

JOYCE STUDIES IN ITALY

13

**WHY READ JOYCE
IN THE 21ST CENTURY?**

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“A MIXER AND WORDPAINTER”:
FINNEGANS WAKE IN THE AGE OF REMIX CULTURE

While James Joyce’s *Ulysses* stands as one of the most fertile literary texts within which to explore the key linguistic, philosophical, and cultural theories of the twentieth century,¹ this article will argue that *Finnegans Wake*, with its polyglot and hyper-allusive assimilation of cultural bricolage, is uniquely positioned to illuminate the changing natures of cultural consumption and (re)production in the nascent twenty-first century’s emerging and evolving Remix Culture. This argument for the *Wake* as both the product of such a nascent culture—with all of its seeming attendant anachronisms—and as the richest text through which to access these uniquely twenty-first century questions will be unfolded in four basic moves; (1) by explicating the concept of Remix Culture with reference to its most commonly considered subject, the music industry, (2) by exploring how *Finnegans Wake* both preempts and exemplifies the consequences of Remix Culture for the production and consumption of cultural artifacts, (3) by demonstrating how the ongoing deconstruction of Author-centric models for conceptualizing culture are localized in literature through the theories of the death of the Engineer and the (re)birth of the Bricoleur and the technologies of hypertexts, and (4) by examining the *Wake*’s key trope of ‘forgery’ within this deconstructive context to exemplify how the text’s marriage of technology, theory, and cultural communication is closely aligned to a contemporary remix aesthetic.

¹ *Ulysses* has been treated as the high-water mark of both modernism (Beebe 1972, 176) and postmodernism (McHale 1992, 42), as a key text for exploring Saussurean or Peircean semiotic models (Milesi 2003) and Derridean deconstruction (Slote 2003), as a “thesaurus of Bakhtinian discourse types” (Lodge 1990, 86), as well as a key text for exploring twentieth-century cultural and political theories, such as Marxism (Booker 2000), and post-colonialism (Duffy 1994).

I. “pricking up ears to my phono on the ground” (FW 452.12)

The term Remix Culture will be applied in this article to any culture that allows and encourages derivative creative activity through increased freedom of access, modularity, and remixability, as opposed to any culture that insists upon concepts of authorial intention, intellectual property, and the immutability of cultural artifacts, and which implements stringent copyright laws in order to keep these structures in place. To begin, we turn to Lawrence Lessig, an American writer on law and ethics, whose study *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* will shape the theoretical approach in this paper.² Lessig’s account begins in 1906 with the submission by John Philip Sousa, a popular composer of American military and patriotic marches, to a congressional hearing on the sudden snowballing of sound reproduction and mass production technologies, such as the phonograph or player piano, which meant that “for the first time in history, a musical composition could be turned into a form that a machine could play” (2008, 24). Of greater concern to Lessig’s study than Sousa’s ultimately successful campaign to change copyright law to cover these reproductions, however, is the part of Sousa’s testimony in which he argued that

these talking machines are going to ruin the artistic development of music in this country. When I was a boy [...] in front of every house in the summer evenings, you would find young people together singing the songs of the day or old songs. Today you hear these infernal machines going night and day. We will not have a vocal cord left. The vocal cord will be eliminated by a process of evolution, as was the tail of man when he came from the ape. (*Ibid.*, 24-25)

One might dryly observe that despite a century of sound reproduction technology we remain, by and large, well in command of our vocal cords. As Lessig elucidates, however, what Sousa is describing is a philosophical concern, couched in a context of Neo-Luddism, that these reproduction technologies “would change our relationship to culture” and force the gen-

² Lessig’s primary argument, which remains outside of the scope of this paper, is that amateur appropriation in the digital age cannot be prevented but merely illegalized, and that treating whole generations as ‘criminals’ for engaging in culture as it is known to them has drastic societal implications.

eral public to become “just consumers of culture, not also producers,” as culture would no longer be a living organism constantly adapting in an integrated and participatory environment, but would become “the product of an elite, even if this elite, this cultural monarchy, was still beloved by the people” (*Ibid.*, 25).

