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Death on the Missisliffi: *Huckleberry Finn in Finnegans Wake*

by KELLY ANSPAUGH

*mark my words and append to my
mark twang, that will open your
pucktricker's ops for you. . . .*
—*Finnegans Wake* 425.29-30

On August 8, 1937, James Joyce wrote to his step-grandson, the eighteen-year-old American David Fleischman:

I have sent you registered a book you certainly will have read as a young boy, probably more than once. I need to know something about it. I never read it and have nobody to read it to me and it takes too much time with all I am doing. Could you perhaps refresh your memory by a hasty glance through and then dictate to your mother . . . an account of the plot in general as if it were a new book the tale of which you had to narrate in a book review. After that I should like you to mark with blue pencil in the margin the most important passages of the plot itself and in red pencil here and there wherever the words or dialogue seem to call for the special attention of a European. Don't care about spoiling the book. It is a cheap edition. If you can then return it to me soon I shall try to use whatever bears upon what I am doing. (*Selected Letters* 387)

Joyce critics have drawn two conclusions from this letter. The first is that "quotations from *Huckleberry Finn* [the book to which Joyce refers] were among the last insertions to be made by Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*" (Atherton 75)—a conclusion supported by a perusal of the *Huck Finn* pages of a *Wake* workbook at Buffalo.¹ The second conclusion drawn from the letter is that "despite his many references to Mark Twain, Joyce never read him" (Tindall 185). Anthony Burgess writes that Joyce's interest in Twain was "mainly verbal," and remarks "sadly, it has to be confessed that Joyce was no real Mark Twain scholar" (1-2). The consensus appears to be that Joyce simply cannibalized Twain's novel, took various phrases from it further to universalize his *Wake*, to give it some American color.²

In his recent study of Joyce, John Bishop rejects this view. He argues that "the spectral transaction by which *Huckleberry Finn* actually does find its way into *Finnegans Wake* suggests quite the opposite of what is usually assumed by

1. The essays on the *Huck/Wake* intertext by Atherton and Rose proceed from a close analysis of this workbook. See Rose's edition.

2. For two other short but important analyses of the Joyce/Twain intertext, see Laidlaw and Jenkins. I have also found useful McHugh's *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* and, for tracking down Twainian character names and titles, Glasheen's *Census*.

people referring to this [the Fleischman] letter. Joyce knew the novel quite well" (412 n 81).³ Bishop thinks Joyce very much aware of the major themes and subthemes of Twain's text, and "would have found many of the central concerns of *Huckleberry Finn* falling right into alignment with the *Wake*: Twain's sustained interest in death, the night, witching and spirits, dream interpretation and dreams, and rebirth, which critics have recently regarded as a controlling theme of the book" (412 n 81). Unfortunately, Bishop's reading of the Joyce/Twain intertext is undeveloped, limited to one text paragraph and two long notes. I, therefore, shall present below a more extended (yet far from exhaustive) analysis of this intertext. My focus shall be the theme of death, and my thesis, that Joyce's allusions to *Huck* constitute a close and sensitive reading of what I shall term the thanatological subtext of Twain's novel.

Before turning to Joyce, however, I must first establish that a deathly subtext does indeed exist in *Huck*. A great many critics of Twain's novel have noted its pervasive morbidity. Robert G. Patterson, for example, sees Huck's staging of his own murder in Chapter 7 as reminiscent of the initiation rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries, wherein "the death of the pig [Huck slaughters a pig for its blood] suggested the ritual death of the initiate" (11). Likewise, J. Hillis Miller observes that Huck time and again wishes out loud for death, and that his narrative manifests "so complete an openness to inhuman nature that it is as if Huck were already dead" (41). Deathliness attaches as well to Twain's literary allusions, particularly his echoes of the Book of Exodus.⁴ This intertext is established in the first chapter, during a scene of reading:

After supper she [the Widow Douglas] got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers; and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him; because I don't take no stock in dead people. (2)

The irony of this scene is that Huck, despite his rejection of the defunct Patriarch, himself emerges as a type of "Mississippi Moses": just as Moses leads the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, so Huck leads Jim out of American slavery, etc. So the character of Huck echoes that of the dead man. The Exodus motif surfaces again during the ultra-violent Shepherdson-Grangerford episode, where Huck is riddled by a character critics have identified as his double, Buck Grangerford:

he asked me where Moses was when the candle went out; I said I didn't know; I hadn't heard about it before, no way.

