Finnegans Wake and the Art of *Pun*ishing the English Language

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Abstract

If puns were once used by the English nonsense writers Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll to bring smiles and laughter both to children and adults, their intrinsically subversive nature made them also an appealing tool (or weapon) to Irish writers such as James Joyce or Samuel Beckett. In this paper, I discuss the ambivalence of puns through the investigation of their presence and purposes in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce‟s last and most controversial work. This paper specifically argues that a *pun* can sometimes become a *pun*ishment and that Joyce‟s radical re-creation of English in the *Wake* is the best example of it.

Keywords: nonsense literature, language usage, *Finnegans Wake,* Edward Lear, Lewis Caroll, Samuel Beckett.

In establishing usage, grammar makes valid and invalid divisions. For example, it divides verbs into transitive and intransitive. But a man who knows how to say what he says must sometimes make a transitive verb intransitive so as to photograph what he feels instead of seeing it in the dark, like the common lot of human animals. If I want to say I exist, I‟ll say, „I am‟. If I want to say I exist as a separate entity, I‟ll say, „I am myself‟. But if I want to say I exist as an entity that addresses and acts on itself, exercising the divine

function of self-creation, then I‟ll make *to be* into a transitive verb. Triumphantly and anti-grammatically supreme, I‟ll speak of „amming myself‟. I‟ll have stated a philosophy in just two words. […]

Let grammar rule the man who doesn‟t know how to think what he feels.[1]

Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*[2]

Puns exploit double or multiple meanings of words, usually for humorous purposes. Sometimes the play is on different senses of the same word; sometimes it is on the similar sense or sound of different words. And, if I take the liberty of making a pun with my own title, it is, first of all, to properly announce four authors who clearly master the art of punning: Lear, Carroll, Joyce, and Beckett. In this paper, I will focus mainly on Joyce and on "*Finnegans Wake*‟s portmanteau style,"[3] but I shall go back to Lear, Carroll, and the nineteenth century to trace the origins of this delight in language and language games. I will also have a, necessarily, brief look into the work of Samuel Beckett to observe if this tendency towards puns (and punishment) finds an inheritor in him.

Furthermore, if one can read, in the title of this paper, the word *punishing* instead of *punning*, it is because – as Lear, Carroll, Joyce, and Beckett so often did – I wish to add another layer of meaning to my discourse and, therefore, imply that the art of punning may sometimes become an act of rebellion towards a specific language or a way to punish its native speakers through the humorous subversion of their own language. Thus, the phrase "*pun*ishing the English language" is "ambiviolent" (*FW* 518.2). It encapsulates both the violent hostility of a punishment and the joyful humour of a pun. After all, there is always a *pun* in a *pun*ishment as a line in *Ulysses* insinuates: "How will you pun? You punish me?" (*U* 361).

When thinking about Joyce and his use of language, one must always bear in mind his singular location not only as a

major representative of Modernism, but also as a member of a colonised nation. As a Modernist writer, he used a variety of formal techniques and linguistic devices to communicate old themes, such as family, relationships, local and universal history, politics, literature, religion, etc., in a new manner. As a member of a colonised nation, he was haunted by words and language as the materialisation of a ruling power. In the light of this, the words of Stephen Dedalus – Joyce‟s alter-ego in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*–, after being reprimanded by the English Dean of Studies for using the word "tundish" instead or "funnel," are particularly revealing:

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ, ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (*P* 215)

Though Joyce clearly shared Stephen‟s concerns and thoughts on the Irish problematic embracing of the English language, he refused to accept the condition of eternal foreign speaker, and, by continually subverting and re-creating English, he ended up by turning the British into foreign speakers of their own language. Joyce certainly appreciated the irony of this reversal in roles, which, as Fritz Senn points out, may be seen as a linguistic revenge: "It is quite possible that Joyce takes his subtle revenge on the linguistic oppressor in that he uses a progressively more elaborate English, which challenges even the native British and put them in their place."[4]

