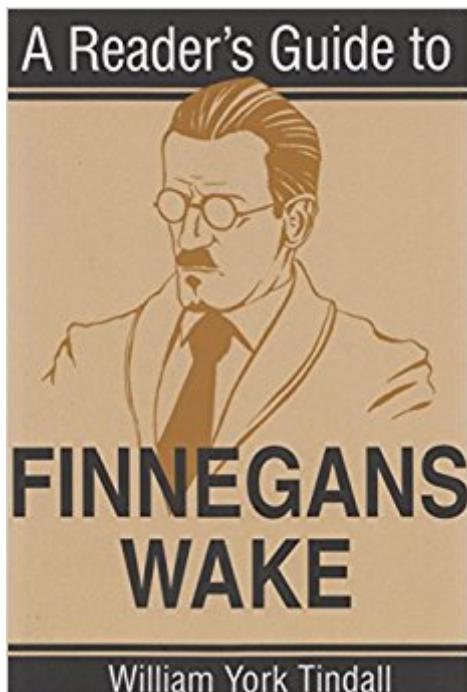


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A Reader's Guide To Finnegans Wake (Reader's Guides)



Synopsis

For years, William York Tindall's guide has been one of the very best ways to approach the difficult writing and complex language of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Over a period of forty years, Tindall studied, instructed, and most importantly, learned from graduate students about Joyce's greatest literary masterpiece. He explores and analyzes Joyce's unexpected depths and vast collection of puns, allusions, and word plays involving more than a dozen languages, thereby breaking down the formidable barriers that can discourage readers from enjoying the humor and brilliance of Joyce.

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Customer Reviews

Probably the most commonly known modern FW guide, Tindall's book is intended to be a guide for the "average" reader. (It says something about Joyce scholarship that anyone who is reading *Finnegans Wake* can still be considered an "average" reader!) The basic structure of Tindall's guide is a "walk-through" of the text, with each chapter of the Wake getting its own personal excavation. Tindall sets down the basic "action" and "plot" of each chapter, especially calling attention to the symbolic nature of the "characters" and how certain themes tend to repeat, forming a network of structural motifs that give the book its overall shape. Tindall sees Joyce as a symbolist more than anything else, and he makes a case that FW is a cosmos in a book, a symbolic labyrinth that contains the whole world reflected in a vast and inexhaustible work of literature. Most of Tindall's

explanations and interpretations are supported by frequent quotations from the text, many of which he takes the time to explicate and/or decompress. At the end of every chapter is a list of additional information, with a particular emphasis on recurring themes. Tindall is very good at linking together key elements in the book, a task almost impossible for the first time reader. He is also very good at unpacking the dazzling levels of meaning Joyce packs into a single word. His sense of humor is quite enjoyable, and he's very gracious in crediting others -- especially his many students. On the negative side, his writing can be a bit brisk at times, and his style can feel choppy and disconnected. I often find myself wishing that he would spend a little more time supporting some of his comments -- some seem as if they were just tossed off the cuff, some periodically strike a false note, and a few even bear the faint aroma of academic BS. Still, this is an excellent guide for the beginning reader, and though a hard core Wakean may crave a deeper analysis, Tindall has some very illuminating views on the Wake to share. He also seems quite aware that some of his ideas are just conjecture, and he rarely proffers them as if they were the irrefutable truth. I get the impression Tindall would welcome anybody at his Wakean kaffeeklatsch, expert or neophyte alike.

This book meant a lot to me years ago when I first began reading "Finnegans Wake." I felt paralyzed before each new chapter of "FW" if I didn't read Tindall first. Now I just plough on through Joyce, and I haven't read Tindall in years, but it's still close to me heart. (Allen's review is on the money.) Also, check out Tindall's "A Reader's Guide to James Joyce."

Okay, the literati will disagree as this book probably isn't intellectual enough---it doesn't probe the dark depths of subconscious sexuality or Jungian psychology. If you are doing your thesis on the nether regions of the Wake, study on! But if you want a Virgil to guide you through Joyce's inferno, this is the book. Campbell's book is more technical and probably a superior analysis. I find the Tindall easy to use and very helpful to keep me on course while still allowing me to think on my own. The thinking, the solving of little puzzles and the playing with puns is the pleasure of reading Finnegans Wake. So I recommend going with this book alone for a first read through the Wake then adding the scholarly stuff should one decide on further study. To the uninitiated, this book is nearly essential.

