

‘Celticism, Ballad Transmission, and the Schizoid Voice: Ossianic Fragments in Owenson, Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett’

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This essay surveys responses to Macpherson’s *Ossian* in Irish literature, alongside analysis of the development of literary Celticism. Despite being a key text behind the development of Celticism in Irish writing, *Ossian* is consciously rejected in Irish Romanticism and in the Celtic Revival. However, *Ossian* becomes a symbol of literary recycling and mental fragmentation in Irish Modernism. Texts studied in this essay include Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl*, Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, and Beckett’s *Murphy*.

Key words

James Macpherson, Sydney Owenson, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Celticism, Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism

Dafydd Moore has stated that “It is difficult to overstate the impact of *The Poems of Ossian* on the literature of Western Europe.”¹ As opposed to a highly enthusiastic response in Western Europe generally, Irish reactions to James Macpherson’s work were often hostile. Of course, Ireland is central to the story of the impact of *Ossian*, since it is the home of most of the source material, i.e. the Fíanaighect ballads, and because Macpherson’s work provoked a wave of scholarly debate and artistic responses. Irish scholarly reactions to *Ossian* have been covered extensively in recent years.² However, as Clare O’Halloran has pointed out, “[h]istorians and critics have, for the most part, failed to appreciate the importance of Macpherson as a catalyst in Irish cultural development.”³ This article argues that an account of the key responses in Irish literature is needed in order to assemble a broader understanding

of the reaction to *Ossian* in Irish culture. Celticist Romantic and Revivalist engagements with *Ossian* should be central to any such account. However, a comprehensive consideration of *Ossian* and Irish literature also needs to consider English-language Irish literary engagements with *Ossian* beyond Celticism.

Ossian is largely responsible for the creation of literary Celticism, despite Macpherson's divisive claims regarding Irish history and his antagonistic stance towards Irish critics.⁴ However, the discourse of Celticism served to shroud the fragmentary nature of *Ossian* and Celticist texts rarely interacted with the Macpherson's works themselves. Celticism itself can be separated into two main phases, an early period following the United Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the Act of Union of 1800, and a later phase, the delayed Romanticism of the Celtic Revival of the late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century. Despite being key texts behind the development of literary Celticism in Ireland, Macpherson's *Ossian* poems are rejected and sidelined in Irish Romanticism and in the Celtic Revival.⁵ *Ossian* is either considered threatening, since its Scottish Gaelic dimension undermines Ireland's position as a uniquely spiritual "Other" capable of contrasting with modern industrialised England, or it is spurned in favour of more "authentic" versions (such as Brian O'Looney's translations of Mícheál Coimín). The challenge of Macpherson is combatted directly by Sydney Owenson in her 1806 text *The Wild Irish Girl*. Later in the nineteenth century, Yeats takes an interest in the legend of Oisín (or "Oisín") but hardly engages with the actual texts of Macpherson's *Ossian*. In Irish Modernism, with the disappearance of Celticism and a diminishing interest in cultural "authenticity" and "purity" (replaced by an emphasis on textual collage, psychoanalysis, and inauthenticity), allusions to *Ossian* appear in works by Joyce and Beckett. The authors studied here – Owenson, Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett – have been selected as they represent different historical eras and literary cultures: Romanticism (Owenson), Revivalism (early Yeats), Modernism (Joyce), and

Modernism/Postmodernism (Beckett). Sydney Owenson may not have the same status as Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett but *The Wild Irish Girl* contains an important literary response to Macpherson's work and was published at a crucial period of Ireland's history.

According to George Watson:

Celticism is an ideological construction, originating in the eighteenth century, an attempt to create, re-create or assert a cultural identity for the people of Ireland, Scotland and Wales which will distinguish them from the majority inhabitants of the British Isles [sic], the English. ⁶

Although Celticism's first phase flourishes in the early nineteenth century, the origins of the phenomenon – and, arguably, the tone of Romanticism itself – lie in the publication of Macpherson's *Ossian* prose poems, starting in 1760. ⁷ As Fiona Stafford has suggested, “[i]f we were looking for a text to demonstrate the defining qualities of Romanticism, James Macpherson's *Ossian* would be hard to beat.”⁸ Emerging from post-Culloden Scotland, Macpherson's English language “pseudotranslation”⁹ of supposedly long-lost Gaelic poetry appeared in an era searching for authenticity in place of artificiality (ironically, *Ossian*'s synthetic artificiality will later be used as a symbol within Modernist texts), as James Pethica has discussed:

The notion that folk stories are repositories of experience and emotion more powerful and authentic than the artificial culture and art of the educated ... had become popular in the late eighteenth century ... [this] contributed to the sensational popularity of the poetry published by James Macpherson ... which purported to be the work of Ossian, a Gaelic warrior-poet from an unspecified remote period of pre-history. Macpherson's “Ossianic” poems – in fact merely adaptations and imitations of Gaelic material he had gathered in Scotland –

were in vogue for more than a decade, and influenced many foundational Romantic texts, even after their recent origin had been exposed ...¹⁰

Not all of Macpherson's work had recent origins, as Malcolm Chapman has noted:

Macpherson had ... in his travels gathered together an important collection of manuscripts which, but for his intervention, might have been entirely lost. Important among them were the early sixteenth-century work now known as *The Book of the Dean of Lismore, An Leabhar Dearg* ... and *An Duanaire Ruadh*.¹¹

In terms of the repositories of emotion Pethica mentions, Macpherson's work has a pervasive sense of regret at the disappearance of an old, heroic culture. According to Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, "Ossian represents a heightening and emphasising of the features of the Gaelic work in and through the language of eighteenth-century Sentimental writing in English."¹²

Macpherson's works, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Scottish Highlands* (1760), *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books, together with Several Other Poems composed by Ossian, the Son of Fingal, translated from the Galic Language* (1761), and *Temora* (1763), faced immediate acclaim but also investigation and scepticism. As Stafford has noted, initial hostility towards Macpherson's output involved protestations from Irish researchers and antiquarians.

Fingal and *Temora* were greeted by a barrage of objections from Dublin, as scholars such as Charles O'Connor ... criticised Macpherson's free-handling of Gaelic poetry ... Even more aggravating was his appropriation of Irish heroes, and the refusal to accept that the Scots were originally inhabitants of Ireland.¹³

O'Connor's criticism includes an imagined dialogue between the bard figure Ossian and his "translator" Macpherson in *Dissertations on the History of Ireland* (1766). In this exchange, the two figures discuss how best to perpetrate their scam: "Do, *Ossian*; make you a Collection of our old vulgar Tales about the *Tain-Bo-Cuailgne*, and *Fiana Ereann* ... I will be your *Translator* and *Dissertator* ... I alone will ensure your Wares, and make a good Market, before we are detected!"¹⁴ As Seamus Deane has noted, "All through the late eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century, Irish commentators ... fought the *Ossian* battle over and over, denying the Scots the primacy they claimed in the Celtic hierarchy."¹⁵ An important part of the "*Ossian* battle" was fought within Irish fiction.

Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), an epistolary "national tale", tells of Horatio, "a young landlord, long resident in England [who] finds his authentic identity in Ireland".¹⁶ Owenson's novel contains a lengthy discussion of Macpherson's texts. As Cliona Ó Gallchoir has pointed out, "Ossianic Celticism was extremely influential in Ireland in this period, and contributed very significantly to the characteristic representations of Ireland and Irish culture produced at this time."¹⁷ Ó Gallchoir observes that in Owenson's text "a combination of manifest Ossianic influence and a rhetoric of denial and rejection is central to the novel's enormously influential construction of Ireland."¹⁸

There are strong scholarly and intertextual aspects to *The Wild Irish Girl* and the book contains extensive footnotes citing non-fictional sources. As Joep Leerssen has suggested, *The Wild Irish Girl* "pretends to be about Ireland [but is] in fact ... about other texts about Ireland."¹⁹ Part of this heteroglossic "infotainment" is an extended assertion of *Ossian*'s Irish provenance. This is important for Owenson, because if Ireland cannot be understood as being the original and purest Celtic nation, then it is not uniquely placed to perfectly complement the Anglo-Saxon world. So, the Celtic "primacy" claimed for Scotland by Macpherson must be overturned. As O'Halloran has pointed out, "[t]hat the forgery question tended initially to

obscure all other considerations is understandable, since Ireland was the only country which seemed, at the time, to lose from the popular acceptance of Macpherson's creation."²⁰

In Owenson's text, Horatio deploys "arguments used by Macpherson, Blair, etc ... to prove that Ossian was a Highland bard".²¹ A priest informs Horatio that although "Ossian is supposed to be a Scottish bard of ancient days ... We are certain of his Irish origin, from the testimony of tradition, from proofs of historic fact, and above all, from the internal evidences of the poems themselves, even as they are given us by Mr Macpherson."²² The priest then embarks on a lengthy disquisition, pointing out Macpherson's errors, producing various proofs of *Ossian's* Irish origin, and submitting forms of textual evidence such as "a bundle of old manuscripts" which turns out to contain "The Conversation of Ossian and St Patrick."²³ Faced with such a learned and convincing defence, Horatio admits he is "fairly routed."²⁴ Here there is a discussion of Macpherson's *Ossian* but no textual transmission.

In *The Wild Irish Girl*, the priest's victory in proving *Ossian's* Irish origins aligns with an attempt to secure Ireland's status as the original, most pure, and most "authentic" Celtic culture. This strategy praises racial purity: "they were true Milesians bred and born ... not a drop of *Strongbonean* flowed in their Irish veins"²⁵ as well as linguistic purity: "the Celtic dialect used by the native Irish is the purest and most original language that yet remains."²⁶ This exposure to an "unadulterated" culture – as well as a love affair with a feminine personification of Ireland in the shape of the "*natural* and *national*" princess Glorvina – acts as a tonic for the somewhat drained Englishman:

Wearied, exhausted ... at a moment when I was sinking beneath the lethargic influence of apathy, or hovering on the brink of despair, a new light broke upon my clouded mind, and discovered to my inquiring heart, something yet worth living for. What that mystic something is, I can scarcely yet define myself, but a magic spell now irresistibly binds me to that life..."²⁷

Weariness and exhaustion belong to the English world in Owenson's text, while Ireland offers a revivifying and experience: "What a dream was the last three weeks of my life! ... It seemed to me as if I had lived in an age of primeval simplicity and primeval virtue."²⁸ Part of this is the charm of the "original and primitive" locals who possess "colloquial wit", and who display "cordiality and kindness."²⁹ In addition to the primeval simplicity of the local population, the landscape and architecture in the west of Ireland offer a sublime and wild grandeur to the tourist: "Grand even in desolation, and magnificent in decay—it was the Castle of Inismore. The setting sun shone brightly on its mouldering turrets, and the waves which bathed its rocky basis, reflected on their swelling bosoms the dark outlines of its awful ruins."³⁰

The construction of Ireland in *The Wild Irish Girl* is that of the romantic, spiritual, wild dream-land which will complement the more prosaic traits of England as an act of "reconciliation." For Seamus Deane, "[The Irish national novel] is seeking to find some reconciliation between versions of the English and Irish national communities that would stifle the impact of the French Revolution ... the provision of the ballast of the English national character for the volatility of the Irish." Deane adds that this is a "Whig dream of reconciliation" and an "unreality."³¹ In other words, it is Owenson who is dreaming, much like the Englishman Horatio. Owenson's novel closes with marriage and the following hope: "In this the dearest, most sacred, and most lasting of all human ties, let the names of Inismore and M—— be inseparably blended, and the distinctions of English and Irish, of protestant and catholic, for ever buried."³²

Malcolm Chapman has argued that the Celtic/Anglo-Saxon system of opposition (and complementarity) demonstrated in the work of writers such as Owenson and Scott originates to a large extent in Macpherson's work: "The Ossianic controversy promoted a picture of the

Celt as natural, emotional, naïve, and a failure in the rough and tumble of the modern world.”

³³ This “picture of the Celt”, and the image of the Celt’s opposite, the Saxon, was revived in the mid nineteenth-century by Matthew Arnold. Drawing on Macpherson’s texts, Arnold conceptualised the Celtic and Saxon races as being fundamentally and essentially contrasting, but also perfectly matched. Arnold, in his lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1866) wished to find a perfect synthesis of “the idealist Celt and the materialist Anglo-Saxon.”³⁴ This is undertaken for ideological and political reasons, as George Watson has discussed, “In *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, Celticism is very much deployed for assimilative purposes: its subtext is how to bring Ireland more firmly into the Union.”³⁵ Being feminine and childlike dreamers, the Celts, in Arnold’s view, always need the Saxons around to take care of all of the practical work. So, Watson concludes, “Arnold’s repressive tolerance suggests that the Celt is lucky to have the dull and muddy-mettled Saxon to run his affairs for him; in return the Celt will serve to leaven the Saxon lump, bringing with him to the heavy imperial dining table his wit and his visionary and spiritual qualities.”³⁶ This work laid the foundations for the Celtic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, according to Robert Crawford: “It was *Ossian* by way of Matthew Arnold who structured the Celtic Twilight in Ireland and Scotland.”³⁷

An example of Macpherson’s influence on the Celtic Twilight, via Arnold, can be found in the early work of Yeats, as Gregory Castle has pointed out: “Yeats’s mystical view of the Irish folk tradition, developed partly in response to Matthew Arnold’s imperialist Celticism.”³⁸ However, the “marriage” of Celtic and Saxon cultures is no longer sought. Indeed, “The Wanderings of Oisín” (1889) is a nationalist work which makes pointed reference to “Fenians” rather than the “Fianna” or “Fena”: “Put the staff in my hands, for I go to the Fenians, O cleric, to chaunt”; “On the flaming stones, without refuge, the limbs of the Fenians are tost.”³⁹ Here Yeats rejects or ignores Macpherson’s *Ossian*, opting for an origin

controlled Ossianic source text for “Oisín” in the form of Brian O’Looney’s translations of the work of Mícheál Coimín.⁴⁰ Macpherson’s Scottish *Ossian* would not have suited Yeats’ Irish nationalist purposes. Nevertheless, Yeats is working within, or against, a dualistic discourse founded upon Macpherson’s work.

