

APPENDIX B

Some Recurrent Words and Phrases

ab ovo usque ad mala This phrase, literally “from the egg to the apples,” is a L adage meaning “from the beginning to the end.” The phrase in whole or in part, and in various deformations, is fairly frequent in *Finnegans Wake*. The phrase *ab ovo*, used in English, is often misunderstood as signifying “from the original source, from the kernel, from the seed, from the germ.” The L phrase is not so meta-physical. A conventional Roman dinner opened with an egg course, concluded with apples, so “from the egg to the apples” corresponds to “from soup to nuts,” and just means “from start to finish.”

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam “To the Greater Glory of God,” the motto of the Society of Jesus, is a phrase very well known, particularly in the form of its initial letters—A.M.D.G.—to every schoolboy taught by Jesuits. It was (and no doubt still is) customary to affix the letters at the head of school exercises and examination papers. In the United States, at least, the letters, or the motto written in full, are often to be found printed on the covers of student notebooks and examination bluebooks.

bella, pia et pura The ambiguity afforded by the L word *bella* yields Joyce endless confusion in *Finnegans Wake*. As a noun, it is plural of neuter *bellum*, “war”—i.e., it means “wars.” As a feminine singular adjective it means “pretty” or “nice.” In conjunction with the name of Anna Livia and the feminine singular adjectives *pura* and *pia*, *bella* would seem to form part of a string of attributes of the Blessed Virgin, or a woman like her—*pia, pura, bella*: “dutiful, chaste, fair.”

Ancient etymologists responded to this ambiguity by deriving *bellum*, “war,” from *bella* (feminine), “nice,” by the process *kat’ anti-phrasin* (“according to the opposite”): “*bellum*, quod res bella non sit”—“war (*bellum*), because it would not be a nice (*bella*) thing.”

But Joyce’s source for the manifold uses of the phrase is not a pious medieval formula, rather it is Vico’s prescription for the establishment of civilized hierarchical society: *pia et pura bella*, “pious and pure wars.” As usual, he is able to make words contradict themselves.

bona fides Although the phrase *bona fides*, “good faith,” is perfectly correct L, its reference in *Finnegans Wake* is to little or nothing pertaining to the classical world. In Ireland until very recently the public houses and ordinary drinking places closed nightly, by law, at hours varying between 10:30 and 11:30 p.m. The ordinary hapless drinker was then required to go home, if his home was easily attainable. But the law took account of the unhappy wanderer far from home at the dread hour, and certain establishments were licensed to cater to genuine travelers—*bona fide* travelers—for extended periods after closing time. Such houses were known as *bona fide* houses, and were highly regarded by the drinking fraternity, who were readily transformed into *bona fide* travelers, since the stipulation of the law, drawn up in days of pedestrian or horse-borne transportation, was that a *bona fide* traveler was anyone who at closing time had put a distance of at least five miles between himself and the spot where he had slept the previous night. In the sizeable city of Dublin, well furnished with public and private transportation, it became no trick at all for respectable citizens to drink at night in suburban pubs five miles or more from the beds in which they had spent the previous night and would also spend the ensuing night, when the charms of *bona fide* drinking palled. Presumably HCE’s pub was a *bona fide* house: Chapelizod was an ideal location for travelers from north-east and south-east regions of Dublin to venture to for licit late drinking. That delightful legal oddity is alas no more, an unsentimental government having recently extended the regular licensing hours and eliminated the special privilege of night-founded thirsty travelers.

et tu, Brute? *Et tu, brute, mi fili*, “And even you, Brutus, my son,” is the L translation of what is purported to be Caesar’s last utterance as he fell under the daggers of his assassins at the foot of the statue of Pompey in the Roman Senate (for the sources report that his actual dying words were spoken in G). The phrase has become famous as the ultimate response to unexpected and unearned treachery on the part of one loved or trusted. According to the Joyce legend the infant writer composed a denunciation of Tim Healy’s betrayal of Parnell (see Appendix A, *Heliopolis*) under the title *Et tu, Healy*. The legend also asserts that Joyce’s father had the effusion printed as a broadside or pamphlet, but no copy has survived.

ex nihilo nihil fit “Nothing can be made out of nothing” is a dictum of the schools that Joyce probably ran across in his attempt to adapt Aquinas to his needs. *Finnegans Wake* contains several variations on the phrase, often with a moral bearing.

ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius We have found only two occurrences of this L proverbial equivalent to “You can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear” in *Finnegans Wake*, and both times mangled almost beyond recognition. Are there other occurrences we have failed to find?