"Well, guess," he says.

"How'm I going to guess," says I, "when I never heard tell about it before?"

"But you can guess, can't you? It's just as easy."

"Which candle?" I says.

3. Atherton, although basing his analysis primarily upon the evidence of the holograph notebook, does comment that "it seems probable that some of Joyce's words came from *Huckleberry Finn* without being first entered in the notebook" (77). Jenkins introduces his short essay by graciously acknowledging Atherton and then reminding the reader that Joyce "also possessed a marked copy of the novel itself" (89)—thereby suggesting that analyses based solely upon the notebook are likely to miss some of the *Huck* in the *Wake*.

4. For the most extensive treatment of this intertext to date, see Collins.

"Why, any candle," he says.

"I don't know where he was," says I; "where was he?"

"Why, he was in the *dark*! That's where he was!"

"Well, if you knowed where he was, what did you ask me for?"

"Why, blame it, it's a riddle, don't you see?" (135)

Kenneth Seib comments, "to Buck Grangerford's question, Huck can supply no answer. Moses, of course, was in the dark—and so is Huck" (14). By "in the dark" I read "dead." Through rejecting the dead Moses, Huck is repressing the recognition of his own death: the recognition that he is a dead man (or rather boy) telling tales. It makes sense according to this reading that Buck should be slaughtered before Huck's very eyes (conclusion of Chapter 18), and that Huck should respond by covering his dead double's face—another gesture of denial. It is also appropriate that later in the narrative we should encounter a character by the name of "Buck Harkness" (190)—a name that combines "Buck" and "Huck," while simultaneously recalling the Twainian *memento mori* expression "hark from the tomb!" (225). Finally, given Twain's lifelong preoccupation with Moses, it is likely that he was aware of the fact that the authorship of the Pentateuch is attributed by tradition to this figure (is in fact popularly called "The Five Books of Moses") in spite of the fact that it contains the story of Moses' death. Moses, therefore, emerges as the first of our culture's thanatographers, and Huck Finn, by the logic of association, as one of its latest.

That Joyce is aware that *Huckleberry Finn* is a type of new book of the dead is suggested by his tendency—as pointed out by Bishop—to associate it allusively with the "old" or Egyptian Book of the Dead, which appears in the *Wake* under various titles such as "the *Bug of the Deaf*" (134.35) or "boke of the deeds" (13.30-31) (also the Doomsday book) or "the going forth by black" (62.27)—an ironical echo of the alternative title "The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day."⁵ Early in his text Joyce evokes the attempt on the part of Finn's watchers to put him back to rest: "Now be aisy, good Mr Finnimore, sir. And take your laysure like a god on pension and don't be walking abroad" (24.16-17). This scene is re-presented two pages later as follows: "And that's ashore as you were born. Your shuck tick's swell. And that there texas is tow linen. The loamsome roam to Laffayette is ended. Drop in your tracks, babe! Be not unrested!" (26.14-17). One immediately recognizes Twain's twang: "that's ashore as you were born" recalls Huck's "sure as you are born," "shuck tick's swell" Huck's shuck tick mattress, "texas" the texas of the steamship *Walter Scott*, and so on.⁶ Joyce's "loamsome roam" Bishop interprets thanatologically as Huck's "'lonesome' road to the 'loamy' grave" (112). The watchers' message to this Hucky Finn?

5. Bishop notes "[Joyce] advised Frank Budgen to compose an article on *Finnegans Wake* entitled 'James Joyce's Book of the Dead.' Budgen seems dutifully to have done this in an essay published as 'Joyce's Chapters of Going Forth By Day,' which, apart from its title and a casual reference, has much of value to say about the *Wake* but little to do with the Book of the Dead" (87). The text of the Book of the Dead Joyce used while writing the *Wake* was translated by E.A. Wallis Budge ("a budge of kleeves" [511.30]). Given Joyce's superstitious mind and taste for coincidence, one wonders if he thought Budgen the man for the essay because of the similarity of his name to that of the book's translator.

