

\ FALLS /

Version 3.5.

What I begin hereof is to be a parallel analysis of two works, James Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" (1939)¹ and Peter Greenaway's "The Falls" (1980)², concentrating on a handful of features. The endeavour has a primary and a secondary objective. The primary objective is to present similar structures within the two corpuses and specifically the two artworks, while the secondary objective is to suggest an underlying structure which is called the Daedalian type of artwork. In this respect my procedure proceeds according to a structuralist logic, looking for a deep structure by comparing features of superficial structures.

Naturally, a scholarly analysis of these works – especially one with such ample philological requirements as the this paper – faces the same questions that the artists themselves had faced: the problem of organising material. Therefore, my intention is to trust myself to the inventions of these artificers, and adopt a similar framework to the paper as the works themselves have. Accordingly, *the list* shall be the principal means of organisation in the present paper.³

The features I have found are twofold: most of them concern solely the artwork itself, while some concern themselves with the position of the artwork in the corpus. I shall begin with the latter, and move on to the former, with (3.) occupying the liminal positional between the two categories. Initially, a brief description of all features provides some orientation, serving as a sketch of the paper:

(1.) Liminal: occupies a peripheral position in the chronology of the corpus.

(2.) Original: so it can serve as the origin and inspiration, or a summary and synthesis for all the other works of the corpus.

(3.) Mythological: creates a personal mythology that opens up the possibility of the other works to indulge in a fertile multilogue that knits the corpus close together.

(4.) Fallical: its original sin is to steal the idea of the Fall from Judeo-Christian and Greek mythology,

(5.) Spiral: which results in a narrative structure that tells the same story again and again with various variations,

(6.) Proteagonistic: with the protagonists changing shape all the time, preserving a rule in their names,

(7.) Sublime: so that the whole work grows into a bulky and incomprehensibly monstrous monster.

(.) Synthesis: These two monsters have these attributes in common, therefore belong to the same breed.

Note: subsections (j.) for Joyce and (g.) for Greenaway explore the theme of the given section from the point of view of a single author.

* * *

(1.) Liminal

The liminal position of the works in focus is discussed in this section, followed by an elaboration on the importance of the liminal position.

(j.)

"Finnegans Wake" is the last work of James Joyce. It is his last will which helps him evade the end by a "*commodius vicus of recirculation*"⁴. A cunning tool to cheat death by a grim game of words: even though his life was destined to come to an end, – he couldn't even read when he finished the Wake – he fashioned his corpus to be endless, entering a vicious circle just after the moment in which we thought to have read his last published words. It is dubbed the "Book of Night" by Joyce himself⁵, as opposed to the "Book of Day", his previous novel "Ulysses"⁶, which encompassed a full day, tracing various characters. At the end of this latter work, Molly Bloom falls asleep, dreaming of the day when he got his husband Leopold Bloom to propose to her. "Finnegans Wake" thus completes and complements "Ulysses" in various ways. Besides representing a dream to supplement the day in order to form a whole day; it is also the feminine book opposed to the male book; the subconscious book as opposed to the conscious book; the collective book in opposition with the subjective book; the history of humankind opposing the history of an individual. A similar logic a complementicity draws through the whole of his (prose) works, and there are good arguments to show how "The Dubliners"⁷ offers an introduction to "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"⁸ and how "Ulysses" is really a sequel to the former book. On the other hand, there are various motives which connect "Ulysses" with the previous pieces of Joyce's prose, but for reasons of brevity they are not explicated here. All in all, it follows

from these arguments that "Finnegans Wake" is not merely chronologically but theoretically the last work. It completes a course of logical development, just like its text: completing a circle, finishing a labyrinth that closes in on itself and could only possibly be entangled by its own creator, Dead/alus, who is dead.

(g.)

The liminal position of "The Falls" is not so evident in Greenaway's oeuvre. It would be curious indeed to argue that it is his first film, as both his critiques and himself agree in that his early short films show a fully accomplished artist. On the other hand, one can attempt to establish "The Falls" as his first feature film. However, even such an approach would be met with serious obstacles. It is true that "The Falls" is the first Peter Greenaway film to run over an hour. On the other hand, it is not a typical feature film with its span of 185 minutes. Furthermore, it is made up of 92 brief biographies in a structuro-mythical framework, with practically no dialogue. Additionally, it has never reached the audiences of corporate international film distribution. These features cast doubt on its status as the first feature film. The best position to assume in the controversy is to acknowledge the awkwardness of the film and grant it a liminal position between Greenaway's early short films and later feature films. After all, when he signed the contract with David Payne to produce his first undoubtable feature film and commercial success, "The Draughtsman's Contract"⁹, it was on condition that this time he had characters speaking to each other.¹⁰ In his subsequent feature films this requirement was thoroughly observed, again underpinning the claim that "The Falls" is nor his last short film of the era, nor his first feature film, but the very film that constitutes the border between two periods.

The border situation is one of the best for observation. Every border is either a beginning

or an end, an origin or a goal. Balázs Béla - in agreement with the later Heidegger – claims in his "Death Aesthetics"¹¹ that we can only properly survey the island of life if the foam of death is at our heels. The liminal position of these works – "Finnegans Wake" as the last work, and "The Falls" as the borderline between two periods of the artist – grants them a special place of subsumation and reflection which can pull into perspective the whole of the corpus, past, present and future.¹²

Looking back from the threshold, it is possible to reflect upon the works of the corpus. Originality (2.), the next section, explicates how that is done.