Hence, in Joyce‟s hands, the English language, "in all its manifestations, with regional variants, colloquial or literary language, slang, fanciful metaphors, obsolete and peripheral terms,"[5] ceased to be a threat, and became a tool or, at times, a

weapon to strike back. An Irish alliterative tonality rings, thus, in Joyce‚s sentences and syntax is affected too.[6] Here are some examples taken from *Finnegans Wake*:

> Tilling a teel of a tum, telling a toll of a teary turty Taubling. (*FW* 7.5-6)

> It made ma make merry and sissy so shy and rubbed some shine off Shem and put some shame into Shaun. (*FW* 94.10-12)

> Are we speachin d‚anglas landadge or are you sprakin sea Djoytsch? (*FW* 485.12-13)

> Totalled in toldteld and teldtold in tittletell tattle. (*FW* 597.8-9)

I find particularly interesting the word "Djoytsch" mentioned in the third quotation. It obviously points out to Deutsch, but it also shares some resonance with Joyce‚s own name as if to indicate the possible existence of a Joycean language.[7]

Joyce seems to wish to remind us, moreover, that if all languages consist of borrowings and assimilations, English is certainly a good example of it, and any page of the story of English could easily prove it.[8] The culmination of this continuous ferment of language is, thus, to be found in the endless borrowings, neologisms, misspellings, and misappropriations of Joyce‚s *Finnegans Wake*, which Fritz Senn defines as "a hybrid based on an English substratum with traces of many languages and a dynamic principle of semantic superimposition."[9] However, as Senn also observes, all of Joyce‚s works, whatever else they may be, are "a compendium of the English language."[10] This includes, of course, bad or inappropriate language and all the mistakes that speakers and writers of English all over the world make every day.

In his attempt to forge something new, Joyce –"a Houdini of the word,"[11] as described by John Banville– resembles yet again Stephen Dedalus that, by the end of *Portrait*, confesses his will to forge the conscience of his race: "Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (*P* 288). *Finnegans Wake* is actually more of an unconscious "chaosmos" (*FW* 118.21) than a conscience, but, as David Spurr emphasises, "forgeries real and imagined form a recurring motif throughout"[12] the text, and, as a form of transgression, they possess an ambivalent nature, or "ambiviolent" (*FW* 518.2), to recall the *Wakean* pun. Indeed, with Joyce the boundary between forgery and forging is erased. Forgeries can be violent when they become an "instrument of colonization"[13] destined to impose something bogus, something that it is not natural or original on others; but they can also be liberating as the product of creativity.

Nonetheless, as Spurr also points out, Joyce resists all traditional dichotomies and he would simply not support the reductionism of thinking that "colonizer is to colonized as forgery to authenticity."[14] Just like Senn, Spurr uses the word "hybrid" to qualify Joyce"s approach and, once again, the best example is undoubtedly *Finnegans Wake*, which is,

> Both forged *and* authentic, both English *and* foreign, it is neither imperialist (in ideology, in narrative form) *nor* nationalist in its anti-imperialism. Instead, it collapses these antinomies in an anarchic explosion of laughter. [...] The subversive function of *Finnegans Wake* is thus closely allied to its comedic function; its celebration of comic freedom is made possible by its power to render ideology ridiculous.[15]

In one of the chapters from his *Joyce and the Scene of Modernity*, titled "Writing in the *Wake* of Empire," Spurr reconstitutes the context in which Joyce"s last work was

written to highlight that in 1922 the British Empire was already beginning to disintegrate, and "Joyce wrote the *Wake* in self-imposed exile from the first colony to break away from the modern British Empire": Ireland.[16] Thus, contrary to many critics" and readers" opinions, Spurr stresses the deep awareness of the *Wakean* text regarding the political and social events of its time, and adds that

> To read Joyce as a decolonized writer is to
> recognize that his historical perspective on the
> final stages of the imperial era coincides with his
> creation of a text that calls into question,
> formally and thematically, the structures of
> power from which writing is inherited.[17]

