‘Unfallable encyclicing’: *Finnegans Wake* and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

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Finnegans Wake and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (*EB*) are both remarkable texts. The first edition of the latter was produced by ‘a Society of Gentlemen in Scotland’ between 1768 and 1771. Based in part on principles developed by Dennis de Coetlogon, it was both a quintessential product of the Enlightenment and a hugely authoritative statement about Britain’s status in the nineteenth-century world. The eleventh edition, the one which Joyce worked from, describes how the project was designed as a ‘digest of general information’, its purpose being nothing less than to ‘give reasoned discussion on all great questions of practical and speculative interest’ (*EB*, 11, vol. 1, vii). The former, positioned very differently at the tail end of the modern, is far from a digest but it reflects back on the encyclopaedic tradition in fascinating ways. To put it simply, *Finnegans Wake* is a text that has apparently swallowed or ‘digested’ vast amounts of information only to return it in ways that seem outside all reasoned discussion. This essay explores that relationship, not because *EB* 11 is somehow ‘key’ to any Wakean ‘metameaning’ but, rather, because in terms of its cultural ambition and the characteristically modern approach it takes to a universal and democratizing epistemology, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* stands at the antithesis of the *Wake*. It is, of course, only one of a large number of texts with which the *Wake* is intertextual, but it has a particular significance precisely because it is so focused on epistemological issues raised by and, indeed, in the *Wake*, a text that makes an astonishing investment in cultures of rationality and processes

of reasoning. *EB* 11's status here, then, is as the text that achieves where the *Wake* 'fails'; it performs in ways the *Wake* simply cannot. For this reason it plays a precise part in framing what it is that the *Wake* gets at as it works off the knowledge the world claims to have of itself. The suggestion, it should be clear, is not that the *Wake* is a satirical version of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, but, rather, that set against the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the satirical direction of the *Wake* becomes focused in particular and highly suggestive ways.

This essay is interested in the more technical issue of our knowledge of where Joyce used the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in the *Wake*, and with the methodological problems involved in identifying usage. The main focus, however, lies in the larger question of how the *Wake* engages with the order and authority embodied in a text that exemplified the very idea of the encyclopaedia. The central argument focuses on the difference between the *Wake* and *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the latter dedicated in its eleventh edition 'by permission to His Majesty King George the Fifth King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions Beyond the Seas Emperor of India and to William Taft President of the United States of America'. Both, it could be argued, are instruments 'of culture of world-wide influence' but Joyce's senses of instrumentality and culture are quite at odds with what the editors of the *Encyclopaedia* have in mind. Their goal is to make available to the public 'all extant knowledge' as it is discovered by the 'civilized world'. The ambition is educative, to produce 'a trustworthy guide to sound learning', but also celebratory. Above all the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is testimony to the awesome power of the Western intellectual tradition, to its authority and universality. At the same time, the *Encyclopaedia* has a proselytizing mission. Through 'the medium of the

University Press', the hope is to 'maintain direct relations with the whole of the English speaking world', to bring 'all extant knowledge within the reach of every class of reader'. The editors have aimed for traditional order, of course, but also new levels of uniformity in construction. Dispensing with 'the old-fashioned plan of regarding each volume as a separate unit' they instead arrange their 'material so as to give an organic unity to the whole work' placing 'all the various subjects under their natural headings, in the form which experience has shown to be the most convenient for a work of universal reference' (*EB*, 11, vol. 1, vii-x).

It is hard to imagine anything more removed from the *Wake* project. Far from maintaining good relations with the empire and the wider 'English speaking world', the *Wake* undermines the very idea of English speaking. As opposed to formulating knowledge as an alphabetical and progressive coherency, the *Wake* conflates, disintegrates and constitutes an astonishing refutation of any kind of epistemological order. Equally it refuses hierarchy, centricism and progressivism and seems specifically designed, not to extend knowledge to the ignorant but, rather, to render the idea of knowledge infuriatingly impossible. At some level the whole *Wake* enterprise — its language strategies, its subversion of narrative, character, structure and so on — collaborate in this dramatic enterprise, and so does the detail of Joyce's working of *EB* 11 and the individual encyclopaedic unit. Here in these local specifics are the signs of what many Wakeans understand as Joyce's central engagement with modern epistemologies, with modern rationalism and universalism.