(2.) Original¹³

Indeed, it seems that all the guiding principles and seminal ideas of the two corpuses are gathered into these artworks. All styles, methods, protagonists and stories which determine the workings of these two minds are here at once, in focus. "The Falls" is the most personal of Greenaway's lists, in which he collects all the things in the world that are of interest to his intellect, much like Sei-Sonagon does in "The Pillow Book"¹⁴. On the other hand, as Joyce has described all of Dublin based on a day of Leopold Bloom, so could a keen intellect describe Joyce's oeuvre from "Finnegans Wake". Perhaps, as "Ulysses" was allegedly written to be a handbook to reconstruct Dublin after a supposed catastrophe, "Finnegans Wake" could be a handbook to reconstruct the Joyce corpus if all but this book would be lost.¹⁵

Naturally, proving such a point satisfactorily would mean to execute just that work mentioned above, so that instead of an essay of thirtysome pages I would have to face the challenge of writing an all-encompassing book on both of my authors from the single

perspectives of the Falls (which is how I intend to refer to both "Finnegans Wake" and "The Falls" at the same time). Dodging the bulky philological investigations for the time being, a handful of examples will suffice to underpin my claim.

(j.)

On the most concrete level there are episodes and motifs that recur in "Finnegans Wake" from the other novels. The first hundred pages of the "Annotations to Finnegans Wake" by Roland McHugh¹⁶ lists five references to "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" and seventeen to "Ulysses". The latter include the explanation of the pair of sentences on the top of page 100 – amidst one of the frequent war descriptions, this time mostly the Anglo-Saxon invasion triggered by Tiernan O'Rourke's wife's adultery. "*The last! The last!*" is claimed to refer to "*Thalatta! Thalatta!*", said by Buck Mulligan on the opening pages of "Ulysses", echoing the cry of Xenophone's Ten Thousand when they reached the sea. The Greek expedition to Persia won a battle at Babylon, but their leaders were captured and executed. Xenophone was elected as the new commander, who subsequently led the army North to the Black Sea. The sight of the Black Sea for these warriors was akin to Ulysses' sigh on glimpsing the shores of Ithaca. The exclamation (Greek "*Sea! Sea!*") became a synonym of "*At last!*", on occasion of accomplishing a mission.

One of the most recurring scenes in Joyce's works is the time he spent with his future wife at Howth Head, a wild hill on the edge of Dublin Bay. While they were lying in each others' arms, a female goat walked by. It seems that the significance of this experience was to emphasize the idyllic nature around them, the innocence of the scene despite its heavily sexual content, and their solitude and consequent safety from intruders. The scene is featured in both "Ulysses" and "Finnegans Wake". In Ulysses:

"She lay still. A goat. No-one. High on Ben Howth rhododendrons a nannygoat walking surefooted, dropping currants. Screened under ferns she laughed warmfolded."

[U]¹⁷

In "Finnegans Wake", the couple is divided by a bulk of pages, and the scene is generally used to connote a playful happiness:

"Arrah, sure, we all love little Anny Ruiny, or, we mean to say, lovelittle Anna Rayiny, when unda her brella, mid piddle med puddle, she ninnygoes nannygoes nancing by. Yoh!"¹⁸

"And that bag belly is the buck to goat it! Meggeg, m'gay chapjappy fellow,"¹⁹

Of course the spider-threads that entangle the Joycean corpus with the "Wake" as the (epi) center do not end simply in intertextual intricacies. There are distinct topics and peculiar connections that are discovered all through the writing of the oeuvre and find their most complete form in the last work. A sheaf of those are collected here, along with one or two fitting examples.

Not surprisingly, the same points of interest are to be found in the works of Peter Greenaway as well, and thus it is natural that a similar system of explication shall be utilised in the next subsection (g.). However, if that is the case, then a few words should be shed about a claim that is implicit in such a method. It has been suggested that there are some peculiar similarities between the two works presently considered. It has also been suggested that the two works form the focal points of their respective oeuvres. If the two works are similar, and each work could stand for all the works of the author, then the claim

is already implicitly made that the two corpses are each alike. I explicitly refrain from such a position, and rather say that the textual streams find a fortunate point of intersection here, and at other points exploring their similar topics from a different perspective. Let us part from these apologies, and head on to explore that crossroad.

FALL/ICARUS

Stephen Dedalus has been at least one of the protagonists of all the Joyce novels. "*What's in a name?*" [U] asks him three times in "Ulysses", referring both to Shakespeare and his own suspected first poem, written in "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man":

*"Stephen Dedalus is my name,
Ireland is my nation.
Clongowes is my dwellingplace
And heaven my expectation."* [P.255]

Great expectations which are reflected in Ulysses:

*"Fabulous artificer. The hawklike man. You flew. Whereto?
Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus."* [U]

Then, Stephen "Icarus" Daedalus is lost in the rolling sea of the text of the "Wake", or in Adaline Glasheen's words, "*Daedalus is hidden cunningly all over FW, and will be but slowly unraveled*".²⁰ One of the relevant surfacings, however, is this:

"a word as cunningly hidden in its maze [French dédale] of confused drapery..."
[FW.120:4-5]

NAMES/PROTEANGONISTS

Proteangonists is a compound of "protagonist" and "protean", to designate a protagonist that is always changing but always the same. It is readily accepted in scholarly circles that "Finnegans Wake" has two proteangonists, HCE and ALP, who constantly manifest in different avatars like Here Comes Everybody and Anna Livia Plurabelle.

However, this diffusive tendency of the main characters in the works of Joyce can be found as early as the "Dubliners", which is a collection of short stories about different Dublin people. Joyce's first novel ("The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man") is a novel of development, where the young Stephen Dedalus is pictured in 5 chapters in 5 different stations of his youth, with clear caesura between chapters and without any linking devices.²¹ Next, the narration of "Ulysses" is notorious in losing track of the principal characters and hectically replacing them with minor characters or even total strangers. And then comes the name-game of "Finnegans Wake", which has been mentioned above.

