To Be and (or?) Not to Be:
Joyce's Rewriting of Shakespeare

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The figure and work of William Shakespeare are today one of the most relevant aspects in James Joyce's texts, particularly in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Already, classic studies like those by William M. Schutte on *Ulysses* and by Vincent Cheng on *Finnegans Wake* establish that the presence of the English playwright is deeper and more pervasive than it may seem at first sight. Likewise, Weldon Thornton's classic study does not fail to point out the great number of allusions to many Shakespearean works that a reader may find in *Ulysses*.[1]

This should not be surprising since, after all, Shakespeare was not only an influence for Joyce but almost an obsession. Joyce gives Shakespeare one of the highest places in his personal history of literature. On a certain occasion Joyce mentions the relevance and significance of his being as old as Shakespeare was when the latter wrote *Hamlet*.[2] But beyond the acknowledgement of influence, there is also the desire to imitate, to better and perhaps even to kill the paternal figure, so that it is not difficult to agree with James S. Atherton when he states that "Joyce saw himself as Shakespeare's rival—possibly his greatest rival."[3]

Shakespeare's influence is especially evident through *Hamlet*. This play is alluded to already in the first episode of *Ulysses* where we are also given the abstract of a theory, the exposition of which will comprise most of "Scylla and Charybdis." In terms of textuality, *Hamlet* seems to be a more pervasive and varied presence than the *Odyssey* or any other text. If we did not have the title, *Ulysses*, we could interpret the novel in terms of *Hamlet* (that is, more than we do already). This is something that can be confusing even for the characters: Stephen considers himself a re-incarnation of Prince Hamlet without realizing that he only plays a secondary role in a novel based on the *Odyssey*.[4] On the other hand, the number of allusions to *Hamlet* that one can find in *Finnegans Wake* indicates that this play is a structural model which Joyce is using as scaffolding (one of them, at least) in the construction of his own text, in a similar fashion to the use he made of the *Odyssey* and the myth of Dedalus and Icarus.[5]

What is interesting about the presence of *Hamlet* is not that we find Stephen behaving as if he were Prince Hamlet, but rather the frequent textual allusions to other fragments in Shakespeare's text. In *Ulysses*, for example, we find "Frailty, thy name is woman" (*H* I.2.146) reappearing as "Frailty, thy name is Sceptre" (*U* 12.1227-8), or as "Frailty, thy name is marriage" (*U* 15.3277); the words of the ghost "I am thy father's spirit" (*H* I.5.9) become "Hamlet, I am thy father's spirit" (*U* 8.67-68 and 9.170), or "Hamlet, I am thy father's gimlet" (*U* 15.3655) and even "Bloom, I am Paddy Dignam's spirit. List, list, O list" in "Circe" (*U* 15.1218, as the ghost in *H* I.5.9, and 22). The most emblematic text in *Hamlet*, "To be or not to be" (*H*

III.1.56), can be found in *Ulysses* as "To have or not to have" (*U* 15.3522), or as "To enter or not to enter" (*U* 17.82). Together with another fragment in the famous monologue, it reappears as "Consummation devoutly to be or not to be wished for" (*U* 16.1031). Finally, in this brief summary a mention should be made of a text in "Circe" which seems to be a sort of bridge between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*: "weda seca whokilla farst" is an echo of "wed her second" in "Scylla and Charybdis" and also an allusion to *Hamlet* (III.2.180). Moreover, given the way the original text is rewritten, it becomes a clear anticipation of the (general) method in *Finnegans Wake*, where, as might be expected, the process of rewriting and reelaboration produces an enhancement of the simple variations that we find in *Ulysses*. To cite only the most representative case, the beginning of Hamlet's monologue, there are in *Finnegans Wake* the following variations, according to Cheng: "wider he might the same . . . other he would, with tosend and obertosend" (*FW* 70.089), "me ken or no me ken Zot is the Quiztune" (*FW* 110.14), "Hanno O'Nonhanno" (*FW* 123.31-32), "in the act of reciting old Nichiabelli's monolook interyear *Hanno o Nonhanno, acce'l brubblemm'as*" (*FW* 182.19-21), "at weare or not at weare" (*FW* 319.28).[6]

The reason for the presence of those variations is that they constitute one of Joyce's typical qualities: instead of writing he continuously rewrites the literary tradition and, specifically, a few select authors. In this case, Joyce rewrites Shakespeare not only to transcend him, but also to create more operative frames of writing. Therefore, if we see that Joyce uses Shakespeare as as structural model, we must not forget that we perceive that use, as in the examples above, through minor variations. Which creates a certain paradox.