According to Ed Larrissy, Yeats’ early work is also informed by the activities and literature of the Ossianic Society of Dublin, which was itself established as another Irish reaction against Macpherson:

Ireland’s attempts to wrest Ossian back from Scotland was ambitiously embodied in the Ossianic Society of Dublin, founded in 1853, whose learned *Transactions* Yeats studied ... Yeats learned from a scholarly tradition instigated by Macpherson’s celebrated work: and he also chose to base his first ambitious long poem on the matter which was most clearly related in the public mind to the essential qualities of the Celt.

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Earlier publications attempting to discredit or correct Macpherson include Theophilus O’Flanagan’s *Derdri* (1808), published in the first (and only) volume of the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin*. Here O’Flanagan attempts to redress the “monstrous fabrication” of Macpherson’s “Darthula.”⁴² Despite the activities of the society Yeats does adapt Macpherson’s work on one occasion, as Larrissy notes:

In his influential lectures, *On Celtic Literature* (well known to Yeats), Matthew Arnold had quoted (or slightly misquoted) a line from Macpherson’s *Ossian*: “They went forth to the battle but they always fell” ... Yeats gave as a title to one of his poems the same misquotation from Macpherson ... though he later changed it to “The Rose of Battle.”⁴³

A Dublin journalist also quotes this line during a discussion on pyrrhic victories and lost causes amid the rhetoric of the “Aeolus” episode of *Ulysses*: “They went forth to battle, Mr O’Madden Burke said greyly, but they always fell.”⁴⁴ This line will reappear – transformed – in *Finnegans Wake*. Yeats’ interest in Macpherson is fleeting. According to Larrissy, it “did not survive into the twentieth century.”⁴⁵ In terms of early Irish literature, Daniel Gomes argues that “Yeats’s emphasis was predominately on recalling a prior mythological unity” rather than on the kind of fragmentation found in Macpherson’s work.⁴⁶

Despite Yeats’ overall rejection of Macpherson’s texts, the binary relationship set up by Arnold, based on Macpherson’s work, survives into the purple glow and pavements grey of Yeats’ era. In the 1880s, according to Roy Foster, “[t]hough jeering at Matthew Arnold” Yeats still “apparently subscribed to the Arnoldean view of the Celt as dreamy, sensitive, and doom-laden.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, as John Brannigan has commented, “Yeats wrote of a distinction between the Celt and the English ... and of affinities between the Irish and Scottish fairy tale which were unmatched in English writing.”⁴⁸ As Yeats writes, “The reaction against rationalism of the eighteenth century has mingled with a reaction against the materialism of the nineteenth century.”⁴⁹ It was partly this Horatio-like reaction against rationality and materialism which had initially led Yeats into his occult adventures and investigations, as Pethica has suggested: “the youthful Yeats ‘tried many pathways’ ... in the 1880s in search of anti-materialist forms of truth.”⁵⁰ According to Foster, Yeats was working in “the tradition of Matthew Arnold [and] the philosophical and anti-materialist side of ‘Celticism’ in 1893.”⁵¹ Even after the waning of Celticism, Joyce speaks of England having “almost entirely a materialist civilization” and creates anti-materialist texts in an imagined lineage of “Celtic” i.e. not specifically Irish – philosophy.⁵² The idea that English materialism must be countered by “Celtic” culture survives from the Revival into Modernism.

In the period from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the “Celtic world”⁵³ went through drastic and rapid change, including the continued decline of the Irish and Scottish Gaelic languages. Irish and Scottish Modernisms developed out of greatly changed political situations from that of Irish and Scottish Romanticisms.⁵⁴ During the Romantic period “Celticism was used as a tool in the construction and expansion of the post-1745 British state.”⁵⁵ At this point, before the rise of O’Connell and before the tragedy of the Famine, Owenson’s “Whig dream of reconciliation” between Ireland and England was still possible, if implausible.⁵⁶ But after O’Connell – and the Famine – no such reconciliation was forthcoming. Since the marriage of Celtic and Saxon cultures had failed to produce a harmonious “end to history” in Ireland, Celticism could no longer be used to promote a discourse of convergence and balance. In Ireland, as Foster has noted, “the Celtic Revival became the Gaelic Revival, and was rapidly politicized.”⁵⁷ As a result of these developments, Celticism recedes rapidly at the beginning of the twentieth century, coinciding roughly with Yeats’ loss of interest in Macpherson. However, English modernity, emanating from the centre of imperial power, was seen as posing a threat to the identities of the Celtic “periphery.” As a consequence, we see in Modernism a marked interest in the far reaches of the Celtic world (the Aran Islands, the Hebrides), especially to islands of primitive vitality considered less contaminated by the “filthy modern tide.”⁵⁸

In contrast to the historical contexts of Irish and Scottish Romanticisms, the Modernist period saw the British Empire beginning to fall apart and cracks starting to show in the British state itself.⁵⁹ Importantly for the study of Irish Modernism, this period also comes after the dawn of psychoanalysis. If notions of national or imperial wholeness were being undermined during this period, so were concepts of personal or psychic unity, especially in texts by Joyce and Beckett.⁶⁰ However, the national and the mental are often conjoined in Joyce’s works. See, for example, the phrase “little brittle magic nation, dim of

mind” in *Finnegans Wake*.⁶¹ Similarly, following the Romantic period, Macpherson’s *Ossian* ceases to be involved in debates concerning primitive vitality, authenticity, purity, or place of origin. Instead, within Modernist texts *Ossian* gains a capacity to signify some of the concerns and methods of the new era: mental fragmentation, indeterminacy, textual recycling, and literary collage.

Publications of Macpherson’s works ceased during the Modernist period, a fallow period following the texts published in 1896 to mark the centenary of Macpherson’s death. Sebastian Mitchell notes that “At the time of the publication of *The Poems of Ossian* [Howard Gaskill’s edition, published in 1996] there had been no new edition of the poems produced by a British or American publisher since 1926.”⁶² However, aspects of Celtic culture re-emerge within Irish and Scottish Modernisms in order to combat English culture rather than to marry it (examples of this trend include the various “Celtic” features of Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, and Hugh MacDiarmid’s “Gaelic idea”). This is partly due to an anxiety in Irish and Scottish literature concerning the perceived threat of an English modernity of soulless materialism (a continuation of anxieties dating back at least as far as the 1800s), or as a response to the historical domination of Ireland or Scotland by England. As Deane has declared: “History ... must be countered by fiction.”⁶³ Indeed, since the Modernisms of Ireland and Scotland were often designed to vandalise or subvert English culture, they became more formally and linguistically advanced than the arguably more formally moderate Modernism of England.⁶⁴ Some of these texts of Irish or Scottish Modernism can be placed in a context of “Celtic” culture, broadly understood (*Finnegans Wake*, for example). However, Ossianic elements also appear in texts that are difficult or impossible to place in any kind of “Celtic” context, for example Beckett’s *Murphy*. The remainder of this essay will consider the different ways in which Joyce and Beckett react to Macpherson’s *Ossian*.

