

Mass Media and Communication in *Finnegans Wake*

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This nonday diary, this allnights newseryreel
(*FW* 489.35)

I.

Finnegans Wake is one of the most frustrating text ever written, because it seems to sabotage any interpretation of its meanings, thus discouraging the readers to solve its crux. Until recent years it had been regarded as a text impossible to read through and interpret intelligibly. Now many Joycean scholars are trying to figure out the structure and strategies of Joyce's last work, thus making possible the access to its interpretive meanings. I will argue that *Finnegans Wake* problematizes the premature closure of interpretation by revealing its multiple possibilities of interpretation rather than by hurrying to finalize its definite meanings. In an interview with Arthur Powers, Joyce remarks on the characteristic of his writing: "In other words, we must write dangerously; everything is inclined to change and flux nowadays and modern literature to be valid must express the flux" (Power

110). Joyce explores the ever-changing world by revolting against the traditional ways of narration and interpretation, just as Joyce once remarked, “One great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wideawake language, cutandry grammar and goahead plot” (*Letters* 3:146). In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce attempts to destabilize any fixed identification or signification. It would not be surprising that Jacques Derrida’s critique of logocentrism in the western culture is exemplified by Joyce’s linguistic experiments in *Finnegans Wake*. So I will discuss Joyce’s efforts to express the flux by focusing on various forms of mass media. It could be a feasible tactics to trace just one strand of the complicatedly woven tapestry of Joyce’s last work: mass media as for me.

It is a well-known fact that James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is a record of only one day, June 16, 1904, the day Joyce wants to immortalize since he went out with Nora Barnacle. Considering that all events taking place in *Ulysses* are diurnal, even though the last two chapters are late in the evening and overnight, *Finnegans Wake* could be a nocturnal diary as is expressed in this expression: “This nonday diary, this allnights newseryreel” (*FW* 489.35). “Nonday” could mean “non-day,” that is, “nocturnal,” just like “allnights.” In addition, “newseryreel” is a composite of nursery—a place where memories of childhood reside or the unconscious is constructed—and newsreel—a flickering world where daily events are reported. So this self-reflexive phrase characterizes *Finnegans Wake* as a composite of a diary, a newsreel, and a dream. In this sense, John Bishop’s regarding of *Finnegans Wake* as “her Evening World” (*FW* 28.20) could be appropriate in that *Finnegans Wake* deals with the night/dream world in a nocturnal diary/journal. The fact that Joyce still refers to many daily newspapers and magazines reveals his all-embracing attitude toward everything. Nothing is discarded in his scheme: everything returns with a difference. I argue that while *Ulysses* is a product of the age of journalism and printing, *Finnegans Wake* is a product of other forms of mass media—such as radio, television, and film, thus revealing Joyce’s vigilant awareness of the advent of a new era—what Donald Theall calls “a new age of communication,” in

which voice and text competes with each other (1995, 30).

Of Joyce's biographical facts, there are two interesting enterprises related to mass media: Joyce's persistent interest in journalism as an archive of cultural discourses, and his ambitious enterprise to run a movie theater in Dublin. With his friend, Francis Skeffington, Joyce had a plan to establish a weekly magazine, whose tentative title was *The Goblin*. So "a jimmy o'goblin" (*FW* 39.21) could be Joyce himself, since Joyce's childhood nickname was Sunny Jim, derived from an advertisement. Joyce's dream of becoming a journalist was realized when he had a chance to volunteer as a correspondent. While studying medicine in Paris, on April in 1903, he interviewed with a French racing-car driver, Henri Fournier, for the *Irish Times*, who was expected to compete in the second James Gordon Bennett cup race in July. This story is incorporated into "After the Race" in *Dubliners*.

After having left Dublin, Joyce seldom visited his home city, except the case in which he tried to set up a movie theater, Volta, in Dublin. Even though this entrepreneur failed, Joyce retained an interest in film throughout the rest of his life (Burkdall 4). He also met with Sergei Eisenstein, a forerunner in the film-making industry, in November 1929, and talked with him about doing a film version of *Ulysses*. Eisenstein's famous film technique, montage, finds its verbal equivalent in a portmanteau, at which Lewis Carroll is excellent.

