One remarkable feature of early Irish and Welsh literature is its frequent use of proper names and placenames in narratives and the prominence given to explanations of their meanings or origins. It is often difficult to determine whether a given name has been invented to suit a narrative detail or vice versa. Onomastic tales, those based on proper names, and toponomastic tales, those based on placenames, are essentially tales with an etymological origin, since they are based on the history of a word (as if the word and its history were found objects) rather than on original or imaginative plots or situations invented by a storyteller. The basic element which transforms names and placenames into narratives or narrative details is the pun. I call this process etymythology, and I show how James Joyce’s knowledge of Irish onomastic and toponomastic tales, and his interest in the process which created them, was bolstered by his early study of the developing science of etymology, and by his reading of Giambattista Vico, Victor Bérard, and Ernest Fenollosa (all of whom based their work to some extent on etymology), to the point where etymythology as poetics be-
came one of Joyce's own methods of composition, an element of his own poetics.

Joyce, fascinated by words like his alter ego Stephen Dedalus, read Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary* by the hour. This fascination and research manifested itself in his early work in the intricate and deliberate way in which he used words with a lively sense of their etymological overtones, weaving their etymological details into their context. This tendency became more pronounced (and more obvious) in his later work. In *Finnegans Wake* etymological puns produce much of the text.

Vico used etymology as a tool for discovering the philosophy and culture of early generations of mankind as they were preserved in the history of words. Bérard offered explanations of the adventures of Odysseus as elaborate puns on the placenames of their locales. Fenollosa hypothesized a theory of Chinese ideograms which prized their ability to manifest their etymology and to retain the "active" or dramatic, nature of primitive verbs. Their work corroborated Joyce's, and he used their details for his own purposes.

Joyce's contemporaries recognized the etymological overtones of his work and commented on them (often with his prompting). Joyce's interest in etymology as a science, and in etymological theories of literature and narrative, dovetailed with his own acquaintance with Irish onomastic/toponomastic literature. The Irish (Gaelic) language lives on in
anglicized Irish placenames, which, to someone who knows Irish (and Joyce studied it for three years), exhibit a lively historical, and often narrative or descriptive, sense. This fact encourages toponomastic tendencies in Irish literature. Joyce took advantage of this tendency in *Finnegans Wake*, turning the Irish meaning underlying anglicized Irish placenames into details in passages concerning those places. Joyce also used specific examples of Irish toponomastic tales as source material for his work. I analyze his use of toponomastic literature as a paradigm of his general approach to etymology as a compositional device, concentrating on a modernized toponomastic tale, *The Return of the Hero*, by Darrell Figgis, and on its sources, *Agallamh na Senorach*, *Oisin in Tir na nOg*, and the *Dindshenchus*, all of which figure in *Finnegans Wake*. I also offer examples of Joyce turning specific Irish placenames into mini-narratives and narrative details to embroider his text to further illustrate this process.

Etymythology is a poetics, a process of composition, which turns individual words into larger semantic units, or elements of literature or narrative. Joyce used it. *Finnegans Wake* is its major modern proving-ground.
BYGMYTHSTER FINNEGAN:
ETYMOLOGY AS POETICS IN THE WORKS OF JAMES JOYCE

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

The University of Connecticut

1976
ADDITIONAL DATES

Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

SYNONYMS AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE WORKS OF JAMES JOYCE

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1976
I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Joseph Cary, George Hemphill, and Charles Boer, for their patience and help, and particularly for their intercession on my behalf in the matter of grants which enabled me to research this study with the support of a Dissertation Fellowship and a Research Assistantship (for which I also thank the Research Foundation of the University of Connecticut) and a Work-Study Grant. I am grateful to the staffs of the Wilbur Cross Library of the University of Connecticut, the National Library of Ireland, Trinity College (Dublin) Library, the Bodleian Library, the British Museum, and, especially, the Royal Irish Academy. I have been fortunate in receiving generous support and advice from a number of individuals, among whom I would like to mention and thank Fritz Senn, Adaline Glasheen, Chester Anderson, Louis Mink, Clive Hart, Richard Ellmann, Frau Dr. Carola Giedion-Welcker, Arthur Power, Arland Ussher, Margaret MacAnulla. Lee Jacobus, George Brandon Saul, Nuala O Faolain, Dermot Healy, and, immeasurably, Alison Armstrong.
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I. INTRODUCTION: ETYMYTHOLOGY

Each sentence of this verbal substance is packed with so many harmonic, linguistic, mythic or historic reminiscences, that the combined memory of all Europe would hardly suffice to understand it. Finally, however, just as in certain ancient tales the well in the citadel communicates through the subterranean channels with the waters outside, I entered into communication with [Finnegans Wake] through the mediation of Irish legend. Clemence Ramnoux

The traditional element [of the old Irish sagas] is most likely to be found in stories which are explanations of names or of place-names or in stories without any clear fictional pattern telling of how certain peoples came to be in a particular part of the country— in other words senchus. James Carney

One of the remarkable features of old Irish and Welsh literature is the frequency with which proper names and place names occur in narratives and the prominence given to explanations of their meanings or origins. This frequency is so remarkable that it suggests an important compositional significance may lie behind this phenomenon, and the methods used to embody names and placenames in narratives may suggest how, in fact, many narratives originated and how they were constructed.

Onomastic tales, those based on proper names, and topono-
mastic tales, those based on placenames, are essentially tales with an etymological origin, since they are based on the history of a word (as if this word and its history were found objects) rather than original or imaginative plots or situations invented by the storyteller. The basic element which transforms names and placenames into narratives or narrative details is the pun, which occupies a central position in Celtic mythology, literature, and art. I call the process by which the etymological ramifications of a word (or a name or a placename) are turned into narrative details by means of puns etymythology, and I will show how James Joyce’s knowledge of Irish onomastic and toponomastic tales, and his interest in the process which created them, was bolstered by his early study of the developing science of Etymology, and by his reading of Giambattista Vico, Victor Bérard, and Ernest Fenollosa (all of whom based their work on etymology), so that etymythology became one of his own methods of composition.

In this study I will concentrate primarily on Joyce’s use of Irish placenames, especially in *Finnegans Wake*, as source-material for his text. I offer his use of Irish placenames as a paradigm of his wider use of words and their etymologies as source-material in *Finnegans Wake*, although I will suggest how Joyce used an etymological approach to words in general, and I will offer some examples of his general approach. First, however, I will describe the etymological nature of Irish and Welsh literature in order to clarify how
names and placenames occasioned stories, and how Irish and Welsh writers transformed this process into a method of composition. Then, in the next two chapters, I will explore Joyce’s study of etymology and theories based on etymology before turning, in the last chapter, to an illustration of how he put the process of etymythology to work in his treatment of Irish placenames in *Finnegans Wake*.

* * * * * * *

In the preface to their translation of the *Mabinogion*, Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones give a useful description of the role which names and placenames play in early Welsh literature:

A further rich addition [to the structure of *The Mabinogion*] is the so-called onomastic tale, the fanciful explanation of the name of a place or person. Sometimes a new tale develops in the course of such an explanation, but for the most part the narrator adapts a tale already in existence. Thus the placename ‘Talebolion’ in *Brânwen* probably means ‘End of the Ridges’ or ‘End or the Chasms’ (the intermediate -e- an old orthographical form of the definite article *y*), but the narrator interprets it as *talebolion*, ‘Payment of Colts,’ and provides an incident to ‘explain’ it was so called.

Numerous examples of such a process are to be found, and not only in the Four Branches, the explanation of the name Culhwch and of place-names which occur in the hunting of *Twrch Trwyth* come to mind from *Culhwch and Olwen;* and Caer Fyrddin and Llydaw from *The Dream of Măsenn Wledig.* Here and there we find an onomastic tale which had not been fully understood by the narrator. In *Math,* for instance, we read how Blodeuedd and her maidens fled to mountains before the men of Gwynedd. In their fear they walked backwards (to look out for their pursuers), and so fell into a lake where they were all drowned, save Blodeuedd. This rather awkward episode seems to have been de-
signed to explain the name Llyn-y-Morynion
(‘Maidens’ Lake’), but we miss the expected
tag, ‘And for that reason the Lake was called
Llyn-y-Morynion.’ It is likely that a close
study of the tales, the Four Branches and
Culhwch and Olwen in particular, would reveal many
other such imperfectly understood
onomastic stories. 3

The examples which the Joneses cite could be interpreted as
ttempts to justify imperfectly understood onomastic details
in traditional stories, but there are also examples of
onomastic details which are intrinsically related to the
thematic content of their context. This next example comes
from the story of Culhwch and Olwen in The Mabinogion: “But
from the time she grew with child, she went mad, without
coming near a dwelling. When her time came upon her, her
right sense came back to her; it came in a place where a
swineherd was keeping a herd of swine, and through terror of
the swine the queen was delivered. And the swineherd took
the boy until he came to the court. And the boy was baptized,
and the name Culhwch given to him because he was found in a
pig-run.” 4 Culhwch means “pig-run,” from lwch, “pig.” But
the major structural element of that story is an epic boar-
hunt in which Arthur and his men help Culhwch to defeat the
boar Twrch Trwyth in order to win Olwen as his wife, so
Culhwch’s name, which is a pun on his birthplace, and the
story of his birth, are intimately linked to Culhwch’s story.
Olwen is treated similarly. “Four white trefoils sprang up
behind her wherever she went, and for that reason was she
called Olwen.” 5 Olwen means “white-track.” In both of these
cases a pun links the name to its source in such a way that the pun could be said to have created the name or its source. This is made obvious by the storyteller.

In other cases the pun is left unexplained, although it would be obvious to the audience. “I will not trust the keeping [cadwraeth] of the tusk [one of the objects of the boar-hunt] to any save Cadw of Prydein.” Cadw means “to keep.” This example may be a case of an imperfectly understood onomastic detail of the plot, or it may be a case of deliberate punning by the storyteller.

The accumulation of such examples suggests a significant compositional connection between names and stories. The role of the storyteller in formulating the onomastic puns which composed the mythological material underlying the story is impossible to determine. Which came first, the pun or the story? Would later storytellers understand that they were dealing with earlier storytellers’ puns? Or would the puns have become accepted as essential narrative details? I will return to these questions after offering some more examples of how this process worked, this time in Irish literature.

Thomas Kinsella notes the toponomastic element which underlies much of the structure of the Irish tale Tain Bo Cuailnge, which he has translated.

One of the major elements of the Tain is its topography. Place-names and their frequently fanciful meanings and origins occupy a remarkable place by modern standards. It is often enough justification for the inclusion of an incident that it ends in the naming of some physical feature: certain incidents, in-
deed, seem to have been invented merely to account for a place-name. The outstanding example is in the climax of the Tain itself, where the final battle (toward which we might assume the action is leading) is treated very casually, while attention is directed in detail to the wanderings of the mortally wounded Donn Cuailnge around Ireland, naming the places as he goes. 7

The battles narrated in the Tain stem from Medbh’s attempt to steal one of the two great bulls of Ireland in order to be equal in property to her husband Aillil, who owns the other bull. The final battle pits the two bulls against each other in an epic struggle which reveals themes deriving from the tale’s most archaic levels. These themes include explanations of placenames and of land formations, which suggests a mythological origin for this portion of the tale. The prominence of placenames in the description of this last battle and its aftermath also suggests a topographical basis for the composition of this portion of the tale.

They took the bull away on the day after the battle [between the opposing armies of men]. On Ai Plain, at Tarbga--the place of bull-grief or bull-strife: the hill originally called Roi Dedonn--he met the bull Finnbennach, the White-Horned. 8

The two bulls fight, but they are stalemated until one of the heroes taunts Donn Cuailnge.

At that, the bull jerked back his hoof. His leg broke, but the other’s horn was sent flying to the mountain nearby. It is called Sliab n’Adarca, the Mountain of the Horn, ever since. 9

The victorious Donn Cuailnge carries the remains of Finnben-
nach with him as he returns to his home from the scene of the battle.

He stopped to drink in Finnlethe on the way. He left Pinnbennach’s shoulderblade there—from which comes Finnlethe, the White One’s Shoulderblade, as the name of that district. He drank again at Ath Luain, and left Finnbennach’s loins there—that is how the place was named Ath Luain, the Ford of the Loins. . . . He came to Etan Tairb and set his brow against the hill at Ath Da Ferta—from which comes the name Etan Tairb, the Bull’s Brow, in Muirthemne Plain. ... Then he went on until he fell dead between Ulster and Ui Echach at Druim Tairb. So Druim Tairb, the Ridge of the Bull, is the name of that place. 10

By conventional narrative standards, this attention to topographical details might seem to impede the progress of the narrative, but the predominance of narrative details related to topography in this sequence indicates that there may have been a different conception of the role of topography in relation to narrative for the storyteller of the Tain. Like the catalogue of ships in the Iliad, such details reveal the important historical, genealogical, and legal roles which stories played in earlier cultures, which they no longer play in our culture. The catalogue of ships in the Iliad seems boring to the modern reader who is interested in the actions of the narrative, the emotions of the characters, and the thematic content of the epic. But the early Greek audience was interested in the historical accuracy of the catalogue in addition to the narrative details, character studies, and themes. In the sixth century B.C. the catalogue of ships became a central issue in a legal dispute among the Greek
city-states concerning the relation of Salamis to Athens. The dispute was resolved on the evidence of the catalogue which linked the ships from Salamis with those from Athens. Similarly, in early Irish culture, genealogy, law, medicine, history and geography were all preserved in poetic tracts. Poems determined history. The poets of opposing armies jointly watched their battles, then jointly composed a poem depicting the battle. Whoever won the battle in the poem won the battle on the field, even if, by modern empirical standards, the opposite were “true.” Topographical literature was also a conspicuous part of this aspect of early Irish culture. “This phenomenon is not confined to the Tain or the Ulster cycle; it is a continuing preoccupation of early and medieval Irish literature, which contains a whole class of topographical works, including prose tracts and poems of enormous length composed by the professional poets, who were expected to recite from them on demand.” 11 In the Celtic literatures there are whole classes of tales devoted to names, placenames, and etymologies, and Celtic scholars have offered a mythological explanation for this aspect of Celtic literature.

Punning is an ancient art and recent studies have shown that it was not indulged in for mere fun. ... The recognition of puns in early Celtic literature will no doubt increase as the texts are studied in more detail. It may well be that the philological uncertainty which haunts the interpretation of so many names in Celtic ... literatures is partly due to their being puns the clues to which have long been forgotten. The Irish Coir Anmann [personal name lore] and the Dindsenchas [placename lore]
very often give two or three alternative explanations of the names of persons or places, but unlike the modern etymologist they do not single out one of these explanations as the true one. One wonders whether these alternatives can be dismissed as mere fragments of unrelated lore gathered together and recorded for the sake of completeness... or whether it was considered fitting that the meaning of complex names should be complex and enigmatic.

The philological uncertainty described here seems to be a traditional aspect of much Celtic Literature. The puns and uncertainties virtually render some examples of Celtic literature untranslatable, or translatable only into a text which would resemble Finnegans Wake. (Joyce scholars face the same philological uncertainties when they try to decide which one of two or three or more alternative meanings of a Joycean pun is the “true” one, or the “truest” one.) One example of this sort of difficulty comes from an early Irish text in the Yellow Book of Lecan, in which a poet, Mac Lonain, puns on the possible meanings of a name assumed by a disguised god. The name is Fidbadach mac Feda Ruscaig. Fid can mean “wood” or “letter”--Fid and Feda are forms of the same word. Rusc means “bark (of a tree),” but it is very close in form to rosc, which means “declamatory poem.” The god’s name could thus mean “Woodman (Fidbadach) son of (mac) Barked Wood (Feda Ruscaig),” or “Man of Letters (Fidbadach) son of (mac) Poetic Letter (Feda Roscaig).” When the god announces his name (usually translated in the first sense, “Woodman son of Barked Wood am I”), the poet composes a declamatory poem extempore, beginning “Woodman Barked Wood’s son is here” (as if
Odin were greeted with an ode). Such punning is frequent in early Celtic literature. In this case the poet within the poem is deliberately punning, so the storyteller probably was as well. Another example will illustrate how such a pun can be integral to a narrative. When the Irish saint Ailbe was in the country of the Ui Fidgenti in Limerick, “he converted a very wicked man by turning his enemies into trees, so that the decapitated heads, which he brought back, proved to be just logs of wood. Fid means wood and cenn means head so the ancestor of the Ui Fidgenti, Fiachra Fidgennid, was so called because he planted a wood. So it is plain why Ailbe acted as he did in the Ui Fidgenti.” The saint’s miracle is thus essentially a pun on the tribal name, and the narrative based on the miracle is essentially etymythological in nature. Onomastic stories are part of the fabric of Celtic literature in general, and there is an Irish text, Coir Anmann, “The Fitness of Names,” devoted entirely to onomastic stories.

Similarly, toponomastic stories are a feature of Celtic literature in general and constitute a genre (the Dindsenchas, or “lore of places”) in Irish literature. “The habit of telling stories to explain place-names is by no means limited to the early Irish; it must be granted, however, that Irish antiquarians brought to the task an outstanding virtuosity and enthusiasm. Nowhere else in European literature of the Middle Ages are legends of placenames so abundantly recorded.” The tales in the Dindsenchas are often short explanations of
how a place got its name. They present an action which be-
comes a name as the result of a pun. Once again, however, it
is difficult to determine whether the action or the name came
first. Actions may have been invented to fit names.

Ath Cliath Cualann (Dublin)
Hurdles of wattling the Leinatermen made in
the reign of Mesgegra under the feet of the
sheep of Athirne the Importunate when deliver-
ing them to Dun Etair at the place in which
Allain Etair was taken from Ulster’s warriors,
where also Mesdedad Bon of Amergin fell by the
hand of Mesgegra king of Leinster. So from
those hurdles “Ath Cliath” (“the Ford of Hur-
dles) was named.
Or thus: “Ath Cliath” When the men of Erin
broke the limbs of the Matae, the monster that
was slain on the Liace Benn in the Brug of the
Mac Oc, they threw it limb by limb into the
Boyne, and its shinbone (colptha) got to Inber Colptha
(“the estuary of the Boyne”), whence
“Inber Colptha” is said, and the hurdle (Cliath)
of its frame (i.e., its breast) went along the
sea following the coast of Ireland until it
reached yon ford (ath): whence -Ath Cliath” is
said. 16

Similarly, Inber Ailnine, the mouth of a river, is named for
an action which took place there, but the name is also a pun
embodied in the story: “So the mother then killed her own
son and Ruad’s only 80n. and she hurled the child’s head af-
ter him, and then said everyone as if with one mouth ‘It is
an awful crime (ailbine)! It is an awful crime!’” 17

One last example will suffice to give a general idea
of the nature of these tales. King Eochaidh gave his eye in
payment to Ferchentre, a poet, to save his honor from being
spoiled by the poet’s satire over an insult he had received
from the king’s people.
Then Eochaidh went to wash the blood off his face, and searched the rushry and found no waters so he tore a tuft of rushes from its roots, and water trickled forth. With this he washed his empty eye-socket, and as he dipped his head thrice under the water all the well became red. Then because of the miracle of generosity which Eochaidh had performed the king regained both his eyes, and as he looked on the well he said: “A red (derg) hollow (derc) is this hollow, and this will be everyone’s name for it.” Whence “Loch Dergdeirc” is said. 18

The examples I have been dealing with thus far come from material which can only with difficulty be separated from the mythic origins of the stories in question. At this primitive level names, puns, and stories are inextricably, and perhaps consciously linked. Storytellers in the pre-literate but still highly developed stage of Celtic society which preceded the establishment of the scriptoria were also conscious of such puns, because their storytelling style was the immediate source for the literate versions, so they too must have underlined the link between action and name in the course of telling a story. All of these stories went through later redactions when they were copied down by literate scribes who were almost certainly aware of the onomastic and toponomastic nature of the tales. This is indicated by the insertion of phrases explaining how the action in a narrative is linked to the name or placename. I would now like to consider examples of onomastic puns and etymological puns which were deliberately and consciously used by Irish scribes to create narrative incidents or details during the composition of written tales and poems. Some of these are based on misreadings or misunderstandings of earlier texts, or cruxes within those texts,
but the best of them reveal an ability to use etymythological puns to actually create and structure literature.

In many cases a whole story is invented to account for the use of a particular word. One famous example concerns St. Patrick, who, when he escaped from slavery in Ireland as a youth. travelled with his crew “through desert country” for twenty-eight days. Then God provided them with food: “Lo, a herd of swine appeared in the way before our eyes, and they killed many of them; and in that place they remained two nights; and they were all refreshed, and their dogs were sated, for many of them had fainted and were left half dead by the way.” The story of Patrick’s dogs has seemed incongruous. “Would a man of the fifth century ... be enough concerned about the welfare of animals as to record the reviving of fainting dogs by sailors with pork chops? And if the ship’s company had been in desperate straits for food . . . would they not have begun killing and eating the dogs?”

The probable explanation or this detail of the dogs is a fanciful interpretation of an obscure word in the original Latin text: \( \text{ecce grex porcorum in uia ante oculos nostros apparuit,}
\) et multis ex illis interfecerunt et ibi duae noctes manserunt; et bene refecti et canes eorum repleti sunt, quia multi ex illis defecerunt et secus uiam semiusuii reliqui sunt. The Irish Book of Armagh reads canes but two non-Irish sources have carnes and another has carne. Thus the original sense was that “they (the sailors) were filled with their (i.e., the pigs’) flesh, for many of them had fainted.”
A similar case concerns the detail of nine madmen associated with a battle celebrated in an old Irish poem. Madmen in Irish literature are characterized by a prodigious ability to leap, and are often depicted leaping from branch to branch through the trees. The most famous example is Suibhne geilt or Mad Sweeney (who plays an important role in Flann O’Brien’s *At Swim-Two-Birds*). This detail of leaping probably arose from the attempt to explain an unusual name. Molling, an early Irish saint, had the peculiar attribute of making prodigious leaps. This attribute seems completely arbitrary, but it might come from an attempt to make sense of a foreign name. “The jumping and levitation which is associated with Suibhne ... was originally an attribute of Molling and arose out of an attempt to explain his unusual and unintelligible name.” 23 “Molling’s name, to the early Irish mind, immediately conjured up the notion of leaping.” 24 Through a complicated process of transmission and association this leaping then became an attribute of madmen. The poem which describes nine leaping madmen is based on a line in the *Annals of Tigernach* and the *Chronicon Scotorum*: Hic totus numerus de Regibus cc. et clx. de ansaib Fergaile et alii et ix. uolatiles i. gelai.  

There died a hundred gracious princes,  
with a hundred brawny horsemen,  
with nine ferocious flying madmen,  
with seven thousand men-at-arms. 26

Carney suggests that the detail of the nine flying madmen is probably based on a misreading of a sentence like: *Bellum*
Almaine in quo cecidit Fegal mac Maile Duin et novem alii nobiles. Thus nobiles might have become uolatiles through a scribal error or a misreading. “From some such compressed account, through a misreading of the last word, the whole spurious ‘tradition’ of the nine gelta has arisen.”

These examples are based on errors, but there are also examples where scribes have imaginatively punned on the possible meanings of words which they did not understand in order to create details or narrative incidents in the lives of saints. Perhaps the best example concerns Patrick, whose full Latin name was Patricius Magonus Succetus Cothirthiacus. Tirechan, in the Book of Ultan, associated cothir with the Irish numeral ceither, “four,” and –thiach with the Irish word teich, “house,” in order to explain Cothirthiacus.

This, along with similar etymological explanations, led to the invention of a story linking Patrick to four masters. The name Cothirthiacus probably came to be associated with Patrick because of a linguistic phenomenon known as the P/K Split. Irish Gaelic, unlike other Indo-European languages, had no P sound. When foreign words with an initial P were borrowed into Irish, a K sound was substituted. Indo-European pod, foot, became Greek pous and Latin pes, but Irish cos.

Among the very earliest Latin p-words Irish was called upon to absorb was Patricius—the name of the apostle, St. Patrick himself. That name, in Irish Padraig, may have been one of the very first p-words successfully naturalized as Catraig or Cotraige. Later, when the form
Padraig had become fully established, the recorded evidence that the saint had once been called Cotraige was misunderstood, and efforts were made to rationalize the apparent anomaly. Therefore one further name was added to the list of those St. Patrick was supposed to have answered to at one time or another, and the name Cotraige was assigned in legend to the period of his youthful bondage in Ireland.

The name itself was ingeniously derived from ceithre, ceathair, “four,” or ceathrar, “four persons,” and in the forms Cothraige and Cathraige was interpreted to mean “belonging to the four.” This etymology then led to the thesis that the young British slave had been conjointly owned by four masters, in order to account for the name. 29

Thus a pun based on etymology transforms an inexplicable name into a story which then becomes an integral part of Patrick’s biography. (Joyce knew about this pun and story and used it in Finnegans Wake. 30)

Another item in Patrick’s biography, the angel who urged him in a vision to return to Ireland, probably inspired a similarly ingenious linguistic invention. The name associated with the angel is Victor or Victoricius, but this may in fact be Patrick’s name. 31 The Irish equivalent was Cernachus, “the victorious one” (from cern, “victory,” and an adjectival suffix). There is a saint named Cernachus whose biography parallels Patrick’s. Both arrived in Ireland in the same year, did the same things. Either one is modelled on the other or both are the same. 32 In fact the majority of saints’ biographies in Ireland may derive from puns on the meanings of ancient tribal names, and from the activities of those tribes, as well as from scribal errors and etymological reconstructions. 33 Thus another whole class of Irish litera-
ture, its hagiography, would have an etymythological basis. If many of these stories can be explained as misreadings or unconscious puns carried over from archaic sources, there is also evidence of scribes and later redactors deliberately using puns to provide both details and a structure for their written tales. “The ancient punsters certainly one day expected to be interpreted.” 34 One example of this deliberate punning occurs in the Irish tale Tain Bo Froech, where Froech and Medbh play “the board-game called fidchell” for three days and three nights. “No food is served and they fail to notice that night has come three times on account of the bright light of the precious stones which illumines the darkness.” 35 This conflates an adulterous situation in which Fergus and Medbh play a chess game in Ailill’s company in Tain Bo Cuailnge, with a tale told of a visit by St. Patrick to St. Brigit during which he preaches for three days and three nights while the sun miraculously does not set. The author of Tain Bo Froech suppresses the miraculous elements in his source because he is writing a pre-Christian heroic tale; he needs a “natural” explanation. Carney comments: “He found this in the great compendium of the knowledge of that age, the Etymologiae of Isidore of Seville. Isidore, in dealing with the precious stone called carbunculus associates it with carbo, coal; it is not conquered by night, he tells us, it lights up the darkness so that it causes flames to flicker before the eyes. This passage in the Etymologiae gave the author of [Tain Bo Froech] the mechanism whereby
he could allow his characters to sit together for three days and three nights, without noting that night had come.”

Perhaps the best example of how an etymological pun provides the basis for a work of art occurs in the long early Irish poem, Caillech Bherri or “The Hag of Beare,” one of the best and best-known early Irish poems. The “hag” was originally a goddess who “dropped carns on to hills in Meath out of her apron, was responsible for moving islands in west Kerry, built mountains from rocks carried in her creel in Scotland, and was queen of the Limerick fairies. … She entered on seven periods of youth … so that every husband used to pass from her to death through old age, and so that her grandchildren and great-grandchildren were peoples and races.” When Christian scribes came upon this story they transformed it into the lament of a “hag” approaching death and comparing her present state of decay with her glorious (and lusty) youth. This transformation was effected by means of a pun.