Joyce was very much aware of the *Ossian* controversy⁶⁵ and held three copies of Macpherson's work (including Italian and German translations) as part of his Trieste library,⁶⁶ a collection that predates the composition of *Finnegans Wake*. In a letter to Paul Léon dated September 11, 1937, written during the final stages of the writing of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce requests a copy of *Ossian*.⁶⁷ *Finnegans Wake* notebook VI.B.45, containing notes written in January and February 1938 in Paris and Zurich, contains a number of Ossianic entries.⁶⁸ Unlike Yeats, Joyce never placed much faith in supposedly "authentic" or "pure" Celtic mythology; during the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses* the "twelve tribes of Iar" feature "the tribe of Ossian."⁶⁹ Like Mangan and Wilde, Joyce understood "the value of the false, the insincere and the artificial, over whatever purported to be 'real,' genuine or authentic art", as Sinéad Sturgeon has noted.⁷⁰ However, *Finnegans Wake* can be read as a "Celtic" text (if we accept Joyce's use of the term),⁷¹ with its use of the figure Fionn mac Cumhaill (from what Joyce called "the amorphous Celtic *Odyssey*"),⁷² its purposeful Celtic obscurity,⁷³ and its idealism and scepticism deriving from the "Celtic" philosophers Berkeley and Hume.⁷⁴ In *Finnegans Wake*, Shem, the Joyce-like writer figure, is compared to "jameymock farceson."⁷⁵ Here, by comparing himself through Shem to Macpherson, Joyce mocks his own method of composition and its inauthentic or "mock" status. As Hillary Clark has commented,

Joyce's task in composing *Finnegans Wake* ... involves rearranging ready-made narratives and ... knowledge ... his method of "interpolation" and "recycling" involves continually working elaborations, revisions and supplements into the text, while retaining the earlier drafts alongside the new material.⁷⁶

Similarly, Vincent Cheng has stated that "Forgery, theft, and plagiarism appear to be givens in Joyce's concept of the literary world."⁷⁷ Joyce himself wrote that he was "quite content to go down to posterity as a scissors and paste man" as it seemed "a harsh but not unjust

description.”⁷⁸ Like Macpherson, Joyce is a gatherer and recycler of textual material. Elsewhere in *Finnegans Wake*, the phrase “*MacPerson’s Oshean*”⁷⁹ suggests that dreams and personal identities are mixed, fluid, and recycled (water generally signifies repetition and return in *Finnegans Wake*).

The considerable amount of Ossianic material in *Finnegans Wake* can be seen by conducting a brief search in the online “*Finnegans Wake* Extensible Elucidation Treasury” (fweet.org). Searching the words “James Macpherson” returns 152 elucidations. Details of the specific Macphersonian textual matter incorporated into *Finnegans Wake* are also to be found in articles by Ward Swinson and Fritz Senn.⁸⁰ Joyce mainly works with “*Temora*” and “*Fingal*” – thus connecting *Finnegans Wake* intertextually with the most and least “authentic” Macpherson texts. According to Moore, “*Fingal* most closely corresponds to extant traditional ballads actually in Gaelic; *Temora* is furthest from the extant tradition.”⁸¹ There are 61 examples of textual transmission from “*Fingal*” and 52 from “*Temora*”. However, Joyce also incorporates elements from ‘Comala’, “The War of Caros”, “The War of Inis-thona”, “The Battle of Lora”, “Conlath and Cuthona”, “The Death of Cuthullin”, “Carric-Thura”, “The Songs of Selma”, “Lathmon”, “Croma”, “Cathlin of Clutha”, “Cath-loda”, “Oina-mural” and “Colna-dona.” What is the point of the inclusion of these scattered *Ossian* fragments? As Senn has commented, “Sometimes Joyce seems to have been content merely to create an atmosphere reminiscent of the Ossianic poems.”⁸² According to Stafford, “[t]he repetitious nature of the language, imagery, metre and even the plots [of *Ossian*], has an almost mesmeric quality” with “imprecise” characters and sense of landscape.⁸³ The repetitive use of Macpherson in *Finnegans Wake* helps to create the obscure, uncertain night-world of *Finnegans Wake* and its representation of dreams and unconsciousness. Aside from this “macro-level” usage, meanings at the “micro-level” can also be deciphered.

An allusion to “Fingal” features right at the onset of *Finnegans Wake* (in its fourth paragraph). The announcement of Conal in Book II of the poem, “If fall I must, my tomb shall rise, amidst the fame of future times”⁸⁴ is repurposed by Joyce as “Phall if you but will, rise you must: and none so soon either shall the pharce for the nonce come to a setdown secular phoenish.”⁸⁵ Macpherson’s phrase already concerns the Wakean themes of death and resurrection but Joyce adds another image of endings and rebirth with “Phoenish”, while making his phrase more suggestive (in both senses) of bodily, non-monumental erections and of sleeping and waking. The elegiac grandeur of “Fingal” is transformed into the comedy and farce of *Finnegans Wake* and Macpherson’s prose poetry is subsumed into the word-music of Joyce’s final text. An illustrative example of the use of “Temora” (Macpherson’s name for Tara, seat of the high kings of Ireland) in *Finnegans Wake* comes slightly further into the first chapter: “hoist high the stone that Liam failed”.⁸⁶ This line adapts “When thou, O stone, shalt fail: and Lubar’s stream roll quite away!”⁸⁷ but adds an allusion to the Lia Fáil, the ceremonial stone at Tara. This construction-themed phrase is part of the building of the central figure HCE (his occupation is a hod-carrier and he is destined to fail/fall). This phrase retains the rising and falling dualism of the first example.

Both of these examples occur right at the beginning (or resumption) of *Finnegans Wake*, in Book I. One particularly interesting example of direct derivation from an Ossianic text to *Finnegans Wake* occurs in Book IV, the final section and “ricorso” of Joyce’s work: “Which the deers alones they sees and the darkies they is snuffing of the wind up.”⁸⁸ According to Swinson,⁸⁹ this phrase alludes to Macpherson’s “Carthon: A Poem” from *The Works of Ossian* (1765), which was itself based on a version of the Scottish ballad “Bàs Chonlaoich” (“The Death of Conlaoch”).⁹⁰ The relevant section of Macpherson’s text reads: “Two stones, half sunk in the ground, shew their heads of moss. The deer of the mountain avoids the place, for he beholds a dim ghost that guards it: for the mighty lie, O Malvina, in

the narrow plain of the rock.”⁹¹ Macpherson’s note to this section reads: “It was the opinion of the times, that deer saw the ghosts of the dead. To this day, when beasts suddenly start without any apparent cause, the vulgar think that they see the spirits of the deceased.”⁹² The final section of *Finnegans Wake* is a “chapter of resurrection and waking up” according to William York Tindall,⁹³ so the apparition of this eerie Macpherson material is well suited to its surroundings. Joyce’s “book of the dark”⁹⁴ frequently blurs death and sleep, and is interested in anything interred, subterranean, or chthonic.