PLACES/EPICENTRES

James Joyce has never written a line of prose that takes place outside Dirty Ol' Dublin Town. "Dubliners" takes up the topic exclusively, the "Portrait" is so autobiographical that it could not take place elsewhere, and even "Ulysses" wanders in the Irish city. Finnegans Wake can also be read as a Dublin story, beginning at Howth Castle and Environs, and "*dublin (...) all the time*"²² [FW.3:8-9].

WATER/WOMEN

Just as "Finnegans Wake", "Ulysses" starts on the Dublin seashore, where the sea is personified as a women, and specifically a mother. Mulligan calls out to Steven:

"Isn't the sea what Algy calls it: a grey sweet mother? (...) She is our grey sweet mother. Come and look." [U.3]

Then, at the end of the novel the principal female character, Molly Bloom falls asleep, which triggers "Finnegans Wake", a dream, as described above in section (1.). During the course of the novel ALP is identified with the river Liffey and with various other fluents.

STYLE/CONTEXT

Voluminous volumes are written on Joyce's style, it would be impossible to do justice to such a general topic in the space of a subheading of a subsection (under (2.g.)). However, not least for the parallelism with Greenaway's work, it is worth placing a note here. Joyce has two kinds of peculiar styles, which accompany him from his first endeavours to his last will. One is the symbolist-aestheticist's brooding semi-romantic style which is so hard to characterize. The other which concerns me here is a certain context-sensitive meta-style. In "Dubliners", this only effects to voice the talk of Dublinfolk, in the "Portrait" it is used cunningly to show forth the lingual development of the boy artist, and in "Ulysses" it is an accordance with the theme of the given chapter as layed out in the diagram of Stuart Gilbert.²³ One could argue that in "Finnegans Wake" the monster turns against its creator, and surely the context-sensitive meta-style goes beyond mere language here, choosing the right words from the wrong languages, at least if we would like to stick to the claim that we are dealing with an English novel.

(g.)

"The Falls" of Peter Greenaway incorporates ideas from earlier short films and serves as a brainstorm buffer for later projects. For example, his alter-ego Tulse Luper, who is the title

hero of his trilogy-in-the-making, makes a (dis)appearance in the movie, on the usual meta-level. He is not only a mysterious archivist of the VUE Commision (the organisation handling the biographies of the film), but also credited as "*Production Advisor*". His role as behind-the-scenes protagonist is evident in many of the short films, and at the present day he is Greenaway's principal metaphor. Other characters with a future history include the Cissie Colpitts, three women with the same name but with differing ages, who will become the protagonists of "Drowning by Numbers"²⁴. The opening scene of a later feature film, "Zed and Two Noughts"²⁵ is also worked out here as one of the biographies.

In order to present an ordinate account of the originality of the film, it is best to select some general themes which provide a framework for the overview of the corpus and the place of "The Falls" within.

FALL/ICARUS

During the whole course of Greenaway's oeuvre, there is a steady level of fascination with the story of Icarus and Daedalus. Apart from the film in focus, Greenaway curated an exhibition entitled "Flying Over Water"²⁶ in Barcelona. Then, investigating the end of Icarus he directed a short film called "Death in the Seine", and the feature "Drowning by Numbers", the latter accompanied by a reflective book²⁷, "Fear of Drowning"²⁸. "Death in the Seine"²⁹ is based on the documents about the people killed into the Seine during the French Revolution, while the latter film explores death by drowning through a series of games between which the three Cissie Colpitts successively drown their husbands.

NAMES/PROTEANGONISTS

The same Cissie Colpitts are prime examples of the use of proteangonists after "The Falls". They are three women: one young, one middle-aged, one old. Although there are some

familial bonds between them, they are not simply a daughter-mother-grandmother configuration. Their numbers and the fact that they decide on the life/death of all the main men characters in the film, killing them effortlessly once they decide to do so associate them with the three witches in "Macbeth" or the three Moiras of Greek mythology. By all means, their identical names have a certain effect of abstraction, as if they would not be mere characters, but stand for something more general like womanhood.

Their male counterparts are the Ariels in "Prospero's Books", an adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Tempest". Three Ariels are in the film, sometimes performing the role of Ariel together, sometimes individually. Thus Ariel are a boy, a man, and an older.

The concept that there is a web of intricate relationships in work under the partial or complete identity of people's names is worked out in "The Falls". However, in one of the earliest short films, "Dear Phone"³⁰, Greenaway employs a similar technique, the development of the idea reaches its full extent here. The list of 92 VUE victims whose family names begin with the letters "FALL" include lovers, sisters, brothers, husbands and wives, whose relationship to each other is not always clear.

PLACES/EPICENTRES

One of the subtexts of "The Falls", or one aspect of VUE research is the investigation of VUE epicentres. There are three possible epicentres mentioned in the film, a small town in Wales, the Lleyn Peninsula and the Boulder Orchard. The latter is most interesting, as its history can be (more or less) reconstructed from the various biographies, forming a sub-subtext. Of course, the history of the Boulder Orchard is a metaphor bearing on the general thrust of the whole film.

In the subsequent film of Greenaway, "The Draughtsman's Contract", the imagery of the garden becomes central, the history of the garden, however, sustains the same status as in "The Falls". Additionally, all the two films focus on the garden's owner, and its transition of ownership.

BABEL/LANGUAGES

Perhaps "The Falls" is the first of Greenaway's creations that address the questions of different languages. As it is declared in the opening credits, the Doomsday Catalogue is presented in 92 different languages. Most of these are special languages that VUE victims tend to develop along with other symptoms. Each language is especially suitable for a single purpose, and some of them require modifications of the vocal cavity to be spoken. They also have their own peculiar world view. There are some dramatic examples in the biographies of the collision of different languages and their connotations.