If we take a paradigmatic example, such as "To be or not to be," rewritten in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* under various guises, we may notice that we are at the same time before something that is and is not, something which on the one hand sends us to *Hamlet*, to "To be or not to be," while on the other hand it shows us that it is not exactly that phrase. To put it differently, at the same time the allusion shows itself to be and not to be "To be or not to be." Playing in this way with the signifier allows Joyce to rewrite Shakespeare, while keeping at the same time (at least traces of) the original text. Thus, we find somewhat paradoxically that "To be or not to be" leads to "To be and not to be," starting a process which goes beyond simple word-play or pun. Although Joyce keeps the phrasing "To be or not to be," his practice shows that, in order to extend his stylistic and therefore aesthetic possibilities, he alters the premises and formal implications of that sentence. In other words, if Hamlet contemplates a doubt before two certainties—Lyster calls him "hesitating soul" in *U* 9.3—Joyce presents the possibility of including both certainties at the same ontological level. That is to say, with the paradoxical treatment of "To be or not to be," it is as if Joyce had substituted the rest of that first line of Hamlet's monologue ("That is the question") for another kind of discourse ("Is that the question?" or even more radically "Is that *a* question?"). In this way, doubt ceases to be related to a choice between two certainties to become inherent to the process itself by means of which certainty is created (and also, indirectly, doubt and choice). This emphasizes the idea that a certainty is actually no more than the end result of a partial and, therefore, provisional process of construction due to a selection within a variety of different choices. In other words, "To be or not to be" evokes an opposition that we may describe as binary and exclusive, while "To be and not to be" refers to oppositions that can be described as multiple, inclusive and probably chaotic.

Thus, we might say that the process of rewriting which Joyce carries out is marked by a quality of inclusiveness. For Joyce, to purify or to refine his style implies an inversion of the normal procedure so that the text can include more and more things, becoming a sort of black hole which is able to absorb all kinds of energy or information.[7] Joyce brings about this qualitative change as working model to open and cross what Stephen calls the "portals of discovery" (*U* 9.229), and above all to present the rewriting which *Finnegans Wake* involves in all senses, particularly in its conception of language. Indeed, to use a well-known comparison, in contrast with the notes we hear in *Ulysses*, the chords which form each word in *Finnegans Wake* are the epitome of this inclusive model with its multiplicity of meanings and its chaotic excess of information. This is probably the source of the difficulties that the reader has to confront, turning *Finnegans Wake*, if a joke is allowed at this point, into "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns" (not at least in the original form).[8]

Along with the rewriting mentioned above, Joyce may have found relevant features for his inclusive formula based on ambiguity in the figure of Shakespeare himself, not only with regard to the origin of the text but also as source of inspiration. In "Scylla and Charybdis," for example, "Rutlandbaconsouthamptonshakespeare" (*U* 9.866) is a clear allusion to the theories that deal with the actual authorship of texts attributed to Shakespeare: Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland, Francis Bacon, and Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton. On the other hand, Joyce also reflects the idea that *Hamlet* might be modelled upon the figure of Shakespeare, of James I (of England, VI of Scotland), or of Robert Devereaux, second earl of Essex. Also, in "Scylla and Charybdis," the legend is mentioned that Shakespeare himself interpreted the role of the ghost (*U* 9.166-67). In "Lotus-Eaters" (*U* 5.195-97) a poster advertises the performance of a well-known actress playing the role of Hamlet, which is connected in Bloom's mind with the theory that Hamlet was a woman (which in turn would explain Ophelia's suicide), a theory which reappears in "Scylla and Charybdis" in Eglinton's words (*U* 9.518-19). But in the play itself we may find passages to support this general line of reasoning: in "Proteus", as might be expected, in "God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle goose becomes featherbed mountain" (*U* 3.477-79), we are given the thoughts of Stephen on the metamorphic character of matter, which can be related to the idea of metempsychosis or be interpreted in parallel with Hamlet's thoughts on the remains of the noble Alexander (*H* V.1.201ff).[9]

The acknowledgement of this inclusive quality which reaches its peak in *Finnegans Wake* would allow us to look back and witness the beginning of that process already in *Ulysses*. In this novel nobody is (only) what they say they are: they are always something else, and in some instances they are even more than they think. This quality of multiplicity of identities or of multiple identifications can be perceived already in "Telemachus" under the guise of the allusions to the heretics Arrius and Sabellius. The latter maintained that terms such as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" were simply names for the same substance (or three different aspects or modes of the same Being). The idea of consubstantiality between Father and Son, which a rebel like Stephen—remember his *non serviam*—maintains in his theory about *Hamlet*, connects him with Sabelius and is something we can trace back to Aristotle,[10] another recurring presence throughout the novel. Stephen's "I am another now and yet the same" (*U* 1.311-12) stresses once again the idea of simultaneous mutability and identity.[11]

At a more specific textual level, we might say that the play with multiple identifications present in *Ulysses* could be summarised in a sentence we find in "Proteus"—"*Lui, c'est moi*" (*U* 3.182-83)—in a context which stresses the possibility of multiple personality: "Other fellow did it: other me" (*U* 3.182). On the basis of the connections made throughout the novel I will just point out a few of the most relevant textual identifications.