As Donald Meek has discussed, in working with the ballad “Bàs Chonlaoich”, “Macpherson was ... using at least one source-poem which originated in Scotland.”⁹⁵ This may be considered as an instance not only of textual transmission of Macpherson’s prose poetry in Joyce’s work but also of a miniature link – via Macpherson – between the Scottish Gaelic ballad tradition and *Finnegans Wake*. While Owenson and Yeats sought to sideline the Scot Macpherson and, in the case of Owenson, to thoroughly discredit Scottish claims to Ossianic material, Joyce’s text actually contains a small amount of material with its roots in a genuine Scottish Gaelic ballad (although it is unlikely that Joyce knew of the source of “Carthon”). *Finnegans Wake* incorporates the kind of textual matter that critics such as Meek have used to indicate that “it is quite incorrect to imply that the tradition tapped by Macpherson had no proper Scottish dimension” and that Macpherson was “operating ... within ... a tradition which was well rooted in Scotland.”⁹⁶ Here Joyce makes direct use, for his own purposes, of material that would later be summoned as a defense against two charges commonly directed at Macpherson: that Macpherson had appropriated Irish culture for Scotland and that he had not worked with actual source material.⁹⁷ This Ossianic material is utilised by Joyce in his exploration of textual recirculation/transmission and of literary construction and fabrication. The material is also part of Joyce’s representation of dreams as a kind of indeterminate, illusory “hoax” (despite the presence of authentic ballad material in

Macpherson's work), his preoccupation with different types of repetition, and his rendering of the linked histories of Ireland and Scotland.⁹⁸

As was mentioned earlier, a Romantic focus on national or racial traits, as seen in texts such as *The Wild Irish Girl*, is replaced by Modernist conceptions of personal and national fragmentation. The fragmentary nature of *Ossian* is highlighted and engaged with in Irish texts following the disappearance of Celticism. As we have seen, *Finnegans Wake* contains a large amount of "fragments" taken from the works of James Macpherson. Robert Crawford has discussed the importance of the fragment in modern literature:

It is a form which speaks of cultural ruin, and of potential re-assembly ... Just as the Ossianic fragments are part of the aftermath of Culloden, in our own century the greatest uses of the fragment have come in the work of poets writing in the wake of a war which shattered the civilisation they knew. Pound used the form for much of his career and Eliot shored up fragments against his *Waste Land* ruins.⁹⁹

We may add Joyce to this list. Furthermore, in addition to the sense of global collapse – or at least European fragmentation – in the early twentieth century, there was also the partial crumbling of the United Kingdom and Ireland during this period. Warfare is not as central to *Finnegans Wake* as it is to *Ossian*. However, *Finnegans Wake* does represent a "troubled terrain."¹⁰⁰ Personal and national divisions and splits frequently merge in *Finnegans Wake*. As opposed to the models of convergence offered in works like *The Wild Irish Girl*, *Finnegans Wake* is a text of deliberate instability. Significantly, the *Wake* was also composed in years following the partition of Ireland, a "partitional of twenty six and six."¹⁰¹

In *Finnegans Wake*, the phrase "MacPerson's Oshean" is associated with "Schizophrenesis",¹⁰² partly because Joyce is linking *Ossian*'s status as something consisting of different elements to the fragmentation of the split or schizophrenic mind. Similarly,

Beckett makes use of *Ossian*, and a character of unstable, scattered origin to signal the “schizoid voice” in his early text *Murphy* (1938, French translation in 1947). Stafford has discussed the attractions of *Ossian* for postmodernism: “postmodern culture offers echoes, quotations, repetitions and correspondences ... In such a climate, a work that insistently blurred the normal distinctions between text and annotation, author and translator, past and present, quoting freely from different traditions ... was likely to attract new interest.”¹⁰³

Murphy is a fairly Joycean text as Beckett works go, written before the younger writer’s turn to textual distillation and reduction. Much of the action (or inaction) in the later stages of *Murphy* takes place at the “Magdalen Mental Mercyseat” hospital in London. According to Shane Weller, “if *Murphy* contains a range of terms drawn from psychoanalytic and psychiatric discourse, it is undoubtedly the concept of schizophrenia that dominates that novel.”¹⁰⁴ Beckett uses a Scottish character with a redolent name, (alongside a remarkably scattered background and, in the French version of Beckett’s novel, a liking for *Ossian*) to explore the “schizoid voice.” Beckett’s text tells us that “Dr. Killiekrankie, the Outer Hebridean R.M.S., had some experience of the schizoid voice. It was not like a real voice, one minute it said one thing and the next minute something quite different.”¹⁰⁵ Killiecrankie’s speaking voice sometimes lapses into Groundskeeper Willie-style rolled Rs: “severe burrrns”, “The essence of all cold storage ... is a free turnover.”¹⁰⁶ Chris Ackerley has discussed Killiecrankie’s origins and interests:

In the French text his background at this point is more complex: conceived in the Shetlands, born in the Orkneys and weaned in the Hebrides, he is a great admirer of *Ossian*, and “croyait s’y connaitre en voix schizoïdes. Elles ne ressemblaient guère aux voix hebridiennes, ni aux voix orkadiennes, ni aux voix shetlandiennes. Tantôt elles

vous disent ceci et tantot cela.” Jung might on occasion use the phrase “Ossianic emotions” for wild flights of fancy.¹⁰⁷

As Ackerley has noted, “*Murphy* marks an important stage in Beckett’s quest for the voice. Its structure and argument were shaped by Beckett’s visit (2 October 1935) with his therapist, Wilfred Bion, to the Tavistock Clinic [in London], to hear the third of Jung’s five lectures (which Beckett later read).”¹⁰⁸

According to Jung, “[t]he beginning of the nineteenth century had brought us the Romantic Movement in literature, a symptom of a widespread, deep-seated longing for anything extraordinary and abnormal. People adored wallowing in Ossianic emotions, they went crazy over novels set in old castles and ruined cloisters. Everywhere prominence was given to the mystical, the hysterical...”¹⁰⁹ Beckett also uses the term “Ossianic”, in his attack on Celtic antiquarianism in a 1934 article entitled “Recent Irish Poetry”, written under the pseudonym “Andrew Belis”. In the article, Beckett accuses Irish “antiquarians” (i.e. Yeatsian-style Revivalists), of “delivering with the altitudinous complacency of the Victorian Gael the Ossianic goods” and providing only “cut-and-dried sanctity and loveliness” (not to be confused with Joyce the cut-and-paste man).¹¹⁰ In “Recent Irish Poetry, as in “Censorship in the Saorstát”, Beckett argues “against cultural isolationism, and for internationalism, for Ireland’s literature to submit itself ... to the influences of the French avant-garde and Pound”.¹¹¹ This may constitute an “Oedipal break with the fathers of the Revival.”¹¹²