In the feature films there are more instances of language conflicts. In "Eight and a Half Women", the great project of son and father of filling the empty house with luxury whores has to end because of the translator girl Kito, who exploits her knowledge of languages to weave a plot unawares in the communistic community. On the other hand, in "The Pillow Book", Nagiko, a young Japanese calligraphist/writer/lover acquires freedom and maturity by learning Chinese, her mother's language. Moreover, her lover will win her because he is a translator with the knowledge of a dozen languages.

WATER/WOMEN

It would need a survey conducted with mathematical tools to undoubtedly prove the point in "The Falls", but at this stage an ample enough impression is sufficient to prove that women and water are intimately related in "The Falls" and in most Peter Greenaway films as well. This mysterious relationship is articulated spacially, and in its extreme form manifests itself in the women's power over life and death, a malignant power which they

practice on men.

Aptesia Fallarme is the waterwoman in "The Falls".

"She could fill a warm porcelain bath in twenty minutes, a warm tin bath took a little longer. To fill a cold tin bath in less than an hour needed other inducements, like a view of the sea, a cow being milked, or the sound of a waterfall."³¹

However, she means no harm to anyone, as none of the characters in the film. Curiously, death in its widest meaning is absent from all of the 92 biographies. Indeed, most VUE victims achieve immortality after the event.

However,

"Ashile Fallko, like Jean-Paul Marais, died in his bath."³²

Which might mean that water still is deadly to men. The scene is a reflection on David's "Death of Marais", the most quoted painting in Greenaway films.

In "The Belly of an Architect"³³, his wife tells Cracklite that she dates another man, a bleak scene of humiliation, which he suffers sitting in a bath. The Architect's mortal stomach disease results from poisoning (carried out by his wife, her lover, or by the two together) or perhaps nerve irritation over his relationship with her wife. By the way, the David painting is connoted here too.

In "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover"³⁴, the first scene of cuckoldry takes place in the ladies room, the last recess of the Wife, a place of obvious watery association.

In "Drowning by Numbers", whenever a man ventures into water, he is bound to be drown by one of the Cissie Colpitts. Additionally, it is worth noting that all the three can swim, as

opposed to the men. Again, the Marais motive features as well: the first man is murdered in a bath.

In the trailer of "The Pillow Book", half of the time Nagiko appears on the screen, she is bathing or somehow associated with water.

In "Eight and a Half Women"³⁵ all things – let it be token-money or a man-imitator girl – are lost and dead which make contact with water. All these events are signs of doom, meaning that the artificial paradise of the father and son is bound to come to an end. The conspirators who arrive after the first death will use it as a tool to unleash a series of lawsuits which lead to the ultimate destruction of the project.

STRUCTURE/COUNT

The idea of using a count (to 92) instead of a narrative as a structuring device is also perfected in this movie, and this feature retains its prominence from the beginning up to the present day. "Goole by Numbers"³⁶ is just a *"a numerical journey through the quaint village of Goole"*³⁷ (1976), while "Drowning by Numbers" (1988) is a feature film where the same method of photographing 'found' numbers in succession punctuates the film. Interestingly, Greenaway now returned to the number 92 as the last digit of counting in the "The Tulse Luper Suitcases"³⁸ (2002-4) project, where the mystery revolves around 92 suitcases.

In fact, the whole idea of "The Tulse Luper Suitcases" concealing 92 wild whims and obfuscating oddities in 92 biographies or suitcases arises from "The Falls", as well as the novel notion of interactive images. The 1980 film was compiled to be a kind of lounge movie, suitable for parties or casual browsing with a video player, and not to be sit through the 3 hours and five minutes. On the other hand, the project under development builds on the idea of spreading a spiderweb of materials out in DVDs, computer games,

websites, TV serials and a movie trilogy, most of these intended to be absorbed as an encyclopedia or game.

(3.) Mythological

The latter section dealt with references in the Falls to other works of the corpus, and the current section considers references to the collective cultural heritage of Western (post) modernity. The references of the Original (2.) section open up the possibility to create an artwork that summarises a given writer's oeuvre, while the ones listed below make it possible to hack together a work from a motley of cultural references, communicating the artist's subjective perspective on his times.

An encyclopedia can attempt to represent an area of intellectual activity, but just as well serve as a point of origin. Both of the Falls have the right degree of vagueness and also the great stock of information to qualify as a compendium of personal mythology. Their means of organising are also alike the compendium, although "Finnegans Wake" is closer to the closely-knit narration of James Fraser's "Golden Bough"³⁹, while "The Falls" is divided into discrete sections. Moreover, the "The Falls" explicitly advertises itself as a compendium from a compendium, a documentary on a section of the VUE Commission's Directory (namely the section of items beginning with the letters FALL). In this respect "Finnegans Wake" can be read as a pre-encyclopedic compilation, while "The Falls" is more of post-encyclopediac modern database. On the other hand, it is worth noting that apart from the succession of numbers and the alphabetical order of names in the Greenaway film, both artworks are basically a linear flow of data without builtin index or search functions. The director's present project ("The Tulse Luper Suitcases") involves inherently indexed information in the form of websites and interactive DVDs. "Ulysses" had at least a hidden

key that was revealed by Joyce after the publication that gave a "skeleton" of the novel and a proper name for the chapters. This table was incorporated into later editions, and most editions adapted the titles of chapters, so that the key was integrated into the artwork. Interestingly, the revelation greatly influenced the reception and eventual success of the book; its undoubted acceptance as a work of genius was in a great part due to Joyce's willingness to supply an analysis to his own creation that 'scientifically' demonstrated the ingeniousness of the design, establishing it in the history of literature and sustaining interest. On the other hand, Greenaway is also an "energetic man, who likes talking about his work, which he does articulately, and fast, drawing on a wide range of cultural references"⁴⁰. He constantly challenges critics' charges of snobbish vagueness by giving diverse interpretations of his films, a different one each time he is asked, which are optionally contradictory. He does this with both interviewers and students. He is one of the teachers of Jean-Francoise Lyotard European Graduate School.⁴¹