Stephen must be clearly identified with Hamlet: they both wear black in mourning for the death of the mother in one case and the father in the other. On the other hand, however, he should not be totally identified with Telemachus, but rather with Achilles.[12] Even Hamlet, with his rigid code of honour and his obsession with the past, seems more like Achilles, while the usurper Claudius shows himself to be more versatile in his methods, and does not hesitate to use deceit or to avoid open confrontation when it helps to secure his future. This actually reminds us more of Odysseus himself.

The theme of usurpation is an obvious link between Stephen, Hamlet, and Telemachus, situating Buck Mulligan in the role of Antinoos and Claudius. But Stephen can also be identified with Claudius by metaphorically adopting his methods: "They list. And in the porches of their ears I pour" (*U* 9.465). In a consubstantial manner, Shakespeare's play also connects a father like Bloom with a son like Stephen by means of a misquotation: "I am thy father's spirit" (Bloom in *U* 8.67-68 and Stephen in *U* 9.170) and in the allusions in "Eumaeus" (*U* 16.783, 16.785, and 16.1031). Bloom's quotation in "Lestrygonians" together with "The ghost walks" in "Aeolus" (*U* 7.237) identify him with King Hamlet who, being the ghost, creates also an identification between Bloom and Shakespeare, something which is repeated in "Circe" with a difference: when Bloom and Stephen gaze in a mirror at the same time, what they see is a reflection of Shakespeare's face (*U* 15.3821-4), another example, perhaps, of consubstatiation. Later, the playwright becomes Martin Cunningham, an identification already present in "Hades" (*U* 6.345). In "Circe" Paddy Dignam becomes textually identified with King Hamlet also, in a dialogue which briefly turns Bloom into Prince Hamlet (*U* 15.1218).[13]

Moreover, Bloom is clearly also a Haroun al Raschid whose noble personality is unknown to his fellow citizens; Parnell is a sort of Ulysses whose return is awaited by the Irish people; and Buck Mulligan is not only a variety of Lord Nelson but also a stripped Jesus Christ.[14] From the very beginning, Buck Mulligan also points out the polysemic quality of everything around him: the Martello Tower, for instance, is a Hellenic *omphalos*, while Stephen is a bard of ancient Greek origin, and he himself is a signifier with different signifieds, from usurper of the role of the priest to St. John Chrysostomos, Claudius, Antinoos, or Agamemnon.

At a general level one could say that characters in *Ulysses* enjoy an obviously proteic quality which manifests itself in different ways: not only can several characters be an incarnation of Odysseus (Bloom, Stephen, Murphy, Bloom's potato) but also any of those characters can in turn stand for a wide range of other characters (thus, Bloom can be Ulysses, Elijah, King Hamlet, the Wandering Jew, or Christ). Above all it should be pointed out that, while at the beginning a certain order and coherence in the system of relationships can be perceived, later on we perceive that everything becomes more diffuse and confusing, and that those identifications are not fixed permanently. This is something we find already in *Ulysses*, as an anticipation of what in *Finnegans Wake* is presented as "every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway" (*FW* 118.21-22).

In addition to the multiple identifications there are other ways in which

these inclusive processes become apparent in *Ulysses*. The notion of "To be and not to be" is encapsulated in two words which define the novel from the point of view of form and content (if such a dichotomy is really tenable): "metempsychosis" and "parallax," terms which help to designate the dual quality of many aspects and different levels in the novel. In connection with "parallax," Hugh Kenner points out that in *Ulysses* we find "[t]wo different versions at least, that is Joyce's normal way."[15] These correspond to the versions from the point of view of the subject or subjects' consciousness, and to that of an authorial/authorized and reliable voice. Such duality can also be seen at the level of macro-structure in the novel's modernist and postmodernist bias; as work and as text; in its two halves; in its two narrative epitomes, "Oxen of the Sun" and "Circe." A more radical variety of that duality takes place through the cluster of identities as in "Siopold" (*U* 11.752), where three characters become elements of communication (singer—aria—listener; sender—message—receiver; author—work—reader) in such a way that a "theory" or aesthetic perspective emerges where those elements can be integrated and exchange their functions, as a consequence of which meaning does not necessarily come only from the sender/author.[16]

This inclusiveness may cause some totally opposing effects, such as the lack of demarcation or of separation between conventionally and generically distinct elements. Thus, sometimes, it is difficult to draw the line between the three basic styles of the novel. The world of the novel seems to take place inside and outside the characters (not on one side *or* the other). Another problematic consequence of that inclusive quality may lie in the idea that everything exists at the same level (and that different interpretations chosen by the reader would be equally valid), and that it becomes impossible to tell fiction from reality, as for example in "Circe," since all existence is, ultimately, textual.[17]