If Yeats used Ossianic material for nationalist reasons, Beckett uses the term “Ossianic” – post-Irish independence – to rail against areas of Irish culture that, in his estimation, had become too inward-looking. After the demise of the Celtic Revival, and the establishment of the Free State, figures from older Irish literature are treated with greater irony and humour, as in Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, Flann O’Brien’s *At Swim Two Birds*, and

Beckett's *Murphy*, where Neary head-butts the statue of Cuchulainn in the Dublin General Post Office. Beckett's "Fingal", the second story in *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934) combines an Ossianic title ("Fingal" is Macpherson's name for Fionn mac Cumhaill, as well as an area in County Dublin) with comic and unheroic content. Mary Power has discussed Beckett's allusions to Macpherson: "Beckett, in choosing McPherson's [sic] transplanted hero, adds another dimension to the mock-heroic. He is writing a parody of the hero of a serious but bogus epic."¹¹³ In "Fingal", Belacqua and his companion Winnie climb the Hill of Feltrim and look down at the Portrane Lunatic Asylum below. This association between ("bogus") mythology and madness continues in the French *Murphy*, with its reference to "Ossianic emotions" (i.e. mental illness).

As Ackerley and Gontarski have commented, the name of Angus Killiecrankie in *Murphy* "connotes, in English, killing the cranky, the mentally ill (G. *krank*, 'ill')." ¹¹⁴ Killiecrankie also refers to a village in Perth and Kinross that saw a victory by Irish and Scottish Jacobites over Hanoverian forces on July 27, 1689. Though he does not inflict violence on Murphy, Killiecrankie is tasked with incinerating Murphy's corpse towards the end of the text, since he has access to "a small close furnace ... in which the toughest body, mind and soul could be relied on to revert, in under an hour ... to ash of an eminently portable quality."¹¹⁵ At the close of a novel interested in fragmentation and breakdowns, Murphy himself disintegrates: "By closing time the body, mind and soul of Murphy were freely distributed over the floor of the saloon" and he is swept out into the street with "the spits, the vomit."¹¹⁶ Fittingly, Killiecrankie is considered "Unromantic to the last."¹¹⁷ By extension, he is also quite un-Ossianic, despite his knowledge of schizoid voices.

That Killiecrankie, in the French *Murphy*, has his origins in the geographically separate Scottish island groups of the Hebrides, Orkney, and Shetland, suggests not only the multiplications of isolated and discrete schizoid voices but also the gathering of elements

from separate, disparate sources (similar to the *Ossian* texts themselves of which Dr. Killiecrankie is an admirer in the French *Murphy*).¹¹⁸ Killiecrankie's origins are also impeccably Ossianic. As Mitchell has pointed out, although the "main events of both *Fingal* and *Temora* take place in Ulster", "[e]pisodes in these epics and in the shorter lyrical and dramatic pieces are also set ... in the Hebrides, Orkney and the Shetland isles ... The central plot of *Fingal* hinges on an invasion of Ulster by Swaran, a Scandinavian chieftain ... The action culminates in the set-piece battle between the Gaels and the Scandinavians."¹¹⁹ So, Killiecrankie's archipelagic origins reflect the various cultures featured in the poems he so admires. As Jon Hegglund has pointed out, the sea often functions as "a conduit for the linkages of cultures" in Joyce.¹²⁰ However, in this Beckett text, the sea (and island groups within it) signify disconnection and incoherence. In Beckett's text, these scattered and isolated locations are linked to what Stanley Gontarski has called "a multivocal, indeterminate multiplicity."¹²¹ As Gontarski has discussed, voice is a central concern of Beckett's oeuvre: "Voice as disembodied entity ... in fragments ... is the heuristic that drives Samuel Beckett's supreme fictions ... Its sources are indeterminate, evasive, ghostly, receding, counterfeited, echoed, ventriloquized."¹²² Unlike Yeats, Beckett had no intention to make something "intended, complete" out of incoherence and fragmentation: "I am not interested in a ... 'clarification' of the individual chaos."¹²³ Sinéad Mooney has noted that Beckett constructed a "deconstructive brand of modernism" as opposed to "the mythopoeic modernism of Yeats."¹²⁴ As part of this, Beckett involves the work of Macpherson, another producer of fragments.

Ossian founded a regrettably long-lived understanding of two races or worlds – the spiritual Celtic realm and the practical Anglo-Saxon territory – and a discourse, Celticism, that began partly as a way of uniting or reconciling those worlds in literature, especially in texts such as *The Wild Irish Girl*. Yeats largely ignores Macpherson, but keeps the interest in

older Celtic literature and the Celtic/Saxon binary that Arnold built upon Macpherson's work. In the twentieth-century, *Ossian* shifts from a connection with national or racial concerns to personal matters, to become a signifier of mental fragmentation. Joyce's use of *Ossian* ties in with the essentially "Celtic" nature of *Finnegans Wake* and with that text's model of consciousness as fragmented and recycled. *Finnegans Wake* also contains a unique, large-scale structure of Ossianic textual transmission. Beckett, following the work of Jung, uses *Ossian* and disparate offshore Scottish and Celtic (and Scandinavian) locations to signify a multiplicity of schizoid voices. From the nineteenth to the twentieth century, *Ossian* moves from an involvement in the Romantic imagining of national identities to an echoing Modernist confusion of irreconcilable inner voices, and from "complementary" communities to the psyche as a divided community. As this shift occurs Celticism, as a construction and as an understanding of a culture, disappears, leaving its founding text open to new transmissions, interpretations, and appropriations.

Notes

Special thanks to Dr Kate Louise Mathis for reading and commenting on an early draft of this essay. I would also like to thank the two reviewers who read this essay for *Irish Studies Review*.

¹ Moore, "Introduction" in Moore (ed), *The International Companion to James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian*, 6. See Porter, James. "Bring Me the Head of James Macpherson" for a summary of the influence of *Ossian* on European culture.

² See O'Halloran's "Irish Re-Creations of the Gaelic Past" and Mac Craith's "'We know all these poems.'"

³ O'Halloran. "Re-Creations", 70.

⁴ Ibid, 74.

⁵ However, Macpherson was a major influence on Scottish Revivalists such as William Sharp / Fiona Macleod). Oisín/Ossian is also a key figure in Irish and Scottish poetry. As Edna Longley has observed: "If Colm Cille/Columba is the patron saint of Irish/Scottish poetry, Oisín/Ossian is the equally 'ambiguous' patron pagan" (Longley, 10). NB: In this article, "*Ossian*" will refer to Macpherson's Ossianic corpus and "Ossian" will refer to the mythic warrior-bard.