If we consider, by way of example, the fate of the authorless and adaptive nature of various strands of folk music, which constantly evolved through processes of “hearing, repeating, and improvising” (Benkler 2006, 50), it would seem that the fears of this Cassandra have largely come true. In this folk model of culture, “stories and songs circulated broadly, well beyond their points of origin, with little or no expectation of economic compensation; many of the best ballads or folktales come to us today with no clear marks of individual authorship” (Jenkins 2006, 135). This fluid and adaptive musical tradition is nicely elucidated, for example, in Gerry Smyth’s study of the various uses of music in Joyce’s “The Dead”, in which Smyth exemplifies the “notoriously protean” nature of ballads through a history of “The Lass of Aughrim” and its “multiple forms, with various lyrics, melodies and narrative structures dispersed over numerous versions” throughout its mixed Irish and Scottish pedigree (2009, 33). This possibility for cultural artifacts to “constantly mutate in relation to the environment through which they move” (*Ibid.*, 33) was suppressed through a combination of technologies of mass production, copyright laws,³ and theories of intellectual property and authorial intention that nurtured the view of cultural artifacts as immutable to the point that even as prominent an artist as Bob Dylan can be accused of plagiarism for engaging in the predominantly fluid discursive practices of folk music.⁴ Lessig characterizes this shift from a reciprocal relationship between production and consumption to a model that “described the movement of information in one direction from a source

³N. Stephan Kinsella, for example, denounces copyright laws as creating artificial scarcities of non-scarce goods (2008, 34-35).

⁴In the last decade, Dylan has been accused in various media outlets of plagiarizing numerous passages from Junichi Saga’s novel *Confessions of a Yakuza* on his appropriately-titled 2001 album “*Love and Theft*”, and the Civil War poetry of the Confederate bard Henry Timrod for his 2006 album *Modern Times*. As Jonathon Lethem highlights, however, “Dylan’s art offers a paradox: while it famously urges us not to look back, it also encodes a knowledge of past sources that might otherwise have little home in contemporary culture.” If “Dylan’s originality and his appropriations are as one,” Lethem concludes, “the same might be said of all art” (Lethem).

to a receiver,” (Manovich 2009, 43), as a shift from “Read/Write” (“RW”) to “Read/Only” (“RO”) culture (Lessig 2008, 28).⁵

In *Finnegans Wake*, this transformation from RW to RO cultures is most explicitly dramatized through these tropes of music and balladry—indeed, Len Platt has argued for considering “popular music culture as an important contemporary site of an engagement between *Finnegans Wake* and the modern” (2007, 144). After HCE’s encounter with “a cad with a pipe” (*FW* 35.11) in Phoenix Park, when he suspiciously defends himself against accusations that the cad has not made against him, episode I.2 follows a game of Chinese whispers as gossip about HCE’s supposed crime spreads and evolves: the Cad tells his wife (his “bit of strife,” *FW* 38.9) the story over supper; she passes it on to her priest, the Reverend Browne (“trusting [...] that the gossip so delivered in his epistolar [...] would go no further than his jesuit’s cloth,” *FW* 38.20-24); the Reverend Brown, “in his secondary personality as a Nolan” (*FW* 38.27-8) pours the gossip into the “aurellum of one Philly Thurnston” (*FW* 38.35); Treacle Tom and Frisky Shorty overhear the story from him at the racetracks; Tom mutters the story in his sleep and is overheard by a trio of tramps, and so on. Here Joyce’s employment of gossip as a means of broadcasting and creating myth exemplifies Manovich’s description of Remix or RW Culture as one in which “the reception point is just a temporary station on information’s path” (Manovich 2009, 43). Finally the various crimes attributed to HCE by the masses are compiled and written down (hence fixed) in “The Ballad of Persse O’Reilly” (*FW* 44-47), fourteen stanzas replete with musical notation that are given an author in the shadowy figure of Hosty.

The ballad and oral culture represented in episodes I.3 and I.4 are still open to some degree of flux,⁶ yet this mode of cultural communication comes

⁵ As Lessig explains, “the analogy is to the permissions that might attach to a particular file on a computer. If the user has “RW” permissions, then he is allowed to both read the file and make changes to it. If he has “Read/Only” permissions, he is allowed only to read the file” (2008, 28). This binary opposition is a relatively reductive when applied to cultures—a continuum of cultures with varying abilities to perform and reproduce consumed culture would be preferable—yet hugely illustrative way of thinking about the roles of technology, theory, and law in cultural communication.