Another characteristic of a work that defines a mythology: few read the original, but many encounter the inspired. How many people walk around in the city of Budapest amongst Hermeses and Apollons, Jesuses and Moseses on the buildings without having read either Homer or the "Bible"? It is similar with the Falls: few of Joyce's readers have the courage to take up the book of night, while few of Greenaway's fans have both the chance and the attitude to watch "The Falls". Even literally, when one watches the shorts "Tree"⁴² or even "Vertical Features Remake"⁴³, s/he may not be aware that some of the footage is incorporated into "The Falls".

As all mythologies, the personal mythologies of the Falls are like the walls of medieval cities: assembled from bits and pieces of previous walls, mined and carved by ancient civilisations. Both Joyce and Greenaway abounds in mythological and quasi-mythological references like Judeo-Christian and Greek mythology and the sensational and gossipy records of history.

(j.)

One instance of the latter is the Parnellite theme in "Finnegans Wake", which is almost omnipresent, forming a subtext for the whole novel. Parnell was the most popular Irish politician of the 1880s, dubbed by his supporter Timothy M. Healy "*the uncrowned King of Ireland*", and betrayed by him and the Irish people in the 1890s, following the scandal of cuckoldery which associated him with the wife of a political ally, Captain O'Shea. Eventually Parnell married the woman known as Kitty O'Shea, lost his political influence and died soon after from the shock. The day of his death came to be known as "Ivy Day" amongst the Irish.⁴⁴

Joyce's father was an ardent supporter of Parnell and his cause of Home Rule, and Joyce inherited his political passion. He wrote a poem for Parnell at age eight, and went on to immortalise his memory in poems and articles and incorporating him into his major works all throughout his life. The possibility of having a universal protagonist (HCE), a cuckold, allowed him for the first and last time to introduce his beloved figure as a principal character. "James Joyce A to Z" states that "*Adaline Glasheen's 'Third Census of Finnegans Wake find references to Parnell and to Joyce's earlier commentary on Parnell all throughout the narrative'*".⁴⁵ The most memorable line is said to be the following:

*"As hollyday in his house so was he priest and king to that: ulvy came, envy saw, ivy conquered. Lou! Lou! They have waved his green boughs o'er him as they have torn him limb from lamb. For his muertification and uxpiration and dumnation and annu- hulation."*⁴⁶

(g.)

Aptesia Fallarme in "The Falls" is obviously another embodiment of the various water and rain goddesses that can be found in virtually all mythologies. There are manifold purposes to suggest this. First, there is her miraculous special power to emit water from her body:

*"She could fill a warm porcelain bath in twenty minutes, a warm tin bath took a little longer. To fill a cold tin bath in less than an hour needed other inducements, like a view of the sea, a cow being milked, or the sound of a waterfall."*⁴⁷

Second, there is the power of the beholder to influence her output by what Fraser would call sympathetic magic. Thirdly, there is her status as a celebrity. Fourthly, there is the fact that for the purposes of representation in the VUE Commission's Doomsday Directory, *"she was persuaded to assume a pseudonymous identity"*, and she has chosen another idol, Tippi Hedren from Hitchcock's "Birds"⁴⁸. This latter fact finally qualifies her as a legend only represented in the artworks she has inspired, such as in Leo-dee-nine's novel "A Sea-Vue", or the pictures of the "well-known" photographer who lived with her for a time.

(4.) Fallical⁴⁹

Creating such a grandiose piece of art with a selection of (pop)cultural references suggests the figure of Daedalus, the great artificer who fashioned his designs by mending together each piece. However, the dangers involved in the realisation of the project invoke the fall of Icarus as well. These two figures are the two opposing faces of the artificer artist.

The most important inspiration for both Falls is the First Fall in the "Bible" and the Last Fall of Icarus from the "Metamorphoses"⁵⁰. Therefore, this section is divided into four further subsections, (a.)-(d.), dealing with Judeo-Christian "Finnegans Wake", Ancient Greek "Finnegans Wake", Judeo-Christian "The Falls", Ancient Greek "The Falls" references respectively.

(a.)

References to the Book of Genesis abound on the first page of "Finnegans Wake". The book begins at "Eve and Adam's". Later, the time is set as "not yet, but venissoon after, had a kidscad buttended a bland old isaac". The third paragraph begins with the Fall, and the thunderword of God:

*"The fall (bababadalgharaghtakamminarronkonnbronntonner-
ronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntooohoordenenthur-
nuk!) of a once wallstrait oldparr is retaled early in bed and later
on life down through all christian minstrelsy."⁵¹*

The last sentence of the paragraph sets the place as

"the park

where oranges have been laid to rust upon the green since dev-

*linsfirst loved livvy."*⁵²

That is, the Garden of Eden just after Lucifer has tempted Eve and she has committed the original sin and eaten from the apple of the knowledge of good and evil. As the story recurs again and again, the fall is repeated all the time in the book as one of the major metaphors.

(b.)