In the eighth or ninth century one of the monastic literati, availing himself of a semantic ambiguity in the word caillech [hag], invented the fiction that she had taken the veil (caille) in the end of her days. He went on to compose around this notion a poem as rich in its symbolism as in its lyric beauty, in which the “Nun” of Berre contrasts her present state of decay with other glorious days when she was young and beautifully arrayed and the companion of princes. … The real subject of this poem, ‘the greatest of Irish poems,’ it has been claimed, is the deep incompatibility between Christianity and the world of pagan belief and the inevitable outcome of their conflict in the conquest and impoverishment of the latter.
An etymological pun made possible the contrast between Christian and pre-Christian Ireland in this poem. There is another very long medieval Irish tale called Agallamh na Senorach, the “Interrogation of the Old Men” or the “Colloquy of the Ancients,” which brings together the cycle of stories associated with Fionn mac Cumhal and the character of St. Patrick. This is accomplished by the fictive device of having Oisin, Fionn’s son, and (in some versions) a few followers survive the Fianna, Fionn’s companions, long enough to be alive when Patrick arrives. When Oisin and Patrick meet they resolve to travel around Ireland together, with Oisin telling a story appropriate to each place they stop. “The point of departure for each story is an explanation of the presence of a tumulus or tomb, the name given to a hill, a wood, a ford or a bridge: each irregularity of terrain, all the peculiarities of place-names, serve as an excuse for a story. Thus, the ground bears the name, and the name contains the legend. The dream remains attached to the soil.” 40 I will return to this story in the final chapter.

The Agallamh na Senorach was one of Joyce’s sources for Finnegans Wake, both for allusions, characters, plot elements and themes, and for a patent example of the technique which can turn a name or a placename into a narrative detail by means of a pun. But first I want to explore Joyce’s interest in etymology and etymological theories in general in order to show that his use of Irish onomastic and toponomastic literature fit into a coherent and established pattern. His studies
in other etymologically-related areas in fact bolstered his interest in (and knowledge of) Irish onomastic and toponomastic literature.

Let me conclude by illustrating the process I have been examining with an example of my own. It is possible to take a word, look up its etymological history, and then to turn the details thus gained into a literary unit. Thus I my native place in Ireland is called Ballaghaderreen, from the Irish bealach an doirin, “the way (or path) through the little oak wood.” There once was a large stand of oak trees near the town. The English cut these trees down and sent them to Scotland to be made into spindles. The townspeople of Ballaghaderreen know the Irish meaning of the anglicized name, and they know why the town has that name and where the trees went. The history is encapsulated in the name. So I can write:

ruins, monuments, and names remain--
Ballaghaderreen;
though the oak wood
that-one time
darkly arched the way
has long since gone to Scotland for spindles. 41

The reference will be immediately apparent to the townspeople (or to any Irish-speaker), as will the pun on the meaning of the name. In this way I can turn a word into a story by utilizing its meaning and the history attached to it. This is a narrative technique, a very common one (as I have tried to show) in Irish folklore, literature, and conversation.
The technique survives in modern Irish literature (see Appendix I), and it appears in *Finnegans Wake* in great abundance.
In accordance with standard scholarly procedure in Joycean studies, I have used the accepted abbreviations for the standard editions of Joyce’s works throughout this study instead of footnoting each quote from Joyce’s work. These abbreviations are (as set out by the James Joyce Quarterly):


Letters, Joyce, James. Letters of James Joyce.


2. James Carney. Studies in Early Irish Literature
and History. Dublin. 1955. p. 322 cf. p. 296. fn. 1: “The old tradition, as is quite usual, centred about a place name.”
4. Ibid., p. 95.
5. Ibid., p. 111.
8. Ibid., p. 251.
9. Ibid., p. 252.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv; cf. Carney, op. cit., p. 67, fn. 1. “This type of material where Maenan Ina dind ‘Maenan in his hill’ has to be mentally expanded as ‘Maenan was killed in the place that has since been known as Maenan’s Hill’ is characteristic of sources where the antiquarian information is important rather than the story.”
15. T.P. Cross & C.H. Slover. Ancient Irish Tales. New York, 1936, p. 596. The Dindsenchas consist of both prose and verse tracts. Whitley Stokes translated most of the prose dindsenchas in Revue Celtique, Vols. 15 & 16, and this is the source for the excerpts in Cross & Slover. The Metrical Dindsenchas were edited and translated by Edward Gwynn in five volumes (Dublin, 1903-35). In addition, John O’Donovan edited Irish Topographical Poems, which James Carney has recently re-edited as Topographical Poems by Seana Mor 0 Dubhagain and Giollana-Naomh O Huidhrin, Dublin; 1943.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
20. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
21. Ibid., p. 17.
22. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 145.
25. Ibid., p. 148.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid., p. 149.
29. Brandon O Hehir. A Gaelic Lexicon for Finnegans Wake. Berkeley, 1967, pp. 403-404, cf. Carney, op. cit., p. 169; fn. 1, who suggests that the notion of Fergus’s fantastic height may derive from confusion between the words lige and lie, i.e., “lying” and “gravestone, stone.” Fergus is said to have recited the Tain Bo Cualnge ina lige, lying down, because he was too tall. This should actually read a lie or a liic, at his grave.
30. In FW this story appears in the phrase “O thaw bron orm, A’Cothraige, thinkinhou gaily?” (FW 54.14), which mimics the Irish O ta bron orm, a Chuathraige, an tuigean tu Gaeilge?. “Oh, I am sorry; Cotrick, do you understand Irish?” (cf. O-Hehir, op. cit., p. 37). The name Cathraige/Cothraige and its connection with the story of Patrick’s four masters appears in the phrase “Quadrigue my yoke” (FW 486.03), where it is immediately preceded by the words “roman cowthrick” (FW 486.02), and as “Caughterec” (600.14). The ass which is always associated with the four old men (Mamalujo), who are also sometimes the Four Masters, is referred to as the “Cot-terick’s donkey” (FW 24.22). (This may in fact be why there always is an ass associated with them, thus illustrating how the pun involved in Patrick’s name, Cathraige, supplied a structural element for FW.)
32. Ibid.
33. Butler, op. cit., p. 40; cf. Butler's chapter entitled "Puncraft," pp. 36-43, where he outlines a theory of saints' biographies deriving from puns on ancestral names and from the migrations of those tribes.
34. Ibid.
35. Carney, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
39. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
40. Ramnoux, op. cit., p. 133.
41. From "Lough Gara Perspective," a long poem constructed largely on etymythological principles.
II. A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG ETYMOLOGIST

One morning after we had moved into Glengarriff Parade, I was standing at the open and still uncurtained window of the only front room watching the butcher’s boy walking in the middle of the road ... and intoning loudly,

Walkin’ along the road
Kickin’ up all the dust
And there’s ne’er a wan in Glengarriff Parade
Dar give him a lick in the pus.

“A rival poet,” I said unsmiling to Jim, who had come to the window. But Jim was amused. He called him “the poet of the rugged glen,” which he said was the meaning of the name Glengarriff. (He had been studying Irish for a year or so.)

Stanislaus Joyce

Joyce’s lifelong fascination with language and with individual words is famous. The young protagonists of “The Sisters” and “Araby,” and Stephen Dedalus also exhibit this fascination. I would like to explore the process by which Joyce’s fascination with language led him to pay particular attention to individual words and their etymologies before suggesting how this attention is reflected in his work.

Mary Colum has written of her days as a University student with Joyce, “I had only the slightest interest in the beginnings of modern languages, in the development of linguistics, in grammar in the early periods of language development. To all these philological questions Joyce applied himself with intensity of interest; he knew by heart paragraphs or pages of early Anglo-Saxon, of Italian of before Dante’s time, of
Joyce received his degree in modern languages. While he was still a University student Joyce wrote an essay, “The Study of Languages,” in which he noted the value of studying individual words. “In the history of words there is much that indicates the history of men, and in comparing the speech of today with that of years ago, we have a useful illustration of the effect of external influences on the very words of a race” (CW 28). This perception of etymology, the shifting history of words, as a tool which can reveal the history of men is similar to Giambattista Vico’s perception of etymology as such a tool. Joyce had probably not yet read Vico at this stage, but their common interest in words as history indicates an important affinity which did become apparent to Joyce later (see chapter three). Many years later, in Paris, Joyce revealed this same interest in words as historical deposits to Padraic Colum.

We passed a bird shop the sign of which was the effigy of a medieval saint. Joyce and I identified him as Saint Fiacre, and we recalled the time when the hired vehicle on these streets was the fiacre. What was the connection between the saint and the vehicle? Well, centuries before, the saint had a well-cultivated garden outside the town, and people with a holiday to spend would say, “Let’s go to Fiacre’s garden.” And Fiacre himself, we are told, was the son of the King of Scotland. But “Scotland” as the name for a country did not exist in Fiacre’s time; “Scot” was Latin for “Gael” and specifically for “Irishman.” So Fiacre emerged as the Irish Fiacre who was probably one of the scholars at the court of Charles the Bald. And here he was now, once the patron of gardens, now the patron of birds of gardens.

History as transmitted in this way fascinated Joyce; it was not outside but inside ourselves. Some particle of the influence of those misnamed
men who spoke Latin with an Irish accent to the Carolingian kings must still be present among the millions of other influences, he reflected, must even exist in the minds of people on the street that morning. And the history that lies below our intellectual preoccupations is a theme in Work in Progress. 4

Joyce had clearly explored the history of “Fiacre” before elucidating it for Colum, and was able playfully to reconstruct the story behind “Fiacre” because the word encapsulates the story in its history (as most etymologies do). It is a simple step to reverse this process of encapsulation by expanding the etymological ramifications of a word into a story (as Joyce did here for Colum with “Fiacre”). As Colum suggests, Work in Progress, which became Finnegans Wake, reveals the fruits of Joyce’s interest in the history of words in virtually innumerable instances.

Early readers of Work in Progress were well aware of the process by which Joyce turned individual words into larger semantic units (Harry Crosby called it “creative etymology”). 5 Padraic Colum described it at length.

And so all serious writers of English today look to James Joyce, who has proved himself the most learned, the most subtle, the most thorough-going exponent of the value-making word. From his early days Joyce has exercised his imagination and intellect upon the significance of words, the ordering of words. . . .

Joyce approached the problem of the word not only as a writer but as a musician, a linguist, a man trained in scholastic philosophy in which definition and rigorous literalness are insisted on. And this concern with the word has brought him far as a literary technician. All writers are concerned with process, with trying to pass from what can be
described to what can be activated. Most of us leave it at the stage of description. ‘He sat there and listened to the music’; ‘Sitting there, he listened to the music.’ So we write, but we know very well that this sort of writing gives us nothing of the process—a man responding to music. Joyce, in his later books anyway, wants to deal only with processes. In *Portrait of the Artist* some one looks at the algebraic signs on a blackboard; he writes of the ‘Morris dance’ of these signs. In that phrase a historical process is presented; we have the activism of algebra, its Saracen origin, the decline of the civilization it came out of to the point where Europe knew only its remnants as dancers and buffoons. 6

This process which Colum is describing depends for its understanding on the reader’s knowledge of the etymology of “Morris dance.” That the example is taken from the *Portrait* indicates how early in his work Joyce put this process to use. Critics of this process called it “free etymology” or “extreme etymological adventures” when they perceived it in *Work in Progress* (where it is of course more apparent than in the earlier works), but others caught something of Joyce’s own fascination.

Joyce, limited by the exigencies of the dream world where neither deliberate logic nor memory of the past dream-actions exists must have his recourse to the word, the multi-colored, age-wise, perennially youthful interpreter of the spirit, the strangest of creatures, the word, ‘as cunningly hidden in its maze of contused drapery as a fieldmouse in a nest of coloured ribbons. And it is this mysterious property of the word to body itself forth at certain moments into a creature of almost sentient powers (as when in war-time the knowledge of the password may prove a matter of life or death ... and ... the potency of the true word, text, or hymn to an intensely religious people like the Egyptians in
their Book or the Dead so often referred to in 'The Ondt and the Gracehoper' upon which depended life everlasting or doom),--it is this power of the word to become for the mind of man a bridge, a mediator, divine reason, protector, or saviour which is the secret seed of this song of songs to the Logos, Work in Progress.

Oliver St. John Gogarty, who was not sympathetic to Joyce’s later work, nevertheless saw validity in it. “In Anna Livia Plurabelle his experiment is at its best. Here there is intelligible evidence of that for which he was striving and that was to make words in a surrealistic way show roots as well as blossoms. His stupendous erudition is evident in every word.” Joyce’s “stupendous erudition” may be intimately bound up with his training in scholastic philosophy (as Colum said); it has been cited as an explanation of his methodology by Michael Stuart.

Indeed, the spiritual essence of scholasticism is so deeply embedded in the roots of his soul that it manifests itself in his mature works in an all-pervading fashion. All of the self-created complexities in Ulysses and Work in Progress resulting in ornamentation of structure, language, and character-creation undoubtedly arise from a compelling soul-need familiar to theologians of weaving a rich network of detail around the thread of an idea, a trait most noticeable in Gothic architecture and in the work of medieval book-illuminators.

This metaphor of embroidering the central idea with ornamental detail will prove useful in explaining how, and perhaps why, Joyce introduced etymological details into his text. The fascination which individual words held for Joyce is suggested by their effect on his alter ego, Stephen.
Dedalus. In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen “began to explore for himself and to choose, and thereby rescue once for all, the words and phrases most amenable to his theory for the proper recitation of verse” (SH 26). Joyce used notebooks and notesheets for the same purpose throughout his life. Stephen “read Skeat’s *Etymological Dictionary* by the hour and his mind which had from the first been only too submissive to the infant sense of wonder, was often hypnotised by the most commonplace conversation. People seemed to him strangely ignorant of the value of the words they used so glibly” (SH 26). Joyce too read Skeat’s dictionary.

In “The Study of Languages” (1898/9) Joyce advocates the study of Latin which would acquaint “us with a language, which has a strong element in English, and thus makes us know the derivations of many words, which we then apply more correctly and which have therefore a truer meaning for us” (CW 29). The etymology of “etymology” seems to lie behind this sentence. Etymology derives from the Greek *etumo-w*, “true,” and *dlongis*, “account,” from *legein*, “to speak,” according to Skeat. “Etymology,” then, reveals the “true account,” and the study of Latin as one of the sources of English etymology will reveal the derivations of words which, once known, will ensure correct application and true meaning. Proper use of words means truthful use of words. Knowledge of derivations lays bare the truest meanings of words. Thus etymology can reveal both
Hugh Kenner has written about Joyce’s interest in etymology, noting that Joyce came to maturity during the same time period as the modern science of etymology. For Kenner, Joyce’s interest in etymology is a significant aspect of his modernism which affects his attitude toward language and his use of it. I would like to summarize some of Kenner’s major points here before turning to Joyce’s work for evidence of etymological material. In doing so I will extend some of Kenner’s conclusions.

“Skeat in his prefatory matter explains very clearly that any etymology reflects ... the actual intercourse of peoples. We are not dealing with mysterious and arbitrary corruptions, but with tribal migrations and minds adopting new themes. Thus sheep and cows, tended by Saxons, receive French names, Mutton and beef, in the conquering Normans’ kitchens.”14 (“In the history of words there is much that indicates the history of men”—CW 28.) “Amidst all this an historical consciousness grew up, an awareness of history superintending’ the proper usage of words”15 (“makes us know the derivations of many words, which we then apply more correctly and which have therefore a truer meaning for us—CW 29.)

When Joyce read Skeat’s Etymological Dictionary, it made him reflect that people seemed strangely ignorant of the value of the words they used so glibly. One such word was swoon, a word in which Joyce’s interest has been noted: it is a debased staple of Vic-
torian novels, whose heroines are always swooning, but Skeat is firm about deriving it not from Victorian usage but from Saxon, and this knowledge appears to have disinfected it for Joyce. Or again, we find in Joyce’s broadside of 1904, The Holy Office the couplet about

Bringing to tavern and to brothel
The mind of witty Aristotle.

and may at first be puzzled by the adjective. Why should Aristotle be witty? It is possible to read his *Metaphysics* from cover to cover without cracking a smile. But Joyce is remembering that Aristotle was for Dante the Master of Those who Know. In the Proteus episode of *Ulysses* he used Dante’s Italian, *maestro di color che sanno*; but in a broadside ballad he uses Saxon words, and a form of knowing derived from the Saxon *witan*, which form is witty.

Kenner goes on to compare Joyce’s methodology of noting words on slips of paper to be harvested for future use with the methodology which produced the New English Dictionary to indicate an affinity between Joyce and the NED editors in their approach to individual words and to etymology. But the emphasis on the significance of single words has ramifications beyond those of usage.

Now the single word had acquired, early in the 19th century, a mystique out of which the Dictionary grew, a mystique we find Joyce sharing. We have seen how Skeat’s Dictionary helped prepare Joyce’s mine, and it was an elder colleague of Skeat’s, Richard Chenevix Trench, who gave the first impulse to the N.E.D. by a paper read before the Philological Society in 1857. Six years before that, in a series of lectures called *On the Study of Words*, this same Trench had defined the state of awareness within which such a thing as *Finnegans Wake* was conceivable. Many a single word—he said—is itself a concentrated poem, having stories of poetical thought and imagery laid up in it. Trench went on to consider the *signatura rerum*, the signature of ‘things...
in the Second Scripture, Nature, which has evolved like language and asks to be read like a book. So, Signatures of all things I am here to read, muses Stephen at the beginning of the Ulysses episode whose title is Proteus, polymorphous Nature, and whose Art is Philology.

. . . There are two reasons for being certain that Joyce was aware of Trench's work. One is that Trench became Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, and Joyce never failed to take stock of prominent men who had been stationed in Dublin. The other reason is that Richard Chenevix Trench had a grandson named Samuel Chenevix Trench, who spent some time in Ireland doing folklore fieldwork, to the intense annoyance or some of the Irish who resented being birdwatched. In 1904 Samuel Trench shared temporary lodgings in a Martello Tower with Oliver St John Gogarty and James Joyce, and he appears in Ulysses under the name of Haines.17

Trench's notion that a single word is a concentrated poem recalls Ralph Waldo Emerson's description or language as “fossil poetry.”18 This same description inspired Ernest Fenollosa (about whom more later) who said all poetry “was once the language itself, and still underlies the dry bones of even our dictionaries.”

Every word, a metaphor, perhaps several degrees deep, still has the power to flash meaning back and forth between apparently divergent and intractable planes of being. The prehistoric people who created language were necessarily poets, since they discovered the whole harmonious framework of the universe and the essential interplay of its living processes. We should find the whole theory of evolution (which our selfcentered Aryan consciousness afterwards forgot) lying concrete in our etymologies.19

Kenner notes that Fenollosa made a note to himself, in the notebook from which this quote comes, to “give examples from Skeat.”20 So words, concentrated poems or metaphors, contain stories which can be revealed by studying their
Stephen Dedalus is fascinated by words (“Words. Was it their colours? No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself” P 166). Stephen, who has decided that his vocation is to be an artist, sees words as treasures to be hoarded (“It was not only in Skeat that he found words for his treasure-house, he found them also at haphazard in the shops, on advertisements, in the mouths of the plodding public” SH 30):

he found himself glancing from one casual word to another on his right or left in stolid wonder that they had been so silently emptied of instantaneous sense until every mean shop legend bound his mind like the words of a spell and his soul shrivelled up, sighing with age as he walked on in a lane among heaps of dead language. (P 178)

Stephen uses words with a conscious sense of their etymology. “The word now shown in his brain, clearer and brighter than any ivory sawn from the mottled tusks of elephants. Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur.” (P 179) Stephen here recalls Skeat’s etymology for ivory. In the phrase “bound his mind like the words of a spell” the etymology of “spellbound” has been expanded or dramatized. Stephen exhibits a lively sense of the etymological history of the words he uses. “His respect for the accurate use of words, the etymologically “true” usage, is evident in his conversation with the Dean of Studies.”
--One difficulty. said Stephen. in esthetic discussion is to know whether words are being used according to the literary tradition or according to the tradition of the marketplace.
I remember a sentence of Newman’s in which he says of the Blessed Virgin that she was detained in the full company of the saints.
The use of the word in the marketplace is quite different. I hope I am not detaining you.
--Not in the least. said the dean politely.
--No, no, said Stephen smiling, I mean...
--Yes. Yes: I see, said the dean quickly, I quite catch the point. detain.
He thrust forward his underjaw and uttered a dry short cough. (P 187-188)

Stephen has focussed attention on the word detain and Joyce, by having the dean miss the point of Stephen’s example, has focussed attention on the importance of individual words in an extraliterary, in this case political, sense, as shortly becomes evident. The dean attempts to hide his embarrassment over misperceiving Stephen’s use of detain by returning the discussion to the practical subject of lamps (which had started it).

--To return to the lamp, he said, the feeding of it is also a nice problem. You must choose the pure oil and you must be careful when you pour it in not to overflow it, not to pour in more than the funnel can hold.
--The funnel through which you pour the oil into your lamp.
--That, said Stephen. Is that called a funnel? Is it not a tundish?
--What is a tundish?
--That. The … the funnel.
--Is that called a tundish in Ireland? asked the dean. I never heard the word in my life.
--It is called a tundish in Lower Drumeonda, said Stephen, where they speak the best English.
--A tundish. said the dean reflectively. That is a most interesting word. I must look that word up. Upon my word I must. (E 186)
Now it is Stephen’s turn to be embarrassed. He has not recognized the dean’s term, funnel, and he has discovered that tundish, a word commonly used in Ireland, even today, is unknown to the Englishman.23 The dean mayor may not look the word up, but Stephen will, shortly, only to discover that tundish is an old English word. “That tundish has been on my mind for a long time. I looked it up and find it English and good old blunt English too. Damn the dean of studies and his funnel! What did he come here for to teach us his own language or to learn it from us? Damn him one way or the other.” (P 251) (“An Anglican ordinal. not reading his own dunsky tunga, may ever behold the brand of scarlet on the brow of her of Babylon and feel not the pink one in his own damned cheek.”--FW 185.10-13) The dean of studies is an Englishman and a convert to Catholicism (and thus a symbol of two of the nets Stephen plans to fly by--British Imperialism and Roman Catholicism). He should know the words of his own language. Tundish is good old blunt English. In looking it up Stephen would have found a Shakesperian reference for it from Measure for Measure (III, ii. 182), where a man has been punished for fornication, “For filling a bottle with a tunne-dish.” Stephen’s fascination with words, and his habit of looking them up, are revealed by this episode. It also illustrates how words contain and reveal history.

The dean repeated the word yet again.
—Tundish! Well now, that is interesting!
--The question you asked me a moment ago seems to me more interesting. What is that beauty which the artist struggles to express from lumps of earth, said Stephen coldly.

The little word seemed to have turned a rapier point of his sensitiveness against the courteous and vigilant foe. He felt with a smart of dejection that the man to whom he was speaking has a countryman of Ben Jonson. He thought:

--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. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (P 189)

"The Study of Languages" had mentioned the crippling influence which the conqueror’s language has on the conquered’s. The simple word tundish illustrates this influence. English did not gain any widespread acceptance in Ireland until the Elizabethan-Jacobean period, when the first successful English administration was established in Ireland. One result of this has been the preservation of Elizabethan words and pronunciation in Ireland. Ironically, tundish, an Elizabethan term, the common Irish word for Funnel, is unknown to the “countryman of Ben Jonson,” who uses an old French term (O.F. founil). More ironically still, as Stephen would have learned from Skeat, tun- may derive from the Gaelic word Tonn, meaning skin (as in “wine-skin”). (“What did he come here for to learn it from us?”; “It is called a tundish in Lower Drumcondra ... where they speak the best English.”) The tun-dish episode is central in Stephen’s development.
It constellates a number of his contradictory impulses (he is at this stage in his development strongly enamoured of Elizabethan songs and poetry yet resentful of English historical and political domination in Ireland). The episode actually happened to Joyce’s friend J.F. Byrne (“Cranly”), but its significance was so great that Joyce adopted it, transformed it from a relatively minor episode (whose emphasis was on the literary value of words) in Stephen Hero into a major one in the Portrait, and returned to it in Finnegans Wake. Tundish illustrates how words can reveal history (which is Joyce’s point in “The Study of Languages”) and it illustrates how Stephen used and learned from Skeat’s dictionary. It also illustrates how Joyce could use the etymological ramifications of a key word to enhance or enrich a passage (cf. Colum’s comment on his use of “Morris dance”). In this case the specific word is crucial to a proper understanding of the significance of the passage. There is another way in which Stephen uses etymology to clarify the proper or true meaning of words. When he defines pity and terror as feelings which arrest the mind, he goes out of his way to stress his use of a word for its truest etymological sense.

You see I use the word arrest. I mean that the tragic emotion is static. Or rather the dramatic emotion is. The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions. The arts which excite
them, pornographic or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I use the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing. (P 205)

From Skeat Stephen would have learned that arrest derives from the Latin restare, to stay, remain (from re-, back, and stare, to stand), and that static derives from the Greek stasos, also from a verb meaning to stand. He seems to have chosen his terms with careful reference to their etymologies. His careful choice of words (both here and in his translations of Aquinas’s terms, integritas, consonantia, and claritas--P 207f.) reflects the concern with knowing the derivation of words in order to ensure their true and proper use stated in Joyce’s essay on the study of language (CW 29), and recalls Colum’s reminder of Joyce’s training in scholastic philosophy “in which definition and rigorous literalness are insisted on.”

Sometimes Joyce enriches the overtones of a passage in the Portrait by introducing details related to the etymology of a word into a context in which they are not immediately apparent. One example of this occurs when Stephen, having renounced the priesthood as a vocation, accepts the “priesthood” of art. This episode is climaxed by his “birdgirl” epiphany, which occurs at the mouth of the Liffey in Dublin Bay. This place inspired the Viking name for Dublin, dubh-linn, or dark pool. First Stephen paces back and forth “from the door of Byron’s public-house to the gate of Clontarf Chapel” (P 164), awaiting
the outcome of his father’s attempt to “find out for him something about the university.” He sets off impatiently for “the Bull.” Clontarf, chain tarbh, is the meadow of the bull, where Brian Boru defeated the Danes in 1014 (this placename is important in Finnegans Wake and I will return to it in another chapter), and the Bull for which Clontarf is named is a sandbank in Dublin Bay, toward which Stephen is headed. When he reaches the dark pool of Dublin Bay, Stephen’s meditations have references to the etymology of Dublin woven into them.

A veiled sunlight lit up faintly the grey sheet of water where the river was embayed. ... the image of the seventh city of christendom was visible to him across the timeless air, no older nor more weary nor less patient of subjection than in the days of the thingmote. Disheartened, he raised his eyes towards the slowdrifting clouds, dappled and seaborne. They were voyaging across the deserts of the sky, a host of nomads on the march, voyaging high over Ireland, westward bound. The Europe they had come from lay out there beyond the Irish sea, Europe of strange tongues and valleyed and woodbegirt and citadelled and of entrenched and marshalled races. He heard a confused music within him as of memories and names which he was almost conscious of but could not capture even for an instant. (P 167)

Stephen is contemplating Ireland’s invading races, such as the Danes (“thingmote”), and reconstructing the history of Dublin which is revealed by the etymology of its name: the grey sheet of water where the river was embayed when the Vikings arrived. The confused music of memories and names which he was almost conscious of may be, in part, the references to “dark pool” which Joyce has woven into the rest of this passage. “A moment before the ghost of
the ancient kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through
the vesture of the hazewrapped city. Now... he seemed
to hear the noise of dim waves” (P 168-169). “The mirror
of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored
the high drifting clouds” (P 170). The passage (which
closes section IV of *A Portrait*) ends as darkness falls,
and it ends with a reference to “pools” (P 173) The
opening paragraph of the next section shows Stephen “staring
into the dark pool of the jar” (P 174). In the last section
of the Portrait Stephen wanders around Dublin as he prepares
to leave it and he reveals a penchant to associate memories
with placenames.