The point of the proverb—“A Mercury is not made out of just any piece of wood you like” (see Appendix A, *Mercurius*)—may not be very persuasive to readers conditioned by Old Testament ridicule of idols, but presumably an ideal herm must have shown a certain aptness for its purpose even before the carver went to work on it. A herm was a sturdy stump of wood topped with a carved human head and made distinctive by a phallus half-way up. Perhaps a good herm-log already showed a knob suitable for the head and had a projecting branch to be shaped into the phallus. Why Joyce uses this proverb, and why he so mangles it, we leave to the reader.

felix culpa *O felix culpa*—“O happy sin,” “O lucky fault”—is the title of a medieval hymn that celebrates the paradox that although the Fall of Adam was the direst misfortune to befall mankind, and the most reprehensible sin ever committed, it yet produced for mankind an entirely unexpected boon and grace, the demonstration of God’s infinite love through which came about the Incarnation of God in Man, and the Redemption through the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ. The theme much fascinated writers on the theme of the Fall and the Atonement, and is fundamental to Milton’s epic, *Paradise Lost*. In Book XII of *Paradise Lost* the fallen but repentant Adam is shown a vision of the future including the redemptive mission of Christ which provokes him to an ecstatic outburst of joy and wonder:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
 That all this good of evil shall produce,
 And evil turn to good; more wonderful
 Than that which by creation first brought forth
 Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
 Whether I should repent me now of sin
 By mee done and occasion’d, or rejoice

Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
 To God more glory, more good will to Men
 From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.
 (PL, XII, 469–478)

For discussion of this theme the finest source is A. O. Lovejoy's famous article, "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall," *ELH*, IV (1937), 161-79.

A stimulus for continued interest in the paradox was that to wish the Fall had not happened seemed somewhat impious, for it implied wishing away the Incarnation of Christ. A less doctrinal fortunate result of Adam's fall not usually adduced in the *felix culpa* tradition is the fact that it provided Milton with the topic of the greatest poem in the English language. Similarly, *Finnegans Wake* depends for its existence on the fall of Tim Finnegan from his ladder, as it does on the recurrent falls of all the other phoenix culprits who wake again at the *Wake*.

FERT The L word *fert* is the 3rd person singular present indicative active form of the verb *fero*, and means "he [she, it] bears or carries." The word we are here dealing with no doubt means "he carries," for it is a device of the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, and is in fact an acronym of the motto of that Order, *Fortitudo Ejus Rhodum Tenuit*.

Fortitudo Ejus Rhodum Tenuit "His Strength Has Held Rhodes," the motto of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, celebrates the heroic defense of Rhodes by the Order against a determined and numerically superior Turkish onslaught in 1480. The "he" in question is either God or St. John. The Order arose in Jerusalem during the Crusades, and conducted fighting retreats from the Holy Land to Cyprus, and from Cyprus to Rhodes. In 1523 it was finally forced to surrender Rhodes to the Turks, and was granted Malta as its base by the Emperor Charles V, whence it is sometimes called the Order of the Knights of Malta. In the vicissitudes of modern history the Order survives, split into Catholic and Protestant divisions. The Catholic part of the Order became a preserve for the extremely blue-blooded continental nobility and presumably has shared their fortunes. The principal Protestant branch became in 19th-century England a charitable organization, which runs the St. John's Ambulance Association. In the early 20th century ambulances in Dublin were operated by the St.

John's Association, and it was no doubt on O'Connell Street that Joyce encountered first the remnant of the organization that has had so colorful a history and bears so romantically evocative a badge.

Hic, Haec, Hoc To make a note on *hic, haec, hoc* may be redundant, but Joyce alludes to the paradigm at least a dozen times. *Hic*, etc., translated "this" and sometimes "here," is the L demonstrative pronoun for the First Person. Students learning L have for countless generations learned the paradigm of this pronoun, reciting first the Nominative singular forms for masculine, feminine, and neuter, then the Genitive forms (identical in all genders), then the Dative forms (likewise identical), then the three Accusative forms, etc.: *hic, haec, hoc; huius, huius, huius; huic, huic, huic; hunc, hanc, hoc*. . . . The metronymic effect is hypnotic and rather reminiscent of a religious chant in a sacred language. The echo remains forever in any mind subjected to the old learning process, and remained so rooted in the mind of Joyce that he has coined "hickeryhockery" (160.13) as a name for L.