⁶ Watson, "Aspects", 129.

⁷ Macpherson created "the tone at the root of Romanticism" (Crawford, 18). Furthermore, the "construction of Celticism and the discourses associated with it effectively begin with [Macpherson's *Ossian*]" (Watson,

‘Aspects’, 130). Macpherson’s work was published well before the generally accepted birth of English Romanticism, the publication of Coleridge and Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. For a discussion of Macpherson, Gaelic poetry, and Scottish Romanticism, see Clancy, ‘Gaelic Literature and Scottish Romanticism’ and Stafford, “Romantic Macpherson” in the same volume (27–38).

⁸ Stafford, “Romantic”, 27.

⁹ Kristmannsson, 39.

¹⁰ Pethica, 131. See also Stafford’s *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian*. According to Moore, “D. S. Thomson’s comprehensive *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson’s Ossian* (1952) spelled out ... the reality of the relationship to the Gaelic milieu (Moore, “Introduction”, 7). However, according to Curley, “Overestimating Macpherson’s indebtedness to genuine Gaelic literature not only misstates the case seriously but also robs him of the distinction of authorship” (Curley, 18).

¹¹ Chapman, *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture*, 39. According to Valentina Bold, “Macpherson was a pioneering fieldworker who ... ‘not only helped preserve valuable Gaelic manuscripts but also contributed to the emergence of the proper study of Celtic literature, drawing attention in particular to its ballad heritage.’ His active collecting may have begun when, after a period in Edinburgh in 1756, he was a schoolmaster at the Charity School at Ruthven ... He returned to Edinburgh and, by 1758, was a tutor to the Grahams of Balgowan. At this time, he was definitely collecting in earnest.” Bold, Valentina. ‘Ossian and James Macpherson’, 194.

¹² Ní Mhugháile, Lesa. “Ossian and the Gaelic World.”

¹³ Stafford, “Introduction”, vii.

¹⁴ O’Conor, *Dissertations on the History of Ireland: To which is subjoined, a dissertation on the Irish colonies established in Britain. With some remarks on Mr. Mac Pherson’s translation of Fingal and Temora*. By C. O’Conor, Esq., 48. Thanks to Paul Fagan for alerting me to this text.

¹⁵ Deane, 43.

¹⁶ Krielkamp, 63.

¹⁷ Ó Gallchoir. ‘Celtic Ireland and Celtic Scotland: Ossianism and *The Wild Irish Girl*’, 117.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁹ Leerssen, 60.

²⁰ O’Halloran, “Irish Re-Creations”, 74.

²¹ Owenson, 107. The “Blair” Horatio refers to is Hugh Blair, supporter of Macpherson’s *Ossian*, and first Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres at the University of Edinburgh.

²² *Ibid.*, 106.

²³ *Ibid.*, 113. Patrick is “airbrushed out” in Macpherson’s versions (Leask, 186).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 113–4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38. “Strongbow or Richard Fitz Gilbert, an Englishman, invaded in 1170 on behalf of Mac Murchada, an exiled Irish king, and after that king died, succeeded him and settled Leinster in Ireland with tenants from his English and Welsh estates” (Kirkpatrick in Owenson, 257).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁷ Owenson, 120, 124.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁹ Owenson, 14, 16, 45, 53, 14, 16.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

³¹ Deane, 29–30, 99.

³² Owenson, 250.

³³ Chapman, 82.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

³⁵ Watson, “Aspects”, 136. According to Howes, “The publication of *On the Study of Celtic Literature* coincided with an increase in ‘Fenian fever’ in Ireland and the United States” and “an outbreak of Fenian violence in Ireland and England”, 20.

³⁶ Watson, “Aspects”, 136.

³⁷ Crawford, 18. For similar observations see Clancy, ‘Gaelic Literature and Scottish Romanticism.’

³⁸ Castle, 174. See also: “Arnold’s interest in the Celt, and his belief in the power of art and criticism to raise the cultural level of a nation, and to stem the tide of vulgarity and of Philistinism, were ... important to Yeats” (Watson, “Yeats”, 41).

³⁹ “The Wanderings of Oisín”, l. 201 and 213, Yeats, *The Poems*, 31. For a discussion of Yeats’ use of the term “Fenians”, see Foster, R. F., *Yeats: A Life, I. The Apprentice Mage*, 80–2.

⁴⁰ “The principal source that Yeats drew on for “The Wanderings of Oisín” was Brian O’Looney’s translation of Michael Comyn’s “The Lay of Oisín in the Land of Youth” (1750), which Yeats accessed in the fourth volume of the *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*” (Gomes, 378).

⁴¹ Larrissy, xiv.

⁴² O’Flanagan, 143. See Mathis, “Mourning the maic Uislen: blood, death & grief in *Longes mac n-Uislen & Oidheadh chloinne hUisneach*” for a discussion of O’Flanagan’s work on Macpherson.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, xiv. Furthermore, Derick Thomson suggests that Yeats’ celebrated phrase “terrible beauty” may derive from Macpherson’s *Temora*. See Thomson, “MacPherson’s Ossian: Ballads to Epics”, 264.

⁴⁴ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 7.572–3. Subsequent references will be made in the standard fashion, i.e. “U” followed by episode number and line number.

⁴⁵ Larrissy, xiv. However, this assessment would contradict Thomson’s suggestion that the phrase “terrible beauty” derives from Macpherson.

⁴⁶ Gomes, 378.

⁴⁷ Foster, *Yeats*, 53.

⁴⁸ Brannigan, 27. Lady Gregory’s interest in the residents of Kiltartan was also an important inspiration for Yeats in his work on the rural peasant.

⁴⁹ Yeats, 187.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁵¹ Foster, *Yeats*, 131.

⁵² Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 125. See also his comments in his *Exiles* notes: “All Celtic philosophers seem to have inclined towards incertitude or scepticism – Hume, Berkeley, Balfour, Bergson” (Joyce, *Exiles*, 353). As Jean-Michel Rabaté points out, Joyce’s comments on Celtic philosophy point to “a tradition or a line of descent in which Joyce clearly wants to be inscribed” (Rabaté, 24).

⁵³ Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 124.

⁵⁴ As was mentioned earlier, Irish and Scottish Romanticisms grew out of the different aftermaths of the 1745/46 Jacobite Rebellion and its defeat at Culloden, the 1798 United Irish Rebellion, and the 1800 Act of Union.

⁵⁵ Carruthers and Rawes, 1.

⁵⁶ S. Deane, 99.

⁵⁷ Foster, *Irish Story*, 99.

⁵⁸ Yeats, *Poems*, 385. For a discussion of archipelagic issues in Irish and Scottish Modernism see Brannigan, John. *Archipelagic Modernism*.