⁶ As seen, for example, in the many “mixed sex cases” (*FW* 48.2) on display (“His husband” *FW* 49.2), “her wife Langley” (*FW* 50.6)); the transformation of refrain of the song “Percy French” (“Has anybody ever been to Mick’s Hotel”) to “whoever’s gone to *mix* Hotel” (*FW* 50.34, emphasis added); and the fact that “it is a slopperish matter, given the wet and low visibility [...] to idendifine the individuone” (*FW* 51.3-6) due to the ‘fact’ that

to an end with the introduction of The Reverend Letter in I.5, a supposedly authoritative document that would cut through the mass of contradictory information amassed in the RW culture depicted in the previous chapters. Book II marks a significant institutionalization of RO culture, as the HCE myth is consolidated in performances (II.1), studies (II.2) and, finally, radio and television (II.3). Interestingly, the latter are referred to in the Wake as “Infernal machinery” (FW 320.33)—the same term Sousa used before congress to describe the technologies of mass production that he believed were ruining culture (Lessig 2008, 24). By the time of II.3, the characters who had both consumed *and* (re)created the HCE myth in Book I have become passive consumers of that myth. As the HCE myth, which had previously been so adaptive and fluid, becomes fossilized in its various written and broadcast forms, we see the introduction of an RO model of cultural communication, which “described the movement of information in one direction from a source to a receiver” (Manovich 2009, 43).

II. “*His producers are they not his consumers?*” (FW 497.1-2)

Yet—back in the non-Wakean world—over the course of the second half of the twentieth century a strong counter-discourse to this prevailing model of Read/Only musical culture slowly developed from a narrow group of well off and technologically savvy consumers to a counter-culture movement in impoverished inner-city American communities. From the exponents of *musique concrete*,⁷ to the early pioneers of Jamaican dance hall culture, to the loops and tape edits of discothèque DJs, local music mixers began to deconstruct and reconstruct disparate elements of musical texts from various genres to produce new compositions, culminating in hip-hop, a form of musical and artistic RW culture originating in the Bronx, New York in the late 1970s (see Chang 2005). Using vinyl records on a phonograph—the very “Infernal machinery” Sousa claimed would signal the end of RW culture—the hip-hop technique of appropriating samples of one sound recording and reusing it as an instrument in a new collage of such samples—with the practice of reincorporat-

“the unfacts, did we possess them, are too imprecisely few to warrant our certitude” (FW 57.16-17)

⁷ An experimental genre of music, pioneered by Pierre Schaeffer in the late 1940s, that exploited the advent of easily editable magnetic tape to splice together extracts from existing recordings to create new sound compositions (see Holmes and Holmes, 79-84)

ing these collages into ever newer collages, and so on, resulting in a kind of *mise en abyme* or series of “forged palimpsests” (FW 182.2)—marked “a major conceptual leap” towards “making music on a meta-structural level, drawing together and making sense of a much larger body of information by threading a continuous narrative through it” by “pulling together the efforts of others into a multilayered multireferential whole which is much more than the sum of its parts” (Seggern).

The result of this marriage of theory, cultural practice, and the democratizing power of new digital technologies (such as affordable personal computers, cheap software programs, and the internet) is that while “the traditional twentieth-century model of cultural communication described the movement of information in one direction from a source to a receiver, in the current era the reception point is just a temporary station on information’s path” (Manovich 2009, 43)—much as the graffiti murals and sampled records of hip-hop culture are constantly tagged and retagged. This dismantling of RO culture by the means of its own mechanisms of promulgation and its replacement with a new and still evolving paradigm shift returning to, but not replicating, a previously displaced RW culture, means that the creation of cultural artifacts again would seem to have the potential to take place “in a networked, participatory environment which breaks down the boundaries between producers and consumers and instead enables all participants to be users as well as producers of information and knowledge” (Bruns 2008, 21).

During his bizarre interrogation by the Mamalujo in *Finnegans Wake* III.3, Yawn, in the process of relating the events of Finnegan’s wake, asks “*Qui quae quot at Quinnigans Quake*” (who, which, how many at Finnegan(?)’s Wake?) before proclaiming: “His producers are they not his consumers?” (FW 497.1-2). Thus the Wake signals, with a typically meta-reflexive flourish, its own discursive processes as being founded on strategies of eliding or challenging the RO relationship between producers and consumers of texts that constitutes its ostensible narratological concern with the authority of the (illegible) Reverend Letter. One sense in which this aspect of the Wake’s discursive strategies is borne out is the unusual process of its composition. Given the problems of Joyce’s failing eyesight, his barely decipherable handwriting, and the unusual manifest forms of which the book is composed, a vast number of copyists’s errors made their way into the finished text.⁸ In addition, Joyce—