A character, who is a blend of Icarus and Deadalus, father and son, was born sometime before "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man". There are hundreds of references to support this, but just two will be necessary for the time being. The very family name of the protagonist (Joyce's alterego) is Stephen Dedalus. At the end of the novel we read his diary, in which he records the last days before flying from his homeland to faraway shores. The last entry runs thus: "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead."⁵³ Thus, Stephen - just having abandoned Christianity - chooses Deadalus for his patron saint.

In Ulysses, Stephen is already an established young man and an aspiring poet. However, he is fallen. He is in Dublin again, summoned home by the infamous telegram with the typo "NO~~T~~H~~E~~R DYING COME HOME FATHER"⁵⁴ . He thinks of himself:

"Fabulous artificer. The hawklike man. You flew. Whereto?"

Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus.

Pater, ait. Seabedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing be."⁵⁵

The title hero of "Finnegans Wake" is Tim Finnegan, from the American vaudeville song "Finnegan's Wake". He falls from a ladder intoxicated, but is resurrected at his wake by the event of accidentally being splashed by whiskey. He is a kind of Icarus. The Greek hero found his death in the sea, but on the other hand, the sea was named after him. In Joyce's work, it is common for a character with the same name to become a rock, a hill or a river. Icarus's fall then can be analysed as a mere transformation into another thing, in which the moment of transformation is the moment of death. Considering the title of the work featuring the original myth, "Metamorphoses", that sounds even more plausible.

However, there is a question that always comes up when dealing with Joyce's D(a)edaluses. Where are the Icaruses? If Daedalus is the patron saint of Joyce, than Icarus is his personal devil. "Talk of the devil and his is sure to appear."

(c.)

It would be curious indeed not to accept that the Fall is not a principal metaphor of "The Falls", where - just as well as in the novel - it occurs recurrently.

The very motive of the Violent Unknown Event is Biblical: the VUE comes as thunderstrike from the sky, for reasons unknown, to seemingly random people. It is as if they would be punished by God for the original sin, as a kind of miniature doomsday. In his short "Acts of God", Greenaway gathers incidents in the same tone. On the other hand, the VUE is not decidedly negative: it is rather the event of being chosen, but collectively as a people, as

God have chosen the Jews, but as an individual. Indeed, being a VUE victim can just as well be a blessing than a curse: one victim becomes world famous, while another suffers from vernim, all thanks to the VUE. Maybe, it has to do with their like or dislike of birds. For example, Thorper 'Castor' Fallcaster⁵⁶, a collector of bird-jokes was effected by the VUE in the following way: *"The VUE has changed the colour of Thorper's hair and had darkened his eyes. His pulse-rate had quickened and he began to speak a form of superior Vionester."* On the other hand, Appis (Arris) Fallabus, who owns a kite factory and flies *"a yellow stunt-kite to intimidate the birds who he blamed directly for his predicament, (...) is partially blind, sensitive to temperature-change and has poor circulation. Nightly he is obliged to lubricate himself with Spanish oil."* This contributes to the Responsibility of Birds theory. It seems that the bird is directly applied in the film as the allegory of God, which is not at all uncommon, given the conventional depiction of the Holy Spirit as a white dove. However, the notion of the interaction of people and birds brings us to Ovidius.

(d.)

Greenaway's long time fascination with the idea of flying, especially self-propelled personal flight, is continued in "The Falls". One of the recurring background characters is *"the patriotic airman who flew himself off the Eiffel Tower in 1909"*⁵⁷. Death-jumps are featured in an almost regular rhythmical pattern throughout the film, saying that hubris, while a deeply personal motive, is also a universal driving force of human endeavours. The hubris of Icarus, which has served distinct ideological and educational purposes in the Greek world is featured here as an object of fascination, without a clear-cut moral message. However, from the pathetic yet grand theme music, and the whole monumentality of the background suggests a sense of dignity in failure, mingled with the respect for authentic

human toil, be it however void. Like the nonperishing idea of revolution: no matter how many people die in the attempt to overcome the laws of gravity and challenge the gods, the historical venture will continue. The idea of flying, with an eye on self-propelled personal flight, is repeated throughout the film. Many characters play the game in their own peculiar ways, and different perspectives on the idea itself and on the (generally futile) attempts to realise it are presented. The best example indeed is the jump from the Eiffel tower, which is repeated three times in the film⁵⁸, in connection with the emerging historical doubts (whether it was really him, then and there). Considering the conclusion of section (c.), it would be feasible to suggest that the desire for flying is the human desire to become God, or at least to achieve freedom.

However, there are gleams of glory in the work. *"At an open-air concert at Phoenix, Arizona, Armeror Fallstag is reputed by his fans and promoters to have flown three hundred and ten meters, and they are not speaking metaphorically."*⁵⁹ Prevented from flying further, he comments in his interview:

"-Did you fly too near the sun?"

*"-No, my hero is Daedalus."*⁶⁰

(5.) Spiral

Due to their mythological approach, both works adapt a spiral structure of narrative. They tell the same story again, but with various variations, while the characters are also always changing but are always the same. There are a couple of central ideas, like those connected with Ikarus and Daedalus, that keep coming up again and again, and control the narratives. These motifs were treated in Fallical (4.), and similar ones in Mythological (3.). The

present section explicates how the small stories, fallical, mythological, fictional, come together to form a more or less coherent work of art.

Myths, as stories that occurred once in a stereotypical original past and recur time and time again through the whole of history have an inherent metaphysical narratological logic. However, modern and post-modern artworks do not by definition have the same metaphysical status that myth had in ancient times. Therefore, the cyclical narrative pattern not being available on the meta-level of the cultural context, they have to implement this metaphysical structure in the narrative itself. In plain English words this means that to achieve the same effect as ancient myths had, they have to adopt a spiral narrative structure.

