Shahrazade, Turko the Terrible, and Shem: The Reader as Voyeur in *Finnegans Wake*

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*Finnegans Wake* contains a number of references to *The Thousand and One Nights*; and the number of those *Arabian Nights* provides a model both for the proliferation of accounts of HCE’s fall, and for the structure of cycle and *ricorso* which Joyce has borrowed from Vico. Like the “one thousand and one stories, all told, of the same” (*FW* 5.28) in Joyce’s text, *The Thousand and One Nights* suggest the completion of one cycle (or millenium) and the beginning of another. Certainly, the *Arabian Nights* is a text known for its numbers and for its sex—as is *Finnegans Wake*. Yet Joyce has taken another more obscure element from the *Arabian Nights*, and applied it to his own “nightynovel.” Among other narrative structures, the tales and fables of the *Arabian Nights* involve a traditional feature of medieval Arabic literature known as the “witnessing system”—a convention which validates a particular saying (often by Mohammed) by locating it in a chain of witnesses who testify to the authority of the text (Gerhardt 378). Joyce, too, uses a witnessing system. Yet, as the third chapter of the *Wake* indicates (with the conflicting and confusing accounts of passersby and pub customers), Joyce’s intent is not to validate but to devalue authority. The chain of witnesses provides not an accurate testimony, but what Colin McCabe has described in Joyce’s work as an “infinite regress of meta-languages”—these meta-languages being, more simply, the discourses which attempt to certify and specify the meaning of a given prior text, yet which become themselves discourses to be specified—or questioned—by another witness (14).

The key here to the unraveling of the chain of witnesses and to the devaluation of authority is Joyce’s treatment of voyeurism as he relates it to the narration and the reading of the *Wake*. And it is here—with regard to the positions of watcher and actor, reader and
that the Arabian Nights provides perhaps its most significant contribution to Joyce’s redefinition of narrative in the *Wake*. For, like Joyce’s narrative tactics in the *Wake*, Shahrazade’s strategy in the narration of the Arabian Nights uses forms of voyeurism to subvert the balance of authority between teller and listener (or reader), and to redefine traditional concepts of textual and sexual mastery.

Though there are several scenes of voyeurism to consider in the *Wake*, and though there are references to the Arabian Nights throughout Joyce’s text, I will concentrate my discussion here on the tale of Willingdone, the Lipoleum(s), and the two jinnies (*FW* 8.9-10.23)—a tale which contains no overt allusions to the Arabian Nights, yet which provides an example of the kinds of narrative subversion that both Shahrazade and Joyce are engaged in. For my conclusion, I will turn to “The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies” (*FW* II.i) where we can watch the aesthetic subversion taking place in the “Magnificent Transformation Scene” (*FW* 222.17) of a pantomime. Before I discuss these texts from the *Wake*, however, I would like to look at the overall structure of the Arabian Nights; and, particularly, I’d like to look at the uses of looking in the text.

Shahrazade’s use of narrative as an act of survival and liberation is a familiar literary topos. Later on, I will comment on the remarks Michel Foucault has made on this subject. But, for the moment, I would like to consider certain other elements of narrative structure which emerge in the Arabian Nights before Shahrazade arrives at her lifesaving narration. The frame narrative which establishes Shahrazade’s position as the teller of the tales to King Shahryar, as well as the tales she tells, involves a complex series of betrayals, assertions of authority, and, significantly, episodes of voyeurism. Margot Norris’s suggestion of a primal scene or primal sin as the source of the various episodes of voyeurism in the *Wake* is appropriate here. In the *Wake*, the primal scene involves the exposure or betrayal which results from the children’s viewing of their parents’ sexual activity (Norris 44-45). The primal scene of the Arabian Nights, however, involves the witnessing of one’s own sexual betrayal—a scene which is repeatedly revised in the rivalry between King Shahryar and his younger brother.