Spurr"s conclusion is that *Finnegans Wake* "declares its independence from imperial structures of discourse,"[18] by sabotaging all the big words related to power, or rather by the "abnihilisation of the etym" (*FW* 353.22), to use the *Wakean* bare words. Indeed, in Joyce"s last work, the play on language breaks free from all restraints and all forms of authority, and thus the author"s alliance with the saboteurs of colonising discourse is coherently linked with the intention of Shem the Penman, a *Wakean* "character," who wishes to "wipe alley english spooker, multaphoniaksically spuking off the face of the erse" (*FW* 178.6-7). Yet, it would be a mistake to dismiss *Finnegans Wake* with its many "punns and reedles" (*FW* 239.35-36) under the claim that it is a mere nihilist destructive book. As Spurr sums up,

> Joyce annihilates the English language precisely
> in order to re-create, so that the inspired non-
> sense of the colonial subject is remade into a
> visionary order where English is read and
> spoken from a wholly new perspective: "Behove
> this sound of Irish sense. Really? Here English

might be seen. Royally? ... Hush! Caution!
Echoland!" (*FW* 22.36-23.5).[19]

This reference to the "non-sense of the colonial subject" provides the ideal clue to bring into the discussion two English masters of nonsense that have greatly inspired Joyce in his own re-creation of the nonsensical world that underlies the special comedy of the *Wake*: Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll – or shall I say "Lewd"s carol" (*FW* 501.34)!

If one has the right to create a world of sense or nonsense, as Marina Yaguello observes,[20] back in the nineteenth century, Lear and Carroll certainly exercised that right in an exemplary manner. Indeed, Lear"s famous *Twenty-six Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures* and *A Nonsense Botany* (1871-1872),[21] for example, rival Carroll"s *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) –the author"s most celebrated book– for the position of the funniest nonsensical text of the nineteenth century, especially because Lear and Carroll both allied text and image in their linguistic nonsensical enterprises.

One of Lear"s nonsense rhymes and pictures introduces the reader-viewer to a rather curious abstemious ass who, strangely enough, lived in a barrel: "The Absolutely Abstemious Ass / who resided in a Barrel, and only lived on / Soda Water and Pickled Cucumbers."[22] The alliterative quality of the phrase "The Absolutely Abstemious Ass" is evident, and it highlights the absurd situation of this ass (note also the pejorative choice of words: it is not a donkey, it is an ass!) who pompously resides in a barrel, which is obviously too small for him, and, which, as a traditional container of alcohol, is totally contrary to his lifestyle principles. Thus, in Lear"s rhymes, verbal and iconic messages both concur to build various ludicrous tableaux.

Furthermore, Lear"s tendency towards alliterations is particularly striking in the following rhyme: "The Queer Querulous Quail, / who smoked a Pipe of tobacco on the top of / a Tin Tea-kettle";[23] but his ironic touch is most pervading in yet another one: "The Inventive Indian / who caught a

Remarkable Rabbit in a / Stupendous Silver Spoon."[24] Funny
as it might be to imagine an "Inventive Indian" catching not
just any rabbit, but a "Remarkable Rabbit," by using such a
civilised tool as a "Stupendous Silver Spoon," Lear‟s
illustration demonstrates that this spoon is nothing but a huge
rudimentary tool, in which an apparently regular, though large,
rabbit sits surprisingly quiet, while an ordinary Indian holds
him in a truly awkward position.

In addition to rhymes and pictures, Lear creates, in *A
Nonsense Botany*, alternative species of plants to feature in his
own particular Botany. "Manypeeplia Upsidownia,"
"Bottlephorkia Spoonifolia" or "Smalltoothcombia
Domestica"[25] are just a few examples of these new species.
One should notice how Lear, as any good botanist, resorts to
Latin to name his nonsensical original plants, and how the
illustrations attach another layer to the comedic side of his
botanical nomenclature.