My question is why Joyce was interested in mass media. Even though he often referred to newspaper articles as cultural resources for his work, I think that he presents the problematics of communication in that *Finnegans Wake* makes the reader always alert to the flux of the world/word and never expectant of any fixed identity or meaning. Joyce's awareness of the emergence of the new modes of mass media such as radios, televisions, and films, reveals itself in his frequent references to them. By foregrounding the problematics of communication, Joyce seems to succeed in making the process of reading a text incessantly unstable and reflexive, thus encouraging the reader to actively participate in the production of meanings. Joyce may agree with his literary disciple, Samuel Beckett, who remarks, "The danger is in the neatness of identifications" (3), just as this could be corroborated

by the following remark: “A being again in becomings again” (*FW* 491.23).

In this paper, I will discuss Joyce’s awareness of communication and its discontents by focusing on the figure of HCE and many forms of mass media. Above all, I would like to look into some references to popular journalism, in particular, comics, because Joyce always explores the convergences of popular discourse and Irish history and politics. To Joyce, journalists are “the redcolumnists of presswritten epics” (*FW* 438.18), in that journalists always compete with writers in claiming themselves as layman chroniclers or daily historians. Therefore, *Finnegans Wake* is “a choir of the O’Daley O’Doyle” (*FW* 48.13). A “choir” is the homonym of “quire,” which is an eight-page sheet for newspaper. “O’Daley” reminds us of the word, “daily,” and “O’Doyle” means the new government of the Free Irish State, “Dáil.” In all, “a choir of the O’Daley O’Doyle” could be “a daily newspaper of Dáil.” In this sense, David Pierce is right in pointing out that *Finnegans Wake* engages itself much in the Irish historical and political contexts:

Just as *Ulysses* belongs to a period of expectancy that found its now perennially hopeful expression in the one day in June in 1904, in a parallel way *Finnegans Wake* gives voice to the disorder and disillusionment that befell Irish politics in the immediate aftermath of the Anglo-Irish War, when civil war and internecine feuding broke out between the warring brothers Shem and Shaun. (245)

Although it is hard to disentangle *Finnegans Wake* from the specific historical contexts of Ireland, in particular, Irish independence and its distressful aftermath, Joyce also reveals his attempts to delineate transcultural and transnational universal patterns. *Finnegans Wake* itself is in flux, counterpoising between a series of binary oppositions – voice and text, eye and ear, time and space, etc.

II.

We need to trace and map out the contours of Joyce's interest in mass media in order to understand Joyce's awareness of the problems of communication. First of all, we need to pay attention to the gestation and development of the main father figure of *Finnegans Wake*. HCE is the primary male figure, one of whose nicknames is "Here Comes Everybody." Before we follow the traces of HCE's multiple transformations, it would be appropriate to examine the Ur-HCE figure, Pop. If it is admitted that Pop's features are transferred to HCE, it would be helpful to consider them. David Hayman summarizes Pop as being "at once realistic, comic and endearing, a fit subject for a newspaper feuilleton or a situation comedy" (13). It would be interesting to examine the genetic process of this figure. In late August, 1923, Joyce began to work on a new sketch, "Here Comes Everybody," which displaces the figure of Pop having frequently appeared in the earlier notes. In November the same year he expanded the "Here Comes Everybody" sketch into a full-scale narrative of a carnivalesque HCE, whose agnomen transmutes itself like a linguistic chameleon into another important figure, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, "this man of hod, cement and edifices" (*FW* 4.26-27), and so on.

The first step to trace HCE's transformations is to consider the genesis of "Here Comes Everybody," the well-known nickname for Hugh Culling Eardsley Childers, Liberal MP in Gladstone's cabinet during the first Home Rule period. He was known as "Here Comes Everybody" probably because he was notable for his girth, as is shown by the 1887 Harry Furniss cartoon (see the figure 1) in *Punch* that produced the first recorded instance of the nickname (Fordham 205-6). This nickname functions as a spring board from which the transformations of HCE spin off. HCE has "An imposing everybody" (*FW* 32.19), which does not only imply Childers's physical feature of obesity, but also presents the problem of universalization (*everybody*) as well as the significance of the body (*everybody*). We should not forget that Joyce must have adopted this nickname for its humorous connotation, because his nickname was developed from the *Punch* cartoon image.