(j.)

In *Finnegans Wake*, the whole of the book presents itself as a single narrative, with recurring tales that repeat themselves while introducing various variations. This is clearly the influence of Giambattista Vico, the Italian historian and philosopher, who had a peculiar theory about the spiral development of world history through three successive eras, with a fourth one to connect the cycles called "*ricorso*". This claim is very well established in Joycean literature. There is strong textual, hermeneutical and biographical evidence to support it. Firstly, the beginning half-sentence refers to this structure not only by being a half-sentence, but also textually:

*"riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend
of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to
Howth Castle and Environs."*⁶¹

This is the end of a "*Viconian recirculation*", a commodity of Vico, or in Joyce's words "*a commodius vicus of recirculation*". Joyce's first face-to-face encounter was in Trieste, 1912, when he moved to Via Bramante, which stems into Piazza Vico,⁶² where Vico's sculpture stood. Attentive to his environment, Joyce began to look at Vico at the time, later adopting the structure of "Finnegans Wake" to Vico's teachings.

(g.)

There are some structural tricks that provide coherency in the seemingly random list of biographies. As Greenaway himself states, the Directory is "*a collection of case-histories of nineteen million victims containing medical and linguistic details, brief biographical notes and perhaps some attempt to explain why the victim was a victim*". Answering these questions creates a rhythmic thought-pattern throughout the film. Furthermore, there is the emerging theory of the Responsibility of Birds, which takes shape from the clues in the various entries.

(6.) Proteagonistic

One very concrete example of the workings of the spiral structure in the novel are the names and persons of the characters. It is widely accepted that the Book of the Night has some archetypical proteagonists, namely HCE and ALP. However, obeying the law of Vico's history and Freud's dreamwork, they constantly change shape and appear in masks such as ALP the river and HCE the hill, Anna Livia Plurabelle and Here Comes Everybody, a diagram for ALP and Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker. Joyce sometimes does not even use roman letters to designate his heroes, but custom signs called "sigma" of his own devise. Additionally, this technique of introducing stability and fluidity to the novel is also

analysed as a reflection of Viconian doctrines.

Vico divided the evolution of man into three stages: (a.) the divine, (b.) the heroic and (c.) the human. These he formulated as types of society as (a.) theocracy, (b.) aristocratic government and (c.) democracy. He expanded the system into a theory of language development, with the three stages as (a.) divine (unarticulated) language, (b.) heroic (symbolic) language and (c.) human (allegorical) language. In "Finnegans Wake", the protagonists are designated in three ways, paralleling the Viconian language steps: (a.) as sigma, (b.) as initials and (c.) as articulate words.

(g.)

Interestingly, the same case regarding the spiral structure of the narrative and the usage of names apply in "The Falls". The film comprises of a series of biographical sketches taken from the VUE Commission's Doomsday Directory, namely the biography of people whose name begins with the letters "FALL". Constance Ortuist Fallaburr, Starling Fallanx, Catch-Hanger Fallcaster, Erhaus Bewler Falluper are such persons. The characters are designated by name and number. It seems that the application of a name-pattern for different persons is a good device to maintain some coherency in the artwork while providing almost unlimited freedom to the artist. This obviously foregrounds the purely conventional - that is, arbitrary - connection between signs and signifiers in a language, and especially in (fictional) proper names.

(7.) Sublime

The sublime is, in a very crude sense of the word, an expanse that is too great for the senses to survey. When reason is unable to ensure a sense of orientation, the task is left to the

imagination to tackle.⁶³ This is the experience of reading "Finnegans Wake" or viewing "The Falls": whichever place we take up these works, it does rarely feel like a determinable point in the arc of a conventional narrative. It is rather a flash in an unlimited, undistinguished series, so lengthy and complex that we can never expect to know all the parts or having heard all the story.

(j.)

Joyce states in one of his letters (about Ulysses) that *"I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant..."* Now, "Finnegans Wake" is even more vague, a monolith of literature below which exegetes crawl in dismay. The simple fact that the language of the Wake is fashioned from 62 different languages, seasoned with puns and references, means that no single scholar will ever actually read the book, if we mean understanding the meaning of every word. How was Joyce able to write it if no one can read it? Well, the answer is simple: while Joyce himself has written the overwhelming bulk of the text, a lot of people contributed to it knowingly or unknowingly. Joyce frequently asked his visitors - especially those versed in an exotic tongue or an arcane lore - to help him compile some of their knowledge into his art. On the other hand, Joyce had also had a notebook with him all the time, recording interesting lingual phenomena, or even the mistakes his pupils made in English in the Berlitz school. In this respect, Joyce was more the editor of the volume, or perhaps the producer.

(g.)

"The Falls", on the other hand, was intended for a lounge audience, and consequently it lends itself more readily to the viewer. Oftentimes one cannot understand a word of Joyce's masterpiece without either a strong background knowledge or the help of secondary

literature. However, the film is packed with references as well, only that they are not essential for the apparent comprehension and enjoyment of the film. Which nonetheless creates the sublime experience outlined above throughout the work is the seriality of the biographies, and the sheer minute length of the movie, together with the density of data that is packed into each part.

* * *

(.) Conclusion

Having argued for the similitude of my subjects from seven perspectives, what can I say? Despite their Doomsday Directory of nineteen million entries, the VUE Commission could not yet prove their "Theory of the Responsibility of Birds", and in the case of the cuckoldry of HCE nothing is certain, despite the whole of human history is laid out as evidence. At this point the argument assumes a theological tone: unable to persuade the doubter, it might impress the believer, or fascinate the inquiring. Both Joyce and Greenaway tried to unify their miscellanea by fashioning a narrative to frame their lists, so I should just as well try the same.