Joyce used several encyclopaedias in the making of the *Wake* but it has long been known that he had a special relationship with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition.

Ready to hand and inexhaustible, it seems to have been particularly associated with the collaborative *Wake* where friends and family were inveigled into *Wake* composition, partly as a result of Joyce's eye problems but also because the idea of the *Wake* being in some sense the work of a collective appealed to Joyce. The Ellmann account has Stuart Gilbert and Helen Fleischman reading entries from a list of 30 cities, 'among them New York, Vienna, Budapest, Rio de Janeiro, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen […] at the names of streets, buildings, parks and city founders they paused to give Joyce time to think whether they could be brought by pun into his work. So Amsterdam became Amtsadam […] and Slottsgarten in Oslo became Slutsgarten'.[1] Such a practice was confirmed and extended with the publication of *Reflections on James Joyce: Stuart Gilbert's Paris Journal* (1993). Gilbert noted an occasion when five volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* were spread on Joyce's sofa and wrote, too, about the involvement of himself, Helen Fleischman, Padriac Colum and Paul Léon in this process. He also suggests that words and phrases were selected by Joyce in terms of the potential for punning although it is now clear that in fact punning on the names of these parks, rivers, streets and so on was relatively rare in the notebooks.[2] There are some wild distortions that go well beyond punning but, as Geert Lernout points out, 'most of the time the names are transcribed literally'.[3] In his early study of the *Wake* and intertextuality, Atherton (1959) also recognized that *EB* 11 was of significance, claiming that Joyce worked from the articles 'Polar Exploration', 'Wax Figures' and 'The Kabballah' and using *EB* 11 to deflate some of the more pious conceptions of the range and depth of Joyce's knowledge. Atherton suggested, for example, that 'everything he [Joyce] uses in *Finnegans Wake* about the

Cabbala seemed to be contained in the article on that subject in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,'[4] although he gives no evidence for this view.

In the unlikely event of there being a definitive account of the extent of Joyce's usage of *EB* 11 in the *Wake*, moreover, it is certain that the handful of articles identified by Atherton as being 'incorporated' will rise dramatically. Quite apart from the 30 odd cities — Prague, Stockholm, Tokyo, St Petersburg, Delhi, Edinburgh, London, Paris, Washington and so on — famously built into the 'Haveth Childers Everywhere' section (*FW* 532-544), there are less concentrated usages scattered throughout. A full exposition of the relationship between the *Wake* and *EB* 11 would involve numerous *EB* articles, many of them intersecting with the *Wake* at very suggestive points, with emblems and ideas that typify the *Wake* in various ways. *FW* 18.11, for example, refers to 'the gyant Forticules with Amni the fay'. Joyce might have got the genus of earwigs (*Forficulidae*) from anywhere, but the *EB* entry 'Earwig' gives '*Forficula auricularia*' (closer to Forticules) and contains other suggestive details, like the fact that 'the Forficulidae are almost cosmopolitan' (*EB* 11, vol. 8, 825d).[5] A zone of plausibility is established here, extended within a few lines of 18.11 where there are the plays on the word 'ant' in 'und laughed ant loved end left' (*FW* 18.21). The *EB* article ends by pointing out that an earwig's pincers are used as weapons of defence against ants (*EB* 11, vol. 8, 826a). Notebook research, most useful for identifying precise *EB* 11 usage in the *Wake*, has established beyond doubt that Joyce took notes from such *EB* articles as 'Herder', 'Geography', 'Ireland', 'Ramadan' 'Orkney Islands', 'River Brethren', 'Wales', 'River Engineering', 'Roman Law' and 'Rumania'. Thus in VI.B.24 at pages 209-16 a number of notes regarding Islam were taken, one sequence of which includes the words,