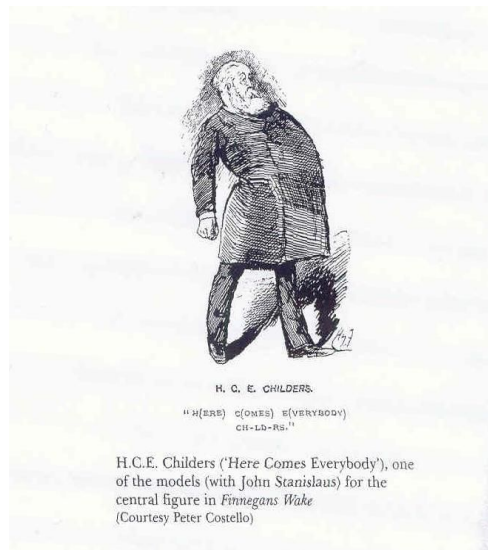


figure 1. Here Comes Everybody

Through the multiple transformations of HCE, Joyce incessantly interrogates their universal characteristics by locating specific historical contexts, and at the same time undermines the universality of a specific event by locating it in a historical context.

Throughout *Finnegans Wake*, HCE incessantly transforms into another entity. Of the transformations, the most significant is H. C. Earwicker. In 1933, Joyce read an article concerning the name of O'Reilly in *Weekly Irish Times*. This article explains that an earwig, an insect called *perce-oreille* in French, burrows into the human brain through the ear and lays her eggs there. Joyce relates this insect's penetration into the ear to the Annunciation, and, by extension, the Incarnation, two major incidents in Christian theology, because the Holy Ghost as an image of the dove is believed to have entered Maria through her ear, in particular, her tympanum. Joyce dismantles the mysterious aura of Incarnation by proposing a natural phenomenon. Another suggestive connection of HCE is "an evocation of the words of consecration in the Roman Catholic mass (incidentally the longest wake

on record): *Hoc est eim corpus meum* ('For this is my body')" (Bishop 141). This also trivializes the holiness of the sanctified body of Christ. In connection with "The Ballad of Percy O'Reilly," Earwicker once again becomes identified as O'Rahilly, an Irish revolutionary in 1916 Easter Rising, or John Boyle O'Reilly, a member of Irish Republican Brotherhood: "Surrection! Eirewecker to the wohld bludyn world. O rally, O rally, O rally!" (*FW* 593.2-4). As Catherine Whitley points out, this ballad takes the form of the historical annal, which chronologically describes some important moments of Irish history (166). This strategy of extended transformation is deployed in order to interrogate the problems of fixed identities. HCE transforms by means of what Claude Jacquet would call "verbal chimera" (31): transmigration of souls (=metempsychosis), (radio) transmission, transubstantiation in the sacrament, transgression (=sin), etc.

First of all, Joyce shows his interest in journalism by referring to moguls of English journalism: "newnesboys pearcing screaming off their armworths" (*FW* 363.6). This phrase unmistakably describes the scene of newspaper boys screaming for sale, but also includes the names of three moguls in newspaper world such as Newnes, Pearson, and Harmsworth, Lord Northcliff. These persons were responsible for the emergence of popular magazines with tabloid formats introduced. Since then, newspapers could not have maintained their readership only with letters, because they revolutionized the media by visualizing the papers. It was Harmsworth, Lord Northcliff, who led the vanguard of revolutionary methods in newspaper publishing industry. He made the first page of his newspaper vividly visualized by putting advertisements. In addition, he came from Chaplizon, the place where Isolde lived according to the legend. As Kimberly J. Devlin explains, the newspapers form "the city's lifeblood" during the day time, and at the same time they "pose an acute psychological threat" (37). The name of Harmsworth is once again mentioned in transmitting the story of the crime committed by HCE in the park: "Our pigeons pair are flewn for northcliffs. The three of crows have flapped it southenly, kraaking of de baccle to the kvarters of that sky" (*FW* 10.26-11.2). In his childhood, Joyce grew up reading magazines published by the

Harmsworth empire (Kershner 6). Joyce's "nursery" world was populated by these popular magazines including *Punch* and *Judy*: "Punch may be pottleproud but his Judy's a wife's wit better" (*FW* 255.16).

