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RAFAEL CARVALHO FALLEIROS

**FINN AMONG US: FIONN MAC CUMHAILL AND HIS
REINCARNATION MOTIF IN *FINNEGANS WAKE***

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Monografia apresentada como requisito final para aprovação na matéria de Monografia em Literatura, a ser utilizada como requisito parcial para a obtenção do grau de Bacharel no Curso de Letras Inglês: Língua inglesa e sua respectiva literatura, da Universidade de Brasília, em julho de 2019.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Pawel Jerzy Hejmanowski

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“The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can.”

J.R.R Tolkien

“The cave you fear to enter holds the
treasure you seek”.

Joseph Campbell

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RESUMO

Esta monografia tem como fim comparar uma obra clássica da literatura, *Finnegans Wake* (JOYCE, 2012), e um herói mitológico irlandês com renomada fama, Fionn MacCool (ou Fionn mac Cumhaill); ou seja, é um trabalho de investigação interessado em perceber como Joyce parte de temas universais para sua particular Irlanda, com todas suas referências ocultas, além das suas relações com a cultura celta (CAMPBELL, 2003). O enredo de *Finnegans Wake* é construído com uma ambiciosa tentativa de se representar a História de toda a humanidade condensada em um arquétipo da “família universal” (CAMPBELL, 1944; AMARANTE, 2009), formada por um marido (HCE), uma esposa (ALP), uma filha (Issy) e dois irmãos (Shem e Shaun). A linguagem enigmática é justamente o que faz com que *Wake* possibilite um número quase infinito de referências a diversos períodos históricos, personagens, pensamentos, avanços, etc., tudo isso englobado por uma atmosfera do sonho (elevada pelo estilo de escrita conhecido como fluxo de consciência) e de noite – portanto, de incertezas (ATHERTON, 1959). O clímax do romance se dá quando HCE é pego em um dos crimes mais perversos de obscenidade (CAMPBELL, 1944). O pai de família é visto no Phoenix Park sendo voyeur de um casal, ou da própria filha (as versões apresentadas no seu julgamento são diversas). Após esse ato, toda sua família sofre interferência direta e diária do seu “pecado original”, assim como toda a História humana sofreu com Adão e Eva. No mais, uma análise histórica do mito de Finn MacCool, e sua presença no *Wake* foram aprofundados com ajuda de teóricos como James MacKillop (1986), Campbell (1944, 1989, 2003) e T.F. O’Rahilly (1946).

Palavras-chave: *Finnegans Wake*, Finn MacCool, Mitologia Irlandesa.

ABSTRACT

This paper is a comparative research between the literary piece, *Finnegans Wake*, by James Joyce, and a broadly famous mythological figure of Irish Mythology, Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Using the stream of consciousness as an innovative tool, the Irish writer tells the History of all humanity in a few pages (AMARANTE, 2009). Symbolically (CAMPBELL, 1944), Joyce portrays a family composed by father (HCE), mother (ALP), a daughter (Issy) and two brothers (Shem and Shaun) as an archetype of the “universal family”. They live a normal life, with ambiguities and conflicts that everyone shares, but the writer goes a step further and

shows how a great crime can afflict a man's heart – referring to HCE's supposed sexual obscenity committed against a couple (voyeurism) or against his own daughter, being judged by the whole city. Finn MacCool emerges as one powerful image of Ireland's past and geography. The mythological background of this work was mainly based on T.F. O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), and the analysis on the *Wake*, on James MacKillop's *Fionn mac Cumhaill* (1986). Additionally, general and specific aspects shall be discussed throughout this article, some of them, respectively, are the historiography of the Fenian Cycle (O'RAHILLY, 1946), Joseph Campbell's monomyth (CAMPBELL, 1989), James Joyce's writing and inspiration processes (AMARANTE, 2009); furtherly, comparisons among Finn, Tim Finnegan, Dublin, HCE, ALP will be made as well as other implications that the book incites upon the hero.

Keywords: Finnegans Wake, Finn MacCool, Irish Mythology.

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INTRODUCTION

Mythology is a theme that fascinated great writers, essayists, dramatists, scholars and readers throughout History. It is so true that, for example, Joseph Campbell and James Joyce devoted a lifetime to study and think about myths, heroes and folklore. The first was a thinker that used his lifetime to discover how those great stories of ancient times were still out there, with different names, and lasted so long. This process culminated in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), Campbell's work that treats the unifying traits in every mythological story/personage (the monomyth). In latter interviews, Professor Campbell admitted that James Joyce, the Irish writer, was a great mentor for him. Works like *Finnegans Wake* (1939) elucidated a variety of questions for the scholar, for the complexity of symbols and mythologies condensed on it.

Enthusiastic as his contemporary, James Joyce was a fictionist that was fascinated with History and mythology, especially when attached to Giambattista Vico's concept of cyclic history in *Scienza Nuova* (1725). For example, in *Ulysses* (1918) Leopold Bloom, the main character, represents a new kind of Joycean hero: the simple Dubliner advertiser becomes a higher form of being in the writer's stream of consciousness. This pattern, as we notice in Campbell's *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944), repeats with the reincarnation motif among Tim Finnegan, Finn MacCool, HCE, Shem and Shaun: mythology is everlastingly repetitive and, thus, Finn will always be able to wake from his mysterious dream to guard Ireland again. Thus, this monograph will concentrate on performing a comparative study between the myth of Finn MacCool, and his presence in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

1.1 Fionn mac Cumhaill background and myth's different versions

Fionn Mac Cumhaill¹ (or Finn MacCool for the English language) is one of the most known figures of Irish Mythology. His presence travels from the Irish landscape to the extreme of the Otherworld – the place where folk believed knowledge, wisdom and the gods themselves lied. Therefore, a number of versions of the hero's journeys were told by the Irish people.

For instance, as MacKillop² (1986) and T.F. O'Rahilly (1946) elucidate, Finn had many faces throughout mythology: as a just and honorable hero; as a leader of the Fianna; as a hunter,

¹ Many different names were given for our hero, since he is one of the most widespread Irish legends in Ireland, Scotland, Norway, England and even Denmark. Thus, he was already named, before the anglicized Finn MacCool, as Fionn, Find, Feunn, Fin MacCoul, MacCumal, MacCooil, etc. (MACKILLOP, 1986)

² James MacKillop's views regarding the Fenian Cycle and Irish Mythology are as important as O'Rahilly's; even though they were briefly discussed in this work, because of the objective of targeting more specific and well-known aspects of Finn's variety of historiography, the scholar's book is a good source for more

farmer and warrior; but also, as a trickster; as a villain (i.e. Diarmuid and Grainne); as a giant; and even as a clown. The latter represents one of the first stories you come about when researching MacCool's deeds: *A Legend of Knockmany*, where Finn, as a giant, tries to outwit the also gigantic Scottish Cucullin/Benandonner. However, when our friend builds the Giant's Causeway, a passage from Ireland to Scotland, to meet his rival, he perceives that Benandonner was way bigger and more fearsome than he had thought. Frightened, Fionn runs away from Scotland and hides in his house. With the help of his wife, Oonagh, Cucullin is fooled to believe that his enemy is not there, but Finn is disguised as his lover's baby. Having the sight of a giant, furry and adult-like infant, the Scott giant flees away with extreme fear and destroys part of the Giant's Causeway along his escape. Once again, Finn is the superior giant of all Ireland.