'privilege', 'sanctuary', 'caliphate', 'ha'jj' and 'Ka'ba'. This list of words appears in virtually the same order in the *EB* 11 article 'Mecca' (950c/d), although the sequence does not appear in that order in the *Wake* itself and, indeed, was not harvested for *Wake* usage. Other than precise identification in the notebooks, there are good reasons to believe that articles such as those on 'Funeral Rites', 'Ghazi', 'Giaour', 'Hegesippus', 'Heraldry', 'Koran', 'Mahomet', 'Mahommedan Religion', 'Nap', 'Napoleon', 'Orkney Islands', 'Pistol', 'Ulema', 'Wapentake', 'Waterloo Campaign', 'Zouave', and many more besides, also helped shape the *Wake*. Here in addition to precise verbal echoes, there may be relationships of style, tone, structure and even rhythm. Mistress Kate's tour around the 'museyroom' in I.i, for instance, utilizes many details from the *EB* article 'Waterloo Campaign'. 'Inmyskilling inglis', a reference to the Royal Iniskilling Fusiliers at Waterloo, draws on the *EB*'s comment: 'so desperate was the fighting that some 45,000 killed and wounded lay on an area of roughly 3 sq. m. At one point on the plateau "the 27th (Iniskillings) were lying literally dead in square".' The article also has a reference to Wellington and Blucher meeting at 'La Bell Alliance' (*EB*, 381), echoed at *FW* 7.33 in 'this belle's alliance'. Joyce's references to Napoleon's General Gronchy (see *FW* 8.22) and to Blucher (*FW* 9.4) similarly could implicate the *EB* article. The most functional piece of intertextuality, however, may well consist not in verbal echoes of this kind but rather in the breathless rhythm of Kate Strong's tour of the 'museyroom'. This seems to get picked up from an excited narrative speed deployed in the 'Waterloo Campaign' article, a speed that is at odds with the careful and conservative restraint more typical of the *EB*.

For all the widespread understanding that the *Wake* and *EB* 11 are related, however, there has never been an account of the general nature of Joyce's utilization of *EB* 11. The implied assumption has been that Joyce, something of an encyclopaedian himself, alights magpie-like on whatever comes to hand and bends it into whatever the particular demands of the *Wake* might be. Thus there is nothing specific about Joyce's work with *EB*. It becomes just one more source for the *Wake*, albeit an important one.

Here Joyce's usage of *EB* 11 might be described as being opportunistic, even randomised as, indeed, often appears to have been the case. It is not easy to see why Joyce should have taken the note from the 'River Brethren' article at *EB* 11, 374a 'River Brethren/Jacob Engle/tribe immersion' (*NBB* VI.B.1, 179). Deprived of a context since this particular note again never actually appeared in the *Wake*, the chances of finding out must be, to put it mildly, slim. Even where notes do transfer, a wider — or even any — logic for the particular usage is not generally apparent. Exactly why the notes 'ekumen=habitable O', 'rubbish' and 'Talweg/deepest line along valley' should have been taken from the long *EB* article 'Geography' to have been incorporated at *FW* 440.30 and 210.02 is likewise unclear (see *NBB* VI.B.1, 179-180). There is at least one part of the *Wake*, the 'Haveth Childers Everywhere' section, where something like a general principle of selection does seem to be operating. Here HCE in master builder mode is embarking on the final, defiant account of his life. It is an account that rests heavily on the familiar masculinist appropriation of culture and civilisation. Appropriately, then, Joyce litters the account with reference to the building and development of major cities. But this framework implies no necessary kinship with the encyclopaedia from which Joyce is working. Joyce, again, seems to be merely utilizing.

As in other parts of the *Wake*, it is generally impossible to see any pattern of reasoning behind the individual usages in ‘Haveth Childers Everywhere’. The following sequence of notes were among those taken at *NBB* VI.B.29, 027-039 from the ‘Edinburgh’ *EB* article: ‘Calton Hill’; ‘Liberton/ Blackford/ Braid/ Craiglockhart/ Corstorphena/ Arthur’s Seat’; ‘three castles’; ‘all painted/ behind’; ‘Morningside’; ‘Rest and Be Thankful’; ‘Mansie Wauch’; ‘Hawthornden’; ‘my members’; ‘chace’. There seems no reason why Joyce should have taken these as opposed to any other sequence of notes. Nor is there any ordering principle to their incorporation in the *Wake* at 541.01-3, 552.05, 550.30, 543.12, 543.13, 540.22, 553.22, 550.05, 553.23 respectively. That is to say, there is no apparent explanation as to why notes appear where they do, why the ‘Washington’ and ‘Paris’ articles should appear at *FW* 546 as opposed to some other part of the section, or why ‘Tehran’ and ‘London’ notes should figure at 547; ‘Washington’ and ‘Copenhagen’ at 548; ‘St Petersburg’, ‘Paris’ and ‘London’ at 549 and so on.