We need to pay attention to another famous publishing mogul, William Beaverbrook, as is referred to in such a phrase: "Milkinghoneybeaverbrooker" (*FW* 72.10). He was the owner of *Daily Express*, *Evening Standard*, and *Pall Mall Gazette*. Another reference reminiscent of his publication career can be found: "Perousse instate your *Weekly Standerd*, our verile organ that is ethelred by all pressdom" (*FW* 439.35-440.1). *Weekly Standard* was also published by Beaverbrook. Joyce relates Beaverbrook with the promised land, full of milk and honey. The "verile organ" means two things: "true (=veri) organ" and "virile organ" (=penis). In addition, "stand" means the erection of a male organ. This may suggest that sexual discourses employed in British journalism is related to British imperialism in that John Bull, England's representative figure, plays a male patron to the feminized Ireland, even though Britannia symbolizes the British empire to the rest of the world. In addition, a reference to Father Finn's *Ethelred Preston*, a Catholic novel written primarily for young people, shows that Joyce must have been aware of the great influence that these magazines had on the minds of young people. If this also refers to an English King, Ethelred the Unready, the political implication would loom larger. The tendency of visualization in popular magazines does not suggest the transition of modes, but rather indicates the commercialization of the body, especially feminine. The distortion of real life in cartoons, photographs, and advertisements could be in a sense an artistic strategy. Randal Harrison remarks on this point: "[t]he cartoon is a *form*, which does not *conform*, but rather *deforms*; and in doing so, it *informs*" (67).

One of the most frequently referred to in *Finnegans Wake* is *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday*. This magazine originated from a comic strip getting its debut in *Judy* in 1867. But by 1884 this comic strip gained such popularity as to be established as a regular magazine. Ally Sloper avoids his landlord and his creditors by 'sloping' down the alleys, and the half-holiday is a Victorian practice of allowing workers



figure 2. Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday

to be home at a lunchtime on Saturday for watching the football games. “Allsap’s ale halliday” (*FW* 264.3-4) combines an advertisement “Allsop’s Ale” with the magazine, *Ally Sloper’s Half-Holiday*. This combination may suggest that Joyce must have understood the way in which magazines and advertising businesses altogether tend to focus on visualizing effects. The image of Ally Sloper as a rascal running away without paying the rent is related to Irish agitators who boycotted and revolted against the land system in the late nineteenth century Ireland. Another thing we must heed is the fact that Ally Sloper’s friend, Ikey Moses, is a typical Jewish pickpocket (Schiff 207). As we can guess from the expression, “the *Ikish Tames*” (*FW* 424.3), Joyce connects the *Irish Times* with Ikey Moses. In *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan denounces Bloom as “Ikey Moses” (*U* 9.607), which registers the symmetrical racial discrimination toward the Jewish and Irish people in British journalism. Another possibility is the Jewish Thames, the British empire under the Jewish economic power. Earwicker is also called “jewbeggar” (*FW* 70.34-5), reminding Joyce’s contemporaries of Josephy Beggar, a hunchbacked Parnellite as

well as a Jewish beggar. In another place, Joyce says about the reason why he emphasizes on this magazine in particular: “Who brought us into the yellow world” (*FW* 288.fn2) and “all them allied sloopers” (*FW* 288.fn4). By using a military imagery, “allied sloopers,” Joyce warns the reader of the attacks of “yellow journalism.” Just as in the cover page of this issue (See figure 2), Ally Sloper is shown as painting nude bodies, which suggests the seedy materials of popular magazines permeated into daily lives. In short, our lives are constructed unwittingly through various forms of mass media.