Another variety of inclusiveness in the novel has to do with the play between appearance and reality, between what is and/but is not: in other words, temporary identities which are later revealed as false appearances in the face of reality. *Ulysses* is and is not at the same time a version of the *Odyssey*, in the same way that Bloom is and is not Ulysses. In the opening paragraph we find Buck Mulligan acting as a priest although he really is not a priest. The role of priest is performed by someone who is not a priest, an usurpation to which we return in a typically Joycean circular trip by means of the last word in the episode, "usurper."[18] Moreover, "Ithaca" also begins with a misleading idea since the "parallel courses" of Bloom and Stephen meet *only falsely* in the infinite. In some episodes the use of a certain style implies a play with the idea of appearance: in "Circe" the style is dramatic only from the point of view of typography, and in "Penelope" the punctuation which is missing has to be provided by the reader. All this again takes us to the idea of the provisional character of meanings, which can only be temporarily accepted until they are substituted by other meanings equally valid in a given context. An example of this, at a different level, can be seen in the sytlistic variation of "Oxen of the Sun."

Ambiguity and indeterminacy are also aspects of this inclusiveness and can materialize in different ways. The open-ended quality, for example, of Joyce's works from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to *Finnegans Wake* is well-known. But it is indicative in the case of *Ulysses* that the novel also opens with a note of ambiguity: "Stately" can either be a (descriptive) adjective or a (modal) adverb, describing a mode of being or a mode of doing. There is no solution in the text for this ambiguity (although there are interpretations to the contrary), and we have to assume that the sense is not

in being or in doing but in both at once or in the relationship between the two. At the beginning of "Calypso" we find something similar: "relish" may both refer to the way Bloom eats the kidney or to the way he cooks them. Finally, although for different reasons, another form of ambiguity can be perceived in the case of third-person singular personal pronouns in "Penelope."[19]

The duality mentioned above can be seen in connection with another aspect clearly related to the idea of inclusiveness. I refer here to the frequent allusions to history and the different conceptions of it presented in the novel. While for Stephen history is a repetitive nightmare from which he is trying to awake,[20] and for Mr. Deasy history moves toward one final goal,[21] Bloom's conception of history implies a combination of the two. For Bloom there is recurrence with variation, identity and change: it is a "history repeating itself with a difference" (*U* 16.1525-26). This materialization of "To be and not to be" in relation to the concept of history can be seen at a more pragmatic level in the way the novel presents repetition with a difference. For example, many allusions are made to the repetitive character of history and to the presentation of different versions of some events. We become aware that "Calypso" repeats aspects of "Telemachus" with a difference, and that Molly-Penelope repeats Molly-Calypso differently. Moreover, as the schemata show, narrative techniques are repeated with a difference.

The inclusive formula of "To be and not to be" summarises, in this sense, the basic features which allow Joyce to create a system of identifications between historical and contemporary characters, by combining the concepts of "parallax" and "metempsychosis" together with the repetition of history with a difference. The result is an aesthetic and ideological system which at the same time is sufficiently rigid to support the text and align it within a certain tradition, and also flexible enough to function as a mould that can be adapted and changed in order to take in and order multiple possibilities.

Metempsychosis (already mentioned in "Calypso") and metamorphosis constitute another device we should point out in this context. The play of multiple identifications is a variety of metempsychosis/metamorphosis. We can think of an antecedent for this in *Hamlet* itself, in a piece of dialogue between the young prince and Polonius regarding the changing form of the clouds (*H* III.2.373), and it is something that from the point of view of plot or psychological analysis of characters reaches its peak in "Circe." Maybe the most interesting variety of this is that which is produced by means of the stylistic play generated by the narrative. Joyce himself states in his letters how he needs to change styles and points of view in the second half of his novel and, thus, it is not surprising that already in "Proteus" we find samples of that process of inclusiveness, at different levels, including language. In "she trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascines her load" (*U* 3.392-93) the verbs use the disguise of different languages to say the same thing, having the same identity under their different linguistic origins. In this episode also, a dog undergoes a metamorphosis (*U* 3.332-63) which has its echo in "Circe" where another dog changes its form during the episode (*U* 15.634-706), so that at the end we do not know what kind of dog it was, only that it was a dog. On a broader level the stylistic change generates, for example, the parodies in "Cyclops," where Bloom is turned momentarily into the prophet Elijah, or where a trivial event (such as throwing a biscuit can) ends in a huge natural catastrophe, an earthquake, which in turn is an echo of an earlier religious event (the death of Christ). This metamorphic process reaches a culminating point in "Oxen of the Sun" where the succession of different styles turns characters, in textual terms, into different

characters, an early instance of which we can find in *A Portrait* where Stephen's evolution is shown by means of the continuous change of style.