6. All of these allusions are identified by McHugh, who also lists the chapters of *Huck* in which they appear (26).

“Boo, you’re through!” (247.12). Joyce continues this passage by turning to the Egyptian Book:

The headboddylwatcher of the chempel of Isid, Totumcaltum, saith: I know thee, metherrjar, I know thee, salvation boat. For we have performed upon thee, thou abramanation, who comest ever without being invoked, whose coming is unknown, all the things which the company of the precentors and of the grammarians of Christpatrick’s ordered concerning thee in the matter of the work of thy tombing. (26.17-23)

Roland McHugh provides the parallel text from the Book of the Dead:

Osiris Ra, triumphant, saith . . . I have performed upon thee all the things which the company of the gods ordered concerning thee in the matter of the work of thy slaughter. Get thee back, thou abomination of Osiris . . . I know thee . . . O thou that comest without being invoked, & whose [time of coming] is unknown. (26)

Thus we have a three-way intertext at work here which might be termed “*Wake/Dead/Huck*.”

One imagines Joyce reading *Huck* and, when coming upon Buck’s riddle about Moses’ darkling whereabouts, experiencing a jolt of *dejà vu*, for Joyce had employed the same riddle in *Ulysses*, where Leopold Bloom is Moses’ ironical avatar. The chapter is the catechistic “Ithaca”:

What self-evident enigma pondered with desultory constancy during 30 years did Bloom now, having effected natural obscurity by the extinction of artificial light, silently suddenly comprehend? Where was Moses when the candle went out? (729)⁷

Buck’s riddle comes back in Chapter 10 of *Finnegans Wake* in the form of a not-so-pious marginal gloss: “*Puzzly, puzzly, I smell a cat*” (275.1-2), which Jenkins correctly identifies as an echo of Huck’s characterization of the audience at a performance of “The Royal Nonesuch”: “I smelt sickly eggs . . . and if I know the signs of a dead cat being around, and I bet I do, there was sixty-four of them went in” (198; Jenkins 91).⁸ This gloss can also be read as a knowing wink to the reader, or Joyce’s gesture of recognition that Huck is “doorknobs dead” (378.1-2), that he is suffering from “a bad attack of maggot” (410.6). Joyce wants us to know that he is a clever reader of Twain’s subtext, that he “sniffed that lad long before anyone” (95.19). He offers alternative titles for Twain’s—and his own—deathbook, including “*Suppotes a Ventriliquorst Merries a Corpse, Lapps for Finns This Funnycoon’s Week*” (105.20-21). Joyce’s echoes of Twain’s title, in fact, usually raise shadows of the grave. “Hurdlebury Fenn” (297.20; my emphasis) evokes both Huck’s burial and fenny Dublin (the Town of the Ford of the Hurdles). “Harkabuddy, feign!” (346.25) reminds us to remember our last ends or, as Huck puts it, to “hark from the tomb!” Twain’s novel exists in a sort

7. That Joyce is aware of the morbidity that attaches to Moses and his story is suggested by his references in the *Wake* to Mount Nebo, where Moses met his end: “No nubo no! Neblas on you liv!” (11.5); “Come nebo me” (11.16); “nebohood” (235.16).

8. Joyce’s gloss also echoes Yeats’s *A Vision* (1938), where the mystic poet recalls his experience with automatic writing: “Sometimes if I had been ill some astringent smell like that of resinous wood filled the room, and sometimes, though rarely, a bad smell. These were often warnings: a smell of cat’s excrement announced some being that had to be expelled . . .” (16). One imagines Joyce found Yeats’s recollection hilarious, and also that it fed his (in)famous “cloacal obsession.”

of dream time, a death time, a “hevnly buddhy time” (234.13-14). Finally, *Huckleberry Finn* is also Huckleberry’s *fin*—his mortal end—and Twain is most certainly the “faunayman” (25.32) at “Hugglebelly’s Funniral” (137.12). To present us with a book whose speaker is dead Joyce considers “Mark Time’s Finist Joke” (455.29) (“Finny. Vary vary finny!” [519.14]). It is a joke Joyce would repeat in his own thanatographical “Funnycoon’s Wick” (499.13).⁹