Finnegans Wake registers the transition of attention from aural sensations to visual perceptions, which populate the world of printing and publication. It is not surprising that a lot of nursery rhymes and childhood games are mentioned in *Finnegans Wake*. Popular magazines in Joyce’s childhood displaced aural materials such as nursery rhymes by visualizing themselves. It is not surprising that a lot of comic magazines on both sides of the Atlantic are referred to in *Finnegans Wake*, since the cartoonist imagination functions to cross the borderlines of cultural, social, and political discourses. Especially, it is worth remembering many references to comic strips on both sides of the Atlantic ocean: “Tilly the Tailor” (*FW* 385.33)—a reference to an American comic strip, Tilly the Toiler—and “comic cuts” (*FW* 286.8). Joyce must have been fascinated by the cartoonist’s creative imagination, which can make anything happen, for example, resisting even the law of physics. Furthermore, cartoon characters like Mutt and Jeff, the prototypes of Shem-Shaun, even Vladimir and Estragon of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, present good sources for humor.

References to radio transmission also present the problematics of communication. In *Ulysses*, Joyce has already introduced Bloom’s eccentric idea about gramophone: “Eyes, walk, voice. Well, the voice, yes: gramophone. Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house” (*U* 6.962-64). In his famous essay, Jacques Derrida picks up a phrase and explicates his theory. In the pub scene (II.3), there are many references to radio transmission: “a Bellini-Tosti coupling system with a vitaltone speaker, capable of capturing skybuddies, harbour craft

emittences, key clickings, vaticum cleaners” (*FW* 309.19-20). Bellini and Tosi are pioneers of radiotelegraphy, with the “coupling system” meaning the coupling of units in radio amplifications (McHugh 309). It is needless to say that the phrase, “harbour craft emittences,” which means radio signals from boats, reminds the reader of an acronymic transformation of HCE. Here an interesting portmanteau is “vaticum cleaners,” because it combines Vatican radio broadcasting and a vacuum cleaner, which is known to cause interferences with radios. Joyce associates this interference with the Vatican radio service, by making a blasphemous pun on the eucharist (L., viaticum)” (Theall 1997, 77). Joyce implies that the propaganda of the Vatican radio broadcasting is interfered by radio waves produced by vacuum cleaners. Communication is interrupted by the phenomenon of interference, just as is exemplified by the one between radio and vacuum cleaner. Joyce must be aware of “this wireless age” (*FW* 489.36). HCE as the Host is called “birth of an otion” (*FW* 309.12), which alludes to the ocean, to a little ear and an oracle (both little ear and oracle=a Greek word, *ôtion*). This word also refers to the title of Griffith’s film *The Birth of a Nation* (Theall 1997, 76). Joyce expects of a new age when “Television kills telephony in brothers’ broil” (*FW* 52.18).

Joyce’s interest in motion pictures led him to attempt to set up and operate a movie theater in Dublin, Volta Theater, which turned out to be a failure. Earwicker’s innocent version of the sin that he committed in the Phoenix Park is filmed, televised, and aired. The “Feenichts Playhouse” (*FW* 219.2) is related to a film, “wordloosed over seven seas crowdblast in cellelletetuslavzendlatinsound scripts” (*FW* 219.6). John Roche Ardill enumerates the “seven sister tongues”—Celtic, Hellenic, Teutonic, Slavic, Zend, Latin, and Sanskrit (McHugh 219). The “soundscript,” which sounds like Sanskrit, implies the method of combining voice and text that movies employ. By referring to seven world languages, Joyce shows that film makes it possible to share HCE’s crime scene with people all “over seven seas.” Joyce also admits his debt to the invention of movies: “Thank Movies from the innermost depths of my still attrite heart” (*FW* 194.2-3). Joyce makes the real world compete with “the reel world,” a cinematographic representation of the real

world: “And roll away the reel world, the reel world, the reel world!” (*FW* 64.25-26).

III.

In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce presents the problem of communication by questioning all modes possible. What concept or phenomenon could be in binary opposition to communication? Perhaps interference could be the answer, considering Joyce’s employment of the cybernetic network in *Finnegans Wake*. Here we need to mention the famous episode of Joyce’s collaboration with Samuel Beckett.