For all the borrowing, the broader relationship between *FW* and *EB* is hardly one of similarity or likeness. On the contrary, Joyce’s practice here is quite antithetical to the procedures governing the compilation of *EB*. The process of taking notes and building them in the *Wake* in such randomised ways constitutes an obvious wrecking of the order, structure and, by implication, the whole epistemology underlying *EB*. The studied dismemberment evident here certainly responds to *Wake* text expedience, but it also reflects back on the secure rationality and structure of *EB* 11 in very pointed ways. Of course, the note-taking techniques so important to the construction of the *Wake* were applied to a whole range of texts of which the *Encyclopedia Britannica* is only one, which means that Joyce worked on a large number of materials often in very much the

same way, the earlier sequence of notebooks being particularly random in execution. This does not mean, however, that Joyce failed to distinguish between, say, taking and using notes from a newspaper, a relatively loose collection of largely ephemeral data, and an encyclopedia 'designed to […] (represent) in an entirely new and original form a fresh survey of the whole field of human thought and achievement' (*EB* 11, vol 1, ix). On the contrary there is great deal to suggest that Joyce entirely understood that in dissecting *EB* 11 as he did and reassembling it as part of the *Wake*, he was engaged in a very precise act of critical cultural sabotage, exposing in highly inventive ways the absurdities of a culturally specific knowledge formation that insisted on posing as the universal.

Apart from these procedural or methodological interventions there are also the parodic workings of the encyclopedia style and these, in particular, are suggestive of the subversive nature of the relationship between these two texts. In the *Wake* as in sections of *Ulysses* they constitute more than a wicked mocking of second rate intellectualism. They quite often perform at the fragile edges of epistemology where old knowledge becomes undermined not just by better science but by the internal contradictions which collapse 'knowledge' into crude ideology. In *FW* I. v., for example, Shaun's assault on Shem involves a comic interference with the 'science' of craniometry, 'where the skulls of the higher and lower races are compared' and 'various sub-racial types such as the dark and fair Europeans are bought together for the purposes of comparison and contrast' (*EB* 11, vol. 7, 372d-73a). Later at *FW* 422 in a kind of backwoodsman stereotype, skull size is associated with still keeping. Shem has 'a lowsense for the production of consumption and dalickey cyphalos on his brach premises where he can purge his contempt and dejeunerate into a skillyton' (422.6-9). The precise reference here is to

Anders Retzius's 'cephalic' (with a play in Joyce's version on 'syphillis') or breadth index which measured the greatest width of a skull expressed as a percentage of the greatest length. Shem appears to his brother to be 'Negroid', or 'dolichocephalic' ('dalicky'), as well as 'Samoyed' or 'brachycephalic'. The cephalic index of the former, as *EB* 11 tells us so authoritatively, was 70 and of the latter 85; the ideal European skull apparently sitting in the middle with an index of 75 (see *EB* 11, vol. vii, 373a-b). Of course such usages are put to the service of the *Wake* narrative but, inevitably, they work backward to the traditions from which they derive to disrupt epistemological securities. The great potential interest of these interventions is only partly, then, that they help us to complete the picture of how the *Wake* was constructed. More importantly, they help us to position Joyce the intellectual and it is through such interventions that notions about difficult matters, like the question of Joyce's 'politics', for example, can be refined. In the end they help us understand what the *Wake* is actually about.