An attempt for a synthesis should then knit together the various elements on the list. For a start, it could be argued that an artist who is more an artificer, identifying with **Daedalus** (4.), spending his life assembling his artifacts from **a motley of cultural references** (3.'), could attempt to construct a great **Labirinth** (2'.) as an overview or a sketch of his life's work.

It is wholly logical that such event would occur **at the beginning or end** (1'.) of his life. As his life-work is almost superabundant and driven by a series of evenly important principles, it seems evident that this is to be of a **sublime** (7.) size. If it is presumed that this creator is a real author, and therefore he always **tells the same story** (5.), then the best method to go about the great project would be to collect these stories, resulting in a sequence of tales with the similar plots and different characters. At this point, the artificer's method of mechanical invention would suggest the devise of a **nominal rule** (6.) to show that his protagonists are always "now one and the same person" (from "Finnegans Wake"). Such a method would open up the possibility of interpreting all the stories as episodes of a long story, unified by an archetypal protagonist, much in the same way as the events of our life claim unity by the fact that they all happened to the same person. Naturally, a Labirinth centred on such a discordant creature of doubtful origins would be open for diverse interpretation by being overtly **mythical** (3.).

"The same renew." (from "Finnegans Wake") says Joyce, and that applies to the this document as well. The first draft ready, in its present state it is more of an outline for future work. Much philosophical elaboration and even more philological work should put the flesh on the skeleton, as now each concept is but merely suggested with an epigrammatic note, and underpinned by only a preview of examples. I will strive to expand the scope of the argument with a strong lineup of instances, and formulate each idea with a superior sophistication. However, the groundwork has been laid out, and the essentials stated. The wings ready, it is now only a matter of using them right.

maxigas @ 2004.11.26 09:30

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- 3 "I think list-making procedures have been a very, very big thing in 20th century literature: James Joyce, [Georges] Perec, it's all listing, listing, listing." - notes Greenaway in a Salon interview. Greenaway, Peter. "The Salon Interview – Peter Greenaway". Salon.com. June 6., 1997.
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- 11 Balázs B. "Halálesztétika" <Death Aesthetics>. Budapest: Papirusz, n.b.
- 12 Some may say that there is a cronology to cling to, and a scholar may not argue against this, and it is nonsense to talk about the liminal position of a work (like "The Falls") if there are important works before and after it. That is obviously an oversimplification, and the arguments against it were summarised by Harold Bloom. Bloom, Harold. "The Anxiety of Influence – A Theory of Poetry". New York: OUP, 1973. Especially the chapter entitled: "Apophrades, or the Return of the Dead".
- 13 The title of the section may be misleading. It is perhaps misfortunate that in the English language the adjective "original" has connotations of "incomparable", while the noun "origin" serves to designate something which is similar indeed to other things, being their "precursor". "Originality" is to be understood here to connote the latter meaning more forcefully.
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- 15 Alternately, pessimists could argue that "Finnegans Wake" rather reads like an attempt to read through the remainders of a bonfire of books, layed from all the papers Joyce ever read and wrote.
- 16 McHugh, Roland. "Annotations to Finnegans Wake". London: The John Hopkind University Press, 1980.
- 17 A note about notes: the following abbreviation system is used througout the notes in the paper to indicate places in the texts. P.XY means page XY in "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man". P Z means chapter Z in "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man". U.XY means page XY in "Ulysses". FW.XY:Z means page XY, line Z in "Finnegans Wake". Moreover, F X means biography X in "The Falls".
- 18 FW.7:27
- 19 FW.54:23
- 20 Glasheen, Adaline. "Third Census of Finnegans Wake - An Index of the Characters and Their Roles". London: University of California Press, 1977 : 67, 135.
- 21 Takács Ferenc. "Afterword for Zeg-Zug film club's screening of 'The Portait of the Artist as a Young Man',

- an adaptation of the novel by Joseph Strick." Budapest: Zeg-Zug community centre, 2004.11.19.
- 22 McHugh says: "Laurend Co., Georgia, founded by a Dubliner, Peter Sawyer, on r. Oconee. Its motto: 'Doubling all the time.'" Which demonstrates how the town of Dublin proliferates all through the novel until it encompasses the whole of the known world and more. McHugh, Roland. "Annotations to Finnegans Wake". London: The John Hopkind University Press, 1980: 3.
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- 30 "Dear Phone". Dir. Peter Greenaway. Screenplay Peter Greenaway. 1977. 17 mins.
- 31 F 18
- 32 F 70
- 33 "The Belly of an Architect". Dir. Peter Greenaway. Screenplay Peter Greenaway. Perf. Brian Dennehy, Chloe Webb, Lambert Wilson, Stefana Casini. Callendar Company / Film Four International / British Screen Hamdale / Sacis, 1986. 118 mins.
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- 36 "Goole by Numbers". Dir. Peter Greenaway. Screenplay Peter Greenaway. 1976. 40 mins.
- 37 "Goole Water Towers". International Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074582/>.
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- 39 Fraser, Sir James George. "The Golden Bough". Abridged ed. London: Macmillan, 1987.
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- 51 FW.3
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- 54 U.43(52)
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- 56 F 54
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- 58 B45, B78, ?
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- 62 Crivelli, Renzo S. "James Joyce - Triestine Initiaries". Trieste: MGS Press, 1996:123.
- 63 Kant writes in section 25 of "The Critique of Judgement" that "Sublime is the name given to what is incomparably great." He goes on to say that the Sublime cannot be grasped by reason, only the imagination has the scope to frame infinity. Kant, Emmanuel. "The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement". Oxford: Clarendon, 1911: 94.