Once or twice, [Joyce] dictated a bit of *Finnegans Wake* to Beckett, though such dictation did not work very well for him; in the middle of one such session there was a knock at the door which Beckett didn’t hear. Joyce said, “Come in,” and Beckett wrote it down. Afterwards he read back what he had written and Joyce said, “What’s that ‘Come in’?” “Yes, you said that,” said Beckett. Joyce thought for a moment, then said, “Let it stand.” He was quite willing to accept coincidence as his collaborator. Beckett was fascinated and thwarted by Joyce’s singular method. (Ellmann 649)

Joyce’s singular method exemplifies the function of contingency and serendipity to interfere communication. One of the strategies Joyce deploys in his work is to find out a hole in the whole. He always questions the perfection of human experience as well as the seamless totality of reality by disrupting it. Joyce’s use of portmanteau enables him to converge binary oppositions into a paradox—such as “chaosmos”(cosmos + chaos), “fict” (fact + fiction), “voise” (voice + noise), and so on. But the resulting effect is convincing and heuristic. In addition, Joyce promulgates this strategy, thus spreading in a multidirectional way.

Joyce seems to undermine the valorization of any sense, whatever it is. He

changes the opening of the Gospel of St. John into the following expression:

In the beginning was the gest he jousstly says, for the end is with woman,
flesh-without-word, while the man to be is in a worse case after than before
since she on the supine satisfies the verg to him! (*FW* 468.5-8).

Marcel Jousse, whose lectures on gesture Joyce attended in 1929, claimed that language originates in gesture. To Joyce, an integrated process of communication is based on gesture, whose etymological root, 'gest,' eventually becomes the "flesh-without-word," an inverted version of "the word made flesh." Joyce's substitution reminds us of the combined meaning of gesture and jest (Theall 1997, 54-55). The "verg" signifies a male organ, because the verge in French is a penis. Joyce alters the gist of Christian credo by combining communication with communion. Furthermore, he extends communication to the body, to which eating is indispensable: "communicake with the original sinse" (*FW* 239.1-2), because communion is a religious ritual of participating in the consumption of the Word. Digestion has a common root 'gest.' What Joyce seems to want is the orchestration of all senses, especially on the condition that the western civilization tends to give priority to vision over hearing. Joyce's juxtaposition of sin and Sinn (German, Meaning) is an important clue to understanding the core of Christian orthodox credo, *felix culpa*. This is why Joyce seems engrossed in the Fall motif, ranging from nursery rhymes, e.g. Humpty Dumpty, to an Irish ballad, "Finnegan's Wake." Joyce reexamines the primacy of any one sense over the others by employing an amalgamation of all senses. In western culture, the eye and the ear are competing with each other for a univocal domination. By changing an element in a compound word, Joyce presents a new perspective on the problem of the priority of sensation: for example, "earwitness to the thunder of his arafatas" (*FW* 5.14-5), and furthermore, "an eye, ear, nose, and throat witness" (*FW* 86.32-33). In another place, which emphasizes on the total combination of all senses, Joyce interrogates the predominance of any one sense in order to "make soundsense and sensesound kin again" (*FW* 121.15): "all your sightseeing and soundhearing and smellsniffing

and tastytasting and tenderrumstouchings” (*FW* 237.16-17). In this sense, *Finnegans Wake* is a complex product based on various senses and resists any totalizing and monadic interpretation of it. Louis Armand succinctly summarizes this Joycean strategy:

In this way Joyce poses a challenge to mimetic conceptions of language—a challenge that involves not only a disruption of the binary category *sensible-intelligible*, but also the empirical conception which would impose a casually linear relation of language to (the) sense(s). (50)

Another more serious problem in communication is highlighted in a comic pair, Mutt and Jute, Irishman and invader. This pair is derived from the comic couple, Mutt and Jeff, whose variations—Jute and Mutt (*FW* 16.10-18.16), Butt and Taff (*FW* 338.5-355.7), Bett and Tipp (*FW* 342.30-1), and Juva and Muta (*FW* 609.24-610.32)—are referred to many times in *Finnegans Wake*. What is more important is that their communication is impossible, for one is “jeffmute” (*FW* 16.14) and the other hardly “hauhauhauhaudibble” (*FW* 16.18). Here Joyce presents gesture as the only way of communication between the mute and the deaf. HCE also has a speech impediment, stuttering, which makes it difficult to communicate with others. It is well known that Joyce was familiar with Lewis Carroll’s verbal habit, and was much influenced by the latter’s language games, such as portmanteau words.