It is important to notice that, as any other mythology, every Fionn's story has a different version and, not rarely, some inconsistencies created by the oral tradition, or by more recent historians. T.F. O'Rahilly (1946) is a ferocious critic of the Euhemerism, a technic which historians use to treat divine beings as if men of old times. This historiographical method humanizes heroes and gods, murdering their cultural importance for the people. According to the researcher, the Christianization of Ireland was a major reason for the euhemerization of Irish Mythology, since wiping out paganism seemed to be a requirement for turning Christ's acceptance easier – this process supposedly started with St. Patrick. O'Rahilly quotes two well-known thinkers whose contribution for Irish euhemerism was unique: O'Donovan and O'Curry. Among other discussions in *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), translating incongruencies were common and helped this misunderstanding of Celtic Mythology. For instance, Tuatha Dé Danann, a mythological people that are said to have inhabited Ireland before the Milesians were thought to be the "people of the goddess Danu", and also, according to the *Leabhar Gabhála* (The Book of Invasions), they were treated as real people who lived in

knowledge on the topic. For example, MacKillop raises some questions as the origin of the MacCool myth (maybe linked to the Scottish Fingal, or to the fiction *The Bruce*, from 1375), if it was inspired by a Greek upbringing, if it was a myth, a legend, or a folklore, the importance to English Literature (W.B. Yeats with his *The Wanderings of Oisín*, published in 1889; James Joyce with *Finnegans Wake*, in 1939; somewhat important also for the historical work of Lady Gregory in *Gods and Fighting Men*), the comparison of journeys between Finn, Heracles, Sigurd and Taliesin, the connection of Finn and his Fianna with Irish landscape (Fingerstone, Fingal's Cabe, The Bed of Diarmaid and Gráinne, Hill of Allen), the different faces of Finn (trickster, giant, engineer and buffoon), the understanding of Finn in Lord Raglan's formula of hero, the legend's eternal reincarnation and its connection to Joyce's work, some surprising facts about the lack of knowledge that the Irish writer had in Gaelic and Celtic Mythology (used Zimmer's inaccurate version to base his fiction and to justify Finn's connection to Dublin's landscape), and finally, his contribution for our further understanding of the branches that Fionn creates in *Finnegans Wake*, showing the inspirations behind HCE, Tim Finnegan, Phoenix Park, Howth Head, William Stead, etc.

ancient times. O’Rahilly, however, shows us different possible translations³ of the term that were possibly used to euhemerize these folk – stripping their link with the divine (Danu, the Otherworld, the mist on which they first came to Ireland, the three gods of craftsmanship) and making them human pagans.

Afterwards, the scholar shows us that Finn is also a controversy figure, because of the many versions of his adventures. For instance, MacCool would acquire knowledge by chewing his thumb; yet, some sources describe him biting his nails when thinking deep. Therefore, the researcher names this variety as “semi-history”: legend, myth and history are mixed, being a very harsh task to draw a line between fact and fiction. Another example is the question that inquired if the (writers about the) Fianna copied the Roman army.

Fionn Mac Cumhaill’s success is explained and broadened by his legend’s spreading across the neighbor countries (i.e. Scotland, Norway, Denmark, England, etc). A precise example is Heinrich Zimmer (1891), a historian who Joyce used for his understanding of Celtic Mythology, is said to have been inaccurate on his readings of Finn. The reason is that Zimmer linked the Irish hero to Norse traditional folklore. In it, he was Caittil Find, whose murder was completed in Munster in 857. Alfred Nutt, however, disagrees and tell us that everything we know about Finn is purely mythical, which might signal a certain euhemerism from Heinrich.

Furthermore, Finn’s death is also controversial⁴. According to the *Irish World-Chronicle*, a hypothesized collection of ecclesiastical annals about Ireland’s past, there are at least two different authorships for the murder of our hero: by Luaigni of Tara in Cairbre Lifechor or by Fian of Luaigni (Cinaed ua Hartacáin). But other sources report that Fionn was behaving badly in Ireland in the eyes of the High King; thus, the Highness ordered a battle to occur, or some close members of the Fianna to slain their leader. Furtherly, it is said that Finn lived⁵ for four generations before his end, being Oisín⁶ and Caílte the only survivors of the supposed Battle of Gabhair, where the Fianna and its leader are gone.

³ In the section XVI – *The three gods of craftsmanship*, O’Rahilly explains that Tuatha de Danann was mistranslated in a couple of written versions of the oral tradition to “the people of the goddess Donann/Danu”, whether it should be *na trí dee dána*, meaning “the three gods of craftsmanship skill” (Goibniu, Luthta and Credne, all having various names depending on the material), and this could be an evidence of an attempt of humanizing those three divinities (O’RAHILLY, 1946).

The English translation and work of historiography might also have altered our understanding and view of Finn MacCool, because the attempt to humanize his figure for catechist purposes generated a loss in characteristics and maybe in power (MACKILLOP, 1986).

⁴ Envolving, sometimes, the death of Cúchulainn as well.

⁵ Actually, Fionn Mac Cumhaill has the “privilege” of eternal live: he won the battle against death. Whenever Finn is slain in Irish Mythology, his body goes to a room where he sleeps until Ireland or the Fianna needs him; and, thus, he wakes one more time for glorious periods.

⁶ This is a very famous story (*Oisín in Tir na nÓg*) in Irish Mythology, even replicated by W.B. Yeats in *The Wanderings of Oisín*, and by James Macpherson’s *Ossian*. After Oisín marries Niamh Chinn Óir and goes to

Later in the essay, T.F. O’Rahilly decides to expose how “The Wisdom of Finn” appeared throughout oral and written traditions in Ireland. Firstly, the Otherworld was seen as the realm of the Celtic gods, and, therefore, *omni science* should be easily found there. However, mere humans could not cross the gates from this world to the Other; so, there were some solutions for folk to acquire wisdom. One belief was that the gods could be polymorphic (i.e. eagle, snake, salmon, birds, etc.) to visit our world, and this should be an opportunity for you to ask for foresight, or to kill the god to obtain it (both in his human form, or animal form). Old age⁷ was a sign of wisdom as well: both concepts of polymorphism and aging were mixed and meant the presence of a divinity or just a very special human⁸.