Equally suggestive usages play with *EB* 11's difficulties in handling forms of knowledge positioned not just on the shifting margins of contemporary currency but, one would have thought, well outside. Heraldry, for example, might be expected to have had little cultural value in the modern world of Edwardian Britain except as an example of redundancy. Reflecting a wide range of ideological sensitivities towards nation, race, aristocracy, conservative social order and so on, *EB* 11, however, produces a huge article on this subject — some 20 pages of double column print, illustrated by coloured prints. It is, in fact, many times longer than the article on eugenics, which did have great contemporary currency but which *EB* 11 clearly, and rightly, thought of as an upstart and derivative project. The astonishingly arcane procedures of 'blazoning' are faithfully

reproduced with the *EB* article on heraldry describing the standard forms and giving many illustrations of how this strange practice was performed. Page 328b points out how '[I]t will be observed that the description of the field is first set down, the blazoner giving its plain tincture or describing it as burely, party, paly, or barry as powdered or sown with roses, crosslets or fleur de lys' — a sentence which, incidentally, would not look out of place in the *Wake*. In his hilariously contaminated versions of such practices,[6] Joyce both follows these amazing injunctions and thoroughly ridicules them. A famous passage in 1.i, for example, explains that Tim Finnegan was the first 'to bare arms and a name', the first to roll up his sleeves as the first builder, the first to bear military arms, and the first to possess a coat of arms:

> His crest of huroldry, in vert with ancillars, troublant, argent, a hegoak, poursuivant, horrid, horned. His scrutschum fessed, with archers strung, helio, of the second. Hooch is for husbandman handling his hoe.
>
> (*FW* 5.6-9)

The tincture here is, suitably enough, 'vert', and at *EB* 11, vol. 13, 323b the author helpfully writes that in heraldry 'green was often named as "vert" '. **He continues that after the 'description of the field' and its tincture is broadly described 'then** should follow the main or central charges, the lion or griffon dominating the field, the chevron or the pale, the fesse, bend or bars, and next the subsidiary charges in the field beside the "ordinary" and those set upon it' (*EB* 11, vol. 13, 328b). If Joyce's 'ancillar' comes from latin *ancilla*, meaning handmaiden, the central charges of Tim Finnegan's cost of arms seem to represent disconcerted handmaidens, done in silver ('argent') and pursued by a 'horrid', 'horned', 'hegoak'. As the *EB* 11 article points out, trees were used as heraldic

devices — the author writes here of ‘Sir Stephen Cheyndut, a 13th century knight’ who ‘bore and oak trees’ and there is an illustration (*EB* 11, vol. 13, 324b). This may help explain ‘hegoak’. This next section, with ‘archers strung, helio’ presumably refers to the ‘subsidiary charges’, although, as throughout, it is far from clear exactly what the design represents (archers pointing arrows at the sun?).

Joyce’s ‘of the second’ is explained at *EB* 11, vol. 13, 328b which refers to ‘three fleur-de-lys of the second’. The writer explains that ‘an ill-service has been done to the students of armoury by those who have pretended that the phrases in which the shields and their charges are described or blazoned must follow arbitrary laws devised by writers of the period of armorial decadence. One of these laws, and a mischievous one, asserts that no tincture should be named a second time in the blazon of one coat’. ‘Of the second’, in the *Wake* passage, then, presumably refers to argent, as the colour silver. In a twist which perhaps echoes the effect on Finnegan’s ‘scrutschum’, ‘fessed’ turns a noun into a verb, a fess being ‘an ordinary formed by two horizontal lines drawn across the middle of the field and containing between them one third of it’,[7] not so much a ‘mistake’ as a signifier, if any were needed, that this is a highly comic version of the extraordinary conventions governing heraldic descriptions, which may not be quite as bizarre as *Wake* writing but which certainly are strange and complex. The *Wake* piece, then, is cod heraldry, just as craniology becomes joke craniology, a comic version of the knowledge so piously served up in the *EB* article, with Joyce woefully failing to comply with the very first rule of blazoning, which, indeed is the whole point about this form of writing, that it should produce in words a ‘lucid’ description of the design.

Embedded just as deeply in the *Wake* are the interventions that poke fun at *EB* 11's attempts to articulate itself as a humanist project, where knowledge is constituted in terms of a progressive, civilizing dynamic, while at the same time indulging a less generous disposition that responds to nationalist instincts. Here *EB* 11 finds itself operating across a spectrum of tones from the ostensibly generous to the patently narrow-minded, although, as it turns out, the gaps between these extremes are not always as wide as one would think. As in the article 'Funeral Rites', which advises readers that to 'confine ourselves to the rites of a few leading races' would be to neglect 'their less fortunate brethren who have never achieved civilisation', the former progressivism can often be just as toe-curlingly condescending and paternalistic as the latter narrow mindedness. Significantly, the same article, in the spirit of inclusiveness, points out that 'a feast is an essential part of every primitive funeral and in the Irish "wake" it still survives' (*EB* 11, vol. 11, 329d).