Pictures can illustrate the text, add something to it, or
subvert it, sometimes. In Carroll‟s work, just as in Lear‟s,
pictures often offer a combination of all these possibilities. A
paradigmatic example may be found in *Alice's Adventures in
Wonderland* when the mouse tells Alice, and the other
"Wonderlawn‟s" (*FW* 270.20) creatures, his sad tale:

> „You promised to tell me your history, you
> know,‟‟ said Alice, „and why it is you hate – C
> and D,‟‟ she added in a whisper, half afraid that it
> would be offended again.
>
> „Mine is a long and sad tale!‟‟ said the Mouse,
> turning to Alice and sighing.
>
> „It *is* a long tail, certainly,‟‟ said Alice, looking
> down with wonder at the Mouse‟s tail; „but why
> do you call it sad?‟‟ And she kept on puzzling
> about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that
> her idea of the tale was something like this –

,,Fury said to a
mouse, that
he met in
the house,
"Let us
both go to
to law: *I*
will prosecute
you. Come
I˝ll take
no denial: we
must have a
trial: for
really this
mornning
I˝ve
noth-ing to
do. Said the
mouse to
the cur,
"Such a
trial, dear
Sir, with
no jury
or judge,
would be
wasting
our
breath."
"I˝ll be
judge, I˝ll
be jury,"
said
cun-
ning
old
Fury:
"I˝ll
try
the
whole
cause,
and
con-
demn
you to
death.""[26]

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Carroll‟s intention of making a pun on the pair "tale" / "tail"
becomes evident from the very beginning, but the way in
which he develops the pun is particularly original. Alice‟s idea
of the Mouse‟s tale takes the form of a mouse tail and it
therefore becomes a tail which tells a tale. It is, indeed, a
narrative poem and a sort of *calligramme* poem that bares the
graphic shape of the tail alluded before in the dialogue and still
present in Alice‟s mind. Lewis Carroll thus anticipates the
work of Guillaume Apollinaire in his *Calligrammes* (1918),[27]
by creating a text in which form is as meaningful as words,
and, thereby, reinforcing the intrinsic relationship between
formal devices and contents.

The same attention to formal devices aimed at
reinforcing specific contents is easily recognisable in Joyce‟s
"Anna Livia Plurabelle" section, probably the most famous and
quoted chapter of *Finnegans Wake*, in which two
washerwomen literally wash Anna Livia‟s dirty linen in public:

<div align="center">

O

tell me all about

Anna Livia! I want to hear all

</div>

about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia?
Yes, of course,

we all know Anna Livia. Tell me all. Tell me
now. You‟ll die when you hear. Well, you
know, when the old cheb went futt and did what
you know. Yes, I know, go on. Wash quit and
don‟t be dabbling. Tuck up your sleeves and
loosen your talktapes. And don‟t butt me – hike!
– when you bend. Or whatever it was they threed
to make out he thried to two in the Fiendish

Park. He‟s an awful old reppe. Look at the shirt
of him! (*FW* 196.1-11)

In this case, one is not dealing with a tail that tells a tale, but
with a delta that tells the story of a woman-river: "Missisliffi"

(*FW* 159.12-13). As the Liffey gets increasingly larger, in its fast flowing towards the sea, the banks become more and more apart and the gossipy dialogue between the washerwomen becomes more and more difficult, but also more and more funny:

> He had buckgoat paps on him, soft ones for orphans. Ho, Lord! Twins of his bosom. Lord save us! And ho! Hey? What all men. Hot? His tittering daughters of. Whawk?
>
> Can''t hear because of the waters of. The chittering waters of. Flittering bats, fieldmice bawk talk. Ho! Are you not gone ahome? What
>
> Thom Malone? Can''t hear with bawk of bats, all thim liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! (*FW* 215.27-34)