⁸ Many important genetic studies of *Finnegans Wake* have been undertaken over the last decade, which unpack this issue in much greater detail than is possible here. For the most recent

who between 1927 and 1929 briefly signaled the possibility that he might hand over the book to James Stephens for completion (see Crispi and Slote 2007, 23)—was aided in composition by “a number of aspiring young writers,” including a young Samuel Beckett, who “read to the optically troubled Joyce and wrote down, at his dictation, passages for what was still called *Work in Progress*” (Gluck 1979, 27). Both of these procedures form feedback loops in which accumulated errors stay in the system, which are then amplified and even developed further in the direction of the mutations—the famous incident when Joyce allowed Beckett’s mistaken inclusion of the phrase “come in”, directed at a knock at the door but assumed by Beckett to be part of the dictation, to remain in the text exemplifies Joyce’s dedication to this approach (Gluck 1979, 27). In Shaun’s estimation, the Letter (and hence the Wake itself) is “Nothing beyond clerical horrors *et omnibus*” (FW 419.33-34), and the text itself proudly boasts of its “hides and hints and misses in prints” (FW 20.11) brought about by “the continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators” (FW 118.25-26). Given these practices of composition and the Wake’s discursive strategies, Tim Conley persuasively contends that “Joyce’s aesthetic ‘progress’ occurs apace with his appreciation and integration of error as a principle of composition and publication” (2003, 6). In the Wake’s expansive discursive circuit (or complex), the roles of author, transcriber, printer, editor, critic, in the discursive process are acknowledged, and even encoded at the level of the text. Primary here too, of course, is the reader or consumer: as Vicki Mahaffey observes, the missing apostrophe in the title of *Finnegans Wake* functions “to inculcate an awareness that [...] reading is itself a transitory editorial practice” (1991, 186).

This Read/Write aesthetic in the Wake is both exemplified and deepened through its more micro-level remix strategies. In one sense, the Wake achieves this remix aesthetic through its protean and fluid approach to characters, as we are told, evoking Giordano Bruno’s theory of the coincidence of contraries, that the Wake’s “centuple celves [...] by the coincidance of their contraries reamalgamerge in that indentity of undiscernibles” (FW 49.33-50.1). Elsewhere, the three soldiers and two girls that seem to be involved in the incident in the park are referred to as “three tommix” (FW 58.24, emphasis added) or “the three *blend* cupstoomerries” (FW 312.28, emphasis added) and “the two *mixers*” (FW 65.28, emphasis added), while

and comprehensive account of the Wake’s genetic history, see Slote and Crispi’s *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*.

Shem—who stands as an indexical cipher for the text of the *Wake* itself—is described as a “hybrid” (FW 169.9). Furthermore, in the bricolage nature of its hyper-allusive and peregrinistic neologisms—famously blending myriad references ranging from popular music, nursery rhymes, and advertising jingles to the world’s central religious and literary texts—*Finnegans Wake* would seem the quintessence of Seggern’s characterization of hip-hop sampling as “pulling together the efforts of others into a multilayered multireferential whole which is much more than the sum of its parts” (Seggern). While literature is no stranger to allusion, the *Wake* stands out as a particularly contemporary case by virtue of the micro-level modularity and remixability of its allusive technique. To take just one brief illustrative example from literally thousands, in the phrase “frai is frau” (FW 94.15) one may detect traces of *both* Hamlet’s “frailty thy name is woman” (in the German “Frau,” I.ii. 146) and Macbeth’s “fair is foul and foul is fair” (I.i. 10), in a simultaneous and modulated remix that, like the graffiti and sampling traditions of hip-hop culture, tags and retags cultural artifacts in an act of innovative creativity.

III. “*Gutenmorg [...] must once for omnibuss step rubrickredd out of the wordpress*” (FW 20.7-9)

These two paradigm shifts, approximately a century apart, from RW to RO culture through technologies of mass production, copyright law, and theories of authorial intention, and back again through the theory of remix and a democratizing technological advance, might seem unique to music over the course of the twentieth century. Literature, however, also suffered a paradigm shift with the invention of a new technology, and the artistic, cultural, and philosophical anxieties about the resulting transformation from RW to RO culture have been interminably more prolonged and painful. I am talking, of course, about the Gutenberg press and the printing revolution that Francis Bacon, writing in 1620, claimed had “changed the appearance and state of the whole world” (2008, 370).⁹

⁹ For a more in-depth historical treatment of the advent of printing and its importance as an agent of change, Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* is recommended. For a more controversial approach, which keeps *Finnegans Wake* to fore in its depictions of pre- and post-printing societies, see McLuhan’s *The Gutenberg Galaxy*.