The salmon was the most common form both of wisdom incarnated and of a god in an animal morph, because the passages from the Otherworld to Ireland were lakes, wells, hills and rivers of the landscape; thus, a fish is more appropriate to do the crossing. So, whenever the Salmon of Wisdom was eaten or tasted, scholars wonder if it was a divinity, or just a specimen coming bathed from deep divine waters. Finn, first called Deimne⁹, in one version, when trained by the druid Finnegas (Finn Eces), gets to eat the Salmon which his master took a long time to catch. Some say this was set in the River Boyne¹⁰, in Linn Féic (a pool of it). After hooking it, Finn was responsible for the cooking. When he put his finger on the fish to see if the temperature was good enough, the fire scalds it, he places the thumb on his tooth and started to chew it to

Tir na nÓg, he becomes king. However, wanting to revisit his fellows from the Fianna, Oisín returns to Ireland in Embarr, a magical horse, but he cannot touch the land, or he will die. Therefore, he visits Ireland and notices that he is now considered a giant there, and that the Fianna was long gone. When he touches the ground accidentally to help some folk to build a road in Gleann na Smól, he ages instantly to 300 years old. Now, it is said that St. Patrick found his aging body in the land and talked to him about Fionn and the Fianna.

⁷ Fintan mac Bóchra, “The White Ancient”, or “The Wise” was a very famous seer in Celtic Mythology who had a hawk, the bird of Achill, that was born in the same date as him. When Finn MacCool arrived in History, Fintan was still alive and, thus, some versions say that he was responsible for teaching some of Irish tradition for MacCool. Bóchra also has the ability to shape-shift into a salmon, another character known for being the Salmon of Wisdom.

A parallel can be traced in *Culhwch and Olwen*, a Gaelic Arthurian story before the Christianization of the figure of King Arthur. In this tale, the Salmon of Wisdom is Eog Llyn Llyw, probably located in the River Severn.

In Welsh legend, we have the Eagle of Gwern Abwy, one of the eldest and wisest creatures in existence.

⁸ We can notice this in other mythologies as well. See Odin, for instance, who is usually treated as an old man without an eye whose ravens tell earthly secrets and stories for him.

⁹ It is quite usual in mythology, following the Hero’s Journey, that the legendary personage changes his name throughout his adventure, earning the qualities he conquered in the meaning of his name. Fionn, for instance, earns a word that means “white”, “fair”, and other significances that are much discussed by T.F. O’Rahilly (1946) and MacKillop (1986).

¹⁰ Other mythological figures also confronted salmons. Cúchulainn spears and mutilates a fish in Linn Féic, a pool adjoining the sid of Aettech and the sid of Bruig, when looking for his enemy, Ekmaire – maybe thinking he shifted into this form. There is another version, *Aided Con Roí*, where Cúchulainn murders and eats a salmon because the soul of Cú Roí resided on it; therefore, when the fish was slain, he lost strength and valor.

The God Nodons, sometimes portrayed as the divinity of the Severn in England, has a temple at Lydney Park and it is not clear if he transformed himself into a salmon, or if he hooked one to acquire its wisdom. Finn invades this scene to be the hero who eats God Nodons in shape of salmon.

ease the pain; consequently, *fiós!* (wisdom). A tale says that Fionn killed Finnegas immediately after gaining knowledge, since he knew the druid would murder him for the stealing. Otherwise, stories report that Finn Eces offers the Salmon for Deimne, because it was meant for him after all the training.

O’Rahilly (1946) illustrates other acquirements of wisdom by Finn. First, our hero parts to an adventure with Mac Reithe and Diorraing, members of the Fianna, with Cam Paradaig as a destiny (there lies the door of a *sid*). Arriving, they find the door open where the three daughters of wisdom-giving are offering a golden vessel containing the water of knowledge to the well’s owner. Céibhfhiinn, who is holding it, by the sight of the three warriors coming inside, hurries to close the door; in the effort, she drops part of the liquid on Finn and his companions and they become wise¹¹. Other tale vocalizes that Fionn and the Fianna, in *Summit of Carn Feradaig*, followed Aitheach, who was carrying a big pig on a fork with a young woman nearby. Suddenly, a magic mist involves them all and they are teleported to Aitheach’s palace. There, Finn finds draughts full of a well’s water of wisdom and he drinks them, gaining *fiós!* On the other hand, the warrior was bathing in a lake at Sliab Cuilinn when suddenly he is transformed into a feeble old man. Apparently, it was Cuilenn’s fault. That is the reason why the Fianna sieges his *sid* and forces him to heal MacCool. He gives a gold cup to the hero and he is restored, alongside with the power of knowledge.

Besides the story of his thumb being squeezed by the daughters of Bec mac Buain, Finn conquers the gift of wisdom by going to slain the Otherworld-god, Cúldub, in *Síd ar Femen*. Here we have two versions: in the first, the door of the *sid* is closed on Mac Cumhaill’s thumb by a goddess, earning *imbais forosnai*; and the second, the same event occurs, but the door alone closes itself on his finger. This version is important for O’Rahilly¹², because the Irish myth is a composite one. This means we need to go back to the discussion of the polymorphism of the gods: when a Salmon of Wisdom is eaten or tasted, is it a god or just a “bathed on sacred waters” fish? For the scholar, it may be Cúldub. To reinforce this view, he frequently compares this journey with the Norse mythology. There, it is normal for the hero to either kill his tutor (analog to the murder of the god) to acquire wisdom, or to slain a dragon (tasting or eating his heart;

¹¹ In another version, this story is repeated with the thumb element inserted: Céibhfhiinn closes the door in Fionn’s finger and drops the liquid on the other two.

¹² T.F. O’Rahilly mentions a tale where Fionn murders a one-eyed giant blinding him with hot iron. Also, there is another tradition where the owner of the *sid* is either Eas Ruaidh, or a deity morphed into a salmon.

Afterwards, he exemplifies by comparing Goll “the one-eyed”, with Eas Ruaidh’s salmon, with Aed, the sun god, and finally with the acquirement of a lightening sword. Then, all these elements can be found in Polyphemus (Odyssey), in the Welsh *Hanes Taliesin*, in the J.F. Campbell’s *Fearachur Léigh*, and, of course, in the Sigurd journey to slay the dragon Fáfnir to eat his heart and gain wisdom.

comparable to the salmon). In the end, O’Rahilly questions if the thumb is the main source of the magic. He wonders if it is the Tooth of Wisdom, or if Finn performed small rituals to unlock the power. Thus, the thinker mentions two spells that the legend might have used and discusses the possible translations and veracity: the *teinm laeda* and the *imbais forosnai* (both forbidden in St. Patrick’s time).

1.2 Joseph Campbell’s monomyth and its relation to Joyce

“Joseph Campbell, (born March 26, 1904, New York, New York, U.S.—died October 30, 1987, Honolulu, Hawaii), prolific American author and editor whose works on comparative mythology examined the universal functions of myth in various human cultures and mythic figures in a wide range of literatures.

While working on his first book, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944; coauthored with Henry Morton Robinson), Campbell attended the lectures of Heinrich Zimmer (1890–1943), a German Indologist at Columbia who had been forced into exile by the Nazis.

(...) Even before undertaking the editing of Zimmer, Campbell was writing *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), which remains his best-known work. In an approach that contrasted with that of subsequent books, Campbell tied the meaning of myth to its plot and claimed to have deciphered the common plot of all hero myths. He understood the hero myth’s central plot in Jungian terms, defining it as the male or female hero’s journey to a strange, new, divine world” (BRITANNICA).