Joyce''s tendency to explore neologisms, puns, and the alliterative quality of words has been extensively mentioned and debated. Joyce himself answered to those who accused him of using too many puns in *Finnegans Wake* that: "The Holy Apostolic Church was built on a pun. It ought to be good enough for me" (*JJII* 546). In his "nightynovel" (*FW* 54.21), Joyce "put[s] the language to sleep" (*JJII* 546) and creates his own world of "sound sense" (*FW* 109.15). If linguistic competence includes both the observance of rules and the ability to subvert them, as Marina Yaguello suggests,[28] Joyce is undoubtedly one of the most competent speakers of English of all times for he has definitely consciously subverted all rules. Actually, only this conscious subversion of rules, particularly grammar rules, could guarantee the production of the effects he desired, since, as Wittgenstein opportunely pointed out, the problem with grammar is, precisely, that it

> does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfil its purpose, in order to have such-and-such an effect on human

beings. It only describes and in no way explains
the use of signs.

When I say that the orders "Bring me sugar" and
"Bring me milk" make sense, but not the
combination "Milk me sugar", that does not
mean that the utterance of this combination of
words has no effect. And if its effect is that the
other person stares at me and gapes, I don"t on
that account call it the order to stare and gape,
even if that was precisely the effect that I wanted
to produce. [29]

Readers of *Finnegans Wake* stare and gape frequently
for the combinations used by Joyce aim specifically at
promoting this effect on them. Though the *Wakean* words often
make "the soundest sense" (*FW* 96.32), their meaning remains
usually rather obscure:

Till ye finally (though not yet endlike) meet with
the acquaintance of Mister Typus, Mistress Tope
and all the little typtopies. Fillstup. So you need
hardly spell me how every word will be bound
over to carry three score and ten toptypsical
reading throughout the book [...]. (*FW* 20.11-15)

Either asleep or just a little tipsy, *Wakean* words are bound to
"make soundsense and sensesound" (*FW* 121.15), and, thereby,
only partially answer the queries of their puzzled readers: "You
is feeling like you was lost in the bush, boy? You says: It is a
puling sample jungle of woods. You most shouts out: Bethicket
me for a stump of a beech if I have the poultriest notions what
the farest he all means. Gee up, girly!" (*FW* 112.3-6). Actually,
the sample of words selected by Joyce in the previous quote is
far from being a mere jumble of words. Making use of a
"freely associative" [30] language, Joyce departs from a simple
idea, that of being lost in the bush, which invariably, and

metaphorically, describes the experience of *Wakean* readers, and turns it into an increasingly more elaborated ensemble of family-related words and expressions, such as "bush," "jungle," "woods," "stump" or "forest." Also, the city of Trieste, a truly important location for Joyce, somehow manages to find its way into the text through an unexpected combination with "poultry." Thus, faced with the enormous richness of Joyce‟s writing and the numerous "soundpicture[s]" (*FW* 570.14) that he creates, one has only to sheer up or "Gee up" and enjoy the linguistic ride.

The "eirenical" (*FW* 14.30) quality of Joyce‟s writing finds an inheritor in Samuel Beckett, his assistant, his friend, his admirer, and, in a way, his successor. Indeed, both Ireland and irony invariably pervade Beckett‟s works. In *Murphy* (1938)[31] the narrator constantly stresses the protagonist‟s tendency towards a particular form of reasoning and of wording that resembles, at times, Joyce‟s "soundsense" (*FW* 121.15), and, sometimes, Lear‟s and Carroll‟s nonsense. Murphy, living in London, but conveniently an Irishman from Dublin, may not be very fond of words, but he certainly has the ability to handle them in a direct confrontation:

> [Celia] felt, as she felt so often with Murphy, spattered with the words that went dead as they sounded; each word obliterated, before it had time to make sense, by the word that came next; so that in the end she did not know what had been said. It was like difficult music heard for the first time.[32]

Murphy‟s words, which sound to Celia as "difficult music," match his peculiar mind:

> Not the least remarkable of Murphy‟s innumerable classifications of experience was that into jokes that had once been good jokes and jokes that had never been good jokes. What

but an imperfect sense of humour could have made such a mess of chaos. **In the beginning was the pun**. And so on.[33]