Joyce, man of Letters, fluent in Languages, Traveler in circles high and low and places near and far, Scholar of knowledge, Prophet to Mankind. William Tindall's reading of FW, A Reader's Guide to Finnegans Wake..., provides insight into Joyce's granularity of FW. Aspirationally Joyce has thrown

all Mankind's manifest gods/deities/idols into FW, reading FW is like circumambulating the Kaaba's 360 idols, each reader/critic will find their own manifest god and if enlightened (a Bodhisattva's perspective) move on to the Unmanifest. Joyce's Ulysses (story of a young man) framework is Homer's Odyssey, tale of a Modern-day Odysseus' personal existential/sexual quest overcoming psychological internal travails (not Odysseus' external travails) affirming humanity (father, mother, son, and daughter). Joyce's FW (story of a mature man) framework is Giambattista Vico's "La Scienza Nuova's" 4 stages of cyclic history: theocratic to aristocratic to democratic to chaos (fractured by Indra's thunderbolt) ending chaos and restarting the world again with theocracy. Both FINNEGANS WAKE (FW) and Ulysses are situated in Dublin, though written on the European continent Joyce memorializes his birth home. FW is Ulysses on a universal scale: Bloom becomes All-Men (HCE) and Dublin becomes the World. Joyce's Ulysses (Bloom) is an energetic man hopping out of bed, plunging into the Dublin day, waging battles real and unreal, exhausted by controversy and rejuvenated by love (Molly). Joyce's HCE is man eternal, man of all wisdom, compassion, understanding, man of all time; Joyce's FW protagonist is Finnegan, who (re)incarnates to HCE, who will (re)incarnate to Shem and Shaun. Reading FW is entering the "mind of James Joyce", who for two decades assembled his masterpiece/tantras/sutras. The mind of Joyce is the "library of mankind" who has reordered dictionaries, encyclopedias, and volumes of knowledge to reveal a universal/perennial mandala of Mankind's thoughts (manifest and spiritual), a revelation. FW is a volume to be Read and Read again for 10,000 years.*4) FW ends "book IV" (Vico's chaos) with a half sentence "A away a lone a last a loved a long the" the first words of FW are the second half of the sentence "riverrun,...", Ganga's river of Unmanifest spiritual life.1) FW's "book I:1" (Vico's theocratic) tells of 1) Finnegan's passing (pedantic fall, an aeon ends), Joyce's God "thunderclap" restarting "book I" from ending "book IV" and 2) transition from Finnegan (his fertile historic home) to HCE (an invading Ulysses). First 4 chapters of "book I" introduces readers to the father (patriarch HCE, his syncretic history and "folk" hearsay), the second 4 chapters of "book I" are devoted to the woman (who will catch her man) who becomes matriarch (HCE's wife ALP, her syncretic history and "folk" hearsay). Finnegan (builder) represents the archaeological past (a passing aeon) held by a forefather (an Indra, Ireland's Indras / impermanent ants upon a whale carcass) with his wisdom of the history of all men and times. Finnegan passes his baton (his place in the fabric/river of the sentient universe) to HCE now present in time with his particular past. The parents (HCE & ALP) are the new "present anchored by their particular pasts" in FW. After 4 billion years of biological evolution, Here we are!, well, Where are we?, and, How did we come about? Our individual particular consciousness has been inherited from the past (a temporal space in an