As the brief biography by Robert Segal (2019) in Encyclopaedia Britannica provides, Joseph Campbell started his mythological journey intrinsically connected to Joyce’s work. In a collection of interviews given by Professor Campbell to the journalist Bill Moyers, published in paper by the name of *The Power of the Myth* (1988), the presence of the Irish writer as some kind of mentor for the scholar is repetitively mentioned. No coincidence that the first Campbell’s work was *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944), a book where Joseph and Henry Robinson try to uncover the sea of references and symbols behind the Joycean labyrinth. As the Professor starts the Skeleton:

“Running riddle and fluid answer, *Finnegans Wake* is a mighty allegory of the fall and resurrection of mankind. It is a strange book, a compound of fable, symphony, and nightmare—a monstrous enigma beckoning imperiously from the shadowy pits of sleep. Its mechanics resemble those of a dream, a dream which has freed the author from the necessities of common logic and has enabled him to compress all periods of history, all phases of individual and racial development, into a circular design, of which every part is beginning, middle, and end” (CAMPBELL, 1944).

Throughout the paragraphs, besides explaining every line of *Finnegans Wake*, trying to expose the narrative comprehensibly (even writing a summary), Campbell and Robinson expose the monomythical element of the fiction through the personages, the landscape and the

imagery of it. For example, right in the introduction we have the explanation that Joyce compresses¹³ all human history with “only” his pen on the paper. From the Original Sin with Adam and Eve, mythologies, and historical wars, all the way through the modern world (although devastated by the WWI), Joyce presents a “Viconean”¹⁴ cyclical view of History, where we are now living the chaotic period when individualism and sterility, representing “the nadir of man’s fall”. When the cycle ends with a thunderclap, the belief in the supernatural will be restored and humanity will be back to the first point of the cycle: to theocracy.

Furtherly, the more specific relations between Campbell and Joyce will be emphasized. For now, it is essential to understand the monomyth and the twelve stages of the Hero’s Journey.

“The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken, or who feels there is something lacking in the normal experience available or permitted to the members of society. The person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life-giving elixir. It’s usually a cycle, a coming and a returning” (CAMPBELL, 1949).

As we comprehend from the quotation, Joseph Campbell attempted to find a common path for all the myths of the world. Throughout *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, a number of examples and patterns are identified. The mythical hero has a journey that almost always can be divided into twelve steps; thus, the monomyth is this “universal human” that goes through them: first, the Ordinary World¹⁵, the environment where the hero exists without knowing the adventure to come; second, Call to Adventure¹⁶, by a threat or an objective, the hero is called to join an adventure to fulfill his destiny, his challenge or his quest; third, Refusal of the Call, for felling fear or having second thoughts, he will resist the call; fourth, Meeting the Mentor¹⁷, needing guidance, it is usual for the hero to meet a master who trains him mentally and physically; fifth, Crossing the Threshold¹⁸, leaving the familiar world to face the unknown; sixth, Tests, Allies, Enemies¹⁹, he is tested, and finds allies and challenges throughout the way;

¹³ “All time occurs simultaneously, Tristram and the Duke of Wellington, Father Adam and Humpty Dumpty merge in a single percept. Multiple meanings are present in every line (...)” (CAMPBELL, 1944).

¹⁴ Reference to Giambattista Vico, an eighteenth-century Italian historian and philosopher that believed (in his *La Scienza Nuova*) History passes through four phases: theocratic, aristocratic, democratic, and chaotic.

¹⁵ Trying to apply it to Finn MacCool’s story, the Ordinary World might be him growing up with his mother/sister training to be a warrior.

¹⁶ In one version, the Call should be the vengeance of Cumhal, his father; in other, the threat of Aillén Mac Midgna, the Burner.

¹⁷ The mentor could be the figure of the druid Finnegas, who helps Finn achieve wisdom; Fintan mac Bóchra could be as well, or even the eldest exiled members of the Fianna who were faithful to Cumhal.

¹⁸ After acquiring knowledge, or going to the forest trying to find the eldest members of the Fianna hiding on a cave.

¹⁹ All the challenges Fionn faces, including Aillén the Burner, alongside with the alliance and command of the Fianna. In some adventures, the warrior band were accepted as hosts in houses next to their challenge.

seventh, Approach to the Inmost Cave²⁰, an actual location that contains a great danger, or an internal conflict; eighth, Ordeal²¹, supreme physical or mental test (inner crisis) that the hero must surpass for him or for his world to survive; ninth, Reward²², after defeating enemy, he emerges stronger with a new ability and/or with a new prize; tenth, the Road Back²³, the will of crossing the threshold is reversed and now the hero needs to go back home, but first, usually, he needs to face one more threat; eleventh, Resurrection²⁴, the moment when the hero has his ultimate and most dangerous encounter with death, being this final battle also a threat against the Ordinary World. He gets out of the final battle cleansed and reborn; twelfth, Return with the Elixir²⁵, returns to the Ordinary World, but both him and his home are changed.

1.3 James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: labor and inspirations



Image 1 - James Joyce by Berenice Abbott, *Transition Magazine*, p. 26.

²⁰ Goll mac Morna, Aillén, or even his internal conflict to avenge his father.

²¹ Directly, Aillén the Burner, and the invasions Ireland suffered and Finn defended.

²² The lightening sword, magical spear, or the gift of wisdom.

²³ Finn's reconquering of the Fianna and the Hill of Allen. Thus, his "return to hereditary normality".

²⁴ This could be read explicitly as his reincarnation after physical death, or abstractly as his resurrection as a leader of the Fianna.

²⁵ A renewed, stronger and wiser leader that the Fianna had lost with Cormac's murder, thanks to the overcoming of Aillén and Goll.

“James Joyce was an Irish, modernist writer who wrote in a ground-breaking style that was known both for its complexity and explicit content. He was born on February 2, 1882 in Dublin, Ireland. He published *Portrait of the Artist* in 1916 and caught the attention of Ezra Pound. With *Ulysses*, Joyce perfected his stream-of-consciousness style and became a literary celebrity. The explicit content of his prose brought about landmark legal decisions on obscenity. Joyce battled eye ailments for most of his life. He died in 1941” (BIOGRAPHY).

Dirce Waltrick do Amarante, a Brazilian academic who translated and studied *Finnegans Wake*, published a book called *Para ler Finnegans Wake de James Joyce* (2009). There, Dirce produces a brief biography of the writer, reuniting information about the composition and reception of the book, besides some analysis concerning the symbology and direct impact of the novel.

According to her, *Finnegans Wake* took seventeen years to be completed. However, the fiction was frequently published in small excerpts with the name *Work in Progress* (in magazines like *Transition*, *Transatlantic Review*, *Criterion*, *This Quarter*, etc.) and was harshly received by readers and by critics²⁶²⁷. Even Harriet Shaw Weaver, Joyce’s friend and financier, thought the book was too strange for the geniality of the Irish writer. Adding his temperament to the account, Sylvia Beach, his editor, had to cancel their contract for a brief period during the writing of *Finnegans Wake*. In letters he addressed to Weaver, he used to say that he was going to write the History of the world, referring to great personages such Napoleon, Tristan, Jesus, and great books like *The Holy Bible*, *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The Torah*, *The Book of Kells*, etc.