Not only does Joyce recognize that Huck is in some sense dead, but he also hits on the cause of death: suicide. Many critics have read Huck’s faking of his own death as a symbolical suicide. On a page full of *Huck* echoes, Joyce writes of Hosty, “setting on a twoodstool on the verge of selfabyss, most starved, with melancholia over everything in general, (night birman, you served him with natigal’s nano!)” (40.21-25).¹⁰ Compare this passage with Huck’s melancholy recollection of being alone in his room at the Widow’s:

I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead. The stars was shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful; and I heard an owl [Joyce’s “night birman”?], away off, who-whooping about somebody that was dead. . . . Then away out in the woods I heard that kind of a sound that a ghost makes when it wants to tell about something that’s on its mind and can’t make itself understood, and so can’t rest easy in its grave and has to go about that way every night grieving. (4)

Huck’s reference to the grieving ghost finds a clear echo in the *Wake*: “but let your ghost have no grievance” (24.27-28).¹¹ Joyce’s passage continues with Hosty “lighting upon a sidewheel dive somewhere off the Dullkey Downlairy and Bleakrooky tramaline where he could throw true and go blow the sibicidal napper off himself for two bits to boldywell baltitude in the peace and quitybus of a one sure shot bottle” (40.29-33). “Lighting upon a sidewheel dive” recalls the scene in Chapter 16 of Twain’s text where a juggernaut-like steamboat runs down the raft: “I dived—and I aimed to find the bottom, too, for a thirty-foot wheel had got to go over me” (131). Joyce has partially transformed Huck’s momentous dive into a suicidal leap from a Dublin tram. “Blow the sibicidal napper off himself” echoes a scene from Twain’s Chapter 41, where Huck is being interrogated by the doctor about Tom Sawyer’s gunshot wound:

“How’d you say he got shot?”
 “He had a dream,” I says, “and it shot him.”
 “Singular dream,” he says. (343)

If one has a dream (while taking a “napper”) and the dream shoots one, one could be said to be shooting oneself, committing “sibicide”—killing one’s brother self—or, like Hamlet, making one’s quietus (“quitybus”). The idea of shooting oneself comes back very late in the *Wake*, in a passage that exhibits “twainly” (267.18) diction: “by jings, someone would make a carpus of somebody with the

9. Bishop tends to read death in *Finnegans Wake* as a metaphor for sleep, although he acknowledges that one could put things the other way around, in which case “the hero of the *Wake* would turn out not to be a sleeping man, but a corpse, his departed spirit wandering in the other world” (125). This is how I tend to read both Joyce and Twain, while recognizing the importance of sleep and dream in both.

10. Atherton offers a close analysis of Joyce’s transformation of Twain’s language to produce this passage (76-77).

11. Danis Rose has also detected this echo (19).

greatest of pleasure by private shootings" (616). Joyce appears to recognize the pleasure principle at work behind the death wish. Another means of suicide that comes up in *Huck* is hanging. Jim in fact warns Huck that he should "keep 'way fum de water as much as you kin, en don't run no resk, 'kase it's down in de bills dat you's gwyne to git hung" (22). This prophecy comes to fruition in the *Wake*, where, after being led through "hackleberries" and "hockinbechers," we are told HCE "hacked his way through hickheckhocks but hanged hishelp from there hereafters" (130.14-20). I read here the coded message "Huck hanged himself from the rafters." Joyce realizes that Twain's humor, like his own, is of the gallows variety: "Murk, his vales are darkling" (23.23). "Mark the Twy" (22.5) is also "Mark the Tris" (22.29).

In his analysis of the Book of the Dead, Bishop emphasizes the importance for Joyce of those passages treating Amen-Ra, god of the sun. Amen-Ra each day travels across the sky in the Ant-boat, or boat of the rising sun. At night this boat descends to the underworld, there to run a terrifying gauntlet. "Worshippers of Amen-Ra," remarks Bishop, "aspired to attain a place in the boat of the sun—the Boat of Millions of Years—reasoning that if one secured a position in the sun god's company, one would attain eternal light and never fear the disappearance of daytime and sunlight and, correspondingly, of wakened consciousness" (104). It is to this vessel that Joyce refers in a phrase already quoted above, "I know thee, salvation boat" (26.18-19). This address appears in a passage replete with Twain allusions, and in reading the *Wake* one begins to note that Joyce's references to the boat of Amen-Ra are often also references to the various vessels that Huck either rides or encounters:

it's as simple as A. B. C., the two mixers, we mean, with their cherrybum chappy (for he is simply shamming dippy) if they all were afloat in a dreamlifeboat, hugging two by two in his zoo-doo-you-doo, a tofftoff for thee, missymissy for me and howcameyou-e-enso for Farber, in his tippy, upindown dippy, tiptoptippy canoodle, can you? Finny. (65.28-33)