⁵⁹ As Brannigan states: “in the 1920s and 1930s ... the very notion of the ‘wholeness’ of ‘Britain’, ‘England’, or the ‘United Kingdom’ was undermined politically and culturally by the emergent sovereignty of the Irish Free State (1922) and its constitutional claim to the ‘whole island of Ireland’ (1937), by the Scottish Renaissance of the 1920s, by the formation of Plaid Cymru (1925) and the Scottish National Party (1934), and by the palpable decline of British imperial power across the globe” (Brannigan, 147).

⁶⁰ Joyce and Beckett had differing attitudes to – and levels of interest or involvement in – psychoanalysis, and related subjects such as the schizoid voice. See Thurston, *James Joyce and the Problem of Psychoanalysis* and Weller, “‘Some Experience of the Schizoid Voice.’”

⁶¹ Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 565, lines 29–30. Subsequent references will use the standard citation method i.e. “FW” followed by page number and line number.

⁶² Mitchell, ‘Ossian’, 160.

⁶³ S. Deane, *Celtic*, 93.

⁶⁴ See Gibson, *Joyce’s Revenge*.

⁶⁵ As were his detractors. In an *Observer* review Oliver St. John Gogarty declared *Finnegans Wake* “the most colossal leg pull in literature since Macpherson’s *Ossian*” (Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 722).

⁶⁶ “Ossian, *Fingal*, trans. into German by Reinhold Jachmann (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, n.d.)
–, *The Poems*, trans. James Macpherson (Leipzig: G. J. Göschen, 1840). Stamped ‘J. J.’
–, *Poesie*, trans. into Italian by Melchior Cesarotti, 2 vols. (Bassano, 1819)”. Ellmann, Richard. *The Consciousness of Joyce*, 122.

⁶⁷ Fahy, 27.

⁶⁸ For information on notebook VI.B.45, see <https://library.buffalo.edu/jamesjoyce/catalog/vi-finnegans-wake/vib45/>

⁶⁹ Joyce, *U*, 12.1125–29.

⁷⁰ Sturgeon, 115. For a discussion of Joyce's representations of the inauthentic *as* authentic, see Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival*. On the subject of Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, it is worth mentioning that "Oscar" and "Fingal" are both Ossianic names and that Jane Francesca Agnes, Wilde's mother, was an admirer of Macpherson's.

⁷¹ "Joyce uses the word Celtic in a very loose and atypical fashion ... simply to denote the non-English nations and inhabitants of the Atlantic Archipelago, regardless of period, place, or language. For example, the modern, lowland, non-Gaelic speaking Scot David Hume is described as Celtic [in] Joyce's notes for *Exiles*" (Barlow, 18).

⁷² Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 148. Of course, the "Finnegan" of the title also contains "Finn". According to Ellmann, "[Joyce] conceived of his book as the dream of old Finn, lying in death beside the River Liffey and watching the history of Ireland and the world—past and future—flow through his mind like flotsam on the river of life" (Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 544).

⁷³ George Gibson has discussed the Celtic nature of the *Wake*'s obscurity: "The *Wake*'s obscurity, perhaps its most striking quality, is also one of its most profoundly Celtic characteristics" (G. Gibson, 226).

⁷⁴ See note 54 for Joyce's comments on Celtic philosophy.

⁷⁵ Joyce, *FW*, 423.01.

⁷⁶ Clark, 105. Philip Herring has suggested that "Joyce ... accepts as given that the artist is a forger of meaning and of identity" (Herring, 117).

⁷⁷ Cheng, *Shakespeare and Joyce*, 96–7.

⁷⁸ Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*. Vol. 1, 297.

⁷⁹ *FW*, 123.25.

⁸⁰ Swinson, "Macpherson in *Finnegans Wake*" and Senn, "Ossianic Echoes".

⁸¹ Moore, "Introduction", 3.

⁸² Senn, 25.

⁸³ Stafford, 'Introduction' to Macpherson, James. *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works* edited by Howard Gaskill, v–xix, xvi. Indeed, words such as "cloud", "storm", "dark", "ocean", "wave", "stream", "roll", "rolls", "rolling", and "rolled" begin to attain a mantra-like quality after extended reading.

⁸⁴ Macpherson, 66.

⁸⁵ *FW* 4.15-17.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.31.

⁸⁷ Macpherson, 241.

⁸⁸ *FW* 603.26-27.

⁸⁹ Swinson, 95.

⁹⁰ See Meek, “Ballads”, 31. *Finnegans Wake* contains Joyce’s own work in the ballad genre: “The Ballad of Persse O’Reilly.”

⁹¹ Macpherson, 127.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 445.

⁹³ Tindall, *A Reader’s Guide to “Finnegans Wake”*, 306.

⁹⁴ *FW*, 251.24.

⁹⁵ Meek, ‘Ballads’, 31. A version of “Bàs Chonlaoich” is included in the Book of the Dean of Lismore. For further information on the ‘Dean’s Book’, see Gillies, “The Book of the Dean of Lismore: The Literary Perspective.”

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹⁷ For a range of criticisms levelled at Macpherson, see Mackenzie (ed.), *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland into the nature and authenticity of the Poems of Ossian*.

⁹⁸ See “The Dream of Ossian” in Barlow, *The Celtic Unconscious*, 51–182.

⁹⁹ Crawford, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Allen, *Modernism, Ireland and Civil War*, 22.

¹⁰¹ *FW*, 264.22–23.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 123.18–19.

¹⁰³ Stafford, “Romantic”, 35–6.

¹⁰⁴ Weller, 38.

¹⁰⁵ Beckett, *Murphy*, 116.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 163, 168.

¹⁰⁷ Ackerley, “Uncertainty”, 41.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁹ Jung, 294.

¹¹⁰ Beckett, *Disjecta*, 70–1.

¹¹¹ Mooney, 33.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 34.

¹¹³ Power, 151.

¹¹⁴ Ackerley and Gontarski, 298. “The original of Dr. Killiecrankie ... was the senior assistant at the Bethlem Royal, one Murdo MacKenzie, originally from Inverness, the pun on “murder” (“Killie”) being further identification” (Ackerley and Gontarski, 298). James Knowlson notes that “Both the Senior Physician and the Assistant Physician at the Bethlem Royal, whom Beckett probably met, were Scotsmen, David Robertson and John Hamilton” (Knowlson, 210).

¹¹⁵ Beckett, *Murphy*, 169.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹⁸ Joyce also had an interest in the Hebrides, Orkney, and Shetland. For example, *Finnegans Wake* notebook VI.B.32 contains material relating to the Hebrides and notebook VI.B.6 has notes on Orkney and Shetland.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁰ Hegglund, 71. See “swaran foi” (*FW* 131.22).

¹²¹ Gontarski, 20.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹²³ Beckett, qtd in McNaughton, 107. See also: “Jung argued that unity of consciousness was an illusion, because complexes could free themselves from conscious control; they have ‘a certain will-power, a sort of ego ... They appear in visions, they speak in voices’ (Tavistock Lecture 3, 72)” (Ackerley, 41).

¹²⁴ Mooney, 34.

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