The inclusive devices described in *Ulysses* point towards the realm of metaphor, anticipated already in Stephen's language. They force the reader to understand the plurality of the characters by means of symbolist processes, in terms of something else; processes, by the way, without which no language would be of any use. If we can say that in the syntagmatic chain the context tries to impose the choice of certain meanings, we can also imagine a text designed to avoid that choice and to allow the paradigmatic presence of all possible meanings. But we might go even further and say that those inclusive devices end up producing a representation based not on the simple substitution of one thing by another but in the simultaneous presence of both. It is not, then, simply, a question of using a metaphor but of adding progressively different meanings to the signifiers which the characters, for example, become. Characters begin as such—Stephen, or Bloom, or Molly—and start from an initial position to gradually accumulate other new meanings which generate new structures of interpretation which in return order, synthesize and inform those meanings. Thus, in the most obvious case, meanings such as Odysseus, Telemachus or Penelope evoke the Homeric narrative structure which in turn supports the interpretation of *Ulysses* in terms of the *Odyssey*. That accumulation of meanings is produced little by little, it is not there from the beginning. As a matter of fact, it is not there from the beginning for all readers.

In *Ulysses* the inclusive process of "To be and not to be" comes into effect mainly through a continuous play of allusions of all kinds, literary or not (although, what would the difference be?). Meanwhile, in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce tries to condense that kind of play even more, to situate it in the most essential materiality of language, that is, the signifier and its prevalence over the signified. Such prevalence forms the basis of HCE (to take *Finnegans Wake*'s most representative character as an example), and it alludes to a frame of reference which may consider the multiplicity of existence while showing Joyce's attempt, precisely by means of language, to escape the fixing quality which language has.[22] If reality is protean, let us build a language which enhances that quality and allows us to escape the univocal, the already fixed.

"To be and not to be" is the critical version that Joyce makes of Shakespeare to be extensively used in *Finnegans Wake*, just as Joyce had earlier produced a version of Homer for *Ulysses*. Joyce's version of Shakespeare is no more than a rewriting of the playwright's most emblematic text in order to create greater possibilities of interpretation and re-elaboration. The epitome of that working-model is HCE, who can assimilate all the possibilities that might be included in the text or imagined by the reader. But again here one can notice the problems which such inclusiveness may create (at least from a modernist perspective), such as a situation of eventual collapse given the many possibilities of interpretation which HCE offers. Once more, this is anticipated in *Ulysses*, in the prolix style of "Eumaeus," or in the strange relationship between Molly Bloom and Buck Mulligan, who are textually connected through the adjectives "plump" and "yellow" and the song "The Death of Nelson" which Mulligan alters and Molly hears in "Wandering Rocks" (*U* 10.251-52 and 10.1063-65). This brings about a case of saturation in the system of correspondences which becomes impossible to discern and which ends up frustrating all attempts at producing a coherent global interpretation. But maybe that is precisely its meaning, what the text is trying to communicate: the mystifying character

of language in contrast to the many-sidedness and even chaotic quality of the real.

The term "chaotic" takes us to what might be a way of approaching and assimilating these inclusive processes in the case of *Finnegans Wake*. But before that we have to make a distinction between chaos and uncertainty. There are in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* allusions to the idea of uncertainty. Stephen, particularly, points out that "[t]he world is founded upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood" (*U* 9.842); in "Ithaca" he insists in the existence of a "micro and macrocosm ineluctably constructed upon the incertitude of the void" (*U* 17.1014-15); and in *Finnegans Wake* we read: "Thus, the unfacts, did we possess them, are too imprecisely few to warrant our certitude" (*FW* 57.16-17). The uncertainty principle has its theoretical origin, as is well known, in the experiments of Werner Heisenberg, and is applied to Joyce's work at large by Phillip Herring, who indicates that this principle draws attention "to absence, hence uncertainty."[23] Indeed, the identity of M'Intosh, or the origin or authorsip of a given passage in "Aeolus"[24]—not to mention the absolutely irresolvable question of Molly Bloom's list of lovers—are cases that cannot be considered as simply a problem of ambiguity. It is obvious that we lack enough information to explain those passages coherently. But there are other instances where it is not a question of not having enough information but rather the opposite: we have too much information and our attention is not drawn to the absent but to the (excessiveness of the) present. In other words, M'Intosh on the one hand, and Bloom and HCE, on the other, embody two different epistemological problems (that is, problems related to the process of acquisition of knowledge that can be integrated in operative and, at least provisionally, valid patterns): one that is marked by its lack of definition and another that is marked by the excess of information. That is, there are problems which in the text can be explained with the help of Heisenberg, or problems that can be discussed in terms of chaos theory.