While sibling rivalry is prominent in both the Arabian Nights and the *Wake*, a more significant rivalry which emerges in the former text is that between men and women. Shahryar asserts his own superior position in this relationship by enacting a vicarious and sexual revenge on his unfaithful wife: he violates a different virgin each night, and
orders her to be beheaded the next morning. It is Shahrazade who volunteers to be the next—and, she hopes, the last—virgin, and who manages to halt this series of violations by telling the King part of a tale each night after sex. Significantly, Shahrazade invites her sister Donyahzade to become the ostensible audience of her tales; the two sisters share both female imprisonment and female narration. In the rivalry between male master and female subject, Shahrazade has challenged the male-centered hierarchy of elder and younger kings with a perhaps female concept of balance and cooperation.

The frame of the Arabian Nights, then, provides us with certain distinct narrative elements: the notion of witnessing associated with betrayal; a rivalry in which witnessing figures as an element in the exchange of power; and a configuration of the female pair. These elements emerge from a fairly traditional narrative politics. At the outset of the Arabian Nights, the male is the master of the female subject; he commands the woman to entertain him—as domestic servant, and/or as sexual object. (One of the many titles of The Thousand and One Nights is, appropriately, The Arabian Nights' Entertainments.) To put this situation in textual terms, as the reader of the woman's performance, the man reserves the right to judge, interpret, and determine her text. He provides the meta-language for her discourse. However, the master is subject to two betrayals here—both engineered by women. Initially, with the King's betrayal by his wife, his power as a reader is subverted; he is forced to read his own vulnerability in the Queen's assertion of her own sexual freedom. His meta-language, then, becomes implicated in the infinite regression of languages which Joyce later turns into Finnegans Wake. As a reader, the King has become not so much a reader, a judge, but a passive witness to a female rebel's text. However, though the Queen's subversion of her master has exposed the fallibility of the master's power, the subversion continues to sustain a traditional concept of authority; the Queen has simply now put the male, not the female, in the position of passivity.

Significantly, both Shahrazade and Joyce take the Queen's subversion one step further as they subject the master to a second betrayal. If the Queen has turned the authoritative reader into a passive witness, Shahrazade turns the witness into a voyeur—a figure whose position involves both passivity and activity, both detachment or concealment and participation. This is clear in the King's position regarding Shahrazade's narrative. With the presence of Donyahzade in what
becomes a narrative ménage à trois, the King loses direct control over the text. His reading of Shahrazade's performance is mediated by the other woman who shares and undermines his position as the sole reader/critic. The reader, then, is no longer a detached judge who can determine the content of a text with his own interpretive text; nor is he a passive witness who is determined by another text (as he is while he witnesses his sexual betrayal). If we were to ascribe a single position to this reader in the narrative dynamics of Shahrazade's revisionary text, we would place him on the margin—not outside, but on the edge—of the circle in which the women's narrative is enacted. Yet the reader/King's position is not a static one. Rather, like a voyeur, the reader is in a compromised position—in two senses of the word: not only is he caught in his vicarious enjoyment of the sexuality of Shahrazade's tales, but he is also caught between the two postures of the supposedly authoritative audience of the tales, and the performer in them. (The King's performance consists of the nightly sex with Shahrazade which serves as a physical counterpart to the sex of her narrative.)

Shahrazade's revision of the traditional dynamics of reading and writing depends largely on the fusion of these two functions. In reference to Joyce's work, Hélène Cixous has suggested that an understanding of the text demands a "lecture-écriture" (419-32)—a simultaneous reading and writing. I would add, then, that the text is the product, to begin with, of a "lecteur-écrivain"—a reader-writer. The same is true of the Arabian Nights, and of the formulation of the voyeur. For if the King, as reader, has no stable or static position with regard to the text, this is so because the writer of the text is also unstable. The King shifts from master to victim because Shahrazade, too, moves from subject of a dictator to dictator of a tale. Like the King, Shahrazade is a voyeur who produces her narrative in a compromised position.

Shahrazade's compromised position is, however, to her advantage. She shares her stance with Turko the Terrible of Ulysses and of the Gaiety Theatre's first Christmas pantomime (McHugh 132)—a voyeuristic figure who, as the song goes, is "the boy / that can enjoy / invisibility" (U 10) precisely because he can proclaim that invisibility in the text of his song while he himself remains safely hidden. Shahrazade's mobility and invisibility engage her reader in a kind of shell game; each time the reader attempts to reveal her under a particular cover, he finds that she is elsewhere. It is this ability to be
always elsewhere which is essential to the role of the *voyeur* and to Shahrazade's survival as a storyteller. Foucault's remarks on narrative and survival are relevant here.