²⁶ Besides his brother, Stanislaus Joyce, James had a group of collaborators and readers of high prestige that helped him pursuit his masterpiece. In a collection named *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, several scholars and well-known writers (i.e. Samuel Beckett, Joyce’s apprentice and secretary for a time, and William Carlos Williams) contributed with essays pointing out the geniality of the book.

²⁷ An interesting episode in the confection of the book is the dictation of Samuel Beckett. Being Joyce’s secretary and helper with the book, the author would tell Beckett, due to his glaucoma, to write the sounds that would happen outside of the office, and also repetitions that he would commit randomly.

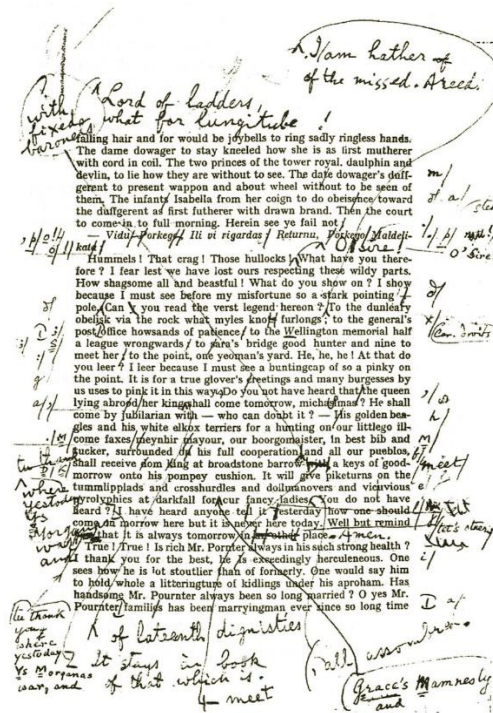


Image 2 - James Joyce's corrections to the final proof of his Work in Progress in November 1929 issue of transition. Transition Magazine, p. 10.

Furthermore, Waltrick assures that the author's biography is inseparable from his latter masterpiece²⁸. Joyce, as mentioned before, had optical problems (glaucoma) throughout his adulthood. Also, his daughter suffered from schizophrenia²⁹. "Joyceans" say that these two facts might have heavily influenced the stream of consciousness technique in *Ulysses*, and even more the way language is explored in *Finnegans Wake*.

Finally, with the release of the book, some chapters were instantly banned and censored in Europe for its "incomprehensible language" and its "obscenities". For example, the eighth chapter, *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, one of the most famous in the fiction, was prohibited in England. According to Dirce Waltrick (2009):

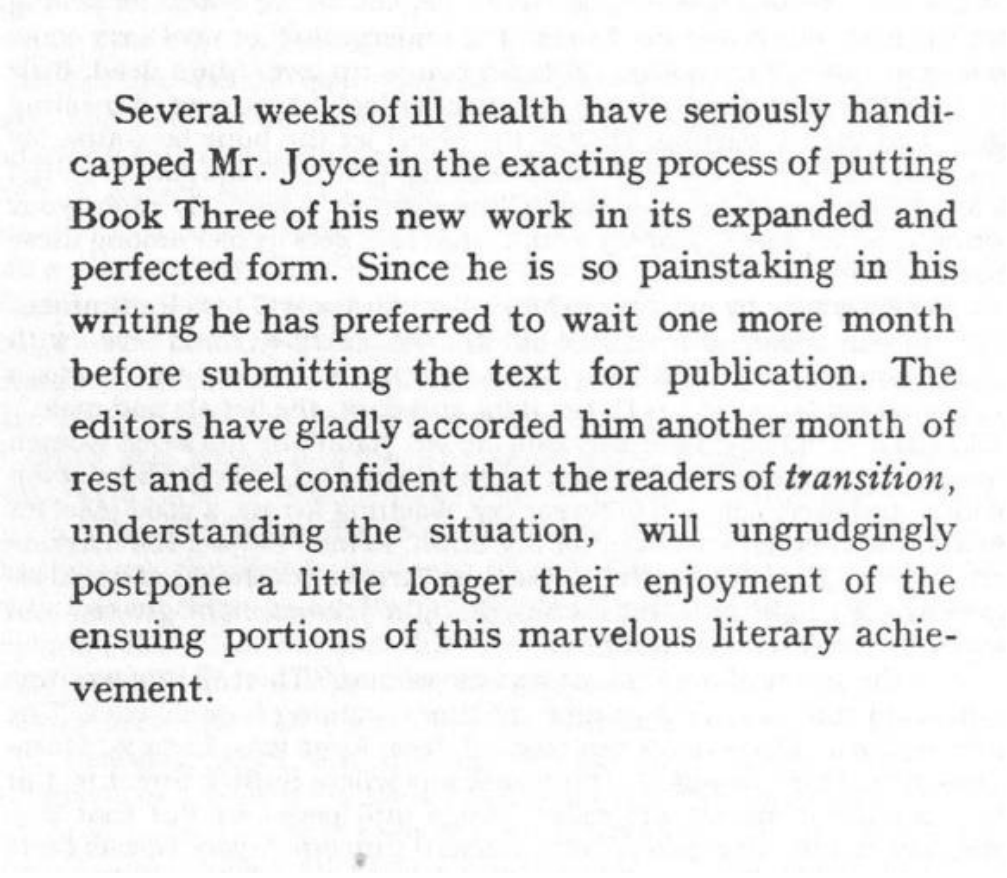
²⁸ However, the great Joyce's researcher, J.S. Atherton (1959), in his *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in James Joyce's Finnegans Wake*, may disagree to this affirmative. For him, the *Wake* is as obscure as the night. It is not clear enough if Joyce uses elements of his life or not, if the book is autobiographical or just a fiction. But this does not diminish the importance of understanding his life (mainly his letters) to grasp some ideas and symbols that Joyce aimed to achieve with the *Wake*.

²⁹ An interesting story emerged from this fact. According to Robert Anton Wilson (1988)'s interview, James Joyce had some problems with Carl Jung, because he would diagnose his daughter with schizophrenia and he would claim that his methods might be of help. However, the writer would ignore and somewhat criticize his contemporary. Joyce would argue that his daughter only spoke a different language, the tongue of the dreams, and this should be an inspiration for his books.

Campbell equally mentions the dispute between Joyce and Jung, taking the first's daughter as an example to illustrate the psychological concept of affect images, by Dr. John Weir Perry, which is an usual occurrence in patients with schizophrenia: "(...) affect images become dissociated in the schizophrenic state: (...) one's emotional life is not supplied with images through which it can communicate". Thus, for him, we are living in a religious schizophrenia. By inheriting the Christian tradition, not being directly and emotionally associated with the supernatural, the affect images effect occurs to us.

“Beyond that, the language of the novel, incomprehensible for most readers, generated a problem that conflicted the critics, since, in one hand, the linguistic and poetic singularities would enrich the text, on the other hand, its apparent lack of meaning and the consequent failure on fulfilling the wish of immediate understanding of the reader fomented hostility”.