The rain laden trees of the avenue evoked in
him, as always, memories of the girls and
women in the plays of Gerhart Hauptmann; and
the memory of their pale sorrows and the fragrance
falling from the wet branches mingled in a mood
of quiet joy. His morning walk across the city
had begun, and he foreknew that as he passed the
sloblands of Fairview he would think of the
cloisteral silverveined prose of Newman, that as
he walked along the North Strand Road, glancing
idly at the windows of the provision shops, he
would recall the dark humour of Guido Cavalcanti
and smile, that as he went by Baird’s stoncutting
works in Talbot Place the spirit of Ibsen would
blow through him like a keen wind, a spirit of
wayward boyish beauty, and that passing a grimy
marine dealer’s shop beyond the Liffey he would
repeat the song by Ben Jonson which begins:

*I was not wearier where I lay* (P 176)

My previous examples have indicated how Joyce wove
the etymological details of words and names into the text
surrounding those words and names. Stephen’s habit of
associating memories with places is similar in some respects
to the narrative device of associating stories with placenames.
which I discussed in the first chapter. This habit is not identical to that device, but it does reveal an affinity between Stephen’s association of memories with places as a narrative device of Joyce’s, and the toponomastic narrative device of early Irish literature, and I note it in this respect. The epigraph to this chapter illustrates how Joyce could and did utilize Irish placenames to create new semantic units out of puns on etymologies, and I think that Joyce used the city of Dublin and its topography as an important structural device in the composition of the last section of the Portrait, where I think that the city of Dublin assumes the role of a “character” whom Stephen must leave just as he leaves the other characters in the book. This is why Stephen wanders around Dublin before resolving to leave. This is why Joyce weaves references to the etymology of Dublin into passages related to Dublin.

I would like to close this chapter with examples of possible etymological bases for the details of an episode in the Portrait and an episode in Ulysses. These examples will suggest how subtle, yet pervasive, Joyce’s etymological punning may be, and how much closer attention we must pay to potential etymological puns in Joyce’s earlier work. I will then, in the next chapter, explore three specific corroborators in an etymological technique akin to Joyce’s before turning to his use of toponomastic puns in Finnegans Wake.

Bearing Colum’s example of Joyce’s use of “morris
dance” in mind. I would like to suggest an instance in which Joyce seems to have chosen a significant detail for his plot from an etymological explanation of the term “maundy” in Maundy Sunday. When Stephen explains his esthetic theory to Lynch he uses terms from Aquinas to structure his discussion. (P 204-215) “Who knows? said Stephen, smiling. Perhaps Aquinas would understand me better than you. He was a poet himself. He wrote a hymn for Maundy Thursday.” (P 210) If Stephen had looked up “Maundy Thursday” as he probably would have, and as Joyce certainly must have, he would have found the following etymology.31

The day before Good Friday is so-called from the Latin dies manda’ti (the day of Christ’s great mandate). After he had washed His disciples’ feet, He said, “A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another” (St. John xiii. 34).

Spelman derives it from maund (a basket), because on the day before the great feast all religious houses and good Catholics brought out their broken food in maunds to distribute to the poor. This custom in many places gave birth to a fair, as the Tombland fair of Norwich, held on the plain before the Cathedral Close.

When Stephen begins to explain Aquinas’s term, integritas, shortly thereafter, he used the example of a basket to illustrate it.

Stephen pointed to a basket which a butcher’s boy had slung inverted on his head.

--Look at that basket, he said.

I see it, said Lynch.

--In order to see that basket, said Stephen, your mind first of all separates the basket from the rest of the visible world which is not the basket. (P 212)
Apparently Stephen chooses the first handy example he can to illustrate his point. But I would suggest that Joyce might have chosen a basket for him to see because there is a connection (albeit a false one) between Maundy Thursday, which Stephen has pointedly connected with Aquinas, and *maund*, or basket. If so, then Joyce has based a detail of his plot on an etymological source. If not, then the coincidence of Maundy Thursday and basket occurring in the same passage is remarkable. If such a coincidence occurred in *Finnegans Wake*, scholars would be inclined to think it deliberate. I would like to suggest that it is deliberate in the *Portrait*, and that it is but one of many examples (like “Morris dance” and *dubh-linn*) of details which Joyce has woven into the texture of his work (even his early work) which depend for their significance (and perhaps for their impetus) on an etymological base.

Another example occurs in *Ulysses*. When Leopold Bloom goes to Davy Byrne’s for lunch (U 171ff.) he has a Gorgonzola cheese sandwich, with mustard, and a glass of burgundy. If Joyce had looked up mustard in Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* he would have found this

**Etymology:**

Connected with *must*. In 1382 Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, granted to the town of Dijon, noted for its mustard, armorial bearings with the motto MOULT ME TARDE (*Multum ardeo*, I ardently desire). The arms and motto, engraved on the principal gate, were adopted as a trademark by the mustard merchants, and got shortened to Moul-tarde (to burn much).
Bloom orders his glass or Burgundy, then thinks, "Sandwich? Ham and his descendants mustered and bred there" (U 171). The glass of burgundy is mentioned several times more in this episode and Bloom accepts mustard to flavor his cheese sandwich. "He studded under each lifted strip yellow blobs. . . A warm shock of air heat of mustard hauched on Mr Bloom’s heart" (U 172-173). This detail seems to translate moult-tarde in the phrase “heat of mustard.” “Wine soaked and softened rolled pith of bread mustard a moment mawkish cheese. . . Mild fire of wine kindled his veins. I wanted that badly” (U 174). Bloom’s phrase seems to translate MOULT ME TARDE/ Multum ardeo. Bloom’s lunch, and some of the details woven into the text here, seem to recapitulate the details of Brewer’s etymology of mustard—Burgundy, Moult-tarde. MOULT ME TARDE/ Multum ardeo. This etymology has no intrinsic connection with the context in which it is recapitulated, however. The details seem to be coincidental or gratuitous. It such a coincidence occurred in Finnegans Wake it would be accepted as deliberate. In Ulysses it is problematical.

I would like to suggest that Joyce probably did weave the details of Brewer’s etymology into the text, just as he wove the details of Dublin’s etymology into the Portrait. I would suggest that his motive for doing so was twofold. He wanted to embroider his text with enriching details and he wanted to pun on the significant words in the passages in question. If this is true (and there are cases where it is undeniably true) then Joyce’s practice was not necessarily
consistent (why choose Mustard instead of Gorgonzola cheese?), but it is evident. The fascination with words which Joyce manifested in his own life and in the life of Stephen Dedalus resulted in a tendency to use words with a lively sense of their etymological overtones. This tendency was accompanied by the tendency to pun on etymological overtones and to embroider the text with puns or with details which had an etymological basis. This practice was only one, of course, of many evident in Joyce’s work, but it is significant enough to warrant further investigation. I suggest that Joyce’s use of etymology to structure episodes or passages, or to compose phrases and sentences based on etymologies, was reinforced by the example of other authors who influenced his work. In the next chapter I will examine briefly the influence of Giambattista Vico, Victor Bérard, and Ernest Fenollosa, each of whom found individual words and their etymologies to be miniature narratives or metaphors. Their approach to etymology suggested that it could produce narratives out of single words. We have seen how Joyce’s own Irish culture suggested the same thing.
1. Stanislaus Joyce. My Brother’s Keeper: James Joyce’s Early Years. Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York 1958. p. 123. I take this example to be symptomatic of Joyce’s penchant for punning on the etymology of Irish placenames. Stanislaus Joyce also records other examples which reveal an awareness of the original Irish meaning of anglicized Irish placenames. “I was taken down to Clane a few times on visiting day to see him. Clane is a small town on his much-loved Liffey near Clongowes, ‘the meadow of the smith’” (p. 40). “Clontarf, the scene of one of the most famous battles in Irish history, was within easy reach by tram. The name Clontarf means ‘the meadow of the bull,’ and the Bull is the low sandbank, which at high tide is completely cut off from the coastal road by a narrow channel of water” (p. 75). According to Dr. Eileen MacCarvill of Dublin, Joyce himself studied Irish for three years. Dr. MacCarvill has done extensive research into Joyce’s membership in the Gaelic League. She has written a book on this subject which is promised by Dolmen Press.


3. This essay has been dated 1898/99 and Joyce’s earliest acquaintance with Vico’s work has been dated to 1905 (A. Walton Litz, “Vico and Joyce,” Giambattista Vico: An International Symposium, ed. Giorgio Tagliacozzo et al., Baltimore, 1969. p. 246.) If Joyce had an earlier acquaintance with Vico’s work it would probably have come through his Italian instructor, Father Charles Ghezzi.

4. P. Colum, op. cit., pp. 127-128. Fiacre was an Irish saint, the patron of gardens, and a fiacre was a hackney coach (“so-called from the hotel of St. Fiacre, Paris, where the first station of these coaches was established by M. Sauvage, about 1650”–Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Philadelphia, 1898. pp. 456-457). Joyce uses each of these connotations in his work. In Ulysses Fiacre figures as a type of the Irish peregrini—“You were going to do wonders, what? Missionary to Europe after fiery Columbanus. Fiacre and Scotus on their creepy-stools in heaven spilt from their pintpots, loudlatinlaughing: Euge! Euge!” (U 42) Joyce mentions Fiacre in “Ireland, Island of Saints and Scholars” (CW 158), and Weldon Thornton has pointed out a reference which parallels Colum’s story in Joyce’s “Alphabetical Notebook” (cf. Allusions in Ulysses, New York, 1973, p. 52)–“Duns Scotus has won a poorer fame than S. Fiacre, whose legend sown in French soil, has grown up in a harvest of hackney cabs.” In the “Cyclops” episode of Ulysses Fiacre occurs twice. The wedding of Jean Wyse de Neaulan and Miss Fir Conifer
with its company of treeladies (which may allude to an older Irish story in which there are twenty-nine tree maidens in a wedding) is performed in the church of
St. Fiacre, patron of gardeners, and the saint appears again in a long list of saints and pseudosaints (U 327, 339). In the “oxen of the Sun” episode the hackney coach appears—“In Ely place, Baggot street, Dukes lawn, thence through Merrion green up to Holles street, a swash of water running that was before bonedry and not one chair or coach or fiacre seen about but no more crack after that first.” (U 397). In Finnegans Wake the phrase “Wereupunder in the fane of Saint Fiacre!” (FW 81.11) occurs. Brendan O Hehir has glossed both Fane and Fiacre as Irish personal names deriving from Fiachra and Fiachan, both meaning raven (fiach).


7. According to Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, one of Joyce’s primary sourcebooks, the Morris dance was “brought to England in the reign of Edward III, when John of Gaunt returned from Spain. ... It was a military dance of the Moors or Moriscos.” As Colum points out, both the Morris dance and algebra have Arab origins which have been forgotten but which still remain encapsulated in the etymology of Morris dance which he elaborates to demonstrate how the etymology of a word can suggest historical overtones.


12. In James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses (Bloomington, Ind., 1960, p. 174), Frank Budgen has described Joyce’s habit of noting down words and phrases on slips of paper. Many of Joyce’s notes, notesheets, and notebooks are now housed in the British Museum and at the State University of New York at Buffalo.


19. *Ibid.*, Fenollosa quoted by Kenner, as is the next long quote.
21. Cf. William Schutte (Joyce and Shakespeare: A Study in the Meaning of *Ulysses*, New Haven, 1957, p. 114) who is quoted in *Allusions in *Ulysses* (p. 417) as suggesting that the phrase "a green crab with malignant red eyes" (U 582) "may owe something to the definition of cancer in Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*. Skeat says, "CANCER, a crab, a corroding tumor. The tumor was named from the notion that the swollen veins around it were like a crab's limbs." (Cf. also T.G. Bergin and M.H. Fisch, eds., *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, Ithaca and London, 1970, p. xxii, who comment that Vico "would use Italian words of Latin origin with a lively sense of their etymological overtones." I have modelled my description of Stephen on their description of Vico.) Cf. also Joyce on "villain" (*CW* 28).
22. I have covered this material from another perspective in my M.A. Thesis (*James Joyce and the Old Man from the West: A Study in Literary Nationalism*, University of Connecticut, 1973). Cf. also "under his beneficition of their pastor Father Flammeus Falconer, boy-coitied him of all mutton suet candles and romeruled stationary for any purpose ... cloaked up in the language of blushfed porporates that an Anglican ordinal, not reading his own dunsy tunga, may ever behold the brand of scarlet on the brow of her of Babylon and feel not the pink one in his own damned cheek" (*FW* 185.03-13) and "you set fire to my tailcoat when I hold the paraffin smoker under yours (I hope that chimney's clear)" (*FW* 190.26-27). This incident first appears in Stephen Hero (*SH* 27).
24. "Sometimes the advent of an overcoming power may be attested by the crippled diction, or by the complete disuse of the original tongue, save in solitary, dear phrases, spontaneous in grief or gladness" (*CW* 28).
25. I have covered this subject more extensively in
my M.A. Thesis (see fn. 27 above). Cf. also P. W. Joyce’s 
*English as We Speak It in Ireland* (London 1910) for a more 
extensive treatment of this subject in one of Joyce’s 
primary sourcebooks. 
26. See fn. 23 above. 
27. See fn. 22 above. 
28. See fn. 7 above. 
29. Collin Owens, an Irish scholar who will be 
teaching at George Mason University, has written a 
dissertation which reveals important uses of etymologies 
of Irish words in *Dubliners*. 
30. E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable: 
Giving the Derivation, Source, or Origin of Common Phrases, 
Allusions, and Words that Have a Tale to Tell*, Philadelphia, 
1898, p. 821. Adaline Glasheen first pointed out to me that 
Brewer’s Dictionary was, along with the eleventh edition 
of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, one of Joyce’s primary 
sourcebooks. Skeat rejects the connection between *maund* 
and *Maundy*, but Joyce would not have been bound by the 
same rules of scientific accuracy which bound Skeat. 
(“Tombland Fair” may be echoed in FW 18-06-07, “Humblady 
Fair,” where the context suggests a tomb. “Humblady Fair” 
echoes “toy fair”—FW 628.09.) 
31. Fritz Senn pointed this out to me, although he 
is not certain that Joyce is deliberately utilizing the 
details from Brewer’s etymology of *mustard* in the passage. 
He does find the coincidence striking enough to raise impor-
tant questions about Joyce’s method of composition. 
32. Brewer, op cit., p. 872. 
33. Cf. Michael Stuart, p. 38, fn. 12 above; cf. also 
Joyce’s description of the workings of the *Tune* page of 
the *Book of Kells* as analogous to his own procedure in 
*Finnegans Wake*.
Joyce’s study of the Irish language and its literature, together with his interest in etymology and his research in that field, had already added an etymological dimension to his early work before he embarked on his study of other men’s etymological theories. After leaving Ireland, Joyce continued this research and became fascinated by the works of Giambattista Vico and Victor Bérard (both of whom figure prominently in his own later work) which he discovered while living on the continent. Through Ezra Pound he learned of Ernest Fenollosa’s work on Chinese ideograms.

To a very large extent, the work of these three men corroborated theories or tendencies latent or already evident in his own, bolstering them with the support of scholarship. But they also provided Joyce with working material for allusions, and gave him examples of etymythology at work. Their theoretical principles contributed largely (though in varying degrees) to the structure and philosophy of both Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. He mined them, particularly Vico and Bérard, for a wealth of details which enriched the texture of his later work. In this chapter I consider each of their theories in turn, isolating what I consider to be the most significant principles which tallied with Joyce’s own etymological theories and suggesting ways in which they may have influenced him as
well. I also offer illustrations of the ways in which Joyce translated their works into his own.

Joyce might have learned about Vico from his Italian professor, Charles Ghezzi, S.J., before leaving Dublin, but he probably first read Vico circa 1905, while living in Trieste. From 1911 to 1913, Joyce had a pupil, Paolo Cuzzi, with whom he had wide-ranging discussions about Vico (JJ 351). Joyce’s first acquaintance with Bérard’s work is a matter of some confusion. He said he had written three-quarters of Ulysses before he discovered Bérard’s work, which “confirmed” his own theories of a Semitic origin for the Odyssey (Letters, I. 401). Yet there is a notebook of his at Buffalo (VIIIA.5, which I discuss below), which has been dated to 1918, which contains numerous references to Bérard’s book, Les Phéniciens et l’Odyssée, which were actually incorporated into the text of Ulysses early on. Recent scholarship suggests a much more pervasive role for Bérard’s influence on Joyce’s work than had previously been thought. Joyce and Pound began corresponding when Pound was working on Fenollosa’s papers (1913 and thereafter). In letters dating from 1915, Pound alludes to his work on Fenollosa’s theory of Chinese ideograms in an offhand way which suggests that Joyce was acquainted with it. The Scribbleshobble notebook, which postdates Ulysses and served as a sourcebook for Finnegans Wake, contains notes on Fenollosa. So Joyce was composing his mature work when he became acquainted with these theorists.

Although their work was in different fields, it is
characterized by a common attitude toward language and etymology for which Joyce had strong affinities. They reinforced his own ideas, but they also extended them, and provided him with evidence and source material to support his own ideas.

A. Giambattista Vico

If a premise to the reading of *Finnegans Wake* must be sought, then it should be the Knowledge of the philosopher Giambattista Vico, to whom Joyce was greatly indebted. It was evident that Joyce was particularly attracted by the encyclopaedic features of Vico’s system. But Vico’s insistence upon the social element of all cultural achievements as well as his appreciation of a linguistic basis as its premise, seemed also to have made a very strong impression.

Heinrich Straumann

The influence of Vico’s philosophy on Joyce’s work has been the subject of a number of critical commentaries. I will confine my comments here to the influence of Vico’s philology on Joyce’s work. Maria Jolas has said that too much attention is paid to Vico’s philosophy and too little to his philology, which fascinated Joyce equally as much as the philosophy. Samuel Beckett’s early essay, “Dante ... Bruno. Vico ... Joyce,” acknowledges the importance of both the philosophy and the philology, but notes how difficult it is to demonstrate specific examples of each in Joyce’s work. “These two aspects of Vico have their reverberations, their reapplications—without however, receiving the faintest ex-
Joyce praised Vico highly and recommended the *Scienza Nuova* to friends as a guidebook to *Finnegans Wake*.

Joyce shared Vico’s view that the history of words revealed the history of men. Vico established his philosophical system by reconstructing the stages of human development as they were revealed by etymology. James Atherton points out that another thing Joyce took from Vico, in addition to his cyclic theory of history and his theory of language, was his way of using etymology. According to Vico the course of history could be inferred from etymology since the story of man’s progress was embedded in the structure of the words we use. In *Finnegans Wake* words are constructed so as to contain within themselves sufficient data to allow the structure of the entire work to be deduced from any typical word.

And A. Walton Litz writes: “Vico looked upon language as fossilized history and sought to recover the past from the radical meanings of words; Joyce reversed this process and sought to create new verbal units which would embody the history of a theme or motif.” Just as etymologies encapsulate history, Joyce’s words encapsulate themes or motifs, but Joyce also constructs themes and motifs out of the ramifications of certain words, just as Vico reconstructs (perhaps it would be truer to say “creates,” since many of Vico’s etymologies are not accurate by modern standards) the narrative of the history of human development out of typical etymologies. This approach to etymology could be called a poetics, a method of...
composing narratives, and I would like to concentrate on Vico’s use of etymology to show this.

For my purposes, Vico’s crucial realization is that it is possible to analyze the thoughts or behavior of earlier human societies only by their standards; that contemporary society represents a developed state of civilization and that primitive men could not have reached the same level of development. This realization anticipates the modern sciences of anthropology, sociology, and evolution. Although (apparently) a pious man himself, Vico is only marginally concerned in his Scienza Nuova with the role a God might play in the development of society. God’s role in Vico’s scheme is to instigate human development through his Word, the thunder, which initiates certain patterns of human behavior which will inevitably evolve into certain institutions which can be predetermined. These recurring institutions are man-made, not God-made, and can therefore be studied by men. Thus Vico concentrates on what men made. “In the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never-failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of human society has certainly been made by men, and its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind” (NS 331). And again, “That which did all this was mind, because men did it with intelligence; it was not fate, because they did it by choice; not chance, because the results of their always so acting are perpetually the same”
Since man has made the civil world and its institutions, and since contemporary man’s mind and institutions are more advanced than earlier man’s, it is necessary to study what remains of earlier man’s thought in order to reconstruct earlier man’s civil world. What remains is heroic poetry, fables, mythology, and the most ancient laws. By analyzing these, Vico discovered “the ideal eternal history traversed in time by the histories of all nations” (NS 35). He examined the extant writings and traditions of ancient Greece and Rome and Egypt, and confirmed what he discerned there by comparing his findings with reports of developments in the Americas, and with historians’ accounts of the Germanic “barbarians” (thus anticipating the comparative methodology of the modern social sciences). The “ideal eternal history” can be discovered because “there must in the nature of human institutions be a mental language common to all nations, which uniformly grasps the substance of things feasible in human social life and expresses it with as many diverse modifications as these same things may have diverse aspects.... This common mental language is proper to our Science, by whose light linguistic scholars will be enabled to construct a mental vocabulary common to all the various articulate languages living and dead” (NS 161-162). This being so, it is possible to establish a “mental dictionary for assigning origins to all the divers articulated languages. It is by means of this dictionary that the ideal eternal history is conceived, which gives us the histories in time of all nations” (NS 145).
Vico was on the verge of discovering the principles of modern Indo-European etymology ("And just as the vassal was called *vas* in Latin and *bas* in Greek, he continued to be called *was* and *wassus* by the barbarian writers of feudal laws" --NS 559, 1064). The key discovery in his process of reconstructing the mentality of primitive man was the value of etymology as a tool for research. In his third person *Autobiography* he writes:

Meanwhile Vico, by the reading of Bacon of Verulam’s treatise *On the Wisdom of the Ancients*, more ingenious and learned than true, was incited to look for its principles farther back than in the fables of the poets. He was moved to do this by the example of Plato who in the *Cratylus* had sought to track them down within the origins of the Greek language. An added incentive was the feeling he had begun to entertain, that the etymologies of the grammarians were unsatisfactory. He applied himself therefore to search out these principles in the origins of Latin words; for certainly the wisdom of the Italic sect had in the school of Pythagoras a much earlier flowering and a greater depth than that which began later in Greece itself. From the word *coelum*, which means both "chisel" and the "great body of air," he conjectured that perhaps the Egyptians, by whom Pythagoras was instructed, had been of the opinion that the instrument with which nature makes everything was the wedge, and that this was what they meant their pyramids to signify. Now the Latins called nature *ingenium*, whose principle property is sharpness; thus intimating that nature forms and deforms every form by shaving it lightly, and deform it by gouging deeply, with the chisel by which the air ravages everything. The hand that moves this instrument would be the ether, whose mind by all accounts was Jove. And the Latins used the word *anima* for air as the principle which gives the universe motion and life, and on which the ether acts as male on female. The ether insinuated into living beings the Latins called *animus*; hence the common Latin distinction. "*anima vivimus, animo sentimus*": by the soul
we have life, by the spirit sensation. Accordingly the soul, that is the air insinuated into the blood, would be the principle of life in men, and the ether insinuated into the nerves would be the principle of sensation. In proportion as ether is more active than air, the animal spirits would be more mobile and quick than the vital. And just as the soul is acted on by the spirit, so spirit would be acted on by what the Latins called mens, meaning thought; hence the Latin phrase "mens animi," the mind of the spirit. And this thought or mind would come to men from Jove, who is the mind of the ether. Finally, if all this were so, the operating principle of all things in nature would be corpuscles of pyramidal shape. And certainly ether united [separated off and condensed] is fire. 11

This example illustrates Vico’s conception of etymologies as fables in themselves, which predate the fables of the poets. The “master key” of Vico’s system was this discovery that “the principle of these origins both of languages and of letters lies in the fact that the early gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets who spoke in poetic characters” (NS 34). By “poetic characters” Vico means etymologies as well as hieroglyphs and metaphors (all three are suggested as examples of “poetic characters” in the Scienza Nuova). Thus etymology is Vico’s key.

Vico’s etymological approach to words so pervaded his work that it became a part of his style. In the preface to their translation of the New Science, Bergin and Fisch write that “Vico was professor of Latin Eloquence at the University of Naples, and ... in the years 1709-22 he had published four works in Latin before turning to Italian for the New Science. We should expect therefore, that he would use Italian
words of Latin origin with a lively sense of their etymological overtones. It only gradually becomes apparent to us, however, that, when he uses such words with emphasis, as when they are the key terms of a sentence or clause, it is usually the etymological meaning that is emphasized." 12 He was convinced that etymologies tell stories which reveal the way the minds of the earlier peoples worked. These peoples thought in poetic characters (metaphorical or evocative words which encapsulate or embody key concepts and thus can yield them up through analysis), spoke in tables or myths, and wrote in hieroglyphs which encapsulated stories pictorially. ("Take for example the poetic phrase 'the blood boils in my heart,' based on a property natural, eternal, and common to all mankind. They took the blood, the boiling, and the heart, and made of them a single word, as it were a genus, called in Greek stomachos, in Latin ira, and Italian collera".—NS 460.) Vico offered a method for analyzing these poetic characters.

Thus the mythologies, as their name indicates, must have been the proper language of the fables, the fables being imaginative class concepts, as we have shown, the mythologies must have been the allegories corresponding to them. Allegory is defined as diversiloquium (that is, expressions comprising in one general concept various species of men, deeds, or things) insofar as, by identity not of proportion but (to speak scholastically) of predictability, allegories signify the diverse species or the diverse individuals comprised under these genera. So that they must have a univocal signification connoting a quality common to all their species and individuals (as Achilles connotes an idea of valor common to all strong men, or Ulysses an idea of prudence common to all wise men), such that these allegories must be the etymologies of the poetic languages, which would make their origins all univocal,
whereas those of the vulgar languages are more often analogous. (NS 403)

In other words, the mythologies or fables of the earlier peoples are like etymologies: both yield up stories which explain human institutions. Vico’s hieroglyphs, myths, and fables, his “poetic characters,” all compress a complex idea or story into a brief exemplary story or into a word. All three can be analyzed by a process similar to etymology, and it is the etymology of single words in particular which yields the most frequent results. “For in these, as in embryos or matrices, we have discovered the outlines of all esoteric wisdom” (NS 779).

“A language of an ancient nation, which has maintained itself as the dominant tongue until it was fully developed, should be a great witness to the customs of the early days of the world” (NS 152). “In the history of words there is much that indicates the history of men, and in comparing the speech of today with that of years ago, we have a useful illustration of the effect of external influences on the very words of a race” (CW 28). Joyce and Vico shared a fascination with etymology as historiography, and the early commentators on Work in Progress (prompted of course by Joyce himself) recognized this.

This was the order of human institutions: first the forests, after that the huts, then the villages, next the cities, and finally the academies. This axiom is a great principle of etymology, for this sequence of human institutions sets the pattern for the histories of words in the various native languages. Thus we observe in the Latin language that almost the whole corpus of words had sylvan or rustic origins. For example, lex. First it must have
meant a collection of acorns. Thence we believe is derived ilex, as it were illex, the oak (as certainly aquilex means collector of waters): for the oak produces the acorns by which swine are drawn together. Lex was next a collection of vegetables, from which the latter were called legumina. Later on, at a time when vulgar letters had not yet been invented for writing down the laws, lex by a necessity of civil nature must have meant a collection of citizens, or the public parliament; so that the presence of the people was the lex, or “law,” that solemnized the wills that were made calatis comitiis, in the presence of the assembled comitia. Finally, collecting letters, and making, as it were, a sheaf of them for each word, was called legere, reading. (NS 239-240)

In his essay in the Exagmination, Samuel Beckett cited this example of Vico’s methodology to illustrate the etymological approach to language which he found manifest in Joyce’s work as a result of Vico’s influence. Stuart Gilbert recognized the nature and importance of Vico’s approach to words when he wrote his “Prolegomena to Work in Progress”: “Vico’s work...is much preoccupied with the root-meanings of words (their associative rather than strictly etymological implications).” And Gilbert also saw the relevance of this to Joyce’s work. “The word-building of Work in Progress is founded on the bedrock of petrified language, of sounds with solid associations.” Elsewhere, discussing puns, he stresses Joyce’s adherence to etymology. “[Edward] Lear’s method of dovetailing words together (‘scroobious’, ‘slobaciously’) may be compared to an Englishman’s way of carving a leg of mutton: he cuts vertically through the meat of sound and the fat of common sense, with an eye only to the funny effect of the chunk removed; whereas the Irish writer (like Tristan at
The découpage of the deer and to the wonderment of Mark's knights) carves his gigot in the continental manner, that is to say, parallel to the etymological bone, following the way the muscles are naturally and anatomically set. 16 (Gilbert's essay was written under conditions similar to his study of Ulysses, so we may be able to infer a Joycean imprimatur here, or at least a nihil obstat.)