The cultural transformations produced by the printing press stand in a complex relation to those brought about by the phonograph and internet. As with the internet, the printing press was a crucial step towards the democratization of knowledge, yet it was also “frequently accused of disseminating fictions and falsehoods” (Walsham and Crick 2004, 20). However, the printing press served as a mechanism that has also, by no means exclusively at all times and places but gradually and surely, created “a dichotomy in literature” in which “the author is on one side of the production process” and the consumer on the other (Barker 2009, 5). As Foucault contends, the Author as a figure in cultural production *came into being* at the point at which discourse became “goods caught up in a circuit of ownership”—as the printing press at once made authorship more meaningful and more profitable, and increased the imperative of highlighting individual responsibilities for texts to enable the punishment of transgressive voices—and as such, it is conceivable that the Author could *go out of being* at some point in the future. Furthermore,

once a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict rules concerning author’s rights, author-publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted—at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century—the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature. (1998, 212)

Foucault’s portrayal splits the history of authorship into a pre-authorial RW culture, a period of author-centered RO culture brought about by the “strict rules concerning author’s rights” and “rights of reproduction,” and a post-authorial RW culture brought about by not only the possibility but the imperative of transgressing this RO model.

Much as with the emerging theories of musical remix in the 1960s, a sense grew in the theoretical circles of the mid-twentieth century that the RO culture in which cultural producers and consumers found themselves was an artificial and constructed model, and that a displaced previous RW culture might, in fact, be culture’s default setting. Such an altered view of texts as processes rather than products is summarized in Roland Barthes’s by now well-rehearsed dictum that a text “is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the message of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and crash”, thus signaling “the destruction of every voice, of every

point of origin” (2008, 170) and thus proclaim the death of the Author. With this sense came an increasingly self-conscious approach to the novel as mix or remix of discourses,¹⁰ and new concepts of culture arose to fill the void left by the felled Author-Figure, largely based around, or in opposition to, Claude Lévi-Strauss’s notion of the bricoleur, “who creates improvised structures by appropriating pre-existing materials which are ready-to-hand” (Chandler 2002, 203; Lévi-Strauss 1996). This seeming critical rediscovery of RW culture also brought with it new distinctly RW compositional strategies, such as William Burroughs’s use of the cut-up technique in *Naked Lunch*, in which various textual sources, including his own, would be cut literally into pieces with scissors, rearranged on a page, and pasted to form new sentences. Vicki Mahaffey suggests that the *Wake* is “an immensely subtle critique, or “reading,” of the limitations of monological authority that anticipates many of the arguments advanced on different theoretical and political fronts” since the 1960s (1988, 2). In this context it is not difficult to see the *Wake*’s “practice of using bits and pieces of heterogeneous materials without regard to their specific function” (Norris 1976, 130), as a watershed moment for this nascent remix culture.

As with musical texts in the twenty-first century, the revolutions of digital technology have shed constraints of access, recomposition, and redistribution with regard to literary discourses to the point that knowledge and manipulation of digital multimedia technologies is “becoming an increasingly dominant form of ‘writing’” (Lessig 2008, 69). As Louis Armand highlights,

the book is entering a distinct epoch in which it will no longer be possible to limit the range of a material body of writing by enclosing it within a published volume [...] With the advent of hypertext and of the World Wide Web this marriage [between the book and technology] seems to have at last been consummated, linking together both the means, medium and matter of publication as something like an open, universal ‘mechanized text.’ (2003, 31)

Indeed, the main trope that has been used over the course of the last decade for connecting the *Wake* to this expansive marriage of text and technology is that of the hypertext, a “branching and responding text” (Nelson

¹⁰ In this Bakhtinian context, it is interesting to note David Lodge’s characterization of *Finnegans Wake* as “a book written in doubly-, or rather trebly-, quadruply-, multiply-oriented discourse” (1990, 39).

1993, 1) that elides the borders between texts in a syncretic network of hyperlinks. As George P. Landow points out, “over the past several decades literary theory and computer hypertext, apparently unconnected areas of inquiry, have increasingly converged” to the extent that both “argue that we must abandon conceptual systems founded on ideas of center, margin, hierarchy, and linearity and replace them by ones of multilinearity, nodes, links, and networks” (2006, 1). Donald Theall insightfully places Joyce in a literary context at the outset of this merging of literature and technological possibility, “with the techno-scientific and electromagnetic interests of Klee, Duchamp, Picabia, Ernst, the Dadaists, Surrealists and Expressionists,” highlighting that if these artists “explored the impact of techno-scientific phenomena such as X-Rays, atomic structure, electricity and magnetism, Joyce extended this exploration into their impact on language, gesture, speech and print/writing” (2006, 29).