It is important to notice that, in the seventeen years Joyce used to compose his work, much studying of mythological texts and of other languages had to be effectuated. As James MacKillop reminds, the author had poor notions of Irish (Gaelic) and its mythology, because of the doubtful material he based his research on (i.e. Zimmer). However, the scholar affirms that the geniality of the writer does not rely on its historiographical/mythological precision. Like Shakespeare, who based tragedies like *Macbeth* and *King Lear* on a not so trustworthy origin, *The Holinshed Chronicles*, James Joyce performs an almost impossible work (as described by Campbell): he takes the archetypes, the monomyth, the Viconean cycles, Irish History³⁰, geography and condenses all in one magnificent book ornated with poetically beautiful symbolisms, tricks and challenges for the reader.



Several weeks of ill health have seriously handicapped Mr. Joyce in the exacting process of putting Book Three of his new work in its expanded and perfected form. Since he is so painstaking in his writing he has preferred to wait one more month before submitting the text for publication. The editors have gladly accorded him another month of rest and feel confident that the readers of *transition*, understanding the situation, will ungrudgingly postpone a little longer their enjoyment of the ensuing portions of this marvelous literary achievement.

Image 3 - Transition Magazine's note reporting Joyce's state of health, p. 140.

³⁰ An interesting comparison that J.S. Atherton (1959) does is the one between Fionn and Eusebius of Caesarea's *Epístola de controversia pascoal*. MacCool's historiography, as many other hero's, is as confusing as the conventional date of Easter.

ORIGINAL TEXT

WELL, YOU KNOW OR DON'T YOU KENNET OR HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU EVERY story has an end and that's the he and the she of it. Look, look, the dusk is growing. Fieluhr? Filou! What age is at? It saon is late. 'Tis endless now since I or anyone last saw Waterhouse's clock. They took it asunder, I heard them say. When will they reassemble it? O, my back, my back, my back! I'd want to go to Aches-les-Pains. Wring out the clothes! Wring in the dew! Godavari vert the showers! And grant of Thy grace. Aman. Will we spread them here now? Ay, we will. Spread on your bank and I'll spread mine on mine. It's what I'm doing. Spread! It's churning chill. Der went is rising, I'll lay a few stones on the hostel sheets. A man and his bride embraced between them. Else I'd have sprinkled and folded them only. And I'll tie my butcher's apron here. It's suety yet. The strollers will pass it by. Six shifts, ten kerchiefs, nine to hold to the fire and this for the code, the convent napkins twelve, one baby's shawl. Where are all her childer now? In kingdome gone or power to come or gloria be to them farther? Allalivial, allalivial! Some here, more no more, more again lost to the stranger I've heard tell that same brooch of the Shannons was married into a family in Spain. And all the Dunders de Dunnes in Markland's Vineland beyond Brendan's herring pool takes number nine in yangsee's hats. And one of Biddy's beads went bobbing till she rounded up last hister-eve with a marigold and a cobbler's candle in a side strain of a main drain of a manzinhurries off Bachelor's Walk. But all that's left to the last of the Meaghers in the loop of the years prefixed and between is one kneebuckle and two hooks in the front. Do you tell me that now? I do in troth. And didn't you hear it a deluge of times? You deed, you deed! I need, I need! It's that irrawaddyng I've stuck in my aars. It all but husheth the lethest sound. Oronoko! What's your trouble? Is that the great Finnleader himself in his joakimono on his statue riding the high horse there forehengist? Father of Otters, it is himself! Yonne there! Is it that? On Fallareen Common? You're thinking of Astley's Amphitheayter where the bobby restrained you making sugarstuck pouts to the ghostwhite horse of the Peppers. Throw the cobwebs from your eyes, woman, and spread your washing proper. It's well I know your sort of slop. Ireland sober is Ireland stiff. Your prayers. Were you lifting your elbow, tell us, glazy cheeks, in Conway's Carrigacurra canteen? Was I what, hobbledyhips? Amn't I up since the damp dawn with Corrigan's pulse and varicose veins, soaking and bleaching boiler rags, and sweating cold, a widow like me, for to deck my tennis champion son, the laundryman with the lavender flannels? You won your limpopo limp from the husky hussars when Collars and Cuffs was heir to the town and your slur gave the stink to Carlow. Holy Scamander, I saw it again! Near the golden falls. Icis on us! Seints of light! There! Subdue your noise, you poor creature! What is it but a blackburry growth or the dwyergray ass them four old codgers owns. Are you meanam Tarpey and Lyons and Gregory? I mean now, thank all, the four of them,

Image 4 - Work in Progress had to be translated into "Basic English". Original Text, Transition Magazine, p. 136.

BASIC ENGLISH

WELL ARE YOU CONSCIOUS, OR HAVEN'T YOU KNOWLEDGE, OR HAVEN'T I SAID it, that every story has an ending and that's the he and the she of it. Look, look, the dark is coming. My branches high are taking root. And my cold seat's gone grey. *Viel Uhr? Filou!* What time is it? It's getting late.

How far the day when I or anyone last saw Waterhouse's clock! They took it to pieces, so they said. When will they put it together again? O, my back, my back, my back! I would go then to Aix-les-Pains. Ping pong! That's the bell for Saehselâte - And Concepta de Spiritu - Pang! Take the water out of your cloths! Out with the old, and in the new! Godavari keep off the rains! And give us support! So be. Will we put them here now? Yes, we will. Flip! Put out yours on your side there and here I'll do the same. Flap! It's what I'm doing. Place! It's turning cold. The wind gets high. I'll put some stones on the hotel linen. But that it came from a married bed it would be watered and folded only. And I'll put my meatman's garment here. There's fat on it still. The road boys will all go past. Six undergarments, ten face cloths, nine to put by the fire, and this for the cold, the church house sisters' linens twelve, one baby's overall.

Mother Joseph might give it away, she said. Whose head? Other ways? *Deo Grattas!* Where now is all her family, say? In the land of the dead or power to come or their great name for ever and ever? All have livings! All is well! Some here, more no more, more again in a strange land. They say that same girl of the Shannons was married into a family in Spain. And all the Dunders de Dunnes in Markland's Wineland, the other side of the water, take number nine in American hats. And that threaded ball so loved by Biddy went jumping till it came to rest by religion's order yesterday night with a waxlight and a flower of gold in a side branch of a wide drain of a man's-friend-in-need off Bachelor's Walk. But all there is now for the last of the Meaghers in the round of the years before and between is one knee-ornament and two hooks in the front. Do you say that now? Truly I do. May Earth give peace to their hearts and minds. *Ussa, Ulla*, we're all of us shades. Why, haven't they said it a number of times, over and over, again and again? They did, they did. I've need, I've need! It's that soft material I've put in my ears. It almost makes the least sound quiet. *Oronoko!* What's your trouble? Is that great Finn the ruler himself in his coat-of-war on the high stone horse there before Hengist? Father of Waters, it is himself! Over there! Is it that? On Fallareen Common? You've Astley's theatre now in your head, where you were making your sugar-stick mouths at poor Death-white, the horse of the Peppers, till police put a top to your doings. Take that spider's mist off from your eyes, woman, and put out your washing squarely. I've had enough to do with your sort of cheap work. Flap! Ireland dry is Ireland stiff. May yours be helped, Mary, for you're fullest among women, but the weight is with me! Alas! It seemed so! Madame Angot! Were you lifting your glass then, say Mrs. Redface, in Conway's beerhouse at Carrigacurra? Was I what, loose-in-the-back? Flop! Your tail walk's Graeco-Roman but your back parts are out of the straight. Haven't I been up from the wet early morning, Martha Mary Alacoque, with Corrigan's trouble and my blood-vessels thick, my wheel-rod smashed, Alice Jane at her last, and my dog with one eye two times overturned, wetting engine cloths and making them white, now heated by turns and then again cold, I a woman whose man is no more, that my sporting son may go well-dressed, the washerman with the

Image 5 - Basic English version, Transition Magazine, p. 137.

IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM: CAMPBELL AND JOYCE MERGED

2.1. Finnegans' origin and his comparison with Fionn

Initially, Joseph Campbell feels that is important for us to understand the title³¹ of the book, *Finnegans Wake*. It refers directly to a famous Irish story about a hod-carrier named Tim Finnegan. He is normally working when, carrying hods through a ladder, he accidentally falls, breaks his skull and is thought to be dead. After, his friends bring him to his house where they mourn and celebrate his wake at the same time. A gallon of whiskey is placed at his feet and a barrel of Porter, at his head. His friends get drunk, and throw some liquor at Tim's face, waking him up to celebrate with them – the same whiskey that killed Finnegan, now resuscitates him. In the end, just the title gives us, briefly, of course, the whole plot and purpose of the fiction: this idea of life's circularity and the idea of reincarnation.

Additionally, Joseph Campbell starts his Skeleton explaining that the book is surrounded by this idea of fall, resurrection, universality, full of riddles, circular ideas, dream setting and night language, all to create this atmosphere of the unknown that is the bedtime. This intention is very clear since the title until the first pages. For instance, Tim Finnegan's fall and awaken can be directly linked, both by name and history, with Finn MacCool – according to Campbell, that was a choice that Joyce made to typify the monomyth, the universal hero. It is Finn coming again (Finn-again, or Finn-a-gain, Finn among us): this is what gives hope to mankind. Tim's fall (every fall in History) breaks the Cosmic Egg, but it is cooked and fed to people³². The various fallings caused the liberation of energy that keeps the universe spinning cyclically (Vico). Therefore, this is why the connection between Finnegans and Finn is so important. The Tim's Wake and the Finn's Wake (Reincarnation) are both events that make History repeat itself, and these occurrences offer energy for the spiral that results on the coronation of HCE as a new hero (which will be discussed further in this monograph).

Campbell, in his also brilliant, *Mythic Worlds, Modern Words: On the Art of James Joyce* (1993), illustrates one more aspect of Fionn: his influence in the Irish landscape. It was already demonstrated in the previous chapter that Mac Cumhaill and his Fianna indeed

³¹ Plato and Aristotle, amplified by Dewitt H. Park in *The Principles of Aesthetics* (1920), already proposed that the title of a fictional work should present an equilibrium of meaning and beauty. That is to say that a classic should provide in its title the whole plot, while developing it more completely from the title to the last line. Moreover, Joyce removes the apostrophe from the possessive in his title maybe because of the meaning he wants to convey to the construction. The author takes the Gaelic meaning of *Finn-a-gains*, which, according to MacKillop (1986), means "Finn among us" – the archetype of the universal human.

³² Campbell exemplifies this eating passage with the awake celebration for Tim Finnegan as well. They are all eating and celebrating with Tim in his bedside. The apostles commemorate with Christ his life and sacrifice with food and wine (his flesh and blood, the Eucharist).

influenced the nomenclature of various places in Ireland, but Joyce takes into a different level of understanding³³. By having Heinrich Zimmer's version of the myth as a standard, considering Fionn to share Nordic origins, the author had the liberty to associate the state of sleeping of the hero with the landscape of Dublin, which, for a lot of scholars, is a primal mistake for someone who understands the veracity of each mythological document. For the author, the legend's body composes the Howth Head as its top, the Phoenix Park as its feet, and the River Liffey crosses by his side³⁴. Even though its historical and geographical inaccuracy, the imagery that Joyce constructs through a giant's body composing a landscape is powerful and meaningful: Fionn Mac Cumhaill composes Ireland in every aspect; thus, rescuing him from sleep might help in the recovery of the culture, the politics, and the mind of Irish folk.

2.2 HCE and ALP: a new generation of heroes

Tim Finnegan falls from the ladder, humanity falls because of the Original Sin; Finn MacCool rises from his sleep to guard Ireland, Christ dies and resurrects to clean the Sin from the world³⁵; Finnegan wakes to celebrate life with his comrades. Where do Humpty Dumpty/Here Comes Everybody/HCE and Anna Livia Plurabelle/ALP function in this cycle of fall and wake? The answer can be found in *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944). As we have already seen, HCE is a reincarnation of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, the type Joyce chooses to represent the monomyth of the hero. If we analyze it closely, all the heroes in all mythologies and specially in the *Wake*, represent a father/warrior/protector figure. While their spouses are the mother/fertile/creational figure. Thus, male myths can be described as an archetype of masculinity, while the divine females, an archetype of femininity. The family, then, composed by HCE, ALP, Shem, Shaun and Issy, is all made by individual archetypes and by the collective one. Campbell describes the *Wake*'s family as the universal family, with all the stereotypical and historical characteristics that composed and will compose the soul of every human union in the History of the world.

³³ MacKillop, Atherton, Dirce, T.F. O'Rahilly, and Campbell (in the *Skeleton*) all seem to perceive this aspect equally, which signs the importance of this symbol in *Finnegans Wake*.

³⁴ This was convenient for the narrative, since it uses the imagery of the mother river (ALP as the Liffey), being a support for HCE, who is a reincarnation of that rocky body of Fionn/Tim.

³⁵ Already discussed, *Finnegans Wake* is a representation of human history, of night and of dreams. Campbell used to say that the universality is the main term that should describe the work. J.S. Atherton, while trying to discover who the dreamer is in the novel (i.e. HCE, ALP, Shem, Shaun, Tim Finnegan, Finn, etc.), reaches a ubiquitous conclusion, following the steps of the Jungian concept of collective conscience: the dreamer is the universal mind. Turning to Joseph Campbell again, the archetype of the human in the *Wake* is universal. Joyce is telling the story of every family there has ever been since Adam and Eve.

While reading the novel, we perceive more and more similarities between all those symbols of fall, resurrection, redemption, etc. For example, HCE is accused of committing a terrible crime of decency (analog to the Original Sin). Although there are many witnesses that tell different versions of the offense, the unanimous fact is that Earwicker performed a sexual obscenity³⁶, maybe referred to his own daughter, Issy, or to some women in Dublin's streets. Yet, more signs are offered by Joyce on these passages. There are twelve people are in the jury that will depose against HCE. Comparatively, twelve friends are gathered in Tim Finnegan's celebrity. Also, Christ had twelve apostles. Additionally, there are four old judges in Dublin who remember and rehearse the anecdotes of old times. Similarly, there are Four Master Annalists of Ireland, Four Evangelists, Four Viconian ages, etc.: the theme of sacred and profane is biblically gathered in *Finnegans Wake*.