I would like to suggest here that Joyce's strong affinity with Vice on the subject of etymology is evident not so much in specific examples 17 as in a general approach to words as historical deposits which becomes apparent in Finnegans Wake. Etymology was Vico's tool for discovering the history of human institutions, but he also recognized a creative side to etymology. One example he cites is the fear of Jove which constituted his authority over the Titans, symbolized by the ring of iron which tied them to the earth. "Such were Tityus and Prometheus, chained to a high rock with their hearts being devoured by an eagle: that is, by the religion of Jove's auspices. Their being rendered immobile by fear was expressed by the Latins in the heroic phrase terrore defixi, and the artists depict them chained hand and foot with such links upon the mountains" (NS 387). The phrase which encapsulates their emotion structures their story. Etymologies (even false etymologies) are responsible for some of the fables of the poets. "Every clearing was called a lucus, in the sense of an eye, as even today we call eyes the opening through which light enters houses. The true heroic phrase
that 'every giant had his lucus' (clearing or eye) was altered and corrupted when its meaning was lost, and had already been falsified when it reached Homer, for it was then taken to mean that every giant had one eye in the middle of his forehead” (NS 564). Translating a metaphor into an action (terrore defixi) can create a story, as can manufacturig an explanation to explain a word whose meaning has been lost. (This process was advanced by Max Muller as an explanation of the origin of myths). Joyce structured Finnegans Wake on Vico’s philosophy and he incorporated numerous allusions to Vico’s name and to details from Vico’s works in Finnegans Wake. Scholars and critics have demonstrated this. But furthermore, Vico’s etymological approach and his recognition of an etymological interest and may have suggested how words, or their etymologies, can be turned into phrases and stories. This is one of the ways in which Joyce composed Finnegans Wake and this is one of the ways in which Vico influenced Joyce.

B. Victor Bérard

Bérard’s point is that the Incidents in the Odyssey result from the Place-Names, in other words not fiction in any humanistic sense but that the process of imagination is from 1) a place person thing event--to-- 2) the naming of it--to--3) the reenactment or representation of it, in other words

object name image or story

Ex.: Kirke-s she-hawk: in Phoenician periphous her island was Nesos Krikès=Isle of the She-
Hawk (in fact the very place is the haunt of birds of prey, Italian coast just above ancient 1st Greek City). But here’s the kicker. Odysseus says “we came to the island Aeaea, where Circe lived ... ” --and Aiaia, in Hebrew, means “ Island of the She-Hawk”?
Charles Olson

Victor Bérard, like Vico, took an etymological approach in his scholarly work. His analysis of Greek and Semitic placenames in the Odyssey led him to suggest that the adventures of Odysseus can be derived from etymological details associated with the placenames of their locales (and that their locales may be reconstructed by reversing this process and looking for placenames which provide such details). Joyce knew Bérard’s work well and noted down in his notebooks many of Berard’s major etymological analyses. Stuart Gilbert has shown how Joyce constructed Homeric “ correspondences” in Ulysses by incorporating details from Bérard’s work into his own text and by finding parallels to details cited by Bérard. Joyce himself acknowledged his debt to Bérard and recommended Bérard’s work to his friends. Joyce scholars have come to recognize that Bérard’s influence on the composition of Ulysses is even more pervasive than Gilbert realized.

I will not discuss here the work that has already been done on Bérard and Joyce. I will concentrate instead on the influence of Bérard on Finnegans Wake by outlining the basic etymological approach which Joyce found in Bérard’s work as a paradigm of a method of constructing
The heart of Bérard’s theory of the origin and sources of the Odyssey lies in his discovery of paired Mediterranean placenames.

Most ... Greek islands have preserved an imperishable record of [the period of Mediterranean thalassocracies] in the names which they bear to this present day. For these names, handed down through thirty centuries by the Hellenes--Delos, Syros, Casos, Paxos, Thasos, Samos, etc.—have no meaning in Greek. But in ancient times they were linked with Greek names which rang with a meaning in Greek ears: Delos--“Quail Island”; Syros--”Foam Island”; Casos--“Flat Island”; Paxos--“Aerial Island.” These Greek names, now forgotten, were simply translations of other mysterious names, which we with the help of Semitic etymology can now safely explain: Casos--Achne, Paxos--Plateia, Thasos--Aeria, Samos--Hypsele, Delos--Ortygia, are merely so many-doublets, as geographers say.24

Bérard also points out an important corollary to the process which created these doublets (each succeeding thalassocracy substituting its own names for those already existing): the etymologies of Semitic words and placenames which have no meaning in Greek often demonstrate strong affinities with the structures of narratives containing Hellenized versions of the Semitic words. For instance, there are two details in the Proteus episode of the
Odyssey which cannot be explained by Greek etymology. Proteus is associated with seals and the wind called zephyr blows in this adventure. Neither zephyr nor seal is a Greek word. But Bérard finds an Egyptian origin for this episode and suggests a Semitic origin for both words which contributes to their role in the Proteus adventure. "In Homer's text, the zephyros is the wind which howls over the sea like the mistral; the epithet 'shrill' is specially applied to it, and that is the meaning of the Arabic root z. ph. r. And the seals, phokai, come in on their 'finny feet': the Hebraic root p. ou. k. means to limp, stagger, wobble." The influence of Semitic roots on Odyssean tales ranges from details as small as these to complete explanations of major narratives in Bérard's theory. (The accuracy of Bérard's theory is of minor relevance in this context, since Joyce was not bound by accuracy in his own approach to using Bérard's material).

Bérard hypothesizes that the source for placename doublets and for Semitic placename roots were periploi, sailors manuals which described the coastlines of the Mediterranean. Bérard suggests that a periplous (or periploi) could be the source for Homer's Odyssean adventures. These periploi supplied the Greeks with foreign words as placenames, proper names, or common nouns, which figure significantly in Homer's text, and in Bérard's theory. "The Periplous is a chaplet of proper names, each separate bead of which can be moved up and down, further
or nearer, as the reader fancies. Each bead represents some accurate, concrete fact, but errors or misjudgment must inevitably creep in, because even the most attentive of readers is free to bunch adjacent beads too closely together or push them too far apart.27 These placename-beads provide the structure for Odysseus’s adventures and the adventures are clues to their own locations.

Supposing we wish to trace the island of Kalypso, the land of the Cyclopes. All we have to do is to find out the Hebrew equivalent for the Greek names. Kalypso’s Isle, Nesos Kalupsous is the “isle of the Hiding Place”, J-Spania would be the Hebrew equivalent; and sure enough Kalypso’s grotto, her four springs and her trees are to be found in Spanish waters. Her meadows of parsley still explain the Spanish name for the island of Perejil, which lies close to the straits of Gibraltar. The Cyclopes in Greek are the Round Eyes (kuklos a circle, ops an eye). In Hebrew, Oin-otra. On the Italian coasts, there is an old place-name, Oinotria, which is still familiar to the Latins and Greeks.28

The Greeks adapted Phoenician placenames to their own geography by translating them, transcribing the m or altering them until they approximated a recognizable Greek word (thus creating a folk etymology or a pun).29 Homer’s account of Odysseus’s adventures is based in a complex but demonstrable way (for Bérard) on the kinds of information contained in Semitic periploi.30 He invents nothing: he vivifies, combines, and arranges. From a chaplet of names in a periplous, the Tales at the Court of Alkinoos derive a whole gallery of characters. The names in the Periplous become the gods and monsters of the poem.31 Personification, dramatization of the meanings of placenames, and puns
on the meanings of placenames are the three methods Bérard outlines for accomplishing this process. I will concentrate on puns here. Puns provide a process for translating an unfamiliar foreign word into a familiar context and puns form an important part of both Greek and Semitic literature. "De même, dans l’onomastique primitive, combien de noms semblaient étranges ou mystérieux aux Hellènes de l’histoire et combien de beaux calembours ils inventèrent pour expliquer ces rébus!" In the case of Greeks borrowing Semitic words there is an inherent impetus to pun in this way.

Dans toutes les langues sémitiques, en effet, le rôle des voyelles est effacé; la charpente du mot est faite de consonnes et le plus souvent d’une triade de consonnes; autrement dit, les racines sémitiques sont le plus souvent trilitères. Toutes les combinaisons de trois consonnes, d’ailleurs, ou presque toutes, se trouvent dans le vocabulaire des racines sémitiques. Il sera donc possible de trouver une étymologie sémitique à presque tous les noms de lieux grecs, romains ou français: PaRiS deviendra la Ville du Cavalier parce que PaRaS veut dire Cavalier en hébreu.

Triliteral roots lend themselves naturally to puns of this sort and Joyce digested this detail from Bérard, incorporating it into Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Bérard describes some puns in the Odyssey as "difficult to pick up, because they are part and parcel of the story itself, woven into the texture of the adventure, and not merely a question of words. One feels or guesses that between apparently straightforward lines runs a secret thread, too ingeniously contrived to be exposed without running the risk
The Laestrygonians lived at "the northern end of Sar-dinia." The oldest race-names in this area known to the Greeks were Balaroi and Korsoi. “These, according to every historian, geographer and mythologist of ancient times, were native races. All other dwellers on the island: Sardinians, Iolians, Ilians, Libyans, Iberians, etc., had come across the seas.” But the Greeks also knew that Balaros was not a proper name. It was merely an epithet. Meaning exile, fugitive, outlaw or bandit. The area was frequented by such types. Since Balaroi was an epithet, the Korsoi were “presumably the only primitive race” in the area. The Semitic root (the word the Greeks would have borrowed since Balaroi was not Greek either) which exactly translates balaros would have been s.r.d., which means both to flee and to escape, to leave one’s home, and to avoid danger. “Hebrew and Arabs use the word sarid to indicate the fugitive, the wanderer—all that is left of a tribe after a raid, of an army after a defeat.” The Greeks knew the legend of Sardos, who fled from Libya to find refuge in Sardinia. The Phoenicians had trading
stations in Libya and Bérard concludes that the name Sardoί must be the Phoenician equivalent for Balaroi. 

Thus a Cape of the Banditti (Balaroi-Sardoί) came to give its name first to a stretch of coast on the north of Sardinia, then to the whole island and finally suggested to the Poet (or to his original source) some of the adventures of his hero.37 The name contains the roots of the narrative.

Just as the alternate wrath and calm of Stromboli became the moods of Aiolos that changed with a shift of the winds, just as this explains why Odysseus visited him twice, finding him friendly in a northerly, hostile in a southerly wind, so, in this island of Sardinia, near the Outlaw’s Point the Poet sees nothing but men fleeing—first the explorers in flight, then Odysseus in flight: the hero only draws his stout sword to cut his cables and sail away, leaving the best part of his ships behind.

And just as Odysseus becomes captive in Kalypso’s island, and disappears in the Island of the Hiding-Place, so in the Land of the Laestrygonians we have a tale of flight and providential escape.

The entire episode, taken as a whole or in detail, is contrived to lead up to this escape. The greater part of the ships, which are not to escape, have anchored well inside the harbor; only the ship of Odysseus, which was to flee, remained at the harbor mouth. Odysseus does not desert his company in this fashion when leaving the cyclopes or Circe or Skylla. As a rule, when a leader draws his sword, it is to defend his crews not to betray them. But it so happens that we are in the Island of Escape, Sardinia.38

Bérard next considers the alternate name, Korsoί, quoting Pausanias who said the original name of the island next to Sardinia, Kurnos, had been changed to Korsika by the Libyans accompanying Sardos. The Semitic root for Korsos would be כָּרָס, meaning to bite, to rend, "both in the strict sense, i.e., to indulge in insults,
mockery or criticism.” This name too becomes an important part of the narrative. The Greek translators of the Bible rendered [k.r.s.] by *to devour terribly, slander terribly, decry*: the nearest Greek equivalent would be *to speak against*: *antiphemi*. The King of the Laestrygonians is a terrible devourer of people; he seizes on one of the envoys of Odysseus and makes a meal of him; at the same time, he is the accuser, the slanderer, the contradictor—“Antiphates.”

This use of proper names as puns on which to base narrative adventures is quite common in the Semitic literature which Bérard explores to bolster his theory of Cultural influence. He points out that the Bible exhibits a similar tendency to construct tales around placenames or to digress in a tale to account for a placename. All through Exodus and Numbers, it is questionable whether certain adventures of Moses are not also to be explained by the names of places he passes through. More than once it seems that the passage describing some incident on the long journey is simply there to explain the name. In the *Odyssey* this use of placenames is no longer tangential, according to Bérard, no longer an embellishment: it is the tale itself. Further examples strengthen Bérard’s theory.

Homer does not name the Island of the Sun. Bérard believes it to be Sicily. The impious crew eat the oxen of the god on this hallowed shore, and are lost with all hands by shipwreck as punishment. Only Odysseus is spared... he alone escapes. Tiresias had foretold that all his
men would perish ... and that he alone would escape their fate.” Once again the tale is contrived to fit the implications of a placename, according to Bérard. “Sicily and Sikeloi cannot be explained satisfactorily in Greek, but in the Semitic tongues ... we find two roots s.k.l., which are written alike save for the first sibilant. ... One of these roots means wild behavior, impiety, desertion, isolation, and the other, loss of relations or friends. Thus, for the Poet or his original source, “Sicily” becomes the land of impiety, bereavement and separation.” Bérard points out that the Oxen of the Sun themselves probably derive from a play on words. The Hebrew root b.k.r., bakar or boker, means both beef and morning.

One last example will suffice to give a clear general impression of the nature of Bérard’s approach.

Greek etymology cannot explain the name of the Sirens. There is ... a Semitic derivation for these ... “daughters of song” as the Scriptures would say—benot ha-sir. The Hebraic sir, “song, canticle,” would thus be exactly reproduced by the first syllable in the Greek word. The Sirens are singers, but they are enchantresses too—fascinators, taking the word in its fullest and earliest sense, which means the women who bind by their enchantments. Such is the meaning of the Latin fascinare, fasciare, or of the Greek thelgo which the Poet uses. The Sirens charm men, they bind them with their magic.

So, following Circe’s advice, Odysseus has himself bound hand and foot to the mast. Then he implores his men to loose him that he may obey the Sirens’ call, but in Vain: his companions only bind him the faster, and do not free him till the Sirens’ voices die away in the distance.

This adventure, together with the Poet’s...
phrase, "the Sirens fascinate by their song," must, I think, make the etymological derivation sir-en: a song of fascination. The word en comes from a root which exists in every Semitic tongue. The Arabs make frequent use of it in the sense of to fasten, to hold in (especially of holding: and controlling a horse by reins) but also with the meaning to bind by evil arts. From it they derive words for ropes, reins, and for witchery, impotence: also the word cloud (the Latins similarly used fascia). The Hebrews do not make as much use of this root, but have, however, also derived from it the word cloud and a verb of more obscure meaning, which appears to mean to indulge in magic arts, whether of divination, according to some, or of fascination, according to others. 43

Here, then, is adduced another structural link between the etymology of a key word and the narrative which contains it; and this is, basically, the essence of Bérard’s discovery and theory. “Each episode in the Odyssey could give us other instances: the explanation of proper names by means of an adventure, or rather the creation of an adventure to explain a proper name is one of the constant features of the Poem.” 44

This can be taken a step further by stressing the structural nature of the process. It is a poetics, etymology, which creates the tale from the etymological ramifications of a word or words, and this is qualitatively different from the more common onomastic nature of folk placename lore. It is qualitatively different because it is deliberate. Unlike folk etymology or unconscious puns, this process is a conscious creative attempt to structure a crafted tale by punning deliberately on the etymological overtones of particular words. The adventures
of the Odyssey are studded with neglected puns, but it is the larger nature of pun which Bérard describes as a process of narrative which is important for an understanding how Bérard influenced the process of composition in Finnegans Wake. Joyce arrived at a similar method of composition that was reinforced and illustrated by Bérard. I will now explore Joyce’s use of Bérard’s etymological process.

Joyce noted down details from Bérard’s work in several places on what are now called the Ulysses “Notesheets” in the British Museum. He also maintained a notebook during the early months of 1918 which was devoted primarily to Bérard and to a lexicon of Greek and Roman mythology. This notebook VIII.A.5, gives a good indication of what Joyce read in Bérard’s work, and of what most interested him. His entries fall into two general areas: noting the significant etymological details of placenames (and of Homeric passages connected with those placenames) from Bérardean analyses which are primarily etymological, and developing Irish parallels for the details which Bérard singles out as essential to the structure of Homeric passages.

Appropriately enough, Joyce’s first Bérardean entry (aside from a bibliographical note) is “Heb. triliteral Roots.” It is the nature of these triliteral roots which facilitated the puns which structured the tales in Bérard’s theory. Leopold Bloom contemplates “the infinite possibilities hitherto unexploited of the modern art of advertise-
What points of contact existed between these languages and between the people who spoke them?

The presence of guttural sounds, diacritic Aspirations, epenthic and servile letters in both languages: their antiquity, both having been taught on the plain of Shinar 242 years after the deluge in the seminary instituted by Fenius Farsaigh, descendent of Noah, progenitor of Israel, and ascendant of Heber and Hereman, progenitors of Ireland: their archaeological, homilectic, toponomastic, historical and religious literature comprising the words of rabbis and culdees, Torah, Talmud (Mischna and Ghemera) Massor, Pentateuch, Book of the Dun Cow, Book of Ballymote, Garland of Howth, Book of Kells: their dispersal, persecution, survival and revival: the isolation of their synagogical and ecclesiastical rites in ghetto (S. Mary’s Abbey) and masshouse (Adam and Eve’s tavern): the proscription of their national costumes in penal laws and Jewish dress acts: the restoration in Chanan David of Zion and the possibility of Irish political autonomy or devolution. (U 688–689)
This quote gives some indication of how far Joyce went to establish Irish-Semitic parallels. It is also significant that Joyce singles out toponomastic literature as one of the links between Irish and Semitic culture. Toponomastic literature is the core of Bérard’s theory and, as I have suggested in the first chapter and will demonstrate in the next, toponomastic literature is an important part of Irish literature. In both cases the narrative impulse is etymological.

Bloom’s smattering of Hebrew and his “triliteral monoideal symbol” suggest the knowledge of triliteral roots which is confirmed by Joyce’s note in VIII.A.5. Bérard’s point about triliteral roots was that they lend themselves easily to puns. Joyce makes use of this aspect of triliteral roots in _Finnegans Wake_. Bérard’s work appears there as “the littleknown peripic bestseller popularly associated with the names of the wretched mariner … a Punic admiralty report, _From MacPerson’s Oshean by the Tides of Jason’s Cruise_, had been cleverly capsized and saucily republished as a dodecanesian baedeker of the every-tale-a-treat-in-itself variety” (FW 123.22-28). Triliteral roots are mentioned several times in _Finnegans Wake_. “Concoct an equoangular trilitter” (FW 286.22-23), “trilustriously” (FW 486.22), “trileral roots” (FW 505.04). There are occasions there where Joyce imitates the Semitic vowelless system: “m’m’ry’s” (FW 460.20) and “O’c’stle, n’wc’stle, tr’c’stle” (FW 18.06). (Consider also Bloom’s “transliter-
ated name and address of the addresser of the 3 letters in reserved alphabetic bouystrophedonic punctuated quadrilinear cryptogram (vowels suppressed) N. IGS./WI.UU. OX/W. OKS. MH/Y. IM"--L 721.) Joyce may be describing the workings of Bérard’s theory about triliteral roots in the phrase “to brace congeners, trebly bounden and asservaged twainly” (FW 267.17-18), that is, to link together similar or related words created from triliteral roots which have yielded words and meanings in two (though often more) directions.50 Some examples of how Joyce worked Bérardean material into Ulysses and Finnegans Wake will suggest how closely Joyce followed his source and how Joyce’s own technique parallels the technique Bérard attributes to Homer.

The first major structural parallel which Joyce draws between Ulysses and the Odyssey via Bérard in notebook VII.A.5. concerns the lotos plant. Bérard demonstrates that the Greeks classified people by what they ate. “Ils distinguaient les Ichthyophages des Rizophages, des Man-geurs de Pain, [Sitophagoi], comme dit l’Odyssée, des Mangeurs d’Homme, [androphagoi].”51 He compares this -phagoi classification system of the Greeks with the modern system of classification by language (“Slavophones, Greco-phones, Latinophones”).52 After discussing how classical geographers responded to reports of the discoveries of new peoples by describing and classifying them in this way, Bérard analyzes the myth of the Lotus-Eaters from a geo-graphical/etymological point of view. Placing the lotophagoi
in North Africa, he quotes both Herodotus and Polybius who compared the *lotos* to figs and dates. Pliny said the Africans called it *celtis*. These references prove "que lotos fut le nom d’un arbre et d’un fruit réels qui faisaient la célébrité de cette cote au temps des première navigations, comme le *mastic* a fait la célébrité de Chios durent toutes les navigations italiennes et franques, jusqu’à nos jours." The word *lotos* did not mean a fruit for the Greeks, however, "le mot [lotos], pour les Hellènes, désigne une herbe de prairie, une sorte de trêfle, dont se régalent les cheveux." The Greeks knew of other *lotophagoi* who ate the plant signified by *lotos* in Greek, but Homer’s *lotos* was clearly different. Bérard finds the explanation, characteristically, in a pun. "On a voulu reconnaître dans le nom du *lotos* (fruit) un mot sémitique … *lot* dont [lotos] serait en effet l’exacte transcription … le parfum de ce fruit … l’a fait ranger par Théophraste parmi les épices et aromates: dans l’Ecriture … *lot* … désigne une espèce de parfum.”

Le poète odysséen a fait sur ce mot étrange un de ces calembours populaires auxquels nous sommes habitués dans la langue et l’onomastique des peuples navigateurs: le *Lotos* pour lui est devenu le fruit de l’oubli, [letho, letho] comme le Léthé était le fleuve de l’oubli dans la mythologie grecque: le *lotos* fait tout oublier à ceux qui le mangent … et de ce calembour, *lotos, letho, letha* … est sortie toute l’aventure des marins déserteurs, qui oublient vaisseau, devoirs et patrie afin de manger toujours ce fruit délicieux. Nous verrons les autres aventures du *Nostos* sortir pareillement du texte même et des mots du periple.
Bérard amplifies this with more details from geographers who attribute an easy life to the lotophagoi. "Ils n’ont pas de lois ni de tribunaux." He mentions a race of "nègres Ichthyophages" and points out the exceptional hospitality of the native lotophagoi extended to strangers, "Ils donnent le lotos aux marins qui les visquent."

Joyce summarized Bérard’s long discussion by citing key words and phrases (his usual technique in VIII.A.5) and notes some Irish parallels. This provides an opportunity to demonstrate how he turned his raw material into a passage in *Ulysses*.

Joyce has translated Bérard’s lotos into an Irish shamrock through a double pun. The Greek lotos was a *tréfle*, a trefoil or clover, as is the Irish shamrock. The shamrock is also a “triliteral” (or trifoliated) root which Patrick used to illustrate the concept of the Trinity (thus founding the Irish Church on a pun, as Christ founded his church on a pun, Petrus/petrum). It should also be noted that the Africans had called the lotos celtis, which is close enough to celtic to suit Joyce’s purpose of finding an Irish parallel to Bérard’s detail. (This parallel also surfaces in *Finnegans*: “Whur’s that inclining and talkin about..."
the messiah so clover? A true’s to your trefling!”—FW 478.24-25, “Et would offer to the delected one the his trifle from the grass”—FW 223.22-23.) The details Joyce noted, and the connection he makes between lotos and shamrock point the way to an Irish parallel to the lotophagoi. This is the Church (the opiate of the masses), and its central rite of communion, wherein all its members demonstrate their kinship by consuming bread (Sitophagoi). In the “Lotus-Eaters” episode of Ulysses the host is equated with lotos in a central passage which contains many echoes of Bérard’s analysis of the original lotophagoi.

Sermon by the very reverend John Conmee S.J. on saint Peter Claver and the African mission. Save China’s millions. Wonder how they explain it to the heathen chinee. Prefer an ounce of opium. … Buddha their god lying on his side in the museum. Taking it easy with hand under his cheek. … Clever idea Saint Patrick the shamrock. … Like to see them sitting round in a ring with blue lips, entranced, listening. Still life. … A batch knelt at the altar-rails. The priest went along by them holding the thing in his hands. He stopped at each, took out a communion … and put it neatly in her mouth. … Latin. … What? Corpus: body. Corpse. Good idea the Latin. Stupefies them first. … They were about him here and there … waiting for it to melt in their stomachs. Something like those mazzoth: it’s that sort of bread: unleavened shrewbread. Look at them. Now I bet it makes them feel happy. Lollipop. It does. Yes, bread of angels it’s called. … Then feel all like one family party. … In our confraternity. … waters of oblivion. … Lulls all pain. Wake this time next year. … Letters on his back I.N.R.I.? No: I.H.S. Molly told me one time I asked her. I have sinned: or no: I have suffered, it is. And the other one? Iron nails ran in. (U 80-81, emphasis added)
Some of the Bérardean parallels running through this passage have already been pointed out. I would like to consider Bloom’s approach to etymology here. Confronted with a foreign word, the Latin **Corpus** (from the priest’s spoken formula as he places the host on the communicant’s tongue, “**Corpus Christi**”), he translates it and then virtually transliterates it: “**Corpus**: body. Corpse.” He applies to this word the same process which Bérard attributed to the Greeks when they assumed Phoenician words into their language.

In this case Bloom translates correctly. Shortly thereafter, confronted by I.N.R.I. and I.H.S., he resorts to another process which Bérard attributes to the Greeks, folk etymology: “I have sinned … I have suffered … Iron nails ran in.” These are actually Molly’s explanations, but it can hardly be coincidental that the same passage from Bérard which supplied so many of these details contains an explanation of the adventure of the *Lotophagoi* through a folk etymology: “Un de ces calembours populaires,” **Lēthe/lotos** (“waters of oblivion”). Bloom even notes a Semitic origin for the bread of the communion host, **mazzoth**. Taken as a whole, this passage might be considered a note of acknowledgement to Bérard, who supplied not just a pastiche of details to flesh out a Homeric correspondence, but a method for creating a narrative incident (exemplified by Bloom’s etymologizing).

Bérard’s etymologies probably suggested Molly’s birth-Place, and the narrative structure of some of Bloom’s adventures. The full significance of Bérard’s influence...
on Ulysses is now being considered anew by Joyce scholars. I would like to suggest that the influence of Bérard’s theory that toponomastic puns could create narratives had just as great an impact on Joyce’s methods of composition as did the wealth of Homeric detail in his work which Joyce mined for correspondences. This is harder to demonstrate because it represents an affinity which expresses itself in general, rather than specific or explicit, terms or examples in the way Joyce puns on etymology or bases passages in significant ways on the etymological ramifications of key words within those passages. For the present I would like to apply Bérard’s description of Homer to Joyce. Bérard’s ultimate conclusion about Homer is that he was a particular literate poet, working directly from Phoenician periploi, or from Greek traditions derived Phoenician periploi, who transformed the words, names, and details of the periploi into the tales Odysseus told in the court of Alkinoos by elaborating subtly on the ramifications and resonances of these words, names, and details, constructing the individual adventures of his hero to conform to this verbal game. Bérard also postulates a literate, sophisticated audience who could appreciate the verbal intricacies underlying the Homeric text, who could appreciate them as an additional entertainment (additional to the narrative) which had tremendous value in itself. The strict accuracy of Bérard’s every claim is debatable. His conclusions about Homer are particularly debat-
able. But Joyce was neither a Homeric scholar nor a professional philologist. He had no need to worry about the accuracy of Bérard’s evidence or arguments, Joyce responded to the narrative potential inherent in Bérard’s explication of toponomastic puns and a toponomastic basis for tales, the etymology of Homer’s tales as revealed by Bérard’s details. Joyce’s own interest in etymology and toponomastic literature, evident in his earlier work, found reinforcement in Bérard’s work. Assimilating Bérard’s theory into his own poetics as one more of several such theories (after Trench, Skeat, Irish literature, and Vico), Joyce mined Bérard to structure his own work, not just through detailed Correspondences, but for a fundamental approach to the relationship between name/word/etymology and story. Like Bérard’s version of Homer, Joyce elaborated subtly on the ramifications and resonances of key words, constructing narratives and pun-passages for a sophisticated literate audience who could appreciate these verbal intricacies underlying the text as an additional element of the text. In *Finnegans Wake* these verbal intricacies are the text.