In reading the above *ad huck* (68.6), we construe the "two mixers" as the mixed-race pair of Huck and Jim. Huck is the cherub-like chap ("cherrybum chappy") who, although naturally clever, must often pretend ignorance or even idiocy ("he is simply shamming dippy") in order to survive. Huck and Jim are indeed "afloat in a dreamlifeboat"; at one point Huck remarks "we said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. . . . You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft" (155). This dream-life-boat is also the "Ant-boat" of Amen-Ra, which preserves life in the dark dream/afterworld. "Hugging two by two in his zoo-doo-you-doo" evokes the love between Huck and Jim—a love that Leslie Fiedler, in his controversial essay "Come Back to the Raft Ag-in, Huck Honey!" has interpreted as homosexual (thus another meaning for "cherrybum chappy?"). "A tofftoff ["double baptism"] for thee, missymissy for me." "Missymissy" is of course the Mississippi, which rises to the surface elsewhere in Joyce's text as the "Missisliffi" (159.12-13) (the Mississippi and the Liffey punningly combined)—and as "ithmuthisthy" (623.10). The Nile (which Bishop remarks continues as the river of the Underworld, "that eeriebleak mead" [316.21-22]) is metempsychotically translated by both Twain and Joyce to America, to the

Mississippi Valley, popularly known as “little egypt” (551.30). “In his tippy, upindown dippy, tiptoptippy canoodle, can you? Finny,” Huck’s canoe, which he uses to make his escape after faking his death, is, like the boat of Amen-Ra, a precarious craft, likely to tip—in which case the passenger may be *fini*: both Finn and finished.

Danis Rose has observed that both the phrase “corpse ship” and the place name “S.Petersburg” appear in Joyce’s *Huck Finn* notebook, but are left unlined, suggesting that they were not used in the *Wake* (Rose 20). To depend too heavily upon the evidence of the workbook, however, can lead to readerly blindness. These notes are used, but only after having been translated into *Wakespeak*:

I was a bad boy’s bogey but it was when I went on to sankt piotersbarq that they gave my devil his dues: what is seizer can hack in the old wold a sawyer may hew in the green: on the island of Breasil the wildth of me perished and I took my plowshare sadly. . . . (549.23-27)

Huck is a “bad boy,” compared to Tom Sawyer’s “good boy,” and, as I have attempted to establish, he is a “bogey”—a ghost of sorts. The speaker tells us “I went on to sankt piotersbarq,” recalling Huck’s adventures in the town of St. Petersburg (Chapter 11), as well as Twain’s sinking of the steamboat *Walter Scott* (Chapter 13), which boat Huck tells us “had killed herself on a rock” (80)—thus a “corpse ship.”¹² “St. Petersburg” also of course evokes St. Peter at the Gate of Heaven—an evocation that would be appreciated by both Twain and Joyce—and it is Huck (or so the symbolism of his story suggests) who kills himself. When the “barq” of Amen-Ra sinks below the western horizon, it is indeed time to give the “devil his dues.” Bishop remarks that some of the incantations included in the Book of the Dead are meant to allow the dead man to avoid hard labor in the afterworld (“I took my plowshare sadly”); and so the speaker’s observation: “what is seizer can hack [Huck] in the old wold a sawyer [Tom] may hew in the green.” The “green” perhaps suggests Sekhet Hetep, the Egyptian Elysian Fields, as does “the island of Breasil.” This island also recalls Jackson’s Island, where Huck flees after faking his death (“the wildth of me perished”), and which Joyce elsewhere echoes: “while Jempson’s weed decks Jacqueson’s Island” (245.24).¹³ What appears consistent in Joyce’s representation of Twain’s after-

12. Jenkins notes another echo of Huck’s observation on the steamboat’s self-slaughter: “daring Dunderhead to shiver his timbers” (274.9-10; Jenkins 90). “Dunderhead” might also refer to Sir Walter Scott himself, whose pernicious romanticism Twain attacks in *Life on the Mississippi* (1883).