In "What is an Author?" Foucault asserts that the writer "must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing": in order to assert himself in his text, the writer must efface himself as well. Foucault excludes Shahrazade from this category of writers, saying that, rather than enact death, her text avoids it (by seducing the King away from murder into marriage) (102–3). Yet I would argue here that Shahrazade avoids death precisely because she does play dead in her text; in fact, her seduction is part of her strategic self-effacement. She prevents the division of her speaking head from her subjected body by presenting herself as an already divided woman. While, on the other hand, Donyahzade may divide the King's share of power over the tales, she also appeases the King by helping to create the illusion of a divided and dependent woman. Shahrazade's use of Donyahzade, then, creates a visible mask of invisibility and vulnerability for the elusive and manipulative speaker.

In a sense, Shahrazade's narrative strategy allows her to conduct her own *Wake*. For the Irish, a wake involves a raucous ceremony of game-playing, story-telling, singing, and drinking intended to protect the mourning household from the spirits of death. Shahrazade fend off similar spirits which take the form of the King and his violent power. Significantly, she does so not by emphasizing her own activity (as do the celebrants described by the ballad of "Finnegan's Wake," for instance), but by presenting herself as a passive victim, figured in the fragmented image of the two sisters.

Through her treatment of doubles and halves, and her redirection of the lines of narrative vision, Shahrazade has subverted the traditional formulation of authority, with its suggestion of usurpation and rivalry. Yet, as we move from Shahrazade's to *Finnegans Wake*, we see that Joyce's text is full of rivalries—between Willingdone and the Lipoleum(s), Buckley and the Russian General, the Cad and HCE, Mutt and Jute, and Shaun and Shem, to name a few. And while the Arabian Nights moves eventually towards reconciliation, the *Wake* moves along a series of antagonisms whose constant realignment propels the text. Nevertheless, the nature of these realignments suggests that, like Shahrazade, Joyce locates (or dislocates) the authority of the reader in the figure of the *voyeur* who is both victor and victim, usurper and usurped. In fact, we can see
these realignments as part of what Norris has called the “maternal salvage” of ALP—like Shahrazade, another revisionary female. Though Norris opposes ALP’s redistribution and exchange to the “unlawful appropriations” of the rival males, I would like to suggest that this male rivalry, and its constant im-balancing of power, is subject to transformation by the redistributive aesthetic of ALP (64, 67–68).

As with the initial configurations of power in the Arabian Nights, the tale of Willingdone and the Lipoleum(s) seems to indicate that authority is determined by one’s position as viewer or performer. “[F]einting to read in their handmade’s book of strategy,” the jinnies create a performance, “a cooin her hand” and “a ravin her hair” (FW 8.31–34). Like the King who watches the narration dramatized as the performance of two women, Willingdone is the reader of the two jinnies’ calculated self-exposure. But the jinnies are not the only performers here. For, as he “git the band up” (FW 8.34), Willingdone becomes a voyeur who participates vicariously in the sexuality of the scene before him. His erection here parallels the King’s nightly sex with Shahrazade; it represents an enactment of the narrative, preventing the reader from determining the text from a position of detachment—or from any single position at all. Willingdone is forced into a simultaneous observation and involvement.

It might appear that Willingdone maintains a position of mastery over the two jinnies. After all, his sexual and martial authority is affirmed as “sexcaliber hrosspower” (FW 8.36) just as the power of the King’s sword is concentrated in, and replaced by, his phallus. Yet the potential authority of Willingdone’s erection is undermined by an emblem of perception: the “tallowscoop” (FW 8.35, 9.34) which falls “on the flanks of the jinnies” (FW 8.35–36). Both phallic and optic, the tallowscoop implicates the role of the reader with that of the voyeur. Even its optic qualities alone suggest the dual role of the reader/voyeur as the tallowscoop fuses immediacy and distance, detachment and participation. As with the regression of metalanguages and of witnesses throughout the Wake, here in particular, the voyeur joins a chain of viewers and exposers which dislocates rather than defines authority.