C. Ernest Fenollosa

A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. … The eye sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, and so the Chinese conception tends to represent them.

 Ernest Fenollosa

... for if we look at it verbally perhaps there is no true noun in active nature where every bally thing--please read this muflo--is becoming in its own eyeballs.

*FW* 523.10-12
I have already quoted Ernest Fenollosa’s description of individual words as metaphors whose etymology can reveal a story. I would like to close this chapter by showing how Joyce put Fenollosa’s theory to use in *Finnegans Wake* and by suggesting that Fenollosa provided still further reinforcement for Joyce’s own ideas of how individual words could be put to work to create literature. 

Joyce probably learned about Fenollosa through Ezra Pound, who was editing Fenollosa’s papers during the period when he first came to know Joyce. Joyce noted some of Fenollosa’s statements in *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* in his own *Scribbledehobble* notebook.

“A true noun does not exist in nature (Fenollosa); any pronouns?: phonetic theory is unsound; be careful!”

These three phrases refer to three separate sections of Fenollosa’s essay, suggesting that Joyce knew the whole essay. Fenollosa himself may appear in *Finnegans Wake* as “Fenella” (FW 184.32). Joyce incorporated Fenollosa’s comment about nouns into *Finnegans Wake* in the selection I have used as an epigraph for this section and in the Phrase, “some such nonoun as Husband or husboat or hose-bound is probably understood” (FW 104.28-29). The essence of Fenollosa’s argument, for the purposes of this use Joyce made of it, is that words, especially words as they are expressed pictorially in Chinese ideograms, are active in nature. They express or contain an action which can be expanded.
The earlier forms of these characters were pictorial, and their hold upon the imagination is little shaken, even in later conventional modifications. It is not so well know, perhaps, that the great number of these ideographic roots carry in them a verbal idea or action. It might be thought that a picture is naturally the picture of a thing, and that therefore the root ideas of Chinese are what grammar calls nouns.

But examination shows that a large number of the primitive Chinese characters, even the so-called radicals, are shorthand pictures of actions or processes.

The idea that words are shorthand capsules of actions has significant consequences. Action is drama (that which is acted), so words contain dramas or the seeds of narratives. For Fenollosa this notion is true for the Indo-European languages as well as the Chinese language. In the derivation of nouns from verbs, the Chinese language is forestalled by the Aryan. Almost all the Sanskrit roots, which seem to underlie European languages, are primitive verbs, which express characteristic actions of visible nature. The verb must be the primary fact of nature, since motion and change are all that we can recognize in her. In the primitive transitive sentence, such as ‘Farmer pounds rice,’ the agent and the object are nouns, only in so far as they limit a unit of action. ‘Farmer’ and ‘rice’ are mere hard terms which define the extremes of the pounding. But in themselves, apart from this sentence-function, they are naturally verbs. The farmer is one who tills the ground, and the rice is a plant which grows in a special way, This is indicated in the Chinese characters. And this probably exemplifies the ordinary derivation of nouns from verbs. In all languages, Chinese included, a noun is originally ‘that which does something,’ that which performs the verbal action,

This is a crucial point in Fenollosa’s theory. Etymology reveals how the “active” nature of primitive verbs is
relevant to the Indo-European languages and Fenollosa often appeals to etymology. "All Aryan etymology points back to roots which are the equivalents of simple Sanskrit verbs, such as we find tabulated at the back of our Skeat."73

(Remember that Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus read Skeat by the hour.) "Few of us realize that in our own language these very differences once grew up in living articulations; that they still retain life. It is only when the difficulty of placing some odd term arises, or when we are forced to translate into some very different language, that we attain for a moment the inner heat of thought, a heat which melts down the parts of speech to recast them at will."74

Fenollosa saw individual words as primitive poetic metaphors. "Metaphor ... is at once the substance of nature and of language."75 The literary artist must realize this and work with it.76

The chief work of literary men in dealing with language, and of poets especially, lies in feeling back along the ancient lines of advance. He must do this so that he may keep his words enriched by all their subtle undertones of meaning. The original metaphors stand as a kind of luminous background, giving color and vitality, forcing them closer to the concreteness of natural processes. ... For these reasons poetry was the earliest of the world arts; poetry, language and the care of myth grew up together.

Ezra Fand added a note of his own to this passage. "I would submit in all humility that this applies in the rendering of ancient texts. The poet in dealing with his own time, must also see to it that language does not petrify on his hands. He must prepare for new advances along the true lines of metaphor, that is interpretive metaphors, or
image, as diametrically opposed to untrue, or ornamental metaphor.”77 I suggest that Joyce approached words in the way Pound and Fenollosa describe. Fenollosa’s argument that poetry, language and the care of myth grew up together is paralleled by Ernst Cassirer’s statement that “Language and myth are near of kin. In the early stages of human culture their relation is so close and their cooperation so obvious that it is almost impossible to separate the one from the other. They are two different shoots from one and the same root. Whenever we find man we find him in possession of the faculty of speech and under the influence of the myth-making function.”78 This suggests an inherent connection between words and stories, what I call etymythology, in primitive myth and folklore. A similar connection between words and stories, can be created deliberately by the modern literary artist, and Joyce often made it. Fenollosa’s description of words as primitive metaphors also parallels Vico’s notion of “poetic characters.” This similarity between Vico and Fenollosa probably reinforced Fenollosa’s significance for Joyce. Joyce would have been prepared for Fenollosa’s arguments by his own reading of Vico, and by Vico’s technique or following the lines of etymology back to the earlier concrete metaphorical roots of language in order to more fully understand language, culture, and history.

In fact Fenollosa outlined a problem which European writers must face when dealing with individual words. “Only
scholars and poets feel painfully back along the thread of our etymologies and piece together our diction, as best they may, from forgotten fragments. This anaemia of modern speech is only too well encouraged by the feeble cohesive force of our phonetic symbols. There is little or nothing in a phonetic word to exhibit the embryonic stages of its growth. It does not bear its metaphor on its face. We forget that personality once meant, not the soul, but the soul’s mask.”79 Joyce was aware of words’ etymologies, however, and did make them exhibit their embryonic growth. In his early work Joyce did this by allowing the etymological overtones of a word to color or enrich a passage (e.g. “Morris dance” in U. In Ulysses, Leopole Bloom thinks, “Corpus. 'Body. Corpse. Good idea the Latin” (U 80), exhibiting his own etymological curiosity. In Finnegans Wake, corpus/corps becomes Cropse (FW 55.08), and the phonetic symbols reassert their cohesive and metaphorical power. Cropse conjures up a whole complex or thoughts related to corpus and corpse: corpses, corps, cropse, birth, death, rebirth, the history of religious and philosophical speculation about death encapsulated in a single word whose rearranged phonetic symbols have created a word which is a metaphor. Stephen Dedalus thought, “Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur. … India mittit ebur” (P 179). This resurfaces in Finnegans Wake as “to the ind of Tuskland where the oliphants scrum from” (FW 427.21-22). In both cases the word ivory, or its etymology, carries connotations of India, elephants, and Sanskrit (in Skeat at least), so the single
word is a metaphor which can be expanded to include India and elephants.

To Fenollosa, Chinese ideograms had an advantage when it came to primitive metaphorical meaning. In this Chinese shows its advantage. Its etymology is constantly visible. It retains the creative impulse and process, visible and at work. After thousands of years the lines of metaphoric advance are still shown, and in many cases actually retained in meaning. Thus a word, instead of growing gradually poorer and poorer as with us, becomes richer and still more rich from age to age, almost consciously luminous. The very soil of Chinese life seems entangled in the roots of its speech. Their ideographs are like blood-stained battle-flags to an old campaigner. With us, the poet is the only one for whom the accumulated treasures of the race-words are real and active. Poetic language is always vibrant with fold on fold of overtones and with natural affinities, but in Chinese the visibility of the metaphor tends to raise this quality to its intensest power.

As with Vi ć o and Bé rard, the validity or accuracy of Fenollosa’s examples (and even of his theory) is often questionable, but Joyce was not bound by validity or accuracy when he put material or theories to his own uses. Joyce was able to accomplish with phonetic symbols what Fenollosa found inherent in Chinese ideograms. Consider these three words from Finnegans Wake: “tragoady” (5.13), “a norange” (450.09), and “alljawbreakical” (293.16). Tragedy derives from the Greek tragoidia, “goat-song,” because, Skeat suggests, “the actors were clad in goat-skins to resemble satyrs.” Joyce’s word, tragoady, simultaneously suggests tragedy, goat, and ode (tragos-aoide, goat-song). The etymology is visible, it bears its metaphor on its face.
The English word orange derives from the Arab nāranj, Persian nārang, “orange,” according to Skeat. The initial n was dropped in Italian and French (but retained in Spanish), and arange became orenge by “a popular etymology for or, gold.” By restoring that lost n, Joyce recreates the origins of orange and turns the word into an etymology, a norange.

Algebra also derives from Arabic, from al, the, and jabr, setting, repairing, in the sense of setting broken bones (by metaphorical extension, the reduction of fractions to integers in arithmetic); hence alljawbreackical.

There are many such examples in Finnegans Wake. This was one of the ways in which Joyce composed his portmanteau words. Thus Joyce was able to accomplish what Fenolloa only hoped could be accomplished in English: he refashioned words to reveal their etymologies.

Joyce’s affinity with Fenollosa on the subject of etymology was general rather than specific. Joyce did not mine Fenollosa for material as extensively as he mined Vico and Bérard, for instance, but Fenollosa would have reinforced Joyce’s already evident fascination with etymology and his penchant for using it as a means to create new words, phrases, and larger semantic units. As with Vico and Bérard, I would like to suggest that, for the purposes of this study, it was Fenollosa’s general approach to etymology, his philology, which fascinated Joyce, rather than the details of his theory. All three of these writers influenced Joyce or provided him with material for allusions or for structuring his work. Here I only want to stress their common understanding of
words and their etymologies as stories unto themselves, which primitive peoples turned into stories (or vice versa), perhaps unconsciously, and which modern authors can turn into stories (or vice versa) deliberately and consciously.

Of all modern authors I think Joyce provides the greatest example of this technique, and I think *Finnegans Wake* is its major proving-ground. For this reason I call Joyce Bygmythster Finnegan, the Master Builder of stories from the building blocks of words.


5. Ibid., p. 5.

6. Cf. Letters, I, 204 (9 October 1923); III, 117-118 (“I should like to hear-Vico read to me again in the hope that some day I may be able to write again”); I, 241; *Our Friend James Joyce,* op. cit., p. 123; *JJ* 706 (“my imagination grows when I read Vico as it doesn’t when I read Freud or Jung”). After *Finnegans Wake* was published, Joyce was still interested in obtaining the latest study of Vico’s *New Science* (Litz, “Vico and Joyce,” op. cit., pp. 254-255).

7. CF, above p. 27; *CW* 28.


13. Cf. Beckett, op. cit., pp. 10-11. The example which Beckett cites surfaces in *Finnegans Wake*: “Translate a lax, you breed a braudaun” (FW 573.33). “This, lay readers and gentlemen, is perhaps the commonest of all cases arising out of umbrella history in connection with wood industries in our courts of litigation” (FW 573.34-574.01). This passage is a parody of canon law (FW 572-576). “Lax” suggests lex. Vico wrote about the gentle races since the Hebrews followed revealed rather than natural laws: “gentlemen.” He derived lex from “sylvan or rustic origins”: acorns, oaks, “the wood industries.” Cf. also “outlex” in the context of a family tree (FW 169.03), and “Ah chaos lex” (FW 518.33) followed by “0 bella! 0 pia! 0 pura” (FW 518.33), a version of one of Vico’s most common phrases, pia et pura bella; and “there’s resin in all roots for monarch” (FW 478.10-11). Cf. NS 363, 407, 513, 529, for more examples of Vico’s etymological methodology.
15. Ibid., p. 57.
16. Ibid., p. 61.
17. See p. 54, fn. 5 above.
21. Cf. Louis Gillet, *Claybook for James Joyce*, p. 17. 20 (“His study came to corroborate my theory … of the Odyssey when I had already written three-quarters of the book” --Joyce is being disingenuous here: notebook VIII.A.5 has been dated to 1918, a much earlier stage of composition; *Letters*, I, 401; *James Joyce’s ULYSSES*, p. vii; *Letters*, I, 271; *JJ 421*; *Our Friend James Joyce*, p. 89; Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*, Bloomington, Ind., 1960, p. 170 (“And there’s a lot to be said for the theory that the Odyssey is a Semitic poem”).
22. There is a study forthcoming, by Michael A. Seidel, entitled *Epic Geography in James Joyce’s ULYSSES*, which is devoted to Bérard’s influence on Joyce; apparently it will be
a very extensive survey which promises radically new interpretations of how Ulysses was written.


25. DHL 96.


27. DHL 149.

28. DHL 121-122; cf. Vico, p. 63 above. Cf. Leopold Bloom, “Milly served me that cutlet with a sprig of parsley. Take one Spanish onion” (U 172, emphasis added), and Stephen Dedalus, “The king of Spain’s daughter, Stephen answered, adding some thing or other rather muddled about farewell and adieu to you Spanish onions and the first land called the Deadman and from Ramhead to Scilly was so and so many” (U 652), where the whole discussion is couched in Odyssean overtones: “a real man arriving on the scene … falling a victim to her siren charms and forgetting home ties. … And the coming back was the worst thing you ever did because it went without saying you would feel out of place as things always moved with the times” (U 651). The passage is studded with Bérardian details.


30. DHL 152; cf. DHL 156. The process Bérard is describing here has strong affinities with the process which produced Irish toponomastic literature (cf Chapters One and Four).

31. Cf. DHL 152-153, 156 for illustrations.

32. B, I, 43; cf. DHL 192. (I quote from B, I/II in the original French to retain the precise terminology which Bérard employed, and because Joyce’s notes are in French, taken from this edn.)


34. DHL 193; cf. my own “problematical” examples of Joyce weaving etymological details into P and U as outlined at the end of Chapter Two).

35. The following discussion is derived from DHL 193-196.
The implications of Bérard’s theory plunge to the very bases of the relationship between Word/Name and narrative (cf. pp. 87-88 above). His work has fired the imaginations of some of this centuries most significant writers, including Ezra Pound (in the Cantos) and Charles Olson (in The Maximus Poems), as well as Joyce.

This discussion comes from DHL 199-200. This explanation was particularly noted by Joyce:

Sun’s oxen bright radiant

Ox

bakar [?bul] Hebr. Morning
(adapted from Herring, op. cit., p. 300).

Bérard may often be the primary source for Joyce’s Homeric details, since the order of Joyce’s details often follows the order of Bérard’s discussion (which does not always follow the order of Homer’s narrative) and Joyce uses Bérardean details which are not in Homer’s narrative.

This is a quite explicit description of Bérard’s theory which also links it with Irish toponomastic literature (cf. Chapter One): a Semitic periplous (“periplic,” “admiralty report,” “Punic”—as in Hannon’s periplous; “Hanna 0’Nonhanno” appears on the same page) was transformed into the twelve tales of Odysseus (“dodecanesian baedeker,” “wretched mariner,” and “ulykkhean” and “penelopean patience” occur earlier on the same page) by turning the “names” into tales (“baedeker,” “every-tale-a-treat-in-itself”). There are other specific references to Bérard’s material in FW as well: “greekenhearted yude” (FW 171.01), “gran Phenician rover” (FW 197.31), “Phenician … Sourdanian” (FW 221.32), and cf. pp. 69f above;
also, consider Hamlet as a “sour” Dane who found himself outlawed and fled his decreed fate: Joyce has linked Hamlet and Odysseus by means of Bérard’s etymological explanation of Sardinia as the location for the adventure of the Laestrygonians, “Phenicia” (FW 576.28), “the Phoenician wakes” (FW 608.32), “somatophage” (FW 171.03), are some examples.

Another example of how Joyce put Bérard to work in FW is based on an entry copied from Bérard in notebook VIII.A.5. Joyce wrote, “Gr. tomb—Heb: dragon / or a dragon’s teeth” (Herring, op. cit., p. 296). Bérard had traced the Taphians, a race of searobbers, to the modern island of Dragonara. “Si Taphos n’est pas grec, s’il ne veut pas dire l’île-du-Tombeau (et je croirais volontiers que le tombeau, [taphos], grec n’a rien a voir ici), je ne vois qu’une racine sémitique ou le rappoter, c’est … tab [qui signifie ramper [to crawl, creep] et dont un dérivé … tab désigne un genre de reptile, crocodile ou dragon, a demi fabuleux” (B, II. 446). Bérard sees the Greek transcription of tab, taph-os, as a sound one on phonetic grounds, identifying Taphos as “l’Isle du Dragon,” and links this toponomastic pun with Greek mythology. “Notre Drongnier fut pour les Hellènes une des Echinades … ou Echines … une des îles des Serpents ou des Dragons: [echis] vipère et dragon fabuleux; Echion est l’un des géants kadmeans, l’un des Spartes, née des dents du dragon.” There is a reference in FW to “dragooned peopled armed to their teeth” (FW 134.05-06), and the passage which prompted this footnote links Bérard’s “littleknown periplic bestseller” with “Jason’s Cruise” (and with “MacPerson’s Oshean”; the name “Macpherson” immediately precedes Joyce’s summary of this Taphos passage in VIII.A.5, an indication that he linked the onomastic basis of MacPherson’s tales with the toponomastic basis of Bérard’s version of Homer). Bérard’s etymological explorations extended beyond the boundaries of the Odyssey to include other myths. This indicates that his theory represents a process of analysis with wider-ranging implications than narrowly defined Homeric studies might indicate.

One last observation on the “every-tale-a-treat-in-itself” variety: Joyce described his method of composing Ulysses in terms which recall Bérard’s theory about Homer’s method of composition. He wrote to Carlo Linati, “My intention is not only to render the myth sub specie temporis nostri but also to allow each adventure … to condition and even to create its own technique. Each adventure is so to speak one person although it is composed of persons” (SL 270-271).

50. Cf. also:

| 485.24-25 | FW | The twicer, trifoliated in Wanstable |
| 515.29 | FW | The Dublin own, thrice familiar |
troubled in trine or dubildin too
tricastellated, bimedallised
53. This information comes from B, II, 102. (The parallel which Bérard draws between lotos and mastic depends on the fact that mastic disappeared from normal use and its meaning could only be reconstructed through minute examinations of earlier navigators’ descriptions: the same process which he applies to lotos, and which Joyce adapts for his own purposes.)
54. Ibid.
55. B, II, 103. (The next quote comes from the same page as well.)
58. Adapted from Herring, op. cit., p. 295.
59. Cf. FW 599.07, 526.22, 109.25, 120.18, 318.08, 441.34, 463.35, 341.34, 86.18, 485.25, 326.08, 425.20.
60. Herring, op. cit., p. 291.
63. See fnb. 22 & 23 above.
64. DHL, 203, 205-20.
66. See above pp. 32ff.
68. Adapted from Scribbledehobble, ed. Thomas Connolly, Evanston, Ill., 1961, p. 96.
70. Ezra Pound, with whose work Fenollosa is intimately bound, appears in FW as well: “Esra” (FW 116.02), “pound” (FW 309.23, 566.01), “Fenella” (FW 184.32) may suggest Fenollosa. “A maunderin tongue in a pounderin jowl? Father ourder abouth the mathers of prenanciation” (FW 89.24-26), links Pound and
Fenollosa doubly, since Fenollosa’s notes on Chinese ideograms and poems provided the material for Pound’s Cathay, (cf. Pound/Joyce, op. cit., p. 33) and his essay on the written character also discusses phonetics and pronunciation (cf. p. 30; cf. Joyce’s Scribbledehobble note, “phonetic theory is unsound: be careful!”). “Idioglossary” (FW 423.09) and “pictograph” (FW 220.11-12) reflect Fenollosa’s subject.

72. Ibid., pp. 16-19.
73. Ibid., p. 16.
74. Ibid., p. 17.
75. Ibid., p. 23.
76. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
77. Ibid., p. 23 Fn.
80. Ibid., p. 25.
IV. BYGMYTHSTER FINNEGAN

The word-building of Work in Progress is founded on the bedrock of petrified language.
Stuart Gilbert

Words fallen out of use are racial experience
Alive but unremembered. When in the poet’s imagination the past experience is relived the dormant word awakes to new life and the poet’s listeners are lifted out of their social functional grooves and partake of the integral life of the race.
Frank Budgen

What you say about the Examination is right enough. I did stand behind those twelve Marshals more or less directing them what lines of research to follow. But up to the present though at least a hundred copies have been freely circulated to the press and press men not a single criticism has appeared. My impression is that the paper cover, the grandfather’s clock on the title page and the word examination itself for instance incline reviewers to regard it all as a joke, though these were all my doing, but some fine morning not a hundred years from now some enterprising fellow will discover the etymological history of the orthodox word examination and begin to change his wavering mind on the subject of the book, whereupon one by one others will faintly echo in the wailful choir, ‘Siccome I gru van cantando lor lai.’
James Joyce

Our Examination Round His Factification for Incamation of Work in Progress was “commissioned” by Joyce to provide a serious critical defense of the radically innovative new work which he was presenting in fragments, via transition, to
a literary audience which wanted another Ulysses. (Fragments of Work in Progress had appeared as early as 1924 [JJ 801-803], but began to appear regularly in transition in 1927. The Exagination appeared in 1929.) Initial reactions to Work in Progress, with a few exceptions, tended to be hostile and derogatory. Joyce feared that his new work might be dismissed as mere nonsense before he had a chance to educate his audience to the serious intent which lay behind it. He hoped the Exagination essays would demonstrate that the book was carefully and seriously crafted and constructed. I will preface my commentary on Joyce’s use of Irish placenames and their etymologies with an exploration of some of the (Joyce-instigated) critical commentary which appeared in the Exagination, because I want to demonstrate that Joyce used etymology and etymological puns deliberately and consciously to construct the text of Finnegans Wake, and he wished his contemporaries to recognize this.

Joyce offered many explanations of passages in Work in Progress to his friends, particularly to Harriet Shaw Weaver (who was skeptical about it). He also recommended books, such as Vico’s New Science and the Book of Kells, which would provide insights into the philosophy and structure of his new work. Joyce was not entirely consistent in the way he offered help. He seemed to tailor his explanations to the needs of each individual. Thus Harriet Shaw Weaver received several word lists explaining portmanteau words in various passages, while Valery Larbaud received a hint to pay close attention to the etymological history of the words which lay behind a
particular portmanteau word. I will concentrate on Joyce’s use of etymology, and the critical commentary which this evoked in the *Examination*, to the exclusion of Joyce’s more general advice about reading *Work in Progress*, in order to confine my remarks to the etymothological thesis of this study.

Joyce defended the word *examination* by suggesting that it was justified by “the etymological history of the orthodox word examination.” This history demonstrates that *examination* is derived from the Latin *examināre*, to weigh carefully; and that the Latin stem *exāmin-* derives from *exāmen*, the tongue of a balance, for *exāmen* (cf. *exigere*, to weigh out.—L. *ex*, out; *agere*, to drive, move). Thus, by inserting the letter *g* into *examination* to produce *exagmination*, Joyce restored the word’s etymological history and some of its metaphorical force (a la Fenollosa), while adding overtones of exaggeration.

Joyce went on to say that the discovery of this process of using etymology in the production of words would “begin to change [the sceptical critic’s] wavering mind on the subject of the book.” I believe he intended Larbaud to understand that this use of etymology was a process which could be applied to other words in the text, and that it was a serious process.

In his *Examination* essay, Samuel Beckett perceived this same process as one derived from Vico’s Philology, and even described it as providing the “structure” of *Work in Progress*. “By structural I do not only mean a bold outward division, a bare skeleton for the housing of material. I mean the endless variation … and interior intertwining … into a decora-
Beckett could describe “decoration” as “structure” because he perceived that in Work in Progress “form is content, content is form. ... [Joyce’s] writing is not about something; it is that something itself.”

When Joyce described how he created exagmination he disclosed a method which created one portmanteau word. But the text of Work in Progress/Finnegans Wake consists largely of such words. So Joyce also disclosed the process which created the text. Beckett described the text, the individual words Joyce produced, as the structure.

Beckett also comments on Joyce’s use of etymology to create the text. “Take the word ‘doubt’: it gives us hardly any sensuous suggestion of hesitancy, of the necessity for choice, of static irresolution. Whereas the German ‘Zweifel’ does, and, in lesser degree, the Italian ‘dubitare’, Mr. Joyce recognizes how inadequate ‘doubt’ is to express a state of extreme uncertainty, and replaces it by ‘in twosome twiminds.’” Joyce’s phrase takes the etymology of doubt (O.Fr. douter--L. dubitāre, akin to dubious, doubtful, moving in two [due] directions) and turns it into a metaphor or dramatizes it, thus creating a phrase out of the etymological ramifications of a word. Beckett sees this etymological approach, this return to the roots of words, as both Viconian and integral to the “style” of the book, which is, in Beckett’s view, the essence of the book, its form and content, and its structure. “There is an endless verbal germination, maturation, putrefaction, the
cyclic dynamism of the intermediate. This reduction of various expressive media to their primitive economic directness, and the fusion of these primal essences into an assimilated medium for the extemporisation of thought, is pure Vico, and Vice applied to the question of style.”

Other contributors to the Exagmination repeated this theme of Joyce’s use of etymology as one of the essential processes which created the text. Stuart Gilbert compared it to Bérard’s theory of etymological puns, and to Vico’s discovery of condensed narratives in etymologies. Eugene Jolas compared Joyce’s methodology to Léon-Paul Fargue’s, of creating neologisms “from root vocables.” Robert Sage stated that Joyce composed his words “with sound philological authority.” Frank Budgen suggested that the writer who restored their etymological history to words could re-invigorate the reader as well as the words by putting the reader through that etymological history. Since Joyce did “stand behind those twelve Marshals more or less directing them what lines of research to follow,” it might be safe to assume that these various statements about the importance of etymology to an understanding of Work in Progress, and of the methods which produced it, also represent Joyce’s own point of view. His statement to Larbaud would seem to confirm this. The most convincing and abundant evidence for this point of view is provided by the text, however. I will now turn to Finnegans Wake itself to provide an outline of how etymology is used there. I will then narrow my focus to Joyce’s use of Irish placenames and Irish place-
name literature to provide a more detailed analysis of Joyce’s etymological process. Shem the Penman, Sham the Punman, is an etymologist. He is a “seeker of the nest of evil in the bosom of a good word” (FW 189.28-29). In this capacity he is the enemy of Shaun, his “bosom foe,” because he tried “to find out how his innards worked” (FW 191.30-33). Shem the etymologist is always “prying down furthermore to chance his lucky arm with his pregnant questions up to our past lives” (FW 438.10-11). He is always looking, Shaun says, “For his root language which he picksticked into his lettruce invention” (FW 424.17-20). This is because, as Vice also said, “the sibspeeches of all mankind have foliated … from the root of some funner’s stotter” (FW 96.30-31), resulting in the “lexinction of life” (FW 83.25). An etymology can reveal past history. But an etymology, in Finnegans Wake, is also “a very fairworded instance of falsemeaning adamelegy” (FW 77.25-26). Etymologies are also “intimologies” (FW 113.04), since Adam first gave names to objects, and etymologists trace those names back to their earliest sources. So etymology in Finnegans Wake is a method for discovering and revealing sources often with the result of discovering and revealing secrets, or novel interconnections and meanings associated with orthodox words. But etymology has a more fundamental role to play in Finnegans Wake as well.