expanding consciousness), and, Biological evolution has divided us by sex (which induces Social evolution) to procreate offspring to fill our temporal consciousness when we expire:- A Dublin wake for Finnegan (who passes), Irish archaeological history (museum, all's fair in love and war) embedded in eternal people/country and aeonic battle of Mutt (native) and Jute (invader, Augustine's MaMaLuJo), the spurned wanting Prankquean (complement of male invader), and the disembarking of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (HCE) and family. HCE's development of personality (history), scandalous/burning sexual trysts in a garden (Ulysses ch Nausicaa), his consequential undoing and its memorialized retelling (hearsay's meanderings, creations of folktale) "The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly". HCE is arrested in the "small hours" for disturbances at his tavern/home unable to enter his front gate/door (like Bloom), tried (for his life's deeds, HCE's Dzogchen Buddhist stance) and jailed (for his own innocent protection). HCE resurrects/transcends his metaphorical coffin (jail/hell, funeral's end to marriage's beginning) precipitating HCE's memories (Ulysses ch Hades), HCE's spirits rally and a revealing (liberating) letter is introduced. Anna Livia Plurabelle's (Muse) expansive repository of letters, written by his son Shem, appropriated by his twin brother Shaun. Analysis of ALP's rescued letter (cast/setting of FW, Kate/Joe drudge-aspect of ALP/HCE) and the informing parable "The Mookse, the Grips and Nuvoletta" (Shaun stasis/space, Shem change/time, and Iseult evolution's choice). Shem's artistic nature (hardships as an enlightened "revealer") who evolves from father Justice to ALP's Mercy and reveals her letter(s). Two washerwoman gossip (private bed sheet and public bloody apron): ALP (Maya/Lama) pursues her soulmate HCE and prepares her social/family "nest" by quashing the rumors of HCE, she is his better half and defender.2) FW's "book II" (Vico's aristocratic) devotes itself to HCE & ALP's children: Shaun (extrovert, man of the world, stasis/space - Sartre's Being, loved) carrier of the letter (cleric of "church"), Shem (introvert, artist, change/time - Sartre's Nothingness, loves) revealer of the letter (prophet), and Iseult (nature's direction) gatherer and composer of letters. The children are the "present future" of FW. Biological and Social evolution engenders parental responsibilities, to successful offspring (brother's battle: Shaun in accord and Shem in conflict with local Dharma) who will inherit and evolve their Own individual particular temporal consciousness within their local deity's Dharma/community (MaMaLuJo), "MaMaLuJo's relic" a donkey, like Ulysses ch Circes "shriveled potato":- Shem (Glugg, 3 evolving epiphanies: asceticism, eponymous jeremiad, Tibetan Dream Yoga), Shaun (Chuff) and Issy play (children's social/courtship world) in front of the family tavern chronologic games parodying their parent's lives. Shem (prophetic Glugg), Shaun (practical Chuff), and evolving Issy ridicule their dated orthodox lessons and arrogant ossified professor (the past, adult world), Shem's (Dolph) sexual revelations

antagonize a perplexed Shaun (Kev) who blackens Dolph's eye, Iseult self-reflects and composes letters, graduation pending the children will move past their parents to their own individual intellectual lives. HCE & ALP's children grow up (the present) in a dithyrambic Establishment of eating, drinking, and storytelling (HCE & ALP's courtship) in the family tavern (HCE's ship), interrupted by "media announcements", a "free and open discussion of ideas" the spiritual Unmanifest pure (imbued Buckley) shoots corrupted manifest defecator Russian General (Tunc, he is redeemed of demiurgic dogma who is sick of manifest dogma), HCE's defensive self-deprecating apologia, HCE's renascence and his intoxicated collapse after the close. MaMaLuJo (local Dharma), HCE asleep on the floor dreams of his (children's collegiate future) transferred romantic love, the tale of the interrelationships between King Mark/HCE, Tristram/Shaun (and Shem/Morholt) and the two Iseults (Queen ALP wife/mother and Princess daughter).3) FW's "book III" (Vico's democratic) devotes itself to "what will be of" HCE & ALP's children, the baton will be passed on (again) from HCE & ALP to: Shaun, Shem and Issy. The children's "influences upon the world" is the "future generation" (presently unknowable) of FW. Instructing parents can guide their children beyond local deity's Dharma (MaMaLuJo, manifest mandala) to the spiritual Unmanifest - Gautama to Buddha:- HCE rises from the tavern floor to go upstairs to bed with ALP, he dreams of (his desired children's future adulthood) Shaun's unfolding career (carrier of the FW letter) promulgating its contents before MaMaLuJo's people from his child's ship (a barrel, Hinayana) and a prophetic children's fable "The Ant, the Grasshopper, and the girls" (Shaun/space, Shem/time, the girls), Shaun's initial apostasy. HCE dreams of a (hopeful future) mature Shaun's second coming (transcendent Juan) adulthood of Western (liturgy, singing, then praying) to Unmanifest Eastern (Mahayana to Vajrayana) sermonizing (FW) before his daughter Issy and her 28 playmates, Iseult moves toward enlightened womanhood and Shem (Dave) is designated as Shaun's Eastern enlightened paraclete/sadhu/Rishi. HCE dreams of his life's enduring "sins of the father" (Unmanifest contents of FW, on his children's future) on transcendent Shaun's (Yawn, he too will recede into the archaeological past) life examined and prosecuted for the imperfect beliefs he inherited and promulgates (FW) by Four Old Inquisitors (MaMaLuJo, and a higher authority Brain Trustees "Unmanifest certified"), HCE is innocent, his life virtuous. Local deity MaMaLuJo, HCE's dreamtime breaks, the interrupting nightmare cry of Shem (Jerry, who intrudes/interrupts his parent's sexuality), once Shem is comforted, ALP & HCE return to bed for late-night intercourse unsuccessful spiritually (transactional, condom male orgasm, female orgasm) and a nap.*4) FW ends "book IV" (Vico's chaos) with ALP's (& HCE's) lovemaking dissolution dream. Joycean Nirvana is attained by ALP (via Dzogchen Togal) and HCE (via Dzogchen Trekcho) realizing enlightenment,