Connecting it all with Fionn (usually understood as a kind of titan in Irish Mythology), Campbell (1944) demonstrates the great against the small polarity: "Worm before God and giant among men, he is a living, aching arena of cosmic dissonance, tortured by all the cuts thrusts of guilt and conscience". To reinforce, all landmarks in the *Wake* have allegorical meanings: "We are introduced at once to Howth Castle, Phoenix Park, the River Liffey, Wellington Monument, Guinness's Brewery, and other important landmarks, all of which have allegorical significance". The Phoenix Park, where *Here Comes Everybody* is said to have sinned, is "reminiscent of the Garden of Eden", and "the product of Guinness's Brewery is the magic elixir of life, the immortal drink of heroes and gods".

Furthermore, Earwicker is a citizen of Dublin. However, after his obscenity, he is considered an intruder, a usurper: again, another type – "[HCE] typifies all the invaders who have overrun Ireland". Moreover, Humpty Dumpty is the image of the great father, but we shall make a connection stressed by MacKillop (1986) and Campbell (1944) of the old man/young girl motif. Fionn Mac Cumhaill, for example, participates in the story *The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne*. The leader of the Fianna was promised for the daughter of the High King of Ireland, Cormac mac Airt, the beautiful Gráinne, but when she finds out that her lover was older than her father, decides to stick with Diarmuid, one of the soldiers and friends of Fionn. He was known for being irresistible for disposing of a "love spot" in his forehead. The story ends, in one version, when Diarmuid joins the Fianna in a boar hunt³⁷. He is attacked and seriously injured by the boar. Finn had the power to heal his comrade just by giving him water with his

³⁶ Described by MacKillop (1986) as a practice of incestuous public masturbation, or voyeurism related to a random couple, or three random girls at Phoenix Park.

³⁷ He had a foretold tale that he was going to be killed by a boar.

hands, but he intentionally lets the water slip through his fingers twice. In the third attempt, Oscar, his grandson, threatens him with violence to help Diarmuid. However, it was too late. When Finn arrives with the water from the well, his warrior is already dead. This story is analog to *Mark, Tristan and Iseult* and HCE and Issy.

One final thought pertinent to this work, which is related to the reincarnation motif, regarding HCE is his “death” and resurrection. During the trial and investigations, in the end of the *Book II*, right until the middle of the *Book IV*, HCE falls into a deep sleep, like the giant (Finn) who sleeps beneath Phoenix Park and Howth’s Head, while Shaun takes control of the narrative. Yet, Humpty Dumpty still defends himself from the Four Judges in a dream-like whisper. On *Book IV*, he is reborn in the image of the gracious all-father figure in Easter. However, this time is different: the identities of parents and sons are merged and confused into one; the past becomes the present and the future; ALP again becomes the River Liffey, draining into the sea and restarting the whole cycle of History.

Anna Livia Plurabelle has a minor direct connection with Fionn, besides the feminine presence of his wives throughout mythology, but she is essential in the narrative. ALP³⁸ represents the River Liffey, a great provider of life (fertility), health (care) and recreation (infancy) for Dubliners. For Campbell (1944), “Just as Earwicker is metamorphosed into Adam, Noah, Lord Nelson, a mountain, or a tree, so ALP becomes by subtle transposition, Eve, Isis³⁹, Iseult, a passing cloud, a flowing stream”. Anna is “a river, always changing yet ever the same, the Heraclitean flux which bears all life on its current”. An interesting episode, highlighted by Dirce Waltrick (2009) in her chapter about *The thematic elements of “Anna Liffey”*, is when washerwomen⁴⁰ are washing clothes in the River. This represents a strong symbol, because it happens right after the Original Sin, when humanity conquered pudor, and, thus, started to wear clothes. Here, the Liffey (ALP) and the activity of this women are considered dirty in all senses, including the unholy, the malicious and the deceitful act of eating the forbidden fruit.

Their symbolism goes further: the two washerwomen can be related to the intrinsic duality there is in every human, who Shem and Shaun equally represent. In the end, both the brothers and the washers turn into a rock (Shaun) – inanimate being, lifeless, permanent, unable

³⁸ Curiosity: Kate, the Earwickers’ maid, is a representation of her in old age.

³⁹ This reminder can equally evoke a relation with Fionn mac Cumhaill. Isis was the wife of Osiris, an Egyptian divinity whose throne was usurped by his brother, Set. Furthermore, Set also dismembers the god’s body and throw it into the river, or, in some versions, in the reeds. Isis is responsible for gathering the parts and for resuscitating Osiris. Besides the direct relation of the body composing the landscape of Egypt (Ireland, in the case of Fionn), now Osiris was the king of the underworld and represented a cyclic day/night archetype, which fits perfectly in *Finnegans Wake*.

⁴⁰ Being surrounded by sin and confusion, these washerwomen are usually associated with mythical figures, such as the Three Weird Sisters from *Macbeth*, or the two gravediggers from *Hamlet* (WALTRICK, 2009).

to modifying itself, thus, slave of its condition, unaltered; and into a tree (Shem) – animate being, full of life, with the ability to grow and alter itself. The signs of the tree and the rock portray the most present theme in the book: life and death (WALTRICK, 2009).

FIONN'S CYCLIC PAST AND FUTURE IN IRELAND

From all the authors and texts we have seen so far, we might conclude that mythology is a collective social construct that contains universal/archetypical truths of humans' psychology, behavior, sociology and culture. As a consequence, myths are not an artifact dead in stone. Following the symbology of *Finnegans Wake*, the myths are trees – alive, independent and able to grow. They are pictures taken by each writer, scholar and reader of an evermoving world whose creatures are dying and being reborn every day. Therefore, studying the myths of old is essential to bring further understanding on the new myths we create, or try to.

The Fenian Cycle, leaded by the figure of Fionn mac Cumhaill, helps us understand the development of culture and faith in Irish society. The cyclic motif has perdured from primitive agricultural conglomerates until the modern Dublin streets with James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, etc. Finn still awakes with his Fianna to fight for Ireland when it needs him. Like the partnership between the River Liffey and the soil of the country, the creativity and the myth feed each other, clean each other and renew each other.

CONCLUSION

This monograph intended to perform a comparative analysis between the myth of Finn MacCool and the great masterpiece of James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*. Of course, due to the dimensions that this type of work demand, a lot of information was left out to others to fulfill. However, the research reached a happy and satisfactory final objective, since it discovered main topics and relations between mythology and English Literature.

The progress towards inner and outer truths continues in and out of mythology, and, as my reading suggests, this was James Joyces's struggle: to make his readers think about History, signs, symbols, cycles, life, death, and the novelty of every aspect of human life. Creativity will always live alongside humans, and alongside life itself. Thus, let us reaffirm this partnership, embrace our myths and be reborn into new minds every day.

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