Whether this "imperfect sense of humour" refers to Murphy, the creator of such a bizarre classification of experience, or to God (Murphy‟s creator)[34] is disputable, but the holy word of the *Bible* is indubitably subverted by the rewriting of the phrase "In the beginning was the Word"[35] into "In the beginning was the pun." However, Beckett was not alone in this re-creation; in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce provides his own versions of the famous phrase:

In the buginning is the woid, in the muddle is the sounddance and thereinofter you‟re in the unbewised again, vund vulsyvolsy. (*FW* 378.29-31)

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)

Hence, Beckett clearly shared with Joyce the facet of linguistic rebel; they simply manifested it in different ways. If Joyce‟s strategy was to expose and to undermine all structures of power by a continual re-creation and rewriting of the English language, Beckett‟s alternative meant, at some point, the embracing of the French language to the detriment of his native tongue. Still, it would be a mistake to take this rejection of English as the final stage of Beckett‟s rebellion movement, for it was nothing but an intermediate phase. Interestingly, he went back to English as the translator of his French works, and, as Salman Rushdie shrewdly observes, in his introduction to the second volume of *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary*

Edition, this reencounter would be decisive for both the author and the language:

> A man speaking English beautifully chooses to speak in French, which he speaks with greater difficulty, so that he is obliged to choose his words carefully, forced to give up fluency and to find the hard words that come with difficulty, and after all that finding he puts it all back in English, a new English containing all the difficulty of the French, of the coining of thought in a second language, a new English with the power to change English for ever.[36]

I totally agree with Rushdie when he says that Beckett changed English forever, and it is only fair to add that Joyce did as much, though using different methods. If Joyce barely destroyed language as we know it, and the English language, in particular, by wanting to say it all, Beckett wasn"t less radical in his pursue of impoverishment, especially visible in his last works. Either by reduction or by excess, both consciously attempted the "abnihilisation of the etym" (*FW* 353.22). If Beckett was somehow inspired by Joyce, Joyce was, in turn, admittedly inspired by the endless language games and nonsensical situations devised by Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear in Victorian time. However, if Lear and Carroll, both English, often saw language as a source of recreation, Joyce and Beckett, both Irish, saw the English language as something they wished to re-create.

It is worth noting that Joyce"s and Beckett"s drives to re-create the English language were not exactly the same. While Joyce desired to find a proper alternative to his acquired speech (just like Stephen in *Portrait*), Beckett deeply wished to escape the influence of Joyce for, as he confessed once to Eduardo Manet, "writing in the language of James Joyce was too heavy a burden to be carried."[37] The great irony lies in the fact that, after all his efforts to disrupt it, Joyce became the

very epitome of the English language, standing firmly beside
Shakespeare.

"When is an „error‟ a mistake?"[38] The answer to this
question is definitely not an easy one when it comes to Lear,
Carroll, Joyce or Beckett. As any good "punman" (*FW*
517.18), all these writers took advantage of the potentialities of
language, particularly the English language, to create ageless
works that may be labeled by some as "litteringture" (*FW*
570.18), but are, in fact, "Outragedy of poetscalds! Acomedy
of letters!" (*FW* 425.24).

Notes

[1] "A gramática, definindo o uso, faz divisões legítimas e falsas.
Divide, por exemplo, os verbos transitivos e intransitivos; porém, o homem
de saber dizer tem muitas vezes que converter um verbo transitivo em
intransitivo para fotografar o que sente, e não para, como o comum dos
animais homens, o ver às escuras. Se quiser dizer que existo, direi „Sou‟. Se
quiser dizer que existo como alma separada, direi „Sou eu.‟ Mas se quiser
dizer que existo como entidade que a si mesma se dirige e forma, que
exerce junto de si mesma a função divina de se criar, como hei-de empregar
o verbo „ser‟ senão convertendo-o subitamente em intransitivo? E então,
triunfalmente, antigramaticalmente supremo, direi „Sou-me.‟ […] Obedeça
à gramática quem não sabe pensar o que sente." Fernando Pessoa, *Livro do
Desassossego* vol. II (Lisboa: Editorial Presença, 1991) 95.