13. Atherton notes that Joyce spells “Jackson’s Island” as “Jacqueson’s Island,” and suggests initially that this may have been the result of carelessness—a suggestion consistent with the argument that Joyce did not read Twain closely. Atherton goes on, however, to observe that “Jacques says James and sounds like Jack’s and so, combining Shem and Shaun, Jacqueson’s is how Jackson’s should go into *Finnegans Wake*” (78).

Twain’s Chapter 17 offers a stronger defense of Joyce’s “misspelling” than Atherton’s. In the following passage from that chapter, Huck has forgotten what false name for himself he has given the Grangerfords:

I laid there an hour trying to think, and when Buck waked up, I says:

“Can you spell, Buck?”

“Yes,” he says.

“I bet you can’t spell my name,” says I.

“I bet you what you dare I can,” says he.

“All right,” says I, “go ahead.”

“G-o-r-g-e J-a-x-o-n—there now,” he says.

“Well,” says I, “you done it, but I didn’t think you could. It ain’t no slouch of a name to spell—right off without studying.”

life raft is that, as a means of salvation, it leaves something to be desired:

—"Three quarks for Muster Mark! / Sure he hasn't got much of a bark" (383.1-2).¹⁴

Once arrived in the Egyptian netherworld, the soul of the dead must fight off the forces of darkness in order to avoid experiencing a second, totally annihilating death. In representing this aspect of the death trip, Joyce again has recourse to Twain. Bishop informs us that "those pedestriasts, my answerers, Top, Sid and Hucky" (410.35-36) raises the shades not only of Tom, Sid, and Huck (Twain's "ushabti" figures, his afterworld helpers), but also of "the Egyptian deities 'Amen,' 'Ptah,' and 'Thoth.'" (411 n 80)—gods the dead man would call upon for protection.¹⁵ In re-writing Huck's adventures, Joyce transforms the King and the Duke into death monsters Huck and Jim must outwit and evade: "We was lowsome like till we'd took out after the dead beats. So I begin to study and I soon show them day's reasons how to give the cold shake to they blighty perishers and lay one over the beats" (347.22-25). "Day's reasons" recalls not only Twain's representation of Jim's dialect ("Well, dey's reasons" [McHugh 347]) but also "The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day."

A crucial stage in the Egyptian funeral ritual is the opening of the corpse's mouth, to which procedure a chapter of the book of the Dead is devoted. Bishop explains that what is done to the corpse is thought to happen simultaneously to the soul of the dead man in the afterworld, which then "opens its mouth in the hour when the sun moves through the gates of dawn, and . . . lets language, consciousness, knowledge, and sunlight flood back in to replace the darkness" (188-89). This chapter is recalled by Joyce in his list of titles as "*Of the Two Ways of Opening the Mouth*" (105.23-24; Bishop 114), and one can detect another echo of this chapter in the following Huck-esque passage of the *Wake*: "With lightning bug aflash from afinger. My souls and by jings, should he work his jaw to give down the banks and hark from the tomb!" (246.7-9). "Lightning bug" not only recalls Twain's famous saying about diction (that the difference between almost-the-right-word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and lightning), but also evokes Kephra, the "*Bug of the Deaf*," an Egyptian god in the form of a beetle. Chapter 30b of the Book of the Dead, notes one commentator, "was always to be inscribed 'on a scarab made of nephrite. . . mounted in fine gold, with a silver suspension ring and placed at the throat of the deceased'" (Andrews 14). The dead man should be able to work his jaw—that is, open his mouth—if he hopes to move "down the banks" (*Huck* 237) of the river Death and still have enough life left to "hark from the tomb" (*Huck* 225)—that is, perhaps, to experience resurrection.¹⁶

I set it down, private, because somebody might want me to spell it, next, and so I wanted to be handy with it and rattle it off like I was used to it. (136)

That Joyce probably had this passage in mind when he misspelled "Jackson's" is suggested by the appearance of the phrase "no slouch of a name" elsewhere in the *Wake* (40.21).