As epitome of an inclusive model with multiplicity of meanings and excess of information, *Finnegans Wake* shows a chaotic quality which produces a separation between information and meaning. We could describe *Finnegans Wake* and the relationship of the reader with this text by using the basic typology mentioned by N. Katherine Hayles in her study of chaos theory.[25] The first kind of approach is defined as "order out of chaos,"[26] which in our case would mean that it is the reader who creates meanings out of the elements in the system. In *Finnegans Wake* a passage seems to encapsulate this possibility in our reading: "Ab chaos lex, neat wehr?" (*FW* 518.31). Hayles illustrates this kind of chaos by alluding to a short story by Stanislaw Lem in which a so-called Demon of the Second Kind spends his time watching air molecules in their endless dance inside a box: "Whenever the molecules form words that make sense, he writes them down with a tiny diamond-tipped pen on a paper tape."[27] I would like to suggest that also the readers of *Finnegans Wake*, and for that matter any other kind of reader, start from a hypothesis and develop a search for data which will support it. The data make sense because of the hypothesis, otherwise they would be meaningless. Thus, again, the reflection indirectly concerns the processes of creation and construction of meaning, which inevitably raises previous questions/answers such as "what is a meaning?," "what does it mean to say that something (X) means (Y)?" In other words, it is a reflection on the ontology of the epistemological. But, once more, this is something anticipated in *Ulysses* where, for example, Stephen—in "Signatures of all things I am here to read" (*U* 3.2)—summarises the

qualities of the perfect Demon of the Second Kind.[28] Another word in *Finnegans Wake* emphasizes a certain conception of the world: "Chaosmos" (*FW* 118.21). This is a clear echo of the "word/world" dichotomy origininating in Martha's typing mistake in *Ulysses*, but while in that novel language seemed to create the world infusing it with order and meaning, in *Finnegans Wake* there is an open recognition of the ineluctably chaotic quality of the real. Therefore, the "realistic" text can only work as an immense signifier which draws together all the possible meanings which exist simultaneously and which only become concrete through the choice of the reader.

Hayles defines the second approach as "hidden order within chaotic systems,"[29] which undoubtedly summarises the position of the reader searching for meaning in the text of *Finnegans Wake*: the reader becomes a sort of detective trying to decipher a hidden code. Also in this case we find a text in *Finnegans Wake* which seems to point in that direction: "artful disorder" (*FW* 126.09). This paradoxical phrase would be again in line with the idea of "To be and not to be," reflecting the dynamic inclusive quality, radical in contrast with *Ulysses*, which we find in *Finnegans Wake*. Now, by a "commodius vicus of recirculation" we can return to *Hamlet* guided by Cheng,[30] who interprets "arful disorder" as a rewriting of the notion of "method in his madness," which from the perspective of chaos theory is obviously an example, due to its contradictory nature, of the method of composition which Joyce follows and which the reader imagines and tries to unravel. This would mean that if in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce cannot accept the dilemma in "To be or not to be," it seems, however, evident that he adopts "method in his madness" as organizing principle. If Hamlet looks to the past, Polonius, unwittingly, is describing the future.

All this seems to support the idea that we cannot read *Finnegans Wake* from a traditional perspective, but rather by basing our reading on premises connected with chaos theory (as the phrase "artful disorder" seems to suggest), although never with the hope of reaching totalizing or fixed explanations. Any order emerging out of that chaos, or that we might discover, would clearly be provisional and not even certain. As Margot Norris points out, "[t]he greatest critical mistake in approaching *Finnegans Wake* has been the assumption that we can be certain of who, where, and when everything is in the *Wake*, if only we do enough research."[31] And Bernard Benstock, in what amounts to an obvious implicit criticism of the expectations generated by the second approach to chaos, adds a certain (realistic) note of frustration: "There remains, then, only the cold, logical realization that *Finnegans Wake* as an enigma may well go unsolved. Time, which was expected to bring all evidence eventually to the surface in an ordered pattern, so far has had the opposite effect."[32] We might even feel forced to revise conventional concepts such as "meaning," since, as Kenner writes, "it is . . . misleading to scan early drafts for the author's intentions, on the assumption that a `meaning' got buried by elaboration. Joyce worked seventeen years to push the work away from `meaning,' adrift into language; nothing is to be gained by trying to push it back."[33]

All this could also have interesting consequences, for example, in relation to the question of the possibility of translating *Finnegans Wake*, since any translation of this work, far from elucidating the meanings in the original text, would only produce an enormous increase of the uncertainty and indeterminacy of the meanings (at least in a traditional sense of the term) with respect to the original text. Thus, a translation of *Finnegans Wake* can never be envisaged as a transference of meaning from one system of

signifiers to another, but simply as a simulation of the experience of the reader before a system of signifiers which has not been got through consensus but, rather, which generates itself in the very act of becoming text. The final implication would be that we cannot "read" *Finnegans Wake*, and even more, we cannot "have read" it. We can only "be reading" it. The wheel comes full circle when "Work in Progress" becomes "Reading in Progress."