As becomes evident when the three rival Lipoleum(s) condense into the “hindoo seeboy” (or the “cursigan Shimar Shin”) (FW 10.14, 10.18), the voyeur himself is exposed, seen by another voyeur who, unlike Willingdone, appears to remain “hindoo” or hidden.
Instead of a chain of witnesses who authorize their own and each preceding text, Joyce produces a chain of *voyeurs* who keep the text suspended in indeterminacy. One critic of the *Arabian Nights* has pointed out that Shahrazade’s survival and narrative success depends on her replacement of the signified with the signifier, a strategy which allows for the development of an unlimited number of discourses or of witnesses (Ghazoul 43). The same occurs in the *Wake*—a text which remains “lapse but not leashed” (*FW* 62.24), falling, with neither origin nor anchor, from one signifier to the next, from one act of voyeurism to another.

Joyce’s narrative strategy here makes possible both a plurality of discourses and a plurality of readings or of positions for the reader/voyeur to adopt. Perhaps because of this plurality, neither and each side emerges as a single victor from the battle for power between Willingdone and the Lipoleum(s). Willingdone wins the division of his three rivals who are represented by the “triplewon hat” (*FW* 8.15); and the Lipoleum(s), realigned three-in-one as Shimar Shin, win their own survival and partial retaliation by blowing up both Willingdone’s “harse” and the triplewon hat that Willingdone has hung on the “harse”’s tail (*FW* 10.2). Since the positions of power are determined by the dynamics of both combat and voyeurism, the victory here must be a pyrrhic one—in two ways—as each master is necessarily made subject to vision and division.

The pyrrhic or peer-ic victory is essentially the creation of the Lipoleum(s) who unsettle the apparently monumental power of “Stonewall Willingdone” (*FW* 10.2) with their fractious and fractured presence, “grouching down in the living detch” (*FW* 8.22). While the jinnies read their strategy against Willingdone from a “handmade’s book” (*FW* 8.32), so, in a sense, do the Lipoleum(s): they take their strategy from Shahrazade’s book of tales. As Shahrazade has done, the Lipoleum(s) present themselves to their supposed master as already divided; in this way, they survive their division into “half of the threefoiled hat” (*FW* 10.8). The Lipoleum(s) center their threesome on one soldier—Shimar Shin—whose name suggests the antagonistic twins of the *Wake*, and whose identity appears to be constituted in two opposing halves. Joyce has, in a way, prepared us for this reading of the Lipoleum(s) through his allusion to Giambattista della Porta (as “Gambariste della porca”—*FW* 9.35–36), the author of “I Due Fratelli Rivali.” Through Shimar Shin, the Lipoleum(s) preserve Shahrazade’s illusion of a binary and
hierarchical structure while they subvert the mastery of the nominal authority—an authority which remains, like its putative subject, always elsewhere. After all, with their shifting between a double and a triple configuration, the Lipoleum(s) elude both defeat and victory; neither Willingdone’s sexcaliber, nor the reader’s interpretive penetration will succeed in articulating (that is, in both dividing and determining) their position. Male rivalry has been feminized, in a sense, transformed into the redistributive tactics of the Prankquean who turns Tristopher and Hilary (FW 21.12) into Larryhill and Toughertrees (FW 22.19, 22.24), and who turns a binary opposition like this one (sad/glad) into a triple configuration with her fairy-tale pattern of three returns.

