tommy Furlong's Pet Plagues, Archduikom Cabhanger, (J.J could plumb the most Cout of whom came Philistim) (first past the post Dial. yuke: itch of a gone pedestrian ot documents for (a nice parenthetical remin- Last Past the Post, Kennealey Won't Tell Thee off Nancy's Gown, curious, delightful words)) derf and Ceptorim. And Canaan begat Sidoni's firstborn and Heth, And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite. And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza [thanks for the directions]; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah [now we're getting somewhere!], and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha. These are the Sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, an-