In *Ulysses*, Bloom, distanced by the scientific language of "Ithaca" contemplates the bookshelves and notices that some of the books are "improperly arranged":

> What reflections occupied his mind during the process of reversion of the inverted volumes?
> The necessity of order, a place for everything and everything in its place. (*U* 17.1408-10)[27]

The reality presiding over *Finnegans Wake* seems to be more that contained in this other sentence: "every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway" (*FW* 118.21-22). Thus, we have gone from the desire for order to the acceptance of the creativity that may be hidden in disorder, from the "artless disorder" in *Ulysses* (14.759) to the "artful disorder" in *Finnegans Wake* (126.09). The formula of inclusiveness which explains *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is the necessary rewriting of the famous Shakespearean text, pointing in the direction not of an epistemological problem to be considered under the category of the uncertainty principle, but rather in the direction of the possibility of the simultaneous presence of different "ontologies." It is actually the chaotic quality of simultaneous presences that provokes, as a secondary effect, an epistemological problem. This change from "To be or not to be" to "To be and not to be"—that is, the substitution of a choice between two possibilities or two well-defined worlds by the recognition of the ontological variability of the text, or of the world—would position *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* in line with the premises shared by other texts within the cultural field of postmodernism.

"Shakespeare is the happy huntingground of all minds that have lost their balance," says a skeptical Haines in *Ulysses* (*U* 10.1061-62). I wonder if a comment about an author so special to Joyce consitutes a good excuse for the reader to rewrite the sentence as "*Joyce* is the happy huntingground of all minds that have lost their balance." In any case, I think that his remark about keeping the critics busy for centuries was an implicit invitation to start the hunt. Howsoever it may be, it is evident that our search for the hidden order in his work keeps us well absorbed, like Demons of the Second Kind, in the molecules which form his texts.

Notes

1. See William M. Schutte, *Joyce and Shakespeare: A Study in the Meaning of* Ulysses (New Haven: Yale UP, 1957); Vincent Cheng, *Shakespeare and Joyce: A Study of* Finnegans Wake (Gerrads Cross: Colin Smythe, 1984); Weldon Thornton, *Allusions in* Ulysses*: An Annotated List* (Chapel Hill: U of Carolina P, 1968). Throughout this paper I quote from the following editions: *Ulysses* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986); *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber, 1975). The conventional abreviations *U* for *Ulysses*, *FW* for *Finnegans Wake* and *H* for *Hamlet* will be used.
2. Joyce in a letter to Stanislaus Joyce, ?2 or 3 May 1905 (*LettersII* 90).
3. Qtd. in Cheng 257n11.

4. Jeri Johnson, paraphrasing Hugh Kenner, indicates that "Stephen thinks he's in a book called *Hamlet* and never discovers that it's really called *Ulysses* and that he is a supporting actor, not the lead." See her edition of *Ulysses* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) 772.

5. For Cheng (72), "Joyce found in *Hamlet* an all-encompassing matrix for his purposes in *Finnegans Wake*: the sheer number, matrical comprehensiveness, and precise correspondences of the *Hamlet* allusions to HCE's family drama prove *Hamlet* to be one of the structural `books at the *Wake*.'"

6. Cheng 205.

7. On the growing number of allusions in Joyce's texts, Thornton writes: "One of the most striking features of the development of Joyce's work from *Dubliners* through *Finnegans Wake* is his increasing use of allusion. Each successive work shows a more and more pervasive use of the technique: the several dozen allusions in *Dubliners* become several in *Portrait*, several hundred in *Ulysses*, several thousand in *Finnegans Wake*." See "The Allusive Method in *Ulysses*," *Approaches to* Ulysses*: Ten Essays*, ed. Thomas F. Staley and Bernard Benstock (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1970) 235.

8. According to Cheng (206), this fragment is alluded to eleven times in *Finnegans Wake*. We could also mention here how this inclusive formula is in consonance with certain aspects of modern science as postulated by the general theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. The latter assigns the electron a dual nature, as energy and as light. At the beginning of the novel, in his parody of transubstantiation, Buck Mulligan talks about "corpuscles" (*U* 1.23). Curiously enough, this was the name given to the electron by J. J. Thomson, who first discovered it. In this sense, Bloom's scientific mind, in contrast to Stephen's, can be seen as a possible nod on Joyce's part to contemporary science. Similarly, later interpretations of Shakespeare's play present a more modern view of Hamlet's reflections, stressing that the quality of his doubts refers to the impossibility of reducing the world to a few uncomplicated statements. See, for example, Jan Kott, *Apuntes sobre Shakespeare*, trans. Jadwiga Maurizio (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1966) 88.

9. I refer here to the crtical opinions of Stuart Gilbert in *James Joyce's* Ulysses (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) 128, and Johnson 792.

10. Johnson 783.

11. Phillip Herring points out that Joyce "had an interest in documented cases of multiple personality which is an important aspect of indeterminate character in *Finnegans Wake*." See his study *Joyce's Uncertainty Principle* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) 189-90.