Appropriately, Joyce derives the names of the two “jiminies” in the Prankquean episode from Bruno’s motto, itself a compromise of contraries: “In tristitia hilaris hilaritate tristis” (McHugh 21). It would appear that Bruno and Shahrazade have the same function in Joyce’s text. Both figures represent a breakdown of oppositions into reunion or compromise. Nevertheless, there is a difference here, suggested in part by the difference in gender. For instance, Shahrazade’s function relates more specifically to oppositions in the dynamics of reading and writing. And her manipulation of these oppositions suggests the figure of the voyeur as reader-writer—a figure, after all, who takes a prominent part in this text about sexual exposure and sexually motivated observation. Finally, Shahrazade’s strategy is a subversive one which involves the concealment inherent to the voyeur. Shahrazade’s subversion prompts a reconsideration of Julia Kristeva’s distinction between the rhetorician and the stylist with regard to the issue of gender in the Wake. In Desire and Language, Kristeva argues cogently that symbolic language is distinct from (and, perhaps, in opposition to) semiotic language. The one involves a repressive attribution of meaning and fixity, while the other operates in the area—or the chora—of the unnameable, of the unstable, and of desire; symbolic language belongs to the father, while semiotic language is the mother’s or the woman’s discourse. Yet Kristeva goes on to ascribe semiotic (or poetic) language to the “stylist” who challenges that father’s discourse with a new one of his or her own. The “rhetorician,” meanwhile, remains fascinated with paternal discourse, “miming a father” in his or her symbolic language (133–39, 138). I would argue that, in certain respects, the stylist simply continues the possessive and repressive behavior of
fathers and sons, and of male discourse. It is the rhetorician, on the other hand, who adopts Shahrazade’s distinctly female strategies of subversion and transformation. As Shahrazade has done, the rhetorician mimes the father, at the same time, “seducing” him away from paternal discourse towards the hybrid and elusive language of the *chora* (or body) he has intended to master (138).

Shem, too, is a rhetorician, functioning in the *Wake* like the hidden seeboy Shimar Shin. Shahrazade, Shimar Shin, and Shem are all *voyeurs* who announce their power from a position of disguise or concealment, and whose discourse both mimes and defies their opponents. Joyce makes Shem’s dual function clear in his revision of the Biblical family which gives Shem his name. Shem’s Biblical antecedent is known for covering his drunken father Noah without taking a glance at Noah’s exposed body. His brother Ham, on the other hand, is known for both watching and proclaiming his father’s physical vulnerability. Yet, in Joyce’s condensation of Ham, Shem, and Japhet into Shem and Shaun, Shem adopts the roles of both brothers at once. For, when he writes, Shem’s text both covers and reveals—proclaims his identity and obscures it. As Shem puts it himself, his writing is a “squirtscreen” to detail and disguise a “squidself” (*FW* 186.6-7). As becomes clear in Shem’s self-inscription with his own excrement, Joyce suggests here that writing involves disguise and self-compromise; narrative is a form of *de-scription*—the unwriting of any particular subject of any particular text. And it is this *de-scription* as a transformation of both self and master, and as an act of survival, which makes the writer a *voyeur*, a hidden seeboy.

As I have pointed out, the gaze of the *voyeur* sets in operation a continuing exchange between the positions of reader and writer, master and subject. The exchange continues until the two positions combine, and until subjection becomes an element of mastery. This fusion of opposites is apparent, certainly, in Joyce’s frequent allusions to Bruno and his theories, and in his use of the Prankquean and her threes. In “The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies,” as well, where pantomimic transformation and combination is the rule, we see HCE, “cap-a-pipe” (*FW* 220.26), turning into his Shem-like rival the Cad; a fallen Shem/Glugg turning into HCE, caught in the complex of “Herzog van Vellentam,” “Bohnaparts,” and “jennyjos” (*FW* 238.24-26, 238.33); and the Lipoleum(s) or Bohnaparts
turning from male to female as they become "la pau'Leonie" to "Josephinus and Mario-Louis" (FW 246.16-17). Of course, these transformations have been taking place from the very beginning of a text which forces us to redefine reading. Margot Norris has pointed out Heidegger’s observation that reading and gathering are etymologically related. The German lesen, which denotes both activities, recasts reading as "not the rapid, automatic decoding to which we are accustomed, but a slow, patient, bringing together, putting one thing with another" (69). In other words, reading Finnegans Wake is a participation in the semiotic, not the symbolic, discourse of a voyeur as we confront a language that cannot be decoded or named. Moreover, the fixed meta-language of a master has given way to the work of a female rhetorician, and to ALP’s gathering and redistribution. We can see this transformation of narrative dynamics in the "Mime," where the Prankquean and her numbers appear, and where "tempt-in-two will stroll at venture and hunt-by-threes strut musketeering" (FW 245.19-20) in yet another version of the "baffle of Whatalose" (FW 246.27).