transcending all defilements and fixations (beyond all dualistic polarities) so that their rainbow bodies are realized, unification with the Unmanifest (Creation, Incarnate conception) and Reincarnation (the baton has been passed on again) - Danis Rose and John O'â™Hanlon 2010/12 "corrected" edition reveals the converging 4 visions of Togal and 4 stages of Trekcho. Eternal Tree of sentient life (time/compassion) and Immutable stone (space/law), "Yet is no body present here which was not there before. Only is order othered. Nought is nulled. Fuitfiat!" Should we Aspire? Aspire to what? To that which manifested consciousness; Unmanifest mandala: ALP's & HCE's converging Togal & Trekcho: The night has passed (all dissolves), the Lotus blooms (sunrise), a Christ/Krishna "Saint Kevin" is born illuminated by light (an aeon begins), baptism of grace. Muta (native didicism) and Juva (invading docetism) observe Mankind's existential struggle "Archdruid vs St. Patrick" (Unmanifest spiritual vs Manifest deities/idols; tick-tock). "Revered Letter" (FW, Joyce's West/East Tibetan bardos). ALP's (& HCE's) "Moksha revelation, Anandamaya kosha" (Creation, Incarnate conception and Reincarnation), to end/restart again (Shiva's trident ending the world) "Save me from those therble prongs!". Cosmic eternal interplay of Two Girls: Maya (Thaya's reflection) empathetic Nuvoletta/Iseult and Three Soldiers: Tamas (Burrus/Shiva), Rajas (Caseous/Brahma), Sattvas (Antonius/Visnu); the "shameful" voyeuristic encounter in Phoenix Park ("book I:2", "The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly") is Bloomâ™s major transgression against his marriage bed (Ulysses ch Nausicaa) with Gerty McDowell (and other sexual trysts, in a "garden") who revealed herself to Bloom "she leaned back and the garters were blue to match on account of the transparent...she let him and she saw that he saw...because he couldnâ™t resist the sight of the wondrous revealment...he kept on looking, looking...a sigh of o! and everyone cried O! O! in raptures..."(366-67), Bloom acknowledges âœStill it was a kind of language between us.âœ(372) and "if youâ™re a man to see that and, like a sneeze coming; legs...Wonder how is she feeling in that region...(373-4). Joyce acknowledges that the "revealment" has activated Bloom, the origins of sexuality are women's invitations / revealments. Intercourses that cannot be "recorded" (physical occurrences: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touch in time & space) are revealments. Joyce established in Ulysses "his revelations" of mankind's hitherto unrecorded conscious and unconscious "thoughts and dreams". The Letter is all-letters (Brown/Nolan, written language captured in masculine/feminine, Indo-european lexical Sanskrit), the "writings of all mankind" (thoughts we live by, define us, ultimately our undoing) including Joyce's: "seductive letters" ending in a trial (Ulysses ch Circe), songs and verses "The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly" etc., the West's backward disunited corrupted truths (book II:2) of human consciousness, HCE's Apologias (muse ALP), and FW (Joyce's comprehensive West/East Tibetan bardos) the "Truths that