12. Notice also how in *Ulysses* Joyce prefers an Odyssean figure like Bloom to an Achillean character like Stephen. These influences and changes have been analyzed by W. B. Stanford in, for example, "Ulyssean Qualities in Joyce's Leopold Bloom," *Comparative Literature* 5 (1953): 125-36.

13. The phrase "all in all," which in *Hamlet* describes King Hamlet, is used in *Ulysses* to refer to Shakespeare (naturally, if it is true that Shakespare played the role of the ghost). In *Finnegans Wake*, however, phrases such as "allinall" (*FW* 242.31) and "allsall allinall" (*FW* 154.05) refer to HCE. According to Cheng (72), the system of correspondences between *Hamlet* and *Finnegans Wake* would be as follows: HCE = Ghost, Shem = Hamlet, Issy = Ofelia, and Shaun = Laertes.

14. Through "Ireland expects that every man this day will do his duty" (*U* 1.68-69) from "The Death of Nelson," and later on—"Mulligan is stripped of his garments" (1.510)—as a parody of the tenth Station of the Cross (Matt. 27: 28; John 19: 23-24): "Christ is stripped of his garments."

15. Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980) 63.

16. Something similar is anticipated in Stephen's theory about Hamlet, where different elements may correspond to different characters. The mathematical analogy mentioned by Buck Mulligan is adequate since the elements become variables with different values, as I have pointed out above.

17. Kenner (126), for example, writes about "Circe": "Deprived of reliable criteria for `reality,' we have no recourse save to read the text as though everything in it were equally real."

18. Mulligan is and is not a priest, but "ungirdled" and later on "untonsured" also indicate implicitly the usurping quality of his gestures, since both the girdle and the tonsure which Mulligan lacks are characteristic attributes of the priest.

19. The metaphoric quality of Stephen's language can also be seen as a source of indeterminacy, since it stresses a perception and representation of the world in terms of something else. It implies an addition, not a disjunction. "Chrysostomos" (*U* 1.26) would be an early instance of what is and is not, and it remains ambiguous in the text. On the other hand, even the sentimental structure of the novel can be affected by these processes. Through "vorrei/voglio e non vorrei" the possibility is presented that husbands and wives can be at the same time (accidental or potential) "lovers" of other people. Notice that we do not find "vorrei e non vorrei" but a variation of that phrase: "voglio e non vorrei," another example of "misquotations" which shows that the mistakes made by the characters or the errors in their language are as important as the non-errors.

20. See *U* 2.46-47: "For them too history was a tale like any other too often heard." Stephen refers to his pupils and the history lesson, revealing a repetitive, perhaps circular, sense of history. It seems that "a tale too often heard" is a prelude to his idea of history as a nightmare later on. In connection with the repetition of history, Friedrich Nietzsche and the myth of the eternal recurrence come readily to mind. Joyce was well acquainted with the work of the German philosopher who is alluded to by Buck Mulligan at the beginning of "Telemachus."

21. "All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God" (*U* 2.377).

22. In "Proteus" Stephen refers to the changing character of reality with the sentence "Put a pin in that chap" (*U* 3.399), and through a quote from *Hamlet*, "Ay, very like a whale" (*U* 3.144).

23. Herring XII.

24. "I have often thought since on looking over that strange time that it was that small act, trivial in itself, that striking of that match, that determined the whole aftercourse of both our lives" (*U* 7.763-65). An early postulation of the butterfly effect? See Thomas Jackson Rice, "*Ulysses*, Chaos, and Complexity," *James Joyce Quarterly* 31.2 (1994): 41-54.

25. See N. Katherine Hayles, *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1990).

26. Hayles 9.

27. Hayles 7.

28. See Johnson's interesting gloss of this passage: "Because perception results from the action of the senses (here the eyes) in concert with the mind (thought), the world becomes real *to Stephen*, as he `reads' (sees/thinks) it—though the emphasis is on his being there to perceive it, not on its being there to be perceived by him. The world exists before him (there must be a text to be read), but comes alive *to him* in the act of `reading' it" (783-84). When in *U* 9.1065-67 Stephen says that he doesn't believe his own theory, we may take it as an indication that his theory, like all scientific discourse, is no more than a cultural and linguistic construct. Stephen's words do not simply deny the validity of his own theory, they also question the validity of any theory. In the prologue to *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, George Bernard Shaw suggests that "every critic of Shakespeare draws the bard in his (the critic's) own image" (Johnson 842), which also turns critics into Demons of the Second Kind.

29. Hayles 9.

30. Cheng 204.

31. Margot Norris, *The Decentered Universe of* Finnegans Wake (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) 120.

32. Bernard Benstock, *Joyce Again's Wake* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1965) 40.

33. Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce* (Boston: Beacon, 1962) 304.

34. This has an echo in a sort of desideratum in *FW* 285.02: "habby cyclic erdor," connected in turn with 287.17 "applepine erdor[2]" where the footnote reads: "If we each could always do all we ever did."