Adam, the first man, is interchangeably atom: “We may come from … atoms and if’s” (FW 455.16-17), “the sameold
gamebold adomic structure ... highly charged with electrons” (FW 165.06-07), and atoms are the most basic units which structure matter, which structures reality. But atoms are interchangeably etyms: “The abnihilisation of the etym ... exqolodonates through Parsuralia ... amidwhiches general uttermosts confusion are perceivable moletons skaping with molecules” (FW 353.22-26). The “abnihilisation of the etym” is also the “annihilation of the atom,” as indicated by the words “exqolodonates,” “confussion” (which combines both “fission” and “fusion,” the “two methods for annihilating atoms explosively), “moletons” and “mulicules” (which illustrate how molecules, composed of atoms, the skeletons of matter, escape in the detonation of the annihilated atom). But the “abnihilisation of the etym” is also the annihilation of the word, the etym: “parsuralis,” with its overtones of to parse, and “uttermosts” (to utter) reinforce “etym” and provide a context of Language for this passage. The simultaneous meanings multiply. Ab-nihil-is-ation also means the process of bringing something from nothing: from-nothing-ise, from-nothing-isation. Ab nihil suggests ex nihil, which suggests God’s process of creating out of nothing (Joyce would have to change ex to ab to retain the form which suggests annihilisation, ad-nihil-is-ation). So the “abnihilisation of the etym” is also creation: the creation of the word from nothing, the creation of the atom from nothing. God created with the Word, Joyce creates the word.
As already noted, etym/atom also suggests Adam, whom God created from mud, breathing life into him, inspiring him with the word. And etym/atom/Adam also suggests Atem, the Egyptian god of creation, who also created from the mud, spitting (or masturbating) onto the primal dungheap (after calling himself into existence, according to some versions, by pronouncing his own name). So annihilation and creation are inextricably linked in a three word phrase which covers etymology, nuclear physics, and creation. Atoms are the most basic units for the creation and construction of matter. Etyms are equally the most basic units for the creation and construction of language. Shem the etymologist seeks the nest of evil in the bosom of a good word. In Finnegans Wake, “The timid hearts of words all excremental” (FW 258.02-0): they are, they exist, universally: out of everything. I take these passages to mean that the “bosom” of a good word, its “timid because reluctant to yield heart,” is its etymology. By reducing a word to its etymological origin, laying bare its etymological history in the process, it is possible to reconstruct a metaphor or a dramatic action which can contribute to a narrative. By “abnihilising” a word in this way Joyce can produce a text which is based on self-generating, or self-germinating, words. He accomplishes this in several ways.

Joyce’s use of etymology falls into two basic categories: etymology as allusion, and etymology as analogue.
Etymology functions as a form of allusion, or as a source for allusions, when Joyce makes the reader aware of what the original meaning of a word was, or of that word’s etymological history (e.g., “the mind of witty Aristotle”: *witan*). Etymology functions as a form of analogue when Joyce uses a word’s etymology as the kernel for a mini-story, expanding or dramatising the etymological details of the word to produce a narrative effect:

He deared me to it and he dared me do it, and bedattle I didaredonit as Cocksnark of Killtork can tell the Ussur Ursussen of the viktaurious onrush with all the rattles in his arctic! As bold and as madhouse a bull in a meadows.

( FW 353:10-13)

This example comes from the Butt and Taft “T.V.” show (II, iii, 337-355), and it combines Brian Boru’s defeat of the Danes at Clontarf in 1014 with the story of Buckley and the Russian General. The link between the two stories is based on an etymological pun. *Clontarf* comes from the Irish cluain tarbh, meadow of the bull, which is also referred to as “Dung turf” (FW 16:22), “Bully Acre” (FW 73:23), “Bully’s Acre” (FW 618:08), “Bullysacre, dig care a dig” (FW 320:33: “dig care a dig” mimics the Irish for 1014: dèag ceathair a déag), “Claneturf” (FW 625:17-18), “clanetourf” (FW 86:10), and “cleftarriff’s” (FW 539:28), as well as “Clontarf” (FW 201:19, 324:20, 376:08), in Finnegans Wake. It is also dramatized once as: “Somular with a bull on a clompturf” (FW 17:09). All of these references occur in passages with overtones of Brian Boru as well. Buckley shot the Russian General for offending Ireland’s pride by
wiping himself with a piece of turf. This piece of turf ("Dungturf," "Clane turf," "clompturf") and the fact that both Brian Boru’s and Buckley’s victories took place on fields of battle, provides a link between the two stories. The meaning of Clontarf can be dramatised to provide a little story or its own ("As bold and as madhouse a bull in a meadows," "with a bull on a clompturf") and the etymological connotations of Clontarf can provide supplementary details to embroider the text ("viktaurious onrush": a victorious onrush against the viking Danes on the “taurious” meadow of the bull).

In these ways a single word, in this case a placename, and its etymological history, including its historical connotations, can provide material for allusion, but it can also serve as a kind of analogue for a narrative action. This particular narrative action may not seem to be very significant in comparison with Béard’s examples of Homeric narratives based on etymological puns, but Finnegans Wake is a very different kind of narrative text wherein “plot” and “structure” are, in effect, subordinated to “style” or what Ezra Pound called logopoeia, the dance of words in the intellect. The language of the text is the major “character” in Finnegans Wake, since the language of the text commands more attention than any of the other “characters. When a phrase or a paragraph within the text has been constructed out of the etymological ramifications of a word I feel justified in describing the use of
etymology thus exhibited as a kind of “narrative” form. The peculiarities of *Finnegans Wake* seem to invite this description, even though the examples cited might seem to be more appropriately described as embroidery of the text, or ornamentation of the text. But in *Finnegans Wake* (as in Irish music and art), embroidery and ornamentation are the text, and distinctions between style and structure are often difficult to make (“In *Finnegans Wake* words are constructed so as to contain within themselves sufficient data to allow the structure of the work to be deduced from any typical word”). For these reasons I distinguish between Joyce’s use of etymology as a form of allusion, alluding to a word’s origins and its other meanings, and as a form of analogue, providing the details which structure a semantic unit within the text.

Another example of a placename etymology being used as an analogue is the use Joyce made of the original Irish name of Dublin, *Baile Átha Cliath*, the Town of the Ford of the Hurdles (bridges of woven branches). “Then from the starving cagework city a horde of jerkined dwarfs, my people, with flayers’ knives, running, scaling, hacking in green blubbery meat” (*U45*; emphasis added). “The reverend Hugh C. Love walked from the old Chapterhouse of St. Mary’s abbey … towards the Tholsel beyond the Ford of the Hurdles” (*U245*). Puns on this name abound in *Finnegans Wake*, but there is at least one example in which the etymology of the name is dramatized, producing a mini-narrative. “And I sept up twinminsters, the pro and the
con, my stavekirks wove so nercely of peeled wands and attachatouchy floodmud, now all loosebrick and stonefest, freely masoned, asked for covenanters and shinners’ rifuge” (FW 552.03-06). This example comes from a long passage in which HCE describes how he established his city, and it is based on the meaning of Baile Átha Cliath, Town of the Ford of the (woven) Hurdles. There are many passages in Finnegans Wake which have Dublin placenames or Irish place-names as carefully woven into them as rivers are into “Anna Livia Plurabelle,” and in this sense these names could be said to “structure” those passages just as river-names “structure” “Anna Livia Plurabelle” (FW 196-216).18

Whether he uses etymology as allusion or as analogue, Joyce generally follows one of several readily described procedures. The first consists of embedding the etymology of a word in a new portmanteau word (“tragoady,” “alljaw-breakical,” “a norange”). The second consists of linking cognate words, words which derive from the same etymological root. One example of this is the use Joyce makes of the link between the humus, earth, and human, earthman, as demonstrated by his use of the root hum:-

the regeneration of man … something to right hume about … The first exploder to make his ablation in these parks was indeed that lucky mortal which the monster trial showed on its first day out. … He comes out of the soil very well after all (FW 606.11-29) -

Eld as endall, earth … the human historic Brute … re humperplace … every at man like myself … That is a tiptip tim oldy faher now the man I go in fear of’, Tommy Terracotta, and he could be all your and my das
In examples like these Joyce is able to play with the fact that the myth of man’s creation is retained in the words for man and for earth, human and humus. Cognate words share an etymological history in their common roots and Joyce can take advantage of that fact to draw out or illustrate their etymological connection. A corollary process also applies to words which are calques, words having the same meaning but a different form (e.g. bard, skald). The link inherent in humus/human is also inherent in 'adhamah/’adham, earth/man, from which Adam is derived. Joyce created two additional calques for earth/man through the puns “Tommy Terracotta” and “Mr. Mudson” (FW 481.32, 133.22). Punning on the etymological meaning of a word is the next process, illustrated by the “last cradle of hume sweet hume,” which puns on the connection between humus and human, and on the proverbial expression, “dust to dust.”

Joyce also engages in creative extension of the etymological meaning of a word, as in his use of hume in the examples already cited. Hume seems to suggest home (“right hume about,” “hume sweet hume”), but it also suggests human and humus, and the widespread use Joyce makes of it in passages which concern the motif of Adam’s creation illustrates how, by making an etymological connection between two words explicit, Joyce could extend an etymological root to cover new ground. This process can also include
the creation of new words to express the etymological root of an old one (doubt: “in twosome twiminds”).

Sometimes Joyce uses words with a lively sense of their etymological overtones ("witty Aristotle," the “Morris dance” of algebraic symbols), and sometimes he turns the details of a word’s etymology into the details of a plot, or of a characterization (e.g. the details of Brewer’s etymology for mustard in *Ulysses*, the details of Dublin’s *dubh linn* in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and of *Baile Atha Cliath* in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, or the overtones of Lynch’s name in *Ulysses*). There are two final methods by which Joyce turns an etymology into a new semantic unit. The first is translation (Clontarf: “a bull in a meadows, “a bull on a clompturf”). The second is transliteration (Pairc an Fionn-Uisce: Phoenix Park: “Finnish pork”;—FW 39.17). All of these general procedures will be evident in the examples which I will use to illustrate the rest of this chapter, which will be devoted to a study of Joyce’s use of Irish placenames in *Finnegans Wake*.

One of the ways in which Joyce composed the text of *Finnegans Wake* was to take the etymological ramifications of a word and to turn them into new semantic units. Since these new semantic units are the building blocks for the text, and since I want to concentrate on the way Joyce did this with Irish words, I call him Bygmythster Finnegan. For *Finnegans Wake* is the best illustration of how this process
can be used to create a literary text. Before I turn to the Irish placenames and placename literature which Joyce used, I would like to cite a passage from *Finnegans Wake* as a description of the process which Joyce used to create his text, and the process which Joyce’s audience must use to read the text.

The prouts who will invent a writing there ultimately is the poeta, still more learned, who discovered the raiding there originally. That’s the point of eschatology our book of kills reaches for now in soandso many counterpoints words. What can’t be coded can be decoded if an ear aye seize what no eye ere grieved for. Now, the doctrine obtains, we have occasioning cause causing effects and affects occasionally recausing altereffects. Or I will let me take it upon myself to suggest to twist the penman’s tale postewise.

*FW* 482.31-483.03

Father Prout (the pseudonym of Francis Sylvester Mahony, 1804-1866) “invented a writing” by translating contemporary verse into Latin and Greek parodies of the verse and then suggesting that the authors of his sources had in fact plagiarized their poems from the “ancient” originals which he had “found.” “Our book of kills” suggests the *Book of Kells* (which, along with other monastic treasures, occasioned some Danish “raiding”), but *kill* is also a very common element in Irish placenames (usually deriving from *cill,* “church,” sometimes from *coill,* “a wood”), and Joyce frequently uses *kill* in this sense. By “counterpoint words” Joyce must mean the additional words suggested by the verbal Overtones of those literally on the page: “the raiding there originally” suggests both “writing” and “reading,” as
well as “raiding.” The method which this passage from *Finnegans Wake* describes could be applied to the subject of anglicized Irish placenames very easily. The “counterpoint words” the “raiding there originally,” could be seen as the original Irish words which lurk behind the present anglicized placenames of Ireland. If the spelling of these anglicized placenames is ignored, so that the pronunciation can suggest the original Irish words, then the original meaning, in Irish, of anglicized placenames can be discerned (“if an ear aye seize what no eye ere grieved for”). The result will be the simultaneous apperception of two names, sometimes with two different meanings, for the same place, in two languages. “We have occasioning cause [the original Irish name] causing effects (the anglicized name] and affects [the anglicization] occasionally recasting altererfeets.” Joyce provided Harriet Shaw Weaver with a perfect example of this (see below, p.). In the remainder of this chapter I will provide more.

THE THRUSH. Smol or smolach [smole, smolagh] is a thrush. The best known name containing the word is Gleann-na-smol, the valley of the thrushes, the scene of a celebrated Irish poem, which is believed to be the same place as Glenasmole. a fine valley near Tallaght, Dublin, where the river Dodder rises.

P.W. Joyce20

Precisely twelve men stood in a half-circle around a block of granite, in a valley which, because of the exceeding beauty of the song of multitudes of thrushes, to which its peculiar properties gave a rich depth and passion, had been named Gleann-na-Smol by the first human traveller that had wandered that way in the beginning of time.

Michael Ireland21
And they are met, face a facing. They are set, force to force. And no such Copenhague-Marengo was less so fated for a fall since in Glenasmole of Smiling Thrushes Patch Whyte passed O’Sheen ascowl. (FW 223.15-18)

In 1923, Darrell Figgis, using the pseudonym Michael Ireland, published a novel called *The Return of the Hero*, which Joyce read and liked (although he mistakenly attributed it to James Stephens)22 Joyce’s library contained a copy of the book,23 and both its title and the author’s pseudonym appear in *Finnegans Wake*, as do several of its characters.24 *The Return of the Hero* draws upon a large body of Irish literature devoted to Fionn mac Cumhal and the Fianna (his band of heroes). In the later medieval and early modern periods this cycle of stories became the most popular cycle in Irish literature, bridging the gap between pre-Christian bardic times and post-Christian monastic times. This was accomplished by the fictive device of introducing St. Patrick to Oisin, the son of Fionn mac Cumhal. Oisin (pronounced *usheen*, anglicized Ossian) is sometimes replaced by another survivor of the Fianna, Caoilte mac Ronain, in these tales.

The *Fionn* stories … are intimately connected With the person of St. Patrick, who lived three Centuries after the ostensible time of the *Fianna*. … The earliest of these stories is *Agallamh na Seanorach* (“Interrogation of the Old Men”), in which Oisin mac Finn and Caoilte mac Ronain, having escaped the destruction of the *Fianna* … are represented as surviving to Meet St. Patrick. Caoilte and Patrick become constant companions, and travel Ireland together while Caoilte elucidates place-names and local history; this provides a framework for tales of the exploits of the *Fianna* which Caoilte narrates as the companions reach the locus of each.25

In this cycle of stories Oisin (interchangeably Caoilte)
becomes the defender of the pre-Christian tradition while Patrick attacks it. “Even in extraliterary Irish tradition, ‘Oisin after Fianna’ is the type of nostalgic longing for lost youth and the past. In many stories Oisin is pre-eminent as a laudator temporis acti in opposition to St. Patrick, scornfully refusing baptism and its requisite repudiation of his past, and deliberately electing to rejoin Fionn and the Fianna in hell.”

The original introduction to The Return of the Hero referred to this large body of material as its source. “The Return of the Hero … is a modernization of ancient Material: back of it is a dialogue of ancient composition but still current amongst Gaelic-speakers in Ireland, ‘The Colloquy of Oisin and Saint Patrick.’” James Stephens, who wrote an introduction for the first American edition of The Return of the Hero in 1930, also noted its source material. “The Return of the Hero’ treated with the same beings [as Stephen’s own Irish Fairy Tales], but in the more modern form known as the ‘Colloquy or the Ancients,’ wherein, by a dramatic trick of the storyteller, Caeltia (in another tract it was Ossian) having been for some hundreds of years in the Land of the Young … came back to earth and narrated these tales to Saint Patrick.”

There are two major reasons why The Return of the Hero, and the background material on which it draws, is particularly important for understanding the workings of Finnegans Wake: its treatment of Oisin as hero and Patrick as
villain,29 and its use of placenames and their etymologies to structure and/or embroider tales. I will show how Joyce incorporated characters and plot elements from The Return of the Hero into Finnegans Wake, but I will also show how Joyce drew upon material available in the novel’s source (Agallamh na Senorach, “Oisin in Tir na nOg,” and folktales from the Fionn cycle) which was not incorporated into The Return of the Hero. This related source material is equally important because it underlies Joyce’s use of placename puns.

The Return of the Hero subordinates the role of placenames in its sources in order to construct a more conventional plot based on dialogue and action. Joyce borrowed freely from both the novel and its sources. For these reasons I would like to explore the source material in some detail, and to integrate it with the major elements which Figgis/Ireland retained in his modernization. I will show how Joyce used both the sources and the modernization in passages of Finnegans Wake.

Agallamh na Senorach, the “Colloquy of the Ancients,”30 an enormous compendium of placename tales linked with the adventures of Fionn and the Fianna, is the central tale of many which represent the assimilation of bardic material into monastic manuscripts. As Stephens writes, “The Colloquy represents the animus of the conquered Pagan schools—the bardic schools—against Christianity and against the monastic establishments. Oisin is undoubtedly the hero of the dialogue.”31 While the dialogue between Oisin and
Patrick which is contained in *Agallamh na Senorach* provides the immediate source material for *The Return of the Hero*. There is another tale which explains how Oisin survived for three hundred years, thus making it possible for him to meet Patrick. The opening pages of *The Return of the Hero* draw upon this tale, “Oisin in Tir na nOg,” and, as I will show, Joyce alludes to it as well.

Oisin survived until the time of Patrick because he spent three centuries in Tir na nOg (Land of the Young) with Niamh, an immortal woman. While there, Oisin grew no older, but he began to miss Fionn and the Fianna and he decided to return to Ireland to visit them. Niamh objected, but eventually agreed, supplying Oisin with a white horse for the journey (the relevance of these details will become evident when I relate this material to *Finnegans Wake*). In bidding fare well, she cautioned, “Now, think well on what I say to you, and keep my words in your mind. If once you alight from the white steed, you will never come back to me. Again I warn you, if you place your feet on the green sod in Erin, you will never return to this lovely land. A third time, O Oisin, my beloved husband, a third time I say to you, if you alight from the white steed, you will never see me again.”

When Oisin arrives in Ireland, having ridden his horse across the ocean, he discovers that three hundred years have passed while he has not aged a day, and that Fionn and Fianna are only memories. He also discovers
that men have diminished in stature. He is a giant by comparison. While travelling around Ireland on horseback in search of the Flanna, revisiting the places most closely associated with them, Oisin arrives in Gleann-na-anoil.

At length I came to Glenasmole, where many a time I had hunted in days of old with the[Fianna], and there I saw a crowd of people in the glen. As soon as they saw me, one of them came forward and said,

“Come to us, thou mighty hero, and help us out of our strait; for thou art a man of vast strength.”

I went to them, and found a number of men trying in vain to raise a large flat stone. It was half-lifted from the ground; but those who were under it were not strong enough either to raise it further or to free themselves from its weight. And they were in great distress, and on the point of being crushed to death.

I thought it a shameful thing that so many men should be unable to lift this stone, which Oscar [Oisin’s son], if he were alive, would take in his right hand and fling over the heads of the feeble crowd. After I had looked a little while, I stooped forward and seized the flag with one hand, and, putting forth my strength, I flung it seven perches from its place, and relieved the little men. But with the great strain the golden saddle-girth broke, and, bounding forward to keep myself from falling, I suddenly came to the ground on my two feet.

The moment the white steed felt himself free, he shook himself and neighed. Then, starting off with the speed of a cloud-shadow on a March day, he left me standing helpless and sorrowful. Instantly a woeful change came over me; the sight of my eyes began to fade, the ruddy beauty of my face fled, I lost all my strength, and I fell to the earth, a poor, withered old man, blind and wrinkled and feeble.

The white steed was never seen again. I never recovered my sight, my youth, or my strength; and I have lived in this manner, sorrowing without ceasing for my gentle golden-haired wife, Niamh, and thinking ever of my father, Finn, and of the lost companions of my youth.
Joyce was aware of the story of “Oisin in Tir na nOg” and borrowed details from it. The best-known version was
Written, in Irish, by Michael Comyn, whose name appears several times in *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce used this source to frame a parody of the Anglo-Irish stage dialect which was associated with the Abbey Theatre. This parody occurs during Yawn’s interrogation by the four old men (Book III, chapter 3, pp. 474-554). (The whole passage is saturated with references to Patrick, suggesting the type of frame tale which uses a dialogue between Patrick and Oisin, which is what “Oisin in Tir na nOg” is, as its structure.) Michael Comyn is suggested by the word “Commong” (*FW* 418.27), and Tir na nOg is incorporated into the parody.

--Whisht awhile, greyleg! The duck is rising and you’ll wake that stand of plover. I know that place better than anyone. Sure, I used to be always overthere on the fourth day at my grandmother’s place, Tear-nan-Ogre, my little grey home in the west, in or about Mayo when the long dog have the tongue and they coursing the marches and they straining at the leash. (*FW* 478.35-479.04)

“They” in the last sentence could be the Fianna, since so many of the tales of the Fianna concern hunts. The story of Oisin’s sojourn in Tir na nOg, and of his fateful return to Ireland, contributes to the general characterization of Oisin in *Finnegans Wake*, and thus helps to structure a portion of the book. In this particular instance a tale which has toponomastic origins has been used for a character and some plot elements (as will be evident in my ensuing examples from *Finnegans Wake*), rather than for its toponomastic content (although “Glenasmole of Smiling Thrushes”, *FW* 223.17, could be traced to this story and cited as an
example of a placename pun). But Joyce’s use of “Oisin in Tir na nOg” confirms his acquaintance with Irish toponomastic tales, which makes it significant within the context of this study.

When Oisin falls to the ground in Glenasmole, he is surrounded by minor clerics: the stone he tossed into place turns out to be the foundation stone for a new church. As he lies, stunned, on the ground, Patrick happens along. (In this way the gap between bardic and monastic Ireland is bridged and the frame work within which Oisin’s tales of Fionn can be preserved is established.) A dialogue between Oisin and Patrick ensues, in which Oisin lauds Fionn and the Flanna while Patrick lauds God. In these dialogues, which are gathered together in *Agallamh na Senoraich*, Patrick is noticeably troubled by the relish with which he enjoys Oisin’s stories. He is also troubled by the contrast between his, and his monks’, asceticism, and the aged Oisin’s more robust style of living. The minor clerics begin to grumble, but angels appear to Patrick and condone the retelling and recording of Oisin’s stories. Patrick laments, “All this is to us a recreation of spirit and of mind, were it only not a destruction of devotion and a dereliction of prayer.” But the angels assure him, “Holy cleric, no more than a third of their stories do these ancient warriors tell, by reason of forgetfulness and lack of memory; but by thee be it written on tables of poets, and in learned men’s words, for to companies and nobles of
the later time to give ear to these stories will be a pastime.”

There are several elements involved in this body of source material which Joyce incorporated into the structure of *Finnegans Wake* along with material from *The Return of the Hero*. These include the relationship between Oisin and Patrick, the interrogation of Oisin after he has fallen to the ground (this is especially relevant in III.iii. where Yawn has many of the attributes of Oisin), the use of placenames as the stimulus for a tale, or as the kernel of a tale, and the contrast between bardic and monastic Ireland. Of these elements, I will concentrate on those which relate mainly to placenames, although I will also suggest how details from the narratives in this source material which lies behind *The Return of the Hero* surface in *Finnegans Wake*.

*The Return of the Hero* itself begins at the moment when Oisin has fallen to the ground in Glenasmole, and proceeds to recount the dialogue between Oisin and Patrick, which turns into a rhetorical contest for Oisin’s soul. Oisin agrees to be baptized because Patrick has led him to believe that he will be reunited with Fionn in heaven as a result. Patrick’s fellow bishops (there are four of them in *The Return of the Hero*) protest that this promise is misleading, and they decide to test Oisin’s faith by telling him that Fionn and the Fianna are in hell, and that baptism will separate them forever. Oisin opts for hell. (In this way the old and the new orders are contrasted, and the new
order suffers by comparison.) The essential elements of the plot of *The Return of the Hero* include Oisin’s return from Tir na nOg, the fall which ages him, the band of little men struggling with the stone (there are twelve of them), the arrival of Patrick and his four bishops (one Irish, three non-Irish), the ensuing dialogues and interrogations, the contrast in lifestyle and culture, the attempt to convert Oisin, its failure and his ultimate departure. All of these elements occur in *Finnegans Wake*.

One parenthetical point: it is often difficult to tell whether Joyce’s immediate source for an element from these stories is “Oisin in Tir na nOg,” *Agallamh na Senorach*, or *The Return of the Hero*. It is most likely that Joyce chose material at will from all three, or from other related sources, such as folktales, without being systematic about how he did it. For this reason I will treat the use of these sources in *Finnegans Wake* as if it were the use of one generalized source, distinguishing the immediate source more precisely where I can.

The first major use of the material just outlined occurs in *The Mime of Mick*, *Nick and the Maggies* (II.i) which is described as:

> Time: the pressant.
> With futurist one-horse balletbattle pictures and the Pageant of Past History worked up with animal variations amid everglaning mangrovemazes and beorbtracktors by Messrs. Thud and Blunder.
> (*FW* 221:17-21).

Shem and Shaun play out their sibling rivalry as Glugg and Chuff in this *Mime*. Their rivalry parallels that of Welling-
And they are met, face a facing. They are set, force to force. And no such Copenhagen-Marengo was less so fated for a fall since in Glenasmole of Smiling Thrushes Patch Whyte passed O'Sheen ascowl. FW 223.15-18)

Here Joyce has coalesced two horses into one to match Oisin’s single horse. He has also translated Glenasmole to produce a tautology. Glenasmole, Gleann-na-smol, Glen of the Thrushes. Joyce could have found this translation in P.W. Joyce’s The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places, or he may have known it through his own study of Irish, or he could have taken it from the opening paragraph of The Return of the Hero (cf. page 124 above) or from “Oisin in Tir na nOg.” Oisin and Patrick are most clearly identified with Glenasmole in The Return of the Hero. In any case, Joyce’s tautological phrase is an example of one of the ways in which a placename can be expanded to ornament his text. In the context of this passage, Patch Whyte/Patrick can be seen as Shaun/Chuff: “Chuffy was a nangel then”
(FW 222.22), and O’Sheen/Oisin can be seen as Shem/Glugg: “But the duvlin sulph was in Glugger, that lost to learning” (FW 222.25). These identifications are reinforced by the passage’s references to baptism, and to the struggle between Glugg and Chuff, “An argument follows” (FW, 222.21).

Arrest thee, scaldbrother! came the evangelion, sabre accusant, from all Saint Joan’s Wood to kill or maim him, and be dumm but ill s’arrested. Et would proffer to his delected one the his trifle from the grass. (FW 223.19-22)

The “evangelion” here is Chuff/Patrick (offering his shamrock, his “trifle” or trefle, clover, “from the grass”), while the “scaldbrother” is Glugg/Oisin (Oisin was a poet, a bard or a skald). Chuff offers Glugg baptism in vain. The contrast between the old and the new orders which Oisin and Patrick represent is also implicit in this passage: “What do you lack? The look of a queen” (FW 223.24). But placenames play a significant role here as well. “Saint Joan’s Wood” suggests both St. John’s Wood and Joan of Arc’s pyre, while “kill or maim him” suggests Kilmainham Prison in Dublin. Transforming Kilmainham into “kill or maim him” is an illustration of another way in which Joyce transforms a placename into a new verbal entity, retaining an allusion to the placename which lies at the root of the new phrase while expanding that root to take on new connotations.

During the Mime Glugg is trying to guess the color (heliotrope) which the Maggies are miming, but his musings during this attempt also suggest Oisin’s musings as he tries to comprehend where Fionn is and how he might join
him there, as expressed in The Return of the Hero and its sources. The four evangelists are included in these musings, since Oisin had to learn the Gospels before he could be baptised.

He askit of the hoothed fireshield but it was untergone into the matthued heaven. He soughed it from the luft but that bore ne mark ne message. He luked upon the bloominggrund where ongly his corns were growning. At last he listed back tobeckline how she pranket alone so johtily. The skand for schooling. (FW 223.20-33)

The skand here, suggesting Scandinavian, reinforces skald-brother’s reference to skald as poet. “Skand for Schooling” suggests School for Scandal, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, an Irish writer, and “growing” suggests Father O’Growney, whose Irish language textbook Joyce studied, thus reinforcing the specifically Irish flavor of this passage.