While considering the *Wake* as a hypertext can be a fertile means of opening up its unusual processes and strategies to scrutiny, I want to make the case that the *Wake* functions much more in the line of the Remix, particularly as manifested in Hip-Hop culture. This difference, I want to suggest, can be found in the *Wake*'s prominent trope of forgery, which stands as a challenge to the erasure of hierarchy that such hypertextual conceptualizations of the *Wake*'s systems seem to suggest.

IV. “*piously forged palimpsests*” (FW 182.2)

Speaking at the 15th International PEN Congress in Paris, 20-7 June 1937, Joyce addressed the issue of copyright and “the moral right of authors” in conjunction with “unscrupulous American publisher” Samuel Roth’s pirated version of *Ulysses*, arguing,

while unprotected by the written law of copyright and even if it is banned, a work belongs to its author by virtue of a natural right and that thus the law can protect an author against the mutilation and publication of his work just as he is protected against the misuse that can be made of his name. (216)

While this argument for the “natural right” of the author, and Joyce’s contention elsewhere that in writing *Work in Progress* he was perhaps the greatest engineer (Joyce 1966, 251), positions Joyce the author on the side

of RO culture, it also aligns him more closely with Sousa's view. Like Sousa, Joyce reveals a philosophical concern with the problems of authority and authorship, as the imperative of transgressing these ideas through a program increasingly dependent upon the mutability, intertextuality, and the mixability of language and literature occurs within a context of teleophobia (to compliment Sousa's technophobia) about losing control of authority and meaning. This is a tension encoded throughout Joyce's fiction—perhaps most explicitly with regard to Shem's fore figure Stephen Dedalus, ("B.A., described in the calendar as a mixer and wordpainter"; *FW* 87.13), in the contradiction between Stephen's rebellious "*non serviam*" and his passivity to the authorities of Haines, Deasy, et al. As David Spurr highlights, the tension between the two senses of Joyce the forger (as the inspired creator from crude matter, and as deceptive imitator) is everywhere present in the *Wake*:

On one hand, Joyce's distinctive mark is immediately recognizable on every page; every word, letter, penstroke is a perfect signature of its own. On the other hand, no other work of Joyce is so clearly a pastiche, a pell-mell assemblage of fragments forged and plagiarized from the cultural memory of western Europe and beyond. (1998, 259)

Peppered throughout with references to notorious forgers, such as William Henry Ireland,¹¹ Richard Piggott,¹² and James MacPherson,¹³ this trope of forgery becomes one of the primary means by which the *Wake* signals

¹¹ "Mister Ireland" (*FW* 608.14), an infamous English forger of would-be Shakespearean documents and plays is alluded to in the *Wake* in conjunction with his play "Vortigern" (*FW* 565.12), a Shakespeare hoax.

¹² Piggott, in an effort to destroy Charles Stewart Parnell's political career, produced fake letters, which purported that Parnell had supported one of the Phoenix Park murders; Piggott's forgery was ultimately uncovered by his misspelling of hesitancy as 'hesitency', and "the spell of hesitancy" (*FW* 97.25) arises in various forms throughout the *Wake*, such as "Hasatency" (*FW* 16.26), "hecitency" (*FW* 119.18), and Pigiott's "hesitancy" (*FW* 35.20; 82.30; 97.25; 599.14). As Spurr highlights, "The entire affair is a classic case of alliance between the press and the government in enforcing colonial rule" (1998, 246). Interestingly, the "spell of hesitancy" is also the spell under which another forger finds himself: Hamlet, who, as Stephen remembers in *Ulysses*, forged a letter that sent Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths (Spurr, 248).

¹³ For a more detailed analysis of the role of James MacPherson's *Ossian* and forgery in the *Wake*, see Barlow, Richard. 2011. James Macpherson in *Finnegans Wake. Founder to Shore: Cross-Currents in Irish and Scottish Studies*, eds. Alcobia-Murphy, S. et al. Aberdeen: AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies.

this tension between the imperative to transgress RO culture and the power of signatures.¹⁴ One of the most prominent of the many forgers to inhabit the Wake is James Townsend Saward—nickname: ‘Jim the Penman’—a Victorian English barrister who forged signatures on money orders for almost thirty years. Similarly, we are told, the supposed author (or forger) of the Reverend Letter “Shem the Penman” (*FW* 125.23) would “study with stolen fruit how cutely to copy all their various styles of signature so as one day to utter an epical forged cheque on the public for his own private profit” (*FW* 181.14-17). Pressing the point, of Shem we are asked

Who can say how many pseudostylic shamiana, how few or how many of the most venerated public impostures, how very many piously forged palimpsests slipped in the first place by this morbid process from his pelagiarist pen?” (*FW* 181.36-182.3)

In contrast to the previously outlined dramatization of the transition from RW to RO culture in Books I and II of the Wake, the “Shem the Penman” episode (I.7) stands as a bold counter-discourse to this RO model, as Shem’s role as writer of the Reverend Letter increasingly takes on that of forger and bricoleur. Indeed, it is interesting to note that in this episode describing a writer that copies and pastes his work by “treasuring with condign satisfaction each and every crumb of trektalk, covetous of his neighbour’s word” (*FW* 172.29-30), we find an allusion to that champion of RW culture (and author of popular marches) John Philip Sousa in the phrase “John Phibbs march!” (*FW* 187.20), encoded in terms that suggest the idea of progress within cyclicity (Jan, Feb, March).