In the gestural language of the "Mime," Joyce offers us a dramatization of Shem/Glugg’s change from authoritative writer and reader to reader-writer (to use Cixous’s terms again) or voyeur. Somewhere in this pantomime scenario lurks the invisible Turko the Terrible of Ulysses and of the Gaiety. Here it is Izod, with her "grateful sister reflection in a mirror" (FW 220.9) who takes the role(s) of Shahrazade and Donyahzade, and who becomes an agent of Shem/Glugg’s transformation. Joyce’s diction leads us to associate Shem’s search for the answer to the flower-girls’ riddle with Willingdone’s observation of the jinnies; both men are engaged in some sort of visual prying. Shem’s "gazework" recalls Willingdone’s "Wounderworker" tallow scoop (FW 224.26, 8.35); and the slang "bander" occurs again in reference to both Shem who must "fand for himself," and Shaun who "bandished it with his hand the hold time" (FW 224.26, 224.34). Even without linguistic parallels, the episode is the same: the male figure looks at the female temptresses who resist him as they expose themselves to his gaze. Significantly, the context for this resistance has shifted now from warfare to interpretation as Shem tries literally to read Izod and her flower-girls. Yet, as the King has done in his intended reading of Shahrazade, Shem fails in his attempt. Before we consider the cause for Shem’s failure, it will be helpful to look at his response to it.
Shem answers his failure to provide an answer to the riddle of color with an act of revenge: he writes. In his anger, "He do big squeal" and he will "set it up all writhefully rate in blotch and void" (FW 228.6, 229.27). Like his attempt at interpretation, Shem's self-expression participates in the male discourse of "unlawful appropriation." His reading has been an unsuccessful exercise in determination—in fixing the elusive text of the flower-girls with his authoritative meta-language. To Shem's one-track questions, the flower-girls and/or Izod respond with only negatives and movement—forms of verbal and physical evasion. Shem's written corrective for the girls' indeterminacy involves another attempted declaration of authority: his "squeal" is a meta-language of aggressive retaliation. Nevertheless, though he may intend to state the case against the vagueness of heliotrope in the apparent clarity of black and white, Shem ends up writing in "blotch and void," "reading off his fleshskin and writing with his quillbone" (FW 229.30). In other words, whether he likes it or not, Shem resorts to the voyeuristic reading-writing of a hidden seeboy. As I.vii has suggested, writing involves the decription of both the writing subject and the subject of the writing.

I have pointed out that transformations are the rule in Finnegans Wake. The conventions of pantomime theatre shed some light on the particular type of transformation at work in Joyce's "Mime." The "Harley Quinn" (FW 221.25) of traditional pantomime is endowed with a slapstick or bat which has the ability to transform his surroundings and to convert his enemies. The slapstick has the magic power we see in Shem's "lifewand" (FW 195.5), and perhaps, in Stephen's ashplant (U 432). Yet, for all its phallic power, Harlequin's wand fails him, and he must be rescued by a "benevolent agent" who is traditionally female. What has taken place here is an assertion of female power and of a female aesthetic—one which replaces combat with reconciliation and reunion. In Shem's case, it is the combined figures of Izod, the flower-girls, the Prankquean, and ALP who transform the phallic mastery of both sex and text.

As a voyeur, Shem must both read and write with an "eye-trompit" (FW 247.32-33), and so must accept the error inherent in every attempt to see or describe the truth. After all, throughout the riddling of the "Mime," Shem can presumably see the colors of the rainbow girls ("eye seize heaven!"—FW 247.31), but he cannot articulate those colors in a text. Even his eventual solution of the
riddle remains unverbalized. The text tells us simply “Wink’s the winning word!” and “Luck!”; later on, we are told “There lies her word, you reder!” and the letters appear as architectural and anatomical pieces (FW 249.4-5, 249.13-14, 249.16-17). Again, a fixed text is impossible; even Izod’s word (of honor) will lie to us. As with the signs of window, hedge, prong, hand, and so on, the letters of Izod’s text remain scattered throughout the equally scattered text of the *Wake*. In order for Shem, or any reader, to discover either text, he or she cannot simply decode the signs into a meta-language. Instead, the reader must gather the letters together, redistribute them, and rearrange them. Writing in a voyeuristic mode, Izod has concealed the answer to her riddle in her question (FW 248.11-14); in order to see it, we must read in the same way.