[2] Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*, ed. and trans. Richard
Zenith (London: Penguin Classics, 2002) 81-82.

[3] Derek Attridge, *Joyce Effects – On Language, Theory, and
History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 124.

[4] Fritz Senn, "James Joyce is Writing Foreign English," *Variations*
17, eds. Ariane Lüthi et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009) 59-71, 61.

[5] Senn 62.

[6] On Joyce and his use of Hiberno-English (that is, the English
variant spoken by the Irish) see, for example, T. P. Dolan, "The Language
of Dubliners." *James Joyce: The Artist and the Labyrinth – A Critical Re-
evaluation* (London: Ryan Publishing, 1990) 25-40.

[7] This wish to build a Joycean language corroborates to a certain
extent Ellmann‟s claim that: "If he [Joyce] was not a nationalist of anyone
else‟s school, he was his own nationalist" (Richard Ellmann, *Four
Dubliners* [London, Hamish Hamilton, 1988] 67).

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[8] On this subject, see McCrum et al., *The Story of English* (London: BBC Books, 2002 [1986]).

[9] Senn 71.

[10] Senn 68.

[11] John Banville, "Survivors of Joyce," in *James Joyce: The Artist and the Labyrinth – A Critical Re-evaluation* (London: Ryan Publishing, 1990) 73-81, 80.

[12] David Spurr, *Joyce and the Scene of Modernity* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002) 104.

[13] Spurr 104.

[14] Spurr 108.

[15] Spurr 118.

[16] Spurr 119.

[17] Spurr 119.

[18] Spurr 119-120.

[19] Spurr 133.

[20] Marina Yaguello, *Alice no País da Linguagem. Para compreender a Linguística*, trans. Maria José Figueiredo (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1991) 134.

[21] Lear"s *Nonsense Books* can be accessed at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13650/13650-h/13650-h.htm

[22] Edward Lear, *A Book of Bosh: Lyrics and Prose of Edward Lear*, ed. Brian Alderson (London: Puffin Books, 1975), 103.

[23] Lear 119.

[24] Lear 111.

[25] Lear 132-3.

[26] Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass* (London: Wordsworth Classics, 1993 [1896]) 35-6.

[27] Cf., for example, Apollinaire"s "La mandoline, l"oillet et le bambou" or "La colombe poignardée et le jet d"eau," in *Anthologie de la poésie française du XXe siècle*, ed. Michel Décaudin (Paris: Gallimard, 2000) 167-168.

[28] Yaguello 134.

[29] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen / Philosophical Investigations*, transl. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963) 138e.

[30] Seamus Deane, "*Finnegans Wake,*" in *The Novel: Forms and Themes*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) vol. II, 907.

[31] *Murphy* is Beckett"s first published novel. He wrote *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* previously, but it was only published in 1992, posthumously.

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[32] Samuel Beckett, *Murphy*, in *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition*, vol. I, ed. Paul Auster (New York: Grove Press, 2006 [1938]) 27.

[33] Beckett 42, emphasis added.

[34] Insofar as Murphy is a fictional being, Beckett is, in fact, his creator and thus shares the role of God and, ironically, becomes the recipient of his own criticism.

[35] John 1: 1.

[36] Rushdie, in *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition*, vol. II, ed. Paul Auster (New York: Grove Press, 2006) XIV.

[37] "Moi, j'ai commencé à écrire en français, car écrire dans la langue de James Joyce était un fardeau trop lourd à porter […]." Samuel Beckett *apud* Tâm Van Thi "Atiq Rahimi, Eduardo Manet et Tahar Ben Jelloun – L'écrivain est-il toujours un exilé?" in *Le Magazine Littéraire* 489 (Septembre 2009) 12-15, 14.

[38] Deane 908.