Oisin rejects Christianity when he is told that Fionn is in hell, and he stalks off, leaving Patrick and his four bishops behind, stunned. Glugg’s actions in this passage also suggest Oisin’s.

Item. He was hardset then, He wented to go (somewhere) while he was weeting. Utem. He wished to grieve on the good persons, that is the four gentlemen. Otem. And it was not a long time till he was feeling true forim he was goodda purssia and it was short after that he was fooling mehaunt to mehynte he was an injine ruber. Etem. He was at his thinker, aunts to give (the four gentlemen) the presence of a curpse). And this is what he would be willing. He fould the fourd; they found the hurtled stones; they fell ill with the gravy duck: and he sod town with the roust of the meast. Atem.  

...... Towhere byhangs ourtales. (FW 223.35-224,08)

The “hurtled stones” here suggest the hurled stone which
felled Oisin, but “fould ... hurtled” also suggests Hurdleford, or the Town of the Ford of the Hurdles, Baile Átha Cliath. Thus there is a placename embedded in the passage by means of a placename pun. Since placename puns structure the stories which Oisin tells to Patrick, and since Oisin’s fall in Glenasmole precipitates the telling of those stories, I think it is significant that this one passage (FW 223.15-224.08) contains references both to the plot of the Oisin-Patrick dialogues and to placenames. The placenames are woven into the fabric of the passage, enriching it rather than structuring it, but they play an important role nonetheless, just as they do in the source material, where the placenames precipitate the stories (“towhere byhangs ourtales”). And the “futurist one-horse battleballet pictures” which are alluded to in the introduction of the Mime suggest to me the fall from his horse which preceded the “Pageant of Past History” which Oisin recreated for Patrick by telling stories about Fionn mac Cumhal.

Fionn mac Cumhal’s significance as a major character in Finnegans Wake has long been apparent. Oisin’s presence in Finnegans Wake has also been noted, but I think he plays a larger structural role than has previously been suggested. As the son of Fionn mac Cumhal, and as a poet, Oisin fits naturally into the structural pattern of Shem the Penman, poet-son of HCE. As Ossian, purported author of Macpherson’s purported Gaelic poems, Oisin also
fits the pattern of sham, or fake, or forger, or plagiarizer, which is associated with Shem. And as Patrick’s rival and the representative of the old Irish order (an attribute he shares with Archdruid Balkelly), Oisin fits the pattern of rivalry which characterizes Shem and Shaun. The seductress in Oisin’s life, who would correspond to Izzy if this patterning holds true, is Niamh, who brought Oisin to Tir na nOg. Thus the characterization of Oisin which Joyce derived from his sources can readily be shown to have contributed to the list of characters and part of the “plot” of Finnegans Wake. It is perhaps more difficult to illustrate how the toponomastic nature of Joyce’s sources for the character of Oisin also contributes to the makeup of Finnegans Wake, but I will attempt to close this discussion of the toponomastic sources for the Oisin material by illustrating how subtly and carefully placenames and their ramifications are woven into other passages dealing with Oisin. Then I will turn to Joyce’s more general use of Irish placenames, where toponomastic puns are more obvious.

Oisin’s fall from his horse parallels Saul’s fall in one of Joyce’s passages: “was struck out of his sittem when he rowed saulely to demask us” (FW 131.11-12). This statement occurs in a passage full of Fionn material, and its relevance to Oisin is reinforced by the presence of “Comyn” nearby (FW 130.21), and by the image of rowing, which identifies Oisin as a sailor who rode a horse across the water.
In another passage, Oisin is connected with both Niamh and Tir na nOg through a series of multilingual puns: "Adamman, Emhe, Issosianusheen and … ogs Weib" (FW 267.18-20). "Adamman, Emhe" suggest "Adam and Eve" (Emhe would be pronounced Eve according to Irish orthography, and this phrase contains other Irish words and names, which suggests that Irish orthography is relevant here). "Adamman" also suggests "Adamnan," an early Irish saint. "Issosianusheen" can be read two ways. It could be a question in English: "Is Ossian usheen?" The answer would be yes. Macpherson’s Ossian is Ireland’s Oisin (pronounced “usheen”). In Irish this would be a declarative sentence: "Is Ossian Oisín" (Is would be pronounced “iss” in Irish). Ossian is Oisin. Thus the same word incorporates a question in one language and its answer in another. This process of hiding an Irish meaning behind an English word, or, Alternately, of finding an Irish meaning behind an Anglicized word, is the same process which reveals the meanings and stories which lie behind Irish placenames. The presence of Oisin in this phrase suggests another reading for "Adamman, Emhe" which would produce Niamh (pronounced neeve) if the two names were read as if elided. Niamh’s presence is also suggested by “ogs Weib,” which contains “og,” suggesting Tir na nOg, and “Weib,” Gennan “wife.” Oisin’s fateful re-turn from Tir na nOg and his fall (his loss of paradise through a literal fall fits the pattern of “Falls” which is evident in Finnegans Wake) reoccur: “I am afraid you could
not heave ahoar one of your own old stepstones ... but
itandthey woule binge ... off the dosshouse back of a
racerider” (FW 481.26-30), “there is always something racey
about, say a sailor on a horse” (FW 606.34-35).

Many of the details concerning Oisin and the stories
about him fit readily into some of the basic thematic patterns
of Finnegans Wake, but there is some evidence to suggest that
the particular story about Oisin represented by The Return
of the Hero could have suggested one of the thematic patterns
of Finnegans Wake. This particular detail would be the
jury of twelve men who constantly stand in judgment on HCE.
Twelve men witness Oisin’s fall in The Return of the Hero
(the number of witnesses is not necessarily specified in
the other sources).

Yet all they who heard or redelivered are not
with that family of bards and Vergobretas
himself and the crowd of Cariculactisors as
much no more as be they not yetnow or had
they then not ever been. Canbe in some future
we shall presently here amid these zouave
players of Inkermann the mime numming the
mick and his nick miming their maggies …
a choir of the O’Daley O’Doyles doublesixing
the chorus in Fenn Mac Call and the Serven
Ferries of Loch Neach. Galloper Troppler and
Hurleyquinn the zitherer of the past with his
merrymen all, zimzim, zinzim. (FW 48.06-16)

To me, this passage suggests Oisin’s misadventure and the
literature of the Fianna, as well as The Return of the Hero.
Oisin, the “Galloper,” tripped, toppled, or fell, the “Troppler,”
and retold the tales of Fionn mac Cumhal, which included
an adventure involving Loch Neagh. The “choir of
O’Daley O’Doyles,” who are Joyce’s characters, mirror (“double
six”) the twelve witnesses of Oisin’s fall in The Return of the Hero. Either Joyce adopted these twelve witnesses for Finnegans Wake or the coincidence of twelve characters for important structural elements in both works is remarkable (but then again, Finnegans Wake thrived on such coincidences, seemed even to invite them, if not actually to create them).

Loch Neach figures prominently in the Dindsenchas, the placename lore of Ireland, as well as in the stories of Fionn mac Cumhal, and Oisin’s stories are all related to placenames, so there is a toponomastic overtone to this passage. It alludes to plot elements of the Oisin stories, but it also carries overtones of placename puns related to those stories.

Another passage which links the jury of twelve men in Finnegans Wake with the twelve witnesses in The Return of the Hero includes the interrogating bishops as well. “The four seneschals with their palfrey to be there now, all balaaming in their sellaboutes and sharping up their pen-isills. … Those twelve chief barons to stand by duedesmally with their folded arums and put down all excursions and false alarums and after that go back now to their runameat farums and recompule their magnum chartarums with the width of the road between them and all harrums” (FW 566.07-16). The context of these sentences is a recapitulation of the cast of characters in Finnegans Wake. Their major reference is to the Magna Carta and the barons who won it at Runnymede, but there are unmistakable Irish connotations as well. These appear in the spelling of “arums
... alarums... farums... chartarums... harruns” which mimics the Irish pronunciation of words containing the consonantal combination –rm, and in the Irish blessing: “the width of the road between them and all harm.” The four “seneschals” with their “palfrey” are the four old Men, or the Four Masters, or the four Evangelists (“Mamalujo”), who are always accompanied by their (or Johnny MacDougal’s) ass (“Balaaming”: Balaam).

This combination of four plus one raises an interesting question. The Irish word for “province” is coiced, which means a “fifth,” but there are four provinces in Ireland. This has led to a number of contradictory explanations of why the word coiced is used for “province.” In Irish literature these explanations often exist side by side. Joyce was aware of this seeming contradiction and used it in *Finnegans Wake*. The four old men are always accompanied by their ass, thus forming a fivesome. Patrick, because he was also named Cathraige, was said to have served four masters. Perhaps the device of the four old men and their ass allowed Joyce to include the four bishop-companions of Patrick, who interrogate Oisin in *The Return of the Hero*, in the connotations of the four old men who interrogate Yawn (who also seems to metamorphose into Patrick many times during their long interrogation). This interrogation (which consists of most of *III, iii*) exhibits the most striking parallels with the story of Oisin and Patrick, and it includes a consistent use of placenames and placename puns to enrich the text.
I will discuss the interrogation of Yawn in the light of Oisin’s interrogation, pointing out the toponomastic characteristics as I go along. This discussion will serve as a transition into a final, more general discussion of Joyce’s use of Irish placenames.

The Return of the Hero begins just after Oisin has fallen from his horse in Glenasmole. The twelve witnesses of this fall, and of its cause, are stunned. Oisin has tossed their block of granite into place and they are not sure they can believe what they have seen.

At this precise moment a prodigious groan broke out from behind them. It was like the bellow of a deer driven out to bay and beset by hounds, for though it was full of pain, it was, however, majestic and most musical. All the twelve men, with their different sorts and sizes, and according to their different heights and manners and speeds and temperaments, at once turned round together. And there, stretched upon the grass, lay a man of enormous age and stature. His groan had been caused by his efforts to raise himself to a sitting position.54

So lay Oisin; now consider Yawn.

Lowly, longly a wail went forth. Pure Yawn lay low. On the mead of the hillock lay, heartsoul dormant mid shadowed landshape, brief wallet to his side, and arm loose, by hisstaff of citron briar. … Most distressfully (but, my dear, how successfully!) to wail he did, his locks of a lucan tinge, quickrich, ripely rippling, unfilleted, those lashbetasselled lide on the verge of closing time, whiles ouze of his sidewiseopen mouth the breath of him, evenso languishing as the princeliest treble treacle or lichee chewchow purse could buy. Yawn in a semi swoon lay awaiting and (hooh!) what helpings of honeyful swoothead (phew!), which earpiercing dulcitude! (FW 474.01-13) ..

Yawn had set out on a journey as Jaun in the preceding chap-
ter (III, ii, FW 429-473), with intimations of a fall from a horse: “he toppled a lipple on to the off … on Shank’s mare” (FW 471.10-21; actually Jaun is on foot, the Irish expression “to ride Shank’s mare” means “to walk,” but the intimations of a horse and a fall are still there). His return from this journey is prophesied in terms which take on the overtones of Oisin’s return as well.

Numerous are those, nay, there are a dozen of folks still unclaimed by the death angel in this country of ours today … who, while there are hours and days, will fervently pray to the spirit above that they may never depart this earth of theirs till in his long run from that place where the day begins, ere he retourneys postexilic, on that day that belongs to joyful Ireland, the people that is of all time, the old old oldest, the young young youngest, after decades of long suffering and decennia of brief glory, to mind us of what was when and to matter us of the withering of our ways. (FW 472.28-473.02)

The “dozen of folks” and the return from a long journey to remind people of what was and of how they have withered remind me of Oisin’s return. Yawn has returned and fallen. He has become part of the “landshape,” lying on “the mead of the hillock” (this simulates an Irish placename, cluain tullach, “meadow of the hillock,” which might be anglicized Clon- or Cloontullagh, or Clon- or Cloontully, although I cannot find a specific placename to fit this in Joyce’s Sources; he may simply have been playing with the conventional way of forming Irish placenames). His locks have a “lucan” tinge (Lucan is a Dublin suburb). So Yawn’s return and his present state not only resemble Oisin’s, they are also expressed by a text which has geography woven into it.
This gives the text a toponomastic flavor. The use of topographical material and toponomastic puns is noticeable and consistent throughout Yawn’s interrogation. This shows that Joyce used both the “letter” (details of plot and character) and the “spirit” (placename puns) of his sources.

As Oisin lays groaning in Glenasmole, Patrick and his four bishops happen along, and the dialogues and interrogations begin. Yawn undergoes a similar fate when the four old men and their ass come by.

> When, as the buzzer brings the light brigade, keeping the home fires burning, so on the churring call themselves came at him, from the westborders of the eastmidlands, three kings of three suits and a crowner, from all their cardinal points, along the amber where Brosna’s fuzzy. To lift them they did, senators four, by the first quaint skreech of the gloaming and they hopped it up the mountainy molehill, traversing climes of old times gone by of the days not worth remembering, inventing some excusethems, any sort, having a sevenply sweat of night blues moist upon them. Feefee! Phopho!! Foorchtha!! Aggalala!!! Jee-shes!!! Paloolala!!!!!!! Oordiminary!!!!!!!

Afear themselves were to wonder at the class of a crossroads puzzler he would likely be, length by breadth nonplussing his thickness, ells upon ells of him, making so many square yards of him, one half of him in Conn’s half but the whole of him nevertheless in Owenmore’s five quarters. There would he lay till they would him descry, spancelled down upon a blossomy bed, at one foule stretch, among daffydowndillies, the flowers of narcosis fourfettering his footlights, a halohedge of wild spuds hovering over him, epicures waltzing with gardenfillers, puritan shoots advancing to Aran chiefs. Phopho!! The meteor pulp of him, the seamless rainbowpeel. Aggalala!!! His bellyvoid of nebulose with his neverstop navel. Paloolala!!!!!!! And his veins shooting melanite phosphor, his creamtocustard comets-hair and his asteroid knuckles, ribs and members, Oordiminary!!!!!!! His electroalatignous twisted entrails belt, (FW 474.16-475.17)
Oisin’s stature is discussed at length in The Return of the Hero, as Yawn’s is here, and the twelve witnesses wonder just what it is that they have seen, and where it might have come from (cf. the references to comets, meteors, nebulae, and asteroids here). In addition to similarities of plot, and the repetition of “aggala” and “Aggala,” which link this passage to The Return of the Hero and to Agallamh na Senorch, there is a prominent use of geography and an association of geography with past history in this passage, which fits the toponomastic mold from which its sources came. This can be seen in the way in which placenames have been woven into the text. “Churring call” (Charing Cross), “the west-borders of the eastmidlands,” “cardinal points” (of the compass), “along the amber” (there is a well-known Irish song containing the words, “She lived beside the Annar [River]”), “Bronsna,” “tif” (Liffey), “Conn’s half,” “Owenmore’s five quarters” (cf. coiced, “fifth,” as “province”), and “Aran” are all examples of placenames woven into the text. Even more significant is the phrase “traversing climes of old days gone by,” which suggests the recreation or past exploits which Oisin performs for the clerics (cf. “inventing some excuse them, any sort,” which suggests the clerics’ dilemma over the validity of this recreation). Yawn is, like Oisin returned from Tir na nOg, “the class or a crossroads puzzler.”

The scene Joyce sets contains still more overtones of Oisin’s predicament among the details of Yawn’s.

Those four claymen clomb together to hold their sworn starchamber quiry on him. …

Up the esker ridge it was, Mallinger’s
Parish… [The tour old men and their ass climb up to interrogate Yawn]. …

The proto was traipsing through the tangle then … and his station was a few perch to the weatherside of the knoll Asnoch and it was from no other place unless there … that he proxtended aloof upon the ether Mesmer’s Manuum, the hand making silence. The buckos beyond on the lea, then stopped wheresoever they found their standings and that way they set ward about him … the travelling court on its findings circuiting that personer in his fallen. And a crack quatyouare of stenoggers they made of themselves … And what do you think, who should belaying there above all other persons forenenst them only Yawn! All of asprawl he was laying too amengst the poppies … oscasleep asleep …

More than their good share of their five senses ensorcelled you would say themselves were … as question time drew nigh and the map of the soul’s groupography rose in relief within their quarterings … (FW 475.18-476.34)

Geography is present here too: “esker ridge” (which crosses Ireland from Dublin to Galway, creating Conn’s half and Mogh’s half”), “in his fallen” (i.e., Inishfallen, another name for Ireland), “Mallinger” (Mullingar), “the knoll Asnoch” (unidentified, although -noch in this case may be related to the Irish word cnoc, “a hill,” which is anglicized as knock). “Oscasleep” contains a hint of “Oscar,” Oisin’s son. Perhaps the most interesting phrase here is “map of the soul’s groupography.” However, since placenames will fashion much of the text which follow, just as placenames fashion the tales Oisin tells Patrick. Joyce coins words which carry similar connotations later in this episode: “landeguage” (FW 478.09-10), “in the locative” FW 481.19), and “Are we speachin d’anglas landadge or are you
sprakin' sea Djytsch?” (FW 485.12-13), as well as “Geoglyphy” (FW 595.07) and “langscape” (FW 595.04). Each of these examples translates geography into language (or vice versa), and that is precisely the process which produces toponomastic literature.

Patrick wants to baptize Oisin, but Oisin refuses. This refusal appears in Finnegans Wake.

As puck as that Paddeus picked the pun and left the lollies off the foiled. A Trinity judge will crux your boom. Pat is the man for thy. Ay ay! And he pured him beheld of the ouishguss, mingling a sign of the cruisk. I popetithes thee, Ocean, sayd he, Oscarvaughther, sayd he, Erivikkinger, sayd fe ... forfor furst of gielgaulgalls and hero chief explunderer of the clansakilitc, sayd he, the steameress mistress to the sea aase cuddycoalmans' ... out of' the hell-sinky of' the howtheners and be damned to ye ... (FW 326.03-13)

Here again geography is evident: “trinity” (Trinity College), “Ocean,” “Erie-,” “-gaul,” “hellsinky,” “howth-” and “dan-“ (Dane, Denmark). (There are also two puns based on Irish: “ouishguss” or uisce, water, short for uisge beatha, water of life, or whiskey; and “cruisk,” Irish cruisc, jug, as in cruiscin lan, or crushkeen lawn, full little jug [of whiskey]). But here Oisin is HCE in his role as viking invader of Ireland and builder of Irish cities (“hero chief explunderer”). Patrick is also fascinated by Oisin’s heathen tales (“out of the hellsinky of’ the howtheners”), as a later comment shows: “Again I am deliciated by the picaresqueness of your images” (FW 486.33-34). The mechanism which frames these picaresque tales is the as-
sociation of deeds with places. “Impossible to remember persons in improbable to forget places” (FW 617.08-09);59
“I will show you all sorts of makeup things, strangerous. And show you to every simple storyplace we pass” (FW 625.05-06).60
And so Oisin and Patrick begin their companionship with toponomastic stories about Fionn and The Fianna.

And still and all at that time of the dynasty
Days … in old Hungerford-on-Mudway, where
first I met thee oldepeotryck … in auld
land syne … and there they were always
counting and contradicting every night …
according to the lapper of their anchronism
… all puddled and mythified … when they
were in dreams of yore … getting into their
way something barbarous … and go away to
Oldpatrick and see a doctor Walker. … in
the wake of their old Foehn again … the
five fourmasters … (FW 393.07-394.17)

“Hungerford-on-Mudway,” Dublin-on-the-Liffey,61 “auld land
sync,” and other details from this passage suggest both
the plot and the placename content of the Oisin-Patrick
dialogues. Whenever Joyce uses this material he also uses
placenames, or placename puns, or references to geography
as well. Fionn, for instance, is described in one place
as “the human historic brute, Finnsen Faynean, oceanyc-
lived … And in the locative!” (FW 481.12-19), where
“oceanyc-lived” suggests that Oisin (Ossian/ocean) retells
Fionn’s life (cf. “there is such a fui fui story which obtains
of him” --FW 481.11).

The first reference to Oisin meeting Patrick in Glenas-
smole occurred in The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies,
or the game of “Colours.”62 The final reference recapitu-
lates that theme when ALP laments, as she passes out to sea, the route Oisin takes when he abandons Patrick to search for Fionn, “Who’ll search for Find Me Colours now on the hillydroops of Vikloefells?” (FW 626.17-18). “Find Me Colours” suggests both Fionn mac Cumhal and the game of “Colours” (in which heliotrope, “hillydroops,” was the correct answer). “Vikloefells” suggests “Wicklow Hills,” and Glenasmole is located in south Co. Dublin, where the Dublin mountains border on the Wicklow hills.

I have analyzed Joyce’s use of The Return of the Hero and its sources to show that he was aware of examples of Irish toponomastic literature, that he alluded to it, that he used elements from it to structure parts of his plot and to broaden his characterization, and that he adopted and adapted the technique which produced it: the toponomastic pun. Placenames structured the stories which formed the plots for Joyce’s sources in this case. Thus placenames indirectly structured those plot elements which he borrowed for his own plot. But the consistent way in which Joyce incorporated placenames into the texture or each passage related to these sources indicates that he was also aware of the important role which placenames played in his sources. His interest in Irish placenames and in dictionaries of Irish placenames has already been mentioned, as has his tendency to pun on the meanings of such names. This interest and this tendency to pun were reinforced by the examples offered by Irish toponomastic literature, where placename puns ac-
ually create the tales. Irish toponomastic puns form a relatively small but significant portion of the etymological puns Joyce used. His evident interest in etymology was bolstered by his etymological studies which revealed other ways in which etymological puns could create stories (Vico, Bérard, Fenollosa). In this respect, his use of Irish top-
onomastic puns is exemplary or paradigmatic of his more gen-
eral etymythological practice. It was not confined to pas-
sages which were based on specific Irish sources, however. Finnegans Wake is rife with toponomastic puns. I will end this chapter by examining a few examples of topono-
mastic puns based on Irish placenames which are not neces-
sarily related to specific literary sources. I will demon-
strate how these examples represent an actual method of composition by showing how individual names were transformed into elements of the text.

Shite and onions! Do you think I’ll print
The name of the Wellington Monument,
Sydney parade and Sandymount tram,
Downes’s cakeshop and Williams’s jam?
I’m damned if I do--I’m damned to blazes!
Talk about Irish Names of Places!
It’s a wonder to me, upon my soul,
He forgot to mention Curly’s Hole.

“Gas from a Burner” (CW 244)

But underneath [Dublin’s] modern foundations still exists that dark untamed and violent soil that knew battle and murder in the days when the Gael was hammering against the Pale. It is necessary to understand this if one is to understand Dublin. It is necessary to un-
derstand that the modern city that we call Dublin and which was once a conglomeration of huts by the Ford of the Hurdles that the
Ostmen . . . captured and christened Diflyn, or Black Pool, in the ninth century, is built-upon legends, old wives' tales, forgotten horrors and a giant mythos. . . . In the mythos Howth is more than a hill and the Liffey is more than a river. One does not walk along the pleasant roads of Rathgar and Ranelagh and Rathmines, now pulsing with motorcars and bicycles, without recalling that here were the 'Bloody Fields' where the wild O' Byrnes and O'Tooles swooped down from the Dublin and Wicklow mountains and slaughtered half a thousand Dubliners on a day that was afterwards called Black Monday. . . . Dublin has been a focal point of passions and impossibilities, violent controversies, angers, desperate loves, fanatical boastings, and barbarous betrayals. Who can gainsay that there are wild Titanic spirits in the soil?

Herbert Gorman

Although his ancestors came from the west of Ireland (from the Joyce Country in Galway), Joyce was himself pre-eminently a Dubliner. His characters operate in a Dublin setting, and that setting became increasingly significant as his work progressed. I have already suggested that the city of Dublin becomes one of the "characters" which Stephen must abandon in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and that this is why he spends so much of his time prior to departure walking around Dublin. I have also suggested that Joyce wove the etymology of Dublin's name into passages of the Portrait. In Ulysses the city of Dublin becomes even more important as the setting for the action and the one consistently unifying structure of the book. Joyce boasted that Dublin could be reconstructed from his book, if need be. In Finnegans Wake Joyce took his characterization of Dublin to its logical conclusion, he made Dublin
into a character. HCE is Dublin, literally, in his most basic state: Howth Castle and Environs. His body forms the Dublin landscape. His family history is the history of Dublin. Thus, at the most basic level imaginable, Joyce’s last work is based upon and structured by geography. ALP is, literally, the Liffey River (Anna Livia), and her family history is the history of the Liffey from its source in the mountains through its finish in the sea. The marriage of HCE, the viking invader in another of his aspects, to ALP, the river, represents the creation of Dublin by the marriage of the settlers to the landscape. So much of Finnegans Wake is based on these two primary personifications, that one of the best guides to the book is a good background knowledge of the history and geography of Dublin.

When Joyce created HCE and ALP as personifications of river and city he displayed a remarkable intuition into the structure of Celtic mythology in general, where men dominate the myths of history and public affairs while women dominate the myths of the land and landscape. “Some peoples, such as the Romans, think of their myths historically; the Irish think of their history mythologically; and so too of their geography. Every strange feature of the soil of Ireland is the witness of a myth, and, as it were, its crystallization.” Even the marriage between HCE and ALP fits the Celtic mythological pattern. “The union of the god of the tribe with the goddess of the earth, of Sucellos with Nantosueltta, of the Dagda with the Morrigan or the Boann,
projects on the plane of mythology . . . the marriage of
the human group with the fertile soil, which is the neces-
sary condition for the prosperity of the tribe and the pur-
pose of all religious activity.” 67

Sucellos. ‘The God of the Mallet’, whose
name means ‘Good Striker’, has been identi-
fied with Dispater, ancestor of the Gauls,
of whom Caesar tells us. . . . The name of
[his] companion, Nantosueltta, is obscure, but
the first element is recognizable as meaning
‘river’ (cf. W. nant ‘stream’). We find
… on Gaulish soil an association of a
father-god with a local river-goddess which
is confirmed by an episode of Irish mythology
in which the Dagda is associated with the
Boye, the sacred river of Ireland. . . . 68

Although both the Dagda and Boann, eponymous ancestors of
the Boyne river, appear in Finnegans Wake, it seems unlike-
ly that Joyce’s characterization of HCE and ALP derives from
specific mythological sources, I think he intuited the
mythic connection between man/city/history and woman/land-
scape/geography which plays such a prominent role in Irish
(and Celtic) mythology. Suffice it to say that on this
very large level of character and structure, a major portion
of Finnegans Wake derives from Irish topography. But since
character and plot structure are often subordinated to style
in Finnegans Wake, to the individual words and phrases rather
than to plot, character and theme, it is important to under-
stand how the geographical basis of ALP and HCE is translated
into words, into the text of Finnegans Wake. Some sugges-
tions have already been made about how Joyce utilized Irish
words and names to create his text. 69 I would like to con-
centrate here on how Joyce used Irish placenames in that
creation. Work is already underweigh to produce a “Gazetteer” of Finnegans Wake,70 so I will not attempt an exhaustive and comprehensive survey of this subject but will concentrate instead on a few representative examples.

The simplest way in which Joyce used geography was to insert placenames directly into his text without distorting or disguising them in any way (“riverrun, past Eve and Adam’s from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs”--FW 3.0l-03). Very often these simply used placenames can evoke significant connotations which will enrich the passage in which they appear (that is, if the reader is sufficiently well-acquainted with the setting). More often, however, Joyce uses puns or disguised references to placenames to create his text. This process was already underweigh in Ulysses, where Joyce referred to toponomastic literature while linking Irish and Hebrew culture.

What points of contact existed between these languages and between the peoples who spoke them?