It is revealing that forgery, rather than plagiarism, should be a more dominant trope in the Wake—after all, if forgery is the act of an author claiming her work is by another person (i.e. a name is stolen in order to add value to the wrong work) and if plagiarism is the act of an author claiming another person’s work as her own (a work is stolen in order to give credit to the wrong name) then most usually the Wake is considered in terms of the latter. The difference, it would seem, is a matter of intention—in the theories of intertextuality, plagiarism is unavoidable, forgery is not. In so

¹⁴ Other notorious non-literary forgers are incorporated; for example, David Spur points out how “as a kind of primal scene of forgery, the *Wake* continually re-enacts Jacob’s usurpation of his brother’s birthright, where Jacob’s kid gloves forge the “signature” of Esau’s hairy hands” (1998, 245).

far as the primary intention behind forgery is deception, this is a dynamic that is not operative in a hypertextual and syncretic textual landscape, where extremes of transparency and accessibility somewhat erase the notion of intentionality, whether deceptive or otherwise, and of the differences between center and margin.

Contrastingly, the remix aesthetic that has been outlined in this paper is not only a process of drawing together various cultural bricolage into a narrative strand, but also a distinctly subcultural and countercultural strategy, deauthorizing dominant discourses from which the artists are excluded, while reclaiming both these texts and discourses and the excluded voice's own position in that culture. Part of the language game of the remix, then, is not only to elide the difference between consumers and producers, but also to confront the authorized with a vision of the un/deauthorized and redacted aspects of society. From myriad potentially rich texts with which to make this comparison to the remix aesthetic of *Finnegans Wake*, I should like to turn to one provocative example from the hip-hop canon in KMD's "Who Me? (With an Answer from Dr. Bert)", from their 1991 album *Mr. Hood*. The track opens with a piece of found dialogue from an audio book of *The Story of Little Black Sambo*, a 1899 children's story written and illustrated by Helen Bannerman: "Once upon a time there was a little boy who lived in the deep, dark jungles of Africa: his name was Little Sambo."¹⁵ The collective's lead MC Zev Love X takes this racial stereotype as a launching point for challenging both the discourses of the racist ("Holy smokes! I see it's a joke / To make a mockery of the original folks") and those who claim racism ("Whoever said that coon was me?"), all over sampled and remixed elements from other sources, such as Doug E. Fresh, Slick Rick, and The Get Fresh Crew's "The Show" and "I Turned You On" by The Isley Brothers. Discouraged, Zev Love X eventually turns to the Dr. Bert of the subtitle, who, it turns out, is the muppet Bert of Bert and Ernie fame, interpolated in dialogue with the MC through samples from the long-running children's television show *Sesame Street*:

ZEV LOVE X: Ah man, damn, man. Yo, they wanna call me a monkey, a coon, a jiggaboo a boogieman... Yo Bert. Yo... Bert

¹⁵ This is a slight variation on the opening line of Bannerman's original text, which reads "Once upon a time there was a little black boy, and his name was Little Black Sambo" (2007, 7).

BERT: Um, what is it?
 ZEV LOVE X: Yo G, they wanna call me all these names.
 BERT: Aha, I know what we can do.
 ZEV LOVE X: What can we do?
 BERT: We'll ask someone out there to find:
 NARRATOR: "Little Sambo"
 ZEV LOVE X: What you be meanin', G?
 BERT: Okay, pick up a crayon...
 UNIDENTIFIED: (Who me?)
 BERT: No, them
 ZEV LOVE X: Us?
 BERT: Yes. Kids pick up a crayon, look for:
 NARRATOR: ("Little Sambo")
 BERT: When you find him, draw a circle around him.¹⁶