have as yet to reach Mankind". Joyce has a "historically traditional" revelation of the relationship between the sexes: "women activate men" and women compose letters (Gerty McDowell, Martha, Molly, ALP, etc.) by collecting fragments of truths (that Belinda the Hen picks through, born to lay and love eggs), while men provide content and build things (Finnegan, HCE, Shaun, etc.). Consequently, women are the Muses (repositories) of Mankind's "thoughts and dreams, history and gossip". "The letter" is within ALP's consciousness / unconsciousness (manifest / spiritual), within her repository: she is the Muse of past letter(s), HCE's Apologias, and FW (Joyce's West/East Tibetan bardos) - just as Picasso' women were his Muses. Men (Joyce / Shem) don't create letters they "reveal letters". Evolution of Everyman: every man will aspire to godhood during their lifetime, as Icarus flew too close to the sun, every man will aspire to dominate their profession (Joyce writing FW) or dominate the world of men (Egyptian pharaohs, Roman emperors, Russian tsars, etc.) yet man (impermanent manifest, "Holy Saltmartin, why can't you beat time?") will fall, taken down by someone (Shiva), "how Buckley shot the Russian General". The children: Shaun, Shem and Iseult will evolve (in book II) from children's games parodying their parents; to youngsters studying their forefather's past lessons; to adults participating in the "rustle bustle" of present life, aspiring to their own godhood (as HCE has), yet they too will experience the fall (dismembered by those around them); after their dismemberment (but before the end/restart) they will dream of what might have been (not their current life) but when they were young, when love was young. "Dreams of Clarity" imparted gifts: HCE dreams of how his family's lives may influence his children's future loves (book II:4); HCE dreams of how his children's future adulthood may unfold as an extension of his life's experiences (book III:1); HCE dreams of how his parenting instructions will influence his children's future of moving past their life's manifest obstacles to their interdependent / individual Unmanifest spiritual lives (book III:2); HCE dreams of how he has prepared his children to defend themselves from their family inheritances (FW), ALP (his soulmate) is invited into his dream (to defend him) as is his cherished Iseult (book III:3). "Clear Light Dream" Moksha, ALP's (& HCE's) lovemaking Nirvana, the past dissolving and a new day arising (book IV). "HCE day" similar to Bloomsday (roughly 24 hrs): Chronologically FW starts with memories "book I:3" of HCE arrested in front of his gated refuge (from MaMaLuJo) unable to enter, unlike Bloom HCE does not enter through the back door, instead HCE is arrested in hours before dawn. Then memories "book I:4" HCE's psychological musings of past travails/gUILts (living death, underworld excursion Ulysses ch Hades) while incarcerated in early hours of morning. Followed by memories "book I:2" HCE walks home through Phoenix Park accosted for the time of day (12 noon) which threatens (real/unreal memories, Ulysses ch Nausicaa) his innocent well-being. These 3 chapters in FW are Joyce's major rework to incorporate Vico's