The presence of guttural sounds, diacritic aspirations, epenthic and servile letters in both languages, their antiquity, both having been taught on the plain of Shinar 242 years after the deluge in the seminary instituted by Fenius Farsaigh, descendent of Noah, progenitor of Israel, and ascendent of Heber and Heremon, progenitors of Ireland. (U 688)

This passage depends upon a coincidence of placenames: Thornton judges that it probably derives from G. Keating’s History of Ireland, Book I, sec. XV, where Keating describes the founding of a language
school in the Plain o– Seanair by Fenius
Farsaidh and dates the school 242 years after
the deluge. Keating traces Farsaidh back to
Magog (said in Gen. 10:2 to be the grandson
of Noah), and says he was the ancestor of the
children of Mileadh, which include Eibhear
and Eiremhon. As a preparation for the tower
of Babel in Genesis 11, we are told, “And the
whole earth was of one language, and of one
speech. And it came to pass, as they jour-
neyed from the east, that they found a plain
in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there”
(11:1-2).71

Thus Joyce created his own connections by yoking coinci-
dential placenames together Elsewhere in Ulysses, Joyce
links Irish placenames with their etymologies: “Old Kilkenn-
y: saint Canice” (U 44), “S. Canice of Kilkenny” (U 339)—
Kilkenny derives from Cill-Chainnigh, the church of St.
Cainneach or Canice.72 Joyce also puns, even in Ulysses,
on the meaning of a placename, or on its associations, to
create his text: “In Inisfail the fair there lies a land,
the land of holy Michan. … There sleep the mighty dead
as in life they slept, warriors and princes of high renown”
(U 293)—it is said the vaults of St. Michan’s church have
the peculiar property of maintaining air so dry that nothing
decays in them and bodies are perfectly preserved. While
such examples are not infrequent in Ulysses, they positively
abound in Finnegans Wake.

In his Scribbledehobble notebook, a sourcebook for
Finnegans Wake, Joyce noted two Irish placename etymologies
which he later incorporated in Finnegans Wake; “plague
buried at Tallaght” and “old Plain (Sean Moy).”73 Accord-
ing to the Annals of the Four Masters, Partholon and
all but one of his 9000 followers died of plague upon “Mag Elta,” or moyelta, the Plain of the Flocks, and were buried at Tallaght, south of Dublin. Since Tallaght derives from Taimhleact, which means plague-grave, this story either explains how Tallaght got its name, or is an example of a story linked with a location by means of an “etymological guess.” Having noted the story, Joyce incorporated it into Finnegans Wake: “a proton grave in Moyelota” (FW 76.21), “by Tallaght’s green hills” (FW 194.35), “Hey Tallaght Hoe” (FW 334.33), “in all the vallums of tartallaght” (FW 478.12) and “this plague-burrow, as you seem to call it” (FW 479.24-25). Thus one toponomastic story provided some of the details of Finnegans Wake. “Old Pain (Sean Moy)” is a simple tautology: sean magh (or moy) means “old plain.” This appears in Finnegans Wake as: “in the country of the old, Sean Moy” (FW 427.27). Most of Joyce’s puns on placenames follow this pattern of either substituting an English translation of the original Irish meaning for the Irish placename, or of using both the placename and its translation in a tautological phrase whose value as a pun depends on the reader’s knowledge of Irish (or of the history of the placename). I will examine two examples of placenames which Joyce used extensively, Dublin/Baile atha Cliath and Phoenix Park, to illustrate this.

Dublin comes from dubh linn which means “black pool.” This etymology provides a number of words and phrases in Finnegans Wake: “Poolblack” (FW 35.16-17), “some dub him
(FW 288.36-289.01), “Hurdlebury Fenn” (FW 297.20), “the furt on the turn of the hurdles” (FW 316.28-29), “Hurtreford” (FW 353.24), “Hungerford-on-Mudway” (FW 393.09), “the autintaxication of our town of the Fords in a huddle” (FW 447.29-30), “Huddleston” (FW 481.28). “You’ve a soft say with ye, Fl atter O’Ford, that honey, I hurley chew you” (FW 512.30-31), “Hurdlesford (FW 547.18), “Hurtleforth” (FW 570.21), “that ford where Sylvanus Sanctus washed but hurley those tips of his anointeds” (FW 570.32-33), “hungerford” (FW 576.26), and “hindled firth and hundled furth” (FW 608.29-30). All of these examples show ways in which Joyce could transform a particular placename into a pun or a portmanteaux word or into a phrase which retains some or all of the original placename or its meaning, while suggesting other “counterpoint” words as well.

Another example, Phoenix Park, is one which Joyce explained to Harriet Shaw Weaver. The original name of Phoenix Park was Pairc an Fionn-Uisce, “the Field of Clear (or Fair or Bright) Water,” “As to ‘Phoenix’. A viceroy who knew no Irish thought this was the word the Dublin people used and put up a monument of a phoenix in the park. The Irish was:

`Fhionn Mhac Cull` (pron. finn ishe = clear water) from a well of bright water there.”76 Joyce incorporated this incident into the long riddle whose answer is “Finn MacCool” in Finnegans Wake (1.1,126-139), where “a well of Artesia” is changed into “a bird of Arabia” (FW 135.14-15). In this case the etymology of “Phoenix Park” is responsible for a phrase which also describes the general process by which Irish
placenames were anglicized: by phonetic equivalent. Unless the reader understands how Phoenix Park derived from Pairc an Fionn-Uisce, the reference embodied in “well of Artesia … bird of Arabia” will be lost. The same explanation applies to another phrase which is based ultimately on the etymology of “Phoenix Park” without explicitly mentioning the word “Phoenix.” “They arise from a clear springwell in the near of our park which makes the daft to hear all blend” (FW 571.02-03). In this example too, the words “makes the daft to hear all blend” may refer to the viceroy who misheard fionn-uisce as “phoenix” and gave the Park its present name. Elsewhere, “Phornix Park” is described as “at her time called Finewell’s Keepsacre” (FW 80.06-07), and Phoenix Park, which appears under numerous guises, is called “Yshgafiena” and “Yshgafiuna” (FW 605.19.20). One more phrase, “Fairbrother’s Field” (FW 585.20), is modelled on Pairc an Fionn-Uisce: Pairc an Fiom-Dearthair, field of the fair brother. Other names for the Park also allude to its etymology: “finisky” (FW 6.27), “Fin-Ishthere Punct” (FW 17.2), “Finnish Pork” (FW 39.17), “Fiounnisgehaven” (FW 100.07), “Glenfinnisk-en-la-Valle” (FW 380.09), “Finest Park” (FW 461.10), and “Finn his park” (FW 564.08; this last example is part of a long description of Phoenix Park). Thus “Phoenix Park” and its variations in Finnegans Wake illustrate how a placename etymology can be transformed into new words, phrases, and/or puns.

This process of using placename etymologies to generate phrases which accompany or further the narrative is similar to
the process which produces toponomastic literature. Place-names generate puns which are based on details of their etymologies, and these puns and details become part of the narrative text. Thus three placenames in the vicinity of Phoenix Park generate a descriptive passage in *Finnegans Wake* in which the descriptions are actually puns on the placenames’ etymologies. “You have a hoig view ashwald, a glen of marrons and of thorns. Gleannaulinn, Ardeevin: purty glint of pleasing height” (FW 264.26-29). Gleann an Marbhain, “glen or valley of the dead,” was anglicized as Glenmaroon. Gleann Aluin, “beautiful glen,” was anglicized as Glenuin. Ard Aoibhinn, “pleasant height,” was anglicized as Ardeevin.77 Thus the descriptions, “glen of marrons and of thorns … purty glint … pleasing height,” are generated by the etymologies, and the text created is toponomastic.

There are many more complex examples of passages which are actually a string of puns based on placenames. “He hestens towards dames troth and wedding hand like the prince of Orange and Nassau while he has trinity left behind him like Bowlbeggar Bill-the-Bustonly; brow of a hazelwood, pool in the dark; changes blowicks into bullocks and a well of Artesia into a bird of Arabia; … his birthspot lies beyond the herospont and his burialplot in the pleasant little field” (FW 135.11-18). Each of these phrases is based on a Dublin placename. “Dames troth” is Dame Street, which runs east-west parallel to the Liffey. The easternmost end of Dame Street leads directly to the gates of Trinity College (an
“Orange” enclave). Nassau Street runs along the southern perimeter of Trinity College. (“Billy-in-the Bowl” was a notorious Dublin beggar, born without legs, who propelled himself in a bowl-shaped wagon. He waited in dark corners to surprise stray women walking home at night, luring them to his location with moans, then stealing their money. He murdered one girl, but was never suspected of the crimes because he was a poor crippled beggar, until he met his match in two women one night, who withstood him and attracted the attention of the police: “Bowlbeggar Bill-the- Bustonly”.)

“Brow of a hazelwood” translates Druim Coll-Choille, “ridge (or brow) of the Hazelwood,” which is now Thomas Street in Dublin, which continues westward towards Phoenix Park from the end of Dame Street. “Pool in the dark” is dubh linn, Dublin. (Fionn mac Cumhal, the “he” of this passage, gained his special wisdom by tasting the salmon which swallowed the hazelnuts of wisdom which fell into a pool.) The “well of Artesia … bird of Arabia” is Phoenix Park. The “burialplot in the pleasant little field” is the cemetery at Glasnevin: Glaisin Aoibhinn, pleasant little green. Later in this same passage the phrase “a locative enigma” occurs, and this is an apt description of the toponomastic process at work here. The individual phrases could be seen as “locative enigmas” whose secrets are revealed when they are matched with the placenames they are based on. Alternatively, a string of placenames can be transformed into a string of descriptive phrases because the original Irish placenames tend
to be descriptive in nature.

The examples I have cited so far are based on placename etymologies or on translations of placenames. Joyce also uses lists of thinly disguised placenames or streetnames to construct passages. “I laid down before the trotters to my stony battered waggonways, my nordsound circulums, my eastmoreland and westlandmore, running boulowards and syddenly parading (FW 553.28-31): Eblana (Dublin), Stonybatter, North and South Circular Roads, Westmoreland street and Westland Row, Sydney Parade. Similarly:

For korps, for streamfish, for confects, for bullyoungs, for smearsassage, for patates, for steaked pig, for men, for limericks, for waterfowls, for wagsfools, for louts, for cold airs, for late trams, for curries, for curlews, for leekses, for orphalines, for tunnygulls, for clear goldways, for lungfortes, for moonyhaunts, for fairmoneys, for coffins, for tantrums, for armaurs, for waglugs, for rougues comings, for sly goings, for larksmathes, for homdsmeethes, for quailsmeathes, kilalooly. (FW 595.10-11)

There are thirty-two items in this list (or litany—“kilalooly: alleluia), and there are thirty-two counties in Ireland. Twenty-five Irish counties are readily discernible: Cork, then seven enigmas, Limerick, Waterford, Wexford, Louth, Kildare, Leitrim, Kerry, Carlow, Leix, Offaly, Donegal, Clare, Galway (there is also a town called Claregalway), Longford, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Cavan, Antrim, Armagh, Wicklow, Roscommon, Sligo, another enigma, Meath and Westmeath (the missing counties are Derry, Down, Dublin, Kilkenny, Mayo, Tipperary and Tyrone).

There are also occasions when Joyce transforms an Irish placename into a seemingly foreign one: “the pigeons doves be
perchin all over him one day on Baslesbridge and the ravens
duv be pitchin their dark nets after him the next night behind
Koenigstein’s Arbour” (FW 136.29-32). “Baslesbridge” is Balls-
Bridge, a section of Dublin, disguised as Basle, Switzerland.
“Koenigstein’s Arbour” is more complicated. “Koenig” is Ger-
man for “king.” The present town of Dun Laoghaire was called
Kingstown for a long period (Dun Laoghaire is the original
name). So “Koenigstein’s Arbour” is Kingstown Harbour, now
Dun Laoghaire harbor. (See Appendix II for more examples.)

In summation: one of the ways in which Joyce created the
text of Finnegans Wake was to transform Irish placenames into
elements of that text. He did this by incorporating the place-
name into the text, by incorporating a translation of the
placename into the text, or by incorporating elements of the
placename’s etymology into the text. An individual placename
could be expanded or dramatized by punning on its etymology.
This process, which I have called etymythology, is an impor-
tant element in old Irish and Welsh literature. Joyce was
aware of such literature and used it both for characterization
and details of plot and for the process of punning which is
integral to its structure.

In addition, Joyce applied the same process to Irish
placenames to create details for the text of Finnegans Wake.
Joyce’s fascination for this process of expanding a word’s
etymology to produce a new word or phrase extended beyond
placenames to words in general, and both his research and
his works illustrate this. Skeat, Vico, Bérard, Fenollosa,
and others who worked closely with etymology to produce theories about words, their origins, and their uses, reinforced Joyce’s natural delight in etymology, and provided him with corroborations of his own theories and with source material for his own work.

In many of Joyce’s passages there is a significant and demonstrable connection between the etymological overtones of a given word and the context in which it appears. There are passages as well which can be attributed primarily to the expansion of an individual etymology. This is true of Joyce’s early work as well as his late, and it may be a function of his lifelong fascination with words and their etymologies. Joyce not only wrote with a lively sense of the etymology of the words he used; etymology can often reveal how or why he composed a passage the way he did. Joyce turned etymology into a form of poetics, a method for composing his text. I offer this general survey of Joyce’s etymological interests, and my more specific commentary on his use of placename etymologies, as a preliminary step in what must necessarily be an extensive and complicated study of Joyce’s words, the attention he paid to their etymologies, the process which transformed their etymologies into his text, and the implications of both his attention and his process for his work and for our appreciation of it.
8. Ibid., p. 15.
9. Ibid., p. 16.
10. Stuart Gilbert, op. cit., p. 49 fn. 1; cf. epigraph at the head of this chapter.
11. Ibid., p. 53.
12. Eugene Jolas. “The Revolution of the Word and James Joyce.” Our Exagmination …, op. cit., p. 84. Cf. p. 79: “When the beginnings of this new age are seen in perspectice, it will be found that the disintegration of words and their subsequent reconstruction on other planes, constitute some of the most important acts of our epoch.” I think Joyce may be referring to this statement in the phrase “abnihilisation of the etym” (FW 353.22) which I discuss below.
14. Cf. the epigraph at the head of this chapter.
17. I discuss this particular placename as a source for puns in the third section of this chapter at greater length.
18. Finnegans Wake, III, iii, 539-554; originally published as Haveth Childers Everywhere (London, 1931), this is an example of a major section of the book which has place-names woven into it so densely that they could be said to structure it.

19. Cf. “And thanacestross mound have swollup them all. This outh of years is not save brickdust and being humus the same returns” (FW 18.03-05); “the man, Humne the Cheapner, Ese … our old offender was humile, commune and en decent from his nature, which you may gauge after the bynames was put under him, in lashingtons of languages … he is ee and no counter he who will be ultimendly respunchable for the hubbub caused in Edenborough” (FW 29.18-36); “Vainly violence … sought … to ongoad and unhume the great shipping mogul and underliven overlord” (FW 97.21-24); “Mister Mudson, master gardiner” (FW 133.22-23); “heavengendered, chaosfoced, earthborn” (FW 137.14); “And the whirr of the whine humming us howe. His hume” (FW 261.03-04); “Well, ‘tis oil thusly. First mull a mugful of mud, son … and take your mut for a first beginning, big to bog … Anny liffle mud which cometh out of Mam will doob, I guess … There’s the isle of Mun” (FW 286.30-287.15); “Sod’s brood, be me fear” (FW 4.06; fear is the Irish word for man). Of course hum- has other connotations as well, e.g., David Hume, humor, humid, etc.


In still another of his works, Social History of Ireland (Vol. II, pp. 171-172), P.W. Joyce links Glenasmole with the site of “The Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel,” the subject of a long narrative poem by Samuel Ferguson, entitled “Conary.” Prof. John V. Kelleher has suggested that Joyce used details from this story in “The Dead” (“Irish History and Mythology in James Joyce’s The Dead,” Review of Politics, XXVII, 1965, 414-433). There is also a poem entitled “The Chase of Gleann an Smoil” published in Transactions of the Ossianic Society, Dublin, 1861 (for the year 1858, Vol. VI), pp. 75-103 (cf. “oceanic society” [FW 125.03]). P.W. Joyce did not make clear which “celebrated Irish poem” he had in mind when he glossed Glenasmole as its scene.


24. FW 74.03 the heroes return
223.17 Glenasmole [the book’s setting ...]
322.03 conan [one of the characters]
608.14 Mister Ireland
607.14 segnall [Seachnall, a character]
617.14 Conan

Oisin, Patrick, Fionn mac Cumhal, Oscar, and several other characters who appear in The Return of the Hero are also prominent in Finnegans Wake without necessarily deriving from The Return of the Hero.


26. Ibid.


28. Ibid., p. x.

29. Cf. O Hehir, op. cit., p. 422: “It is a contention difficult to put beyond controversy, but I believe the deterioration of Patrick as he is shown in the Fionn cycle, and the more and more sullen opposition to what he is made to stand for, are both major structural contributions to Finnegans Wake.”


32. P.W. Joyce. Old Celtic Romances. New York, 1962 (reprinted from the original London edition of 1879), p. 266. I quote from this edition because I suspect that James Joyce would have known of it because of his interest in the other works of his namesake. W.B. Yeats used another version of this story as his source for “The Wanderings of Oisin,” and it exists in many folk versions.
33. Ibid., pp. 261-268.
34. FW 130.21 Comyn 295.08 Comyn 361.10 Comyn 381.28 Merkyn Cornygwham 388.13 Cominhome and Saint Patrick 396.06 Comong 418.23 Comong 481.13 commong … oceaneyclived
36. Ibid.
37. Cf. Wellington’s “white harse” (FW 8.16, 21; 10.02, 12.12, 21).
39. CF. fn. 1 to Chapter 2 above, and the epigraph to Chapter Two.
40. “The duvlin sulph was in Glugger” has a number of connotations. It could mean “the devil himself”; sulphur, as in hellfire; the Dublin, or dubh linn (pronounced “duvlin”), self; and a “glugg” is a “rotten egg” in Irish, which would have a rotten sulphuric smell.
41. I have discussed this detail at greater length in part two of Chapter Three above.
42. The “look of a queen” is the attribute which Kathleen Ni Houlihan, Ireland personified, acquired at the end of Yeats’s play of that name when a young man left his home and his bride-to-be to fight patriotically for Ireland’s independence. This phrase has since become synonymous with the personification of Ireland.
43. Kilmainham Prison was the place where the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising were held prior to their executions. It was a notorious torture chamber and a brutal punishment center throughout the Irish War of Independence for Irish guerrillas captured by the British. Yeats’s play, Kathleen Ni Houlihan, was instrumental in creating the revolutionary fervor which culminated in the Rising. Coincidentally, a performance of the play was scheduled to open the night the Rising began, but had to be cancelled when one of the leading actors, who was also a leader of the Rising, was killed.

45. Cf. Glasheen, op. cit., p. 197: OSSIAN or Oisin—legendary Irish warrior and bard, son of Finn MacCool … After the Flanna were defeated by Carbery … Ossian was carried off to the Land of the Young by Nimb … and returned centuries later, like Rip Van Winkle, to find his companions dead, himself ancient, and St. Patrick … in Ireland. … Ossian was the supposed author of Macpherson’s … poems. … 123.25 … 139.22 … 294.13; 326.6,18; 385.36.

I can supplement this list with the following additional instances of Oisin’s name:

FW 46.22 Onesine [in a context of Fenian names]
125.03 oceanic society [Ossianic Society]
128.04 faunonfleetfoot [oisin means “faun”--lit. “little deer”]
223.18 O’Sheen
267.19 Issossianushceen
354.06 Faun
384.04 - oceanal
384.19 oceans
392.06 ocean
426.21 ocean’s
470.16 Osis
470.18 Osis
470.20 Osis
481.13 oceean-
547.07 fawned
593.05 Osseania


47. SL 398.


52. FW 43.29
   five pussyfours green
   394.17
   five fourmasters
   440.01
   Apply your five wits to the four verilatest
   475.07
   Owenmore’s five quarters
   476.29-34
   five … quarterings
   513.34-35
   five’s court [cf. Dublin’s Four Courts]
   596.16
   forefivest

This is not the only example of confused (or confusing) numerological schemes in Irish culture. The “Four” Masters were actually six in number (cf O Hehir, op. cit., pp. 383f., 385f.). In fact, such ambiguous confusions of significant numbers seem to be an important part of Irish and Celtic mythology (cf. Alwyn & Brinley Rees, op. cit., pp. 118 et passim), and Joyce used other examples of such confusion as well. Eg.:

FW 267.17-18	trebly bounden and asservaged
twainly
485.24-25	the twicer, trifooled in Wanstable
486.03-05
   --Quadrique my yoke,
   Triple my trust,
   Tandem my sire.

Cf. also the deliberate confusion of numbers involving “Mama-lujo” and the ass as a paradigm of the mysterious “fifth” province which is variously identified.

53. I have discussed this in more detail in Chapter One


56. Ibid., pp. 174ff.
58. Oisin’s presence is also demonstrated by the names in this passage: “Ocean,” “Oscarvaughter” (which suggests “Oscarvater” or “Oscarfather”—Oisin was Oscar’s father: cf. also “son … osker” at 326.15-16, and “osion” at 326.18). I do not know why Oisin should be here when he fits the pattern of Shem elsewhere, but he is.
59. This also recalls Oscar Wilde’s witticism concerning a foxhunt, which appears several times in FW: “the unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible.”
60. These are ALP’s words, strictly speaking, but they illustrate the process I am describing nonetheless.
62. James Joyce’s explanation of the Mime for Harriet Shaw Weaver.
63. Louis Mink (Wesleyan University) has been preparing a “Gazetteer of Finnegans Wake” which will illuminate Joyce’s prodigious use of placenames. I have contributed a large number of references to Mink’s files.
64. Herbert Gorman. James Joyce. New York, 1939, p. 4. This biography, like the essays In the Exagmination and the books by Gilbert and Budgen, was very largely and extensively influenced by Joyce himself.
65. This aspect of Joyce’s work had a direct influence on William Carlos Williams’s long poem Paterson (Williams was one of the contributors to the Exagmination), and, by implication if not by direct influence, on Charles Olsen’s Maximus poems, thus initiating an important sub-genre in twentieth century poetry.

It is a remarkable fact that the relative importance of gods and goddesses in Irish mythology varies according to the documents that one examines. In the historical tradition … the principle role belongs to the colonizers, inventors or male warriors, and female persons intervene only in episodes. On the other hand, in the geographical tales of the Dinshenchas the female divinities fill a much larger place. This is explained by … the national or tribal character of the gods and the local character of the goddesses. It is not an accident that the former dominate the
historical myths and the latter the topographical myths.

67. Ibid., pp. 93-94; cf. also p. 93: “Thus we have a male principle of society which is opposed to a female principle of nature, or rather... social forces of male character opposed by natural forces of female character.”

68. Ibid., p. 19.


70. See fn. 63 above.


72. Cf. also the puns on Baile Átha Cliath already cited in this chapter (U 45, 245).


74. This was R.A.S Macalister’s opinion of the identification of Tallaght with Partholon, as cited by Roland McHugh, op. cit., pp. 21-22; cf. also O Hehir, op. cit., pp. 255, 256, 378. P.W. Joyce also tells this story in Irish Names of Places, op. cit.

75. Cf. O Hehir, op. cit., pp. 355ff., who explains the derivation of Anna Livia’s name from eanach, an Irish word meaning “fen.” His extensive note on how Joyce used eanach in FW is a good illustration of the process I am describing.

76. Joyce to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 14 August 1927 (SL 328); cf. SL 297 (on “Dougal”), 301-302 (on “Baile Átha Cliath”), 331, 347fn., and 392fn., for more examples of Joyce glossing the Irish meanings behind names and placenames.


78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.
Many contemporary Irish poets acknowledge the role which placenames play in preserving Irish history, and many pun on the Irish meanings of placenames. In Wintering Out (London, 1972), Seamus Heaney has several poems which illustrate this, as in “Gifts of rain”:

The tawny guttural water
spells itself, Moyola
is its own score and consort,

bedding the locale
in the utterance,
reed music, an old chanter

breathing its mists
through vowels and history.

and in “Anahorish”:

My ‘place of clear water’,
the first hill in the world
where springs washed into
the shiny grass

and darkened cobbles
in the bed of’ the lane.
Anahorish, soft gradient
of consonant, vowel-meadow …

Other poems of his, such as “Broagh,” “Toome,” and “A New Song,” exhibit similar tendencies.

Ciaran Carson works with Irish placenames in a poem about the earliest settlers in Ireland in “Insular Celts” (Faber Book of Irish Verse, ed. John Montague, London, 1974, p. 379):

Having left hard ground behind
in the hardness of their place-names,
they sailed out for an island …

They will come back to the warm earth
and call it by possessive names,
mother, thorned rose, woman, love’s birth,

to hard hills of stone they will give
the words for breast, to meadowland,
the soft guttural of rivers,

tongues of water …
In *The Rough Field* (Dublin, 1972), John Montague uses Irish and Scots-Irish placenames in the north of Ireland as clues which reveal Irish history. “The Rough Field” itself is the name of his own townland: Garvaghey, from *garbh achaidh*, a rough field, as the epigraph to his book points out. In “A Lost Tradition” Montague shows how placenames preserve and reveal history:

> All around, shards of a lost tradition:  
> From the Rough Field I went to school  
> In the Glen of the Hazels [Glencull]. Close by  
> Was the bishopric of the Golden Stone:  
> The cairn of Carleton’s homesick poem.

> Scattered over the hills, tribal  
> And placenames, uncultivated pearls.  
> No rock or ruin, dun or dolmen  
> But showed memory defying cruelty  
> Through an image-encrusted name.

> The heathery gap where the Raparee,  
> Shane Barnagh, saw his brother die—  
> On a summer’s day the dying sun  
> Stained its colours to crimson:  
> So breaks the heart. Brish-mo-cree  
> [bris mo choi, my heart breaks].

> The whole landscape a manuscript  
> We had lost the skill to read,  
> A part of our past disinherited,  
> But fumbled, like a blind man,  
> Along the fingertips of instinct.

A similar use of placenames occurs in “A Grafted Tongue” and “Glencull Waterside” in *The Rough Field*. In various ways the toponomastic side of Irish literature still survives in modern Irish literature.
I offer some further examples of Joyce’s Irish placename puns here to reinforce my commentary and summary:

FW 76.04 Meadow of Honey: Clonmel, cluain-meala, “meadow of honey”
131.01 Mount of Misht Slieve Mish, Sliabh-Mis, “mountain of Mis (a woman’s name)”
194.36 pools of the phooka: Pollaphuca, the pooka’s or demon’s hole
202.30-31 oak trees ... Kildare: Cill-Dara, “church of the oak trees”
443.09-10 the meadow of heppiness ... clonmellian: Clornmel, cluain-meala, “meadow of honey”
491.09-10 our straat that is called cork-screwed: Camlin Street in Cork City, from cam, “crooked”
497.17-20 Merrionites, Dumstdumbdrummers, Lucanicians, Ashtoumers, Battersby Parkes and Krumlin Boyards, Phibsburgs, Cabraists and Finglossies, Ballymunites, Raheniacs and the bettlers of Clontarf: thinly disguised sections of Dublin--Mount Merrion, Dundrum, Lucan, Ashtown, Battersby Park, Crumlin, Phibsborough, Cabra, Finglas, Ballymun, Raheny and Clontarf
499.33 Rawth of Gar and Donnerbrook Fire: Rathgar (Gar’s Fort) and Donnybrook Fair
507.02 fishy stare ... Kimmage: Kimmage means “place of curving water”
532.12-13 Farnum’s rath or Condra’s ridge or the meadows of Dalkin or Monkish tunshep: Rathfarnum (Farnum’s rath or fort), Drumcondra (Condra’s druim or ridge), Clondalkin (Dolcan’s chuaín or meadow), and Monkstown—all sections of Dublin
this section is densely packed with placename puns

honeymeads: Clonmel, cluain-meala, “meadow of honey”

cabrattlefield of Slaine: Cabra, a section of Dublin, and Slane, a town in Co. Meath

I offer these examples simply to provide a more varied sample. O Hehir’s *Gaelic Lexicon* reveals similar puns on names and placenames on almost every page of *FW*. Louis Mink’s *Gazetteer* will disclose many more, and I believe my own lengthy catalogue of Irish placenames in *FW*... which I have contributed to the *Gazetteer*, fits in better there than it would in this more general study of Joyce’s technique of using placenames to create words and phrases in *FW*.
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