14. Anthony Burgess notes Joyce's conflation of Mark Twain with King Mark of Cornwall in Malory's *Tristram* (1).

15. Atherton also identifies Joyce's "Top, Sid and Hucky" as "Tom, Dick and Harry," or another instance of "Here comes everybody" (79).

16. Atherton rightly observes that this passage also evokes the children's fear of the wrath of the father (80).

There is of course a promise of resurrection in *Finnegans Wake*—"Hohohoho, Mister Finn, you're going to be Mister Finnagain" (5.9-10)—although we are assured that every resurrection will inevitably be followed fast upon by another death—"Hahahaha, Mister Funn, you're going to be fined again!" (5.12-13). So the *Wake* figures forth a circular pattern, or as Shem the Penman puts it, "our twain of doubling bicirculars" (295.30-31). Joyce's allusions to *Huckleberry Finn* suggest that he thought resurrection played an important part in that text as well. Maybe Huck is just *pretending* to be dead, "is simply shamming dippy" (65.29)—is in fact "Harkabuddy, *feign!*" (346.25; my emphasis). Early in the book we hear the command "Repose you now! Finn no more!" (28.33-34), but by book's end we are informed of "that hugglebeddy fann, now about to get up" (616.1-2). "Thanam o'n dhoul," shouts the rising Tim of the ballad, "do you think I'm dead?" (cited in Ellmann, 557); "but your saouls to the dhaoul," protests the *Wake*-ing Huck, "do ye. Finnk. Fime. Fudd?" (499.17-18). The promise of a glorious resurrection for Huck is perhaps most clearly and concisely offered by Joyce's echo of Twain's conclusion. Twain writes, "I been there before. THE END, YOURS TRULY, HUCK FINN" (362). Joyce writes, "To be continued. Huck!" (454.7). The modernist continuation of *Huckleberry Finn*, of course, is a book called *Finnegans Wake*.

Perhaps it was Joyce's fellow "Man of 1914," T. S. Eliot, who recommended that he read *Huck*, for in a 1953 speech Eliot observed of Twain: "I should place him . . . even with Dryden and Swift, as one of those rare writers who have brought their language up to date, and in so doing 'purified the dialect of the tribe'" ("American" 23). In his 1950 introduction to Twain's novel, Eliot compares the character of Huck to that of Ulysses, claims that the Mississippi is the true, mythic hero, and underscores both the book's and the river's circular structure:

Like *Huckleberry Finn*, the River has no beginning or end. In its beginning, it is not yet the River; in its end, it is no longer the River. . . . At what point in its course does the Mississippi become what the Mississippi *means*? It is both one and many. . . . at the end it merely disappears among its deltas: it is no longer there, but it is still where it was, hundreds of miles to the north. (335)

How could Eliot write of a river without "beginning or end," that is "both one and many," and *not* think of Joyce, the Liffey, and "the book of Doublends Jined" (20.16)? Regardless of *why* Joyce decided to open *Huck*, I think that when he did he probably felt much the same as did his Irish epigone, Flann O'Brien, who remarked of Huck's creator that there was an "eerie resemblance between certain departments of his thinking and my own" (cited in Clissmann 224). "Eerie" is just the right word in this context, for Twain's narrative is, like the *Wake*, the adventures of "Morbus O' Somebody" (88.14), a "new book of Morses" (123.35), a "Helpless Corpses Enactment" (423.31).

To the passage of his letter to Fleischman cited above, Joyce appends the following note: "many thanks in advance but if for any reason you cannot do this [that is, take notes on *Huck*] it will be no great loss" (387). Once Joyce began to read Twain's text, however, he realized just how important its incorporation into the *Wake* would be, knew that he must "entwine our [his and Twain's] arts with

laughters low” (259.7-8). In the final analysis, the question we must ask is “how much—if any—of the original meaning does Joyce expect his reader to know?” (Atherton 77). That Joyce thought it important for his reader really to *know* Twain is suggested by the short passage from the *Wake* I cite above as epigraph: “append to my mark twang, that will open your pucktricker’s ops for you, broather brooher” (425.29-30).

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