revelation of restart/recirculation into FW, Joyce rewrites 3 chapters of Ulysses: When He is denied Her front door, He is in Hell (on earth), when released (from Hell) His odyssey to Her begins again (with His ever-present accompanying internal travails) for She always knows when He is worthy of Her acceptance (their Paradise). Then "book I:1" Finnegan's afternoon wake at HCE's tavern and retelling memories (books I:2-4). Inside HCE's tavern (his ship) his patrons talk about his family (Norwegian Captain and the Tailor's Daughter), truthful letters (ALP) and fabricated stories (books I:5-8 & II:3); while the children (Shaun, Shem and Iseult) are in and out of the family tavern/home all day taking their lessons (book II:2) and playing about with their friends (Shem's closing dream, book II:1); HCE, as proprietor, defends himself with a self-deprecating apologia before his intoxicated collapse late night (book II:3). HCE dreams on his tavern floor (book II:4); then dreams in his bed (books III:1-3); before intercourse with his wife ALP (book III:4). HCE & ALP's lovemaking dissolution dream (book IV) to awaken to a new day, Joycean Nirvana is attained by ALP's (& HCE's) unification with the Unmanifest (Creation, Incarnate conception) and Reincarnation (the baton has been passed on again), awaiting Joyce's God "thunderclap" at the beginning of FW's "book I". Joycean Nirvana lies on the surface of FW's text (mandala, available to all) excavating below the surface of the text reveals the arguments that support the Nirvana (present granular mindfulness) and refutes all institutional/religious dogma (children's marginalia righting/reversing misconceived lessons) and authoritarian oppression (Wellington Museum's militarism expressed as instrument of people or oppression by rulers). Joyce reveals the Dzogchen "Father Tantras" or "Maha Yoga" (book I:1-4) and Dzogchen "Mother Tantras" or "Anu Yoga" (book I:5-8). Shem is identified as receptive to "Ati Yoga" or Non-Dual Tantras (Tiberiast Duplex, book I:6); the answer to the Riddle(s) the "Tiberiast Duplex" is Shem (Joyce, the Enlightened One). The Children learn in "book II" Dzogchen Semde (Mind/Time series) self-knowledge (awareness) and Dzogchen Longde (Space series) evolution-knowledge (primordial wisdom, rigpa). HCE dreams (intends) in "book III" to impart Dzogchen Mannagde (Secret Instruction series) Self-Liberation-knowledge to his Children. What does it all Mean: Joyce's gift to Mankind is that Life recirculates. Unlike Joyce's Ulysses (based on Homer's Odyssey) life does not end with woman (in Molly's bed): night passes, the morning arises, and all dissolves to recirculate and restart again - some actors leave the stage and are replaced / (re)incarnated by a "younger version of their former self". Joyce changes from Ulysses by using Vico's framework of recirculation for FW: Finnegan (re)incarnates to HCE, as Shaun (most like HCE) will largely be a (re)incarnation of HCE, Shem (most like ALP) will (re)incarnate some of HCE but also some of ALP, and Iseult will largely be a (re)incarnation of ALP - however, Iseult will choose a man much like HCE (who is (re)incarnated through his daughter) as

Shaun will choose a woman much like ALP - while Shem may become the next Joyce. FW is aural (oral) history like Homer's Odessey and Celtic folktales - when one pronounces (phonology) FW's words (aloud) there are more languages than just English; also, when one reads (morphology) FW's words almost all the words are "portmanteaus / neologisms" which gives each of FW's "poly-syncretic" words many meanings (universal impermanence, Heisenberg uncertainty/obscurity), each FW syncretic sentence dozens of possible messages, each FW syncretic paragraph hundreds of possible readings, Joyce's rendering of a more expansive English language and multiplicating universal book with coalescing syncretic themes/stories (that responds/opens to each reader's inquiries). Joyce schooled in Christian Jesuit metaphysics (pushed down into the mindfulness of human consciousness) breathes in the spirit of expansive Celtic (Irish) democratic community tavern life where man's stories of life are told. Tavern life teaches the evolution of Joyce's ten "thunderclaps" (one hundred lettered words) pushing man's (technologic) evolution forward from cave man's tales to modern tv media tales. Inside the tavern man learns of the purely human (animal) fall, taken down by another human(s) - like animal taken down on the African savanna. A granular reading of FW can render FW as an updated John Milton's Paradise Lost (regurgitated knowledge from the tree, to affirm man's damnation); however, Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species was published in 1859 and Joyce in FW book II clearly walks Shaun, Shem and Iseult through their earthly evolutionary lifetime travails, our mortality is a consequence of Life's evolution. Every page of FW speaks to man's (unconscious biological survival, conscious "racing competitive" social, contemplative aspirational personal) evolution and to Life recirculating (West meets Dzogchen East a "meeting of metaphysical minds") that binds humanity together into the future. Dzogchen (beyond all dualistic polarities) the heart of human consciousness - Joyce's underlying (subcutaneous) arguments refute the "Western curse of metaphysical/mythological damnation", the curse does not exist in the Eastern mind. Like "counting the number of angels on the head of a pin" (Aquinas 1270) Joyce provides a granular/expansive reading of FW as a "defense against all Western adversity" for our conscious and unconscious Western travails. HCE's angst is caused by his community that imposes a Western curse (damnation) upon him that man is not guilty of...to experience Joycean Nirvana, a defense against this man-made guilt is required - for as Zoroaster revealed cosmogonic dualism, evil is mixed with good in man's everyday universal travails (even the Dalai Lama must defend Nirvana rigorously from the most populous authoritarian state in human history). Joyce's FW celebrates the Joys of Christian/Buddhist diversity of humanity (expansive human consciousness: Gnostic Norwegian Captain, Shem, Archdruid), Brahma (Finnegan, HCE, Shaun), Divine Women (ALP, Iseult, Nuvoletta), his family - and the Sufferings of