For all that it is a pantomime, Joyce’s “Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies” has its share of sound and words. Nevertheless, silence has the last word: “Mummum” (FW 259.10). Yet this is not a literal, but a figurative silence. Unlike the “Mum’s” and the “Silanse” (FW 228.15, 228.17) which precede Shem’s verbal revenge on the flower-girls, this silence suggests the ability of this voyeuristic text to remain outside the limiting and determining framework of a meta-language. Both the “Mime” and the *Wake* leave their reader able to see the scattered signs of the text, able to gather them together in some way, but unable to articulate and master them in a language of his or her own.

In my discussion, I have suggested the possibility that Shahrazade offers Joyce a model for the reader redefined as a *voyeur* who simultaneously holds the reader’s power of judgment and the writer’s power of expression, who both discriminates and generates. Like a witness in the infinitely regressing chain of Joycean and voyeururistic testifiers, Joyce’s model has created a model of her own as a counterpart to the King. Among her tales in the *Arabian Nights* are some which concern Haroun al Raschid, the Caliph of Baghdad during the ninth or tenth century, and the supposedly beloved “Commander of the Faithful.” The Caliph is also a *voyeur* who masks himself to maintain his form of mastery; disguised as a commoner, the Caliph investigates the welfare of his kingdom. He becomes, then, a “commander” or dictator who both watches and prescribes, who is both passive witness and active teller. In his wanderings around Baghdad, the Caliph suggests the *Wake*’s HCE—
a suggestion which Joyce hints at through the image of HCE "stambuling haround Dumbaling" (*FW* 33.36–34.1). Together, HCE and Haroun al Raschid suggest a new position for interpretive and/or narrative authority in the configuration of reader, writer, and text. The position is, in fact, a lack of position, a lack of any fixed site from which a fixed claim to power can be made. In the *Wake*, the identification of place must coincide with disinformation; for instance, when we ask where ALP is, the answer must be "we nowhere she lives" (*FW* 10.26). After all, we are forced to look for her through an "eyetrompit."

As the stories about HCE, Willingdone, and others multiply in the *Wake*, the text warns us that we will be unable to distinguish an origin or an individual at all: "since in this scherzarade of one's thousand one nightinesses that sword of certainty which would identifide the body never falls" (*FW* 51.4–6). If it were to fall, that sword would divide head from body, teller from text, or teller from listener. And such a divisive and decisive falling would put a stop to the somewhat different falling—the linguistic lapsing—which is the substance of the *Wake*. In a sense, the text's principle is to conduct a wake for itself—to keep at bay the evil spirits of a traditional hermeneutics which determines an origin and an ending for its subject, and which produces the final utterance of a meta-language. One way in which Joyce has kept the traditionalists at bay is to transform the sword of certainty—not into the proverbial ploughshare, but, as a *voyeur* would, into a tallowscoop.

**NOTES**

1. Though neither the sisters nor the brothers are twins, the mirroring configuration of the women as they share in the presentation of the tales suggests a form of equality that the two brothers lack.

2. As McHugh points out, "bander" is French slang for "to have an erection" (8).

3. He lurks elsewhere in the *Wake* as well, as "Tutk of the Theater," "Thorker the Tourable," and "turgoes the turrible" (*FW* 98.10, 132.18, 205.29).

4. Henceforward, Shem/Glugg will be, simply, Shem.

5. The first series of questions concerns only gems, and the second, only yellow (*FW* 225, 223).

6. Appropriately, Stephen uses his ashplant dramatically, "shattering light over the world," in the pantomime-influenced play of "Circe" where he ponders gesture as a "universal language" (*U* 432).

7. With her more powerful wand, the benevolent agent might be a version of what Suzette Henke has called the "phallic mother" in Joyce (117–18).
8. This is only fitting since, after the Regency, pantomimes ceased to be completely silent (Mayer 19).

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