The defiant act in this remix is the appropriation of a piece of mainstream culture (and children's culture at that) for a subculture—rendered particularly poignant in the fact that the usual positions of exclusion and inclusion, of authorized and unauthorized speakers and audiences, are reversed ("UNIDENTIFIED: (Who me?) / BERT: No, them / ZEV LOVE X: Us? / BERT: Yes). In the audio book sample of *Little Sambo* that begins the track we see an example of RO culture in which only the authorized voice may speak, excluding the voice of the "little boy who lived in the deep dark jungles of Africa"; in the remixed dialogue between Zev Love X and the Sesame Street character we find the counter-discursive (and comic) potential of RW culture to include the voice of the disenfranchised, exploiting a tension wrought of negotiations of and challenges to authorship and authority, and ultimately turning the tables by drawing a circle around the "Little Sambo." This, then, is more forgery than plagiarism, in so far as the remix does not claim the texts of Helen Bannerman and Sesame Street as its own work, but invests their signatures with the intentions and readings of the forger.

Much as hip-hop sampling assumes its transgressive force not by denying the origins of its samples but rather by challenging them with unauthorized uses that (mis)appropriate their original intentions, the Wake's primary dynamic might be said to be that of a 'mix'—in which elements are juxta-

¹⁶ KMD. 1991. *Who Me? (With an Answer from Dr. Bert)*. *Mr. Hood*. Elektra Records.

posed to form a whole, the constituent parts of which are still distinct—rather than a ‘merge’—in which elements are juxtaposed to form a single entity. That this is the tension on which the *Wake*’s transgressive dynamic rests can be seen, I would suggest, through its dominant trope of forgery: as David Spurr highlights, in *Finnegans Wake* “the particular form of transgression represented by forgery” can be seen as a “as a figure for the nature of writing, and as a metaphor for artistic creation” in so far as Joyce’s work erases the boundary between forgery and forging (1998, 246). However, Spurr continues, forgery is also a challenge to authority and a transgression of RO culture in so far as such palimpsestic forgeries expose that “the notion of authenticity is a human invention designed to confer privilege, protection, and value: as such it participates in the fictive constructions belonging to what we more commonly recognize as forgery” (1998, 259). In this context we might see that in its constant reference to an origin that is unobtainable and most likely non-existent—primarily in its manifold interpretations of the illegible Reverend Letter written by the forger—the *Wake* might preempt Barthes’s view of “the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin,” but it does so in a way that is invested in the dialogue between authorized and unauthorized narratives and perspectives in the negotiation of authority that emerges from this absence of a primary signature. Here, then, we find the tension between the forger/creator and the forger/imitator in Joyce’s “very many piously forged palimpsests” (*FW* 182.2):

In the act of signing, the signatory makes provision for his or her own absence and even death, as the laws of probate make clear. [...] But not to sign is to relinquish authority, and even not to exist in a certain legal sense. In a very concrete way, then, the signature both affirms one’s presence and creates the conditions for one’s absence: we live and die not by the sword but by the pen. (Spurr 1998, 251)

Conclusion

Book IV, the *Wake*’s ‘Ricorso’, seems to map a reverse course to the first five chapters of Book I, returning to ALP’s Reverend Letter’ (*FW* 615.12-616.19) and closing the book on her monologue (or dialogue with her silent partner HCE), an oral (or perhaps mental) document of her memories of her and HCE’s history peppered with the fear of forgetting and of being

forgotten as ALP “signs her final tear. Zee End” (*FW* 28.28-9). This lone signatory voice stands in marked contrast to the communal oral RW tradition outlined in the *Wake*’s opening chapters, yet this fact mirrors the *Wake*’s own backwards movement to a RW culture with a difference. Rather than a RW culture based on the mutual ownership and adaptation of cultural artifacts by members of that culture, the remix culture of the twenty-first century—and *Finnegans Wake* as a key literary representation of this movement in its nascent state—is founded in the conscious return to and exploitation of RW cultures of the past as initiated by individuals and in the context of the inerasable conflict between authorized and unauthorized voices. If a remix is a return, it is by no means a replication. As with *Ulysses*, the *Wake* closes with a provocative space for the deauthorized female voice claiming and re-appropriating the authority and contents of memory, and in this sense, perhaps, we can see that the defining mode of the *Wake* is not that of syncretism (the cultural acceptance of alien or previous traditions) but of the conflict for authority, the pitting of authorized against unauthorized discourses, of which culture is made in the absence of origins. It is in this sense—as well as and beyond the genesis of its composition and its primary aesthetic of remixing allusions, language systems, and various strands of cultural bricolage—that Joyce’s final “piously forged palimpsest” (*FW* 182.2) offers the ideal terrain within which to explore this reemergence of a Read/Write culture that constitutes the present, tentative, and still emerging philosophical transformative moment.

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