the inescapable "evil" of Shiva (Buckley), the debilitating harmful sterile intrusive authoritarian institutionalizing damnation (MaMaLuJo, St. Patrick) by Augustine, the manufactured clerical corruptions identified by Luther et al. (since 367 AD) and the burdens of "survival of the fittest" anxiety (modern commerce) met with a Dzogchen Buddhist stance. The (innocent infant) Norwegian Captain (Krishna, HCE), occasionally defensive (Shiva, HCE), though concretized (Brahma, HCE) by community family life (MaMaLuJo) - through spirits (drink) HCE accesses his spirituality (dreams) and through spiritual (cutting through) love-making with ALP (direct approach) they access (their Krishnas), unification with the Unmanifest. Joyce was a Prophet who consumed Man's conscious and spiritual "thoughts and dreams, history and gossip, efforts and failings" - to reveal the joys (Nirvana) and sufferings (Samsara) of Mankind. Hermes Trismegistus reveals in the Corpus Hermeticum the Unmanifest to his son Tat; however, Maha-Visnu's unlimited universes (sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest) predates Western revelations by centuries. Unmanifest "spiritual" God (Visnu) is omniscient compassionate eternal. Manifest universes consist of Equilibrium (Visnu), Creation (more Brahma) and Destruction (less Shiva) - Shiva is a "temporal manifestation of Visnu" whose destructions are manifest and cannot interact with the Unmanifest. Zoroaster revealed Cosmogonic dualism where inescapable manifest "evil" (Shiva) is mixed with good (Visnu and Brahma). The 39th Festal Letter 367 AD expunged (discarded to the midden heap) Unmanifest spirituality from Christ's message (Nag Hammadi manuscripts, spiritual revelations beyond the orthodox canon). Doctrines of Augustine: dogmas of original sin, infant damnation and predestination were brought to Ireland by St Patrick (Conquistadors quash Latin America's Toltec seers), consequently extinguishing Unmanifest spirituality, sentient's place in the river/fabric of the temporal universe (preexistence and reincarnation). All Manifest gods are deities/idols (man's creations/symbols) - only the Umanifest (untouched by man) is affirmative by definition (our universe's reality: its matter, its laws & consciousness manifest); manifest local ephemeral astronomic physics vs Unmanifest universal eternal quantum (Maya Thaya & Tamas Rajas Sattvas) physics. Brahma manifestations (not imbued by the eternal Unmanifest) are met with opposing force. Joyce returns Mankind to the path to the Unmanifest. Joyce's FW message: Christian/Buddhist omniscient compassion (Christ/Krishna) is eternally joyful and recirculating. Affirmative family (HCE/Brahma, ALP/Divine woman & children) existentiality: life's biological evolution (sex), modern survival (money), constraining community (Dharma, social evolution) are constantly assaulted by inescapable "aggressive insidious vile" corrupt soul(less/sucking) ossified demonic antipathetic attacks. Joycean Nirvana is attained via the Christian/Buddhist affirmative middle way, "beyond polar opposites" the path of Christ/Buddha.JCB

I had a guide book to help me with reading Ulysses. It helped. This book is, for me, way too complex and detailed and academic. I would rather struggle through the Wake itself than to struggle through this. Given that, it is obviously well written and may be a perfect fit for other readers.

It is a classic

This reader's guide to finnegans wake is necessary to any studious person. Reading Joyce is a challenging decision. Without the help of these scholar we could never do!

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