Laus Deo Semper "Praise to God Forever" is a Jesuit slogan used as a sort of antiphon to *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, and the initials are often written at the bottom of a paper that is headed A.M.D.G. Joyce found the initials L.D.S. irresistibly alterable into L.S.D. (l.s.d., standing for *libri, solidi, denarii*), the symbols, prior to decimalization, for Pounds, Shillings and Pence. The rearrangement *Laus Semper Deo* continues to make quite acceptable L, but in this form also suggests the mercenary side of a Church that sold Ireland to an English king for Peter's Pence (see Appendix A, *Laudabiliter*).

Obedientia Civium Urbis Felicitas "The Obedience of the Citizens is the Happiness of the City" is the implausible and no doubt intentionally tendentious motto on the Arms of the City of Dublin. For most of its long history Dublin's citizens were obedient to their foreign masters, who made the city the center of their domination of Ireland, and received in return very little urban felicity. Nobody bothers to note what the slogan may mean now in a parliamentary republic. Joyce uses the formula as a leit-motif for Dublin that occurs at least eleven times in *Finnegans Wake*.

Rhaeda / Rhoda The enigmatic doublet *rhaeda/rhoda*, under various spellings, occurs at least four times in *Finnegans Wake* (081.09,

327.11, 434.07, 478.13) and probably oftener. We are quite at a loss to say what the combination means. *Rhaeda* (spelled various ways, properly without an h) is a L word borrowed from Celtic, which was the name of a kind of four-wheeled carriage. *Rhoda* is a G word, plural of *rhodon*, “a rose,” and also the name of a feast day when graves were decked with roses. Probably this odd doublet is associated some way with the similar doublet Romulus/Remus (see Appendix A, *Romulus*) but we confess we are baffled in trying to ascertain its significance.

Securus iudicat orbis terrarum “Untroubled, the world [*literally*, the circle of the lands] judges”—this sentiment, under several ingenious disguises, occurs at least six times in *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce had used this sentence, received at second hand, much earlier in his career in the paper called “Drama and Life” that he read before the Literary and Historical Society of University College, Dublin, on January 20, 1900. He picked up the phrase—a quotation from St. Augustine (*Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* [“Against the Letter of Parmenianus”], III, 24)—from the *Apologia* of Cardinal Newman (Ch. III). Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 74, gives details, but fails to note that Newman was also quoting at second hand. Newman had read the sentence (in effect, “The whole world gives its calm judgment”)—a remark directed by Augustine against the Donatist heresy—in an article by Cardinal Wiseman on “The Anglican Claim.” Wiseman’s employment of this remark, Newman relates, was the specific impetus to his own abandonment of Anglicanism for Roman Catholicism. Joyce’s distortions of this crucial sentence are perverse and impudent (*Finnegans Wake* 076.07–08, 096.33, 263.27–28, 306.R2, 513.01–02 and 593.13–14).

Thalatta! Thalatta! “Sea! Sea!” was the cry of the leading elements of Xenophon’s Ten Thousand as they came through the mountain passes above Trebizond and saw the Black Sea below them in the distance. The moment is unforgettable in one of the most vividly written accounts of a military campaign ever recounted, the so-called *Anabasis* of Xenophon. Xenophon, exiled from Athens, had gone virtually as the guest of a Spartan friend along with a contingent of 10,000 Greek mercenaries who had been hired by Cyrus, brother of the king of Persia, to help him in a revolt against his brother. When, deep inside Persia, Cyrus was killed in battle, his Persian forces dissolved leaving the Greeks isolated. The leading officers of the mercenaries,

invited to negotiate with the king's officials, were treacherously massacred, leaving the Ten Thousand without generals. Xenophon with some others took command and led the Greek force northward (their retreat westward to the Mediterranean being blocked) through the mountains of Armenia toward the Black Sea. After dreadful hardship and constant harassment by savage tribesmen in the snow-covered mountains, they finally reached the sea. The excited cry *Thalatta! Thalatta!* rippled back through the ragged ranks of the army.

The word *thalatta* is the Attic form of the more general G word *thalassa*. Joyce uses both forms, in which he is technically correct. Xenophon was an Athenian, but the Ten Thousand included Greeks of all dialects. (The expedition lasted from 401 to 399 b.c.)

Unde gentium festines “Whence in the world are you hurrying?”
“Where among the nations are you hurrying from?” is a question that occurs at least three times in *Finnegans Wake*. By whom? To whom? Why?

Veni, Vidi, Vici “I came, I saw, I won”—usually rendered “I came, I saw, I conquered”—was Caesar's laconic boast after he had defeated King Pharnaces II of Bosphorus at the battle of Zela, in Asia Minor, in 47 b.c., one of the final battles in his successful civil war against Pompey. Laconic once, it has become a verbosity by repetition—at least six times in *Finnegans Wake*.