Joyce deals with such issues in a great number of highly inventive ways. Most obviously he has the *Wake* practice a kind of inverse appropriation, where causes most dear to patriotic hearts are reproduced in utterly wayward contexts. Here they become so hopelessly contaminated as to be virtually unrecognizable in culturally specific terms. The glorious Waterloo campaign, a product of Wellington's 'unswerving determination' and 'firmness' (which is why he figures as 'Willingdone' in the *Wake* incarnation) and 'the invincible steadfastness shown by the British troops and those of the King's German legion' (*EB* 11, vol. 28, 381d), becomes predominantly an Irish victory in the *Wake*. But it also becomes hopelessly conflated with a victory of the Spartan confederacy in 404 B.C, an eighteenth-century defeat of the French by the Austrians, the Norman invasion of

1006, the Crimean War, the American War of Independence, Italian Unification, and so on (see *FW* 8-9). Elsewhere the *Wake* both takes on and outdoes the superior tones of *EB* 11, especially in relation to prestigious myths of origins. Here everything is first and foremost located as 'Irish' in invention. The first building; the first city; the first act of sex; the first writing; 'the first peace of illiterative porthery in all the flamend floody flatuous world' (this being claimed of the Prankquean tale at *FW* 23.9-10); even the first language, the first 'yew' and 'eye' (*FW* 23.36) — all are Irish.

Elsewhere again the *Wake* responds to such tones through massively overdone comic confirmation. Hence in Finnegan's famous funeral in 1.i. the 'primitive' Irish not only have a wake where they commune with the dead in a funeral feast. They also assert the continued life of the dead by feeding the corpse with 'honey, hive, comb and earwax, the food for glory' (*FW* 25.6). They leave offerings, 'pouch, gloves, flak, bricket, kerchief, ring and amberulla, the whole treasure of the pyre' (*FW* 24.32-33), indicating that as 'primitive folk' they 'cannot conceive of a man's soul surviving apart from his body, nor of another life as differing for this, and the dead must continue to enjoy what they had done here' (*EB* 11, vol.11, 330b). They appease the dead to prevent a rising (see *FW* 24. 16-26; 27. 22-23) and see the dead in the stars. Tim Finnegan's 'heart is in the system of the Shewolf' and his 'crested head in the tropic of Copricapron' (*FW* 26.11-13). In short, in this account Finnegan's Irish mourners display just about every kind of characteristic said to typify the response to death in *EB* 11 across 'primitive' peoples of the world, including practicing suttee (see *FW* 253/EB 11, vol.11, 330b) and eating the flesh of the departed (see *FW* 7.10-14), a practice not uncommon, *EB* 11 tells us, amongst primitives like the Uaupes of Amazonia (*EB* 11, vol. 11, 331d).

Such examples are precisely that, illustrations that point to just how central *EB* 11 and the encyclopedist principle is to the *Wake* agenda. The evidence of Joyce working on the *Encyclopedia* in these and many other disruptive ways are all over the pages of *Finnegans Wake* and show the limitations of the commonly held view that Joyce himself was a straight encyclopedic borrower, sharing all the naïve confidence in the popular production of knowledge held by his lead character in *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom. In fact, the *Wake*'s relationship with *EB* 11 is very much more interesting and it is fundamentally shaped by a thoroughgoing skepticism. There are, of course, many reasons why modern Western culture struggled, and continues to struggle, with epistemological faith, but, as I have argued elsewhere, in Joyce's case the astonishing cultural travel of dangerous racist discourses across such fields of knowledge as anthropology, paleoanthropology, sociology, biology and historical linguistics for example — fields that were all simultaneously unraveling in the early decades of the twentieth century — was crucial to the determination of a highly politicised response. The rise of the pseudo-sciences, like eugenics, craniology and phrenology, and the cultural value attached to such irrationalist phenomena as theosophy rendered Joyce likewise highly sensitive to the limitations, ambiguities and downright impossibilities of the confident modern universalism that characterised the encyclopedic tradition.[8] Above all, of course, Joyce was a Catholic Irishman, brought up and educated in a colonized culture and society a positioning that most fundamentally shaped his sensitivity to the 'universal', including to the idea of universal narrative.