Communication is sometimes not completed when its transmission is interrupted. The postcard is a form that blurs the distinction between private and public, while the purloined letter contaminates both the sender and the receiver.

I will let me take it upon myself to suggest to twist the penman’s tale posterwise. The gist is the gist of Shaum but the hand is the hand of Sameas. (*FW* 483.1-4)

Here Joyce warns the reader of a possibility of mistaken identity, because the

latter sentence reminds the reader of a line in the Genesis: “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau”(Genesis 27:22). Jacob’s deception is repeated in a different form, forgery, in *Finnegans Wake*, since Jim the penman, James Townsend Savard, was a forger. Joyce must have in mind Richard Pigott’s forgery of Parnell’s letter, which is also related to HCE: “HeCitEncy!” (*FW* 421.23). Shem the penman is always in opposition to Shaun the postman in the fraternal struggle. Shaum/Sameas is a combined figure of Shem and Shaun, like Stoom or Blephen in *Ulysses*, and in addition, Shem could be a sham. The letter that the hen or *poule* found in the litter was “a goodish-sized sheet of letterpaper originating by transhipment from Boston (Mass.)” (*FW* 111.8-10). It refers to T. S. Eliot’s poem, “The *Boston Evening Transcript*.” Another variation, “traumscript from Maston, Boss” (*FW* 623.36), implies that *Finnegans Wake* is the dream text, because the German “traum” is dream. In other words, it could be “newsletters” (*FW* 390.1) or “the Litvian Newsestlatter” (*FW* 382.13). But if the contents of the private letter were made public, its aftermath could be huge, because the letter tells about HCE’s sin in the Phoenix park.

In conclusion, Joyce presents a cultural history of mass media as well as Irish history in *Finnegans Wake*. In other words, he himself is writing the “chronicles of disorder” in opposition to the official version of history, which tends to deal only with great men and grand events. The dream language of *Finnegans Wake* always glides across our consciousness, thus giving an obscure glimpse of its reality. Representation is impossible to Joyce, who tries to grasp the flux of the world in his final work. In other words, reading *Finnegans Wake* is the experience being “caught up in an interstitial space, a ‘zone of nonconformity’” (Nunes 59). The world of *Finnegans Wake* with which Joyce is presenting the reader is “the chaosmos of Alle” (*FW* 118.21).

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*Abstract*Mass Media and Communication in
Finnegans Wake

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James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* presents us with a number of self-reflexive expressions, for example, "This nonday diary, this allnights newseryreel" (*FW* 489.35). This means that *Finnegans Wake* is a work about the nocturnal world, which is also the dream world. So Joyce adopts a different strategy to deal with this nocturnal world. His last work registers the new era of mass media including newspapers, illustrated periodicals, and motion pictures. It problematizes interpretation itself by interrogating a variety of communication modes, thus undermining its complacency.

Joyce focuses on the influence of popular discourses on the minds in childhood and explores the visualized pages of popular journalism, in particular, comic strips. His reference to such comic figures as Mutt and Jeff, Ally Sloper, and so forth reveals that his childhood world is populated with these comic characters. The main character of *Finnegans Wake*, HCE, is also derived from a cartoon image, and his incessant transformations are made possible by the cartoonist imagination. References to various forms of mass media show Joyce's concern about the influence of popular discourses on the common people.

By exploring these modes of communication, Joyce presents the problematics of communication. First of all, he questions the valorization of any sense, whether visual or aural. In addition, communication is not completed when it is interrupted. By using an example of interference in radio, Joyce puts communication into question. In *Finnegans Wake*, which deals with the dream world, he destabilizes any complacency of identification, thus making any interpretation incomplete. So

his interest in mass media corroborates his strategy of problematizing the process of interpretation itself.

■ Key words : Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, mass media, popular culture, communication

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