In a very general sense, the idea of the later Joyce texts being designed both to encompass and expose the ambiguities, gaps and inconsistencies of what Derrida called

the ‘onto-logico-encyclopedic field’ — or the Enlightenment project — performing their own acts of radical deconstruction, is not new. Indeed it goes back at least to the 1970s.[9] In 1976, Margot Norris was arguing that Joyce’s final text, far from constituting a ‘dreamlike saga of guilt-stained, evolving humanity’ and ‘a mighty allegory of the fall and resurrection of mankind’ was an assault on the very idea of the universal. The *Wake*, she wrote, subverted ‘the most cherished preconceptions of Western culture’.[10]. The value of this idea and its precise dimensions, however, is still being unraveled, albeit in terms now usually outside of any explicit discourse of deconstruction, and it is with that prospect that this account of Joyce’s usage of *EB* 11 ultimately engages.[11] The suggestion is that Joyce’s working of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* brings the larger perspective on Joyce’s engagement with the Enlightenment and modernity in the *Wake* into sharper focus. Joyce’s undermining of the encyclopaedia principle and the epistemology on which it is based here becomes central to the *Wake*’s wider and foundational instincts.

Notes

[1] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (1959; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 628.

[2] Thomas F. Staley and Randolph Lewis, *Reflections on James Joyce: Stuart Gilbert’s Paris Journal* (University of Texas Press, 1993), 20-21; 26-27.

[3] Geert Lernout (ed.) *The ‘Finnegans Wake’ Notebooks at Buffalo* (Turnout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001-) VI.B.29, 5.

[4] James S. Atherton, *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in James Joyce’s ‘Finnegans Wake’* (1959; Mamaroneck: Paul Appel, 1974), 87, 47. Actually there is no article on polar exploration in *EB* 11, although there is one on ‘polar regions’.

[5] This essay adopts the indexing principle of *EB* 11 where the letters a, b, c and d signify respectively the upper and lower half of the first and second columns of the text.

6 There is a strong likelihood that Joyce's interest in the article would have been substantial. The *EB* article begins by showing the ubiquity of heraldic symbols echoing the mock universalism of the *Wake,* particularly evident in this early part of the book where the investment in mock origins is very strong. It states that 'in all ages and in all quarters of the world distinguishing symbols have been adopted by tribes or nations, by families and chieftains' (*EB* 11, vol. 13, 311d). It also shows how writers on heraldry were much involved in myths of origin and points out how the formulation of coats of arms sometimes involved a play on the holder's name. For example, Salle of Bedfordshire had 'two salamanders *sal*tirewise' (*EB* 11, vol. 13, 313a). The writer shows, with strong echoes of Vico who devoted pages to the 'the vanity of nations', that '[t]he legends which assert that certain arms were "won in the Holy Lands" or granted by ancient kings for heroic deeds in the field are for the most part worthless fancies' (*EB* 11, vol. 13, 313a).[6] The article is also, as one might expect, strongly Anglo-centred, nothing less, in fact, than a history of symbols associated with English aristocratic families. None of this establishes certainty that this article is specially used by Joyce, but its sets up a suggestion which is worth following, not least because it intersects with some of the fundamentals of the *Wake*. For an account of Joyce uses of heraldry more generally see Michael J. O'Shea, *Joyce and Heraldry* (Albany: State University of New York, 1986).

[7] The definitions are taken *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1, 742.

[8] See Len Platt, *Joyce, Race and Finnegans Wake* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[9] See Jacques Derrida, '*Ulysses* Gramaphone HEAR SAY YES IN JOYCE' in Derek Attridge (ed.), *Acts of Literature* (London: Routledge, 1992), especially 281.

[10] Margot Norris, *The Decentred Universe of Finnegans Wake: A Structuralist Analysis* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 5.

[11] A development well illustrated by Finn Fordham's essay 'The Universalization of *Finnegans Wake* and the Real HCE' in Andrew Gibson and Len Platt (eds.) *Joyce, Ireland, Britain* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 198-211.