

Bob Dobbs Explains “Finnegans Wake” Via the Ten Thunders

[mycanvassesaresurrealist](#)

Bob Dobbs: Well, the first thunder is on page 3. It contains references to all the early technologies like speech, fire, early weaponry and early forms of clothing. It would be basically Paleolithic man becoming Neolithic man.

Gerry Fialka: That's not really attuned to the three or four major forms of communication that McLuhan has talked about. So the first thunder does not include written or electronic forms, only speech.

Bob: Not electronic, it is basically speech. But it contains early caveman drawings or early forms of writing. It starts out "bababada", which is the babble of speech. It's nomadic man.

Gerry: What's nomadic, the wanderer?

Bob: Yes, they don't have settlements yet. They haven't really got into villages and towns.

Connie Dobbs: The Tower of Babel?

Bob: Yes, that's implied. The first thunder is on page 3.

Connie: Like that cricket right there?

Bob: Yes, it's acoustic space. The deep, dark bog of acoustic space. Then the

second thunder, on page 23, is in the section on the Prankquean. The Prankquean is the beginning of visual space. The beginnings of piracy, exploitation, pillaging and creating wealth reservoirs. Then clothing comes in as social weaponry. Clothing becomes fashion, or aggression (the aggressive act of clothing). So, before that you just had non-visual man, he was not visually designing himself. The second thunder starts to bring in the visually designing levels of social organization and social power.

Gerry: So, it made man competitive, the fact that he's starting to wear clothes?

Bob: Yes, but not to wear clothes, but to use clothes as social weaponry, as status symbols...Cleopatra, Egyptian times. The second thunder begins "Perkodhusk".

Gerry: I know what a husk is, but what is a "Perko"? A pair of coats?

Connie: A husk is like wearing a house around you, your armor.

Bob: So, the third thunder is on page 44. It begins "klikkaklakka".

Connie: The railway.

Bob: Well, hold that thought because there are two levels. It does refer to the railway, but you've jumped up pretty far from the Egyptian BC times to the 1800's. It means the beginning of cliques, of settlements. Priests are organizing.

Gerry: And religion?

Bob: Oh yes, religion is always there. But this is the beginning of settlements and Neolithic man, with cliques running society. Whatever form of social hierarchy there is. So you have "klikka", clique. The fourth thunder is on page 90. It starts off "Bladyughfoulmoecklenburg". It is Medieval towns with lots of mud, agrarian life. The beginning of market gardens, carts and oxen delivering food to a market.

Gerry: The wheel is the extension of the foot?

Bob: Yes, the wheel has established itself in that situation. "Blady" refers to bloody. It refers to many things, that's one of them. "Moecklenburg" refers to mud town, the old Hollywood movies of Medieval times with mucky castle zones, Monty Python kind of scenarios .

Gerry: And Napoleon really introduced mud as the fifth element?

Bob: Well, he was joking on the scientists looking for the fifth element. They were trying to find the fifth element for the incipient Periodic Table, and he said, "Mud's the fifth element!"

Gerry: What does "mud" represent in your Third Album?

Bob: Well, we will get to that, that's the tenth thunder.

Gerry: So, there's some mud here, and some mud later.

Bob: Oh yes, all the thunders assume and resume the others. They all resonate with each other. Now thunder five begins "Thingcrooklyexineverypasture" and it ends "mindlookingated." Now this is the beginning of industrialization, and the prostituting of women, the scourge of prostitution. It is the early industrial displacement of community. It takes place on page 113 which is a key section of the book because on page 109 Joyce spells out his technique. Pages 109 through 113 have a lot of stuff in there.

Gerry: What's "stuff"?

Bob: Much meat, many themes.

Gerry: The whole meaning behind FINNEGANS WAKE?

Bob: Some of the meanings. He spells out a lot of the meanings in that

section. In that section, Belinda the hen is digging in the middenheap and finding the letter, which is a symbol for FINNEGANS WAKE. And it was "the muddest thick that was ever heard dump", you know that T-shirt slogan I have. So this middenheap, this muddest thick, this letter in the mound, the hen gets it and it's all scratched. It looks like FINNEGANS WAKE. That is the fifth phase of the domination by visual space. That's the industrial age of the photo, the newspaper, and assembly-line reproduction. So Belinda the hen, who lays many eggs, is the symbol for industrial man. So the first five thunders have taken you from Paleolithic Man, moved you through Neolithic Man, through Medieval, up to Industrial Man and the 19th Century. The first five thunders are on pages 3 through 113, in one hundred and ten pages you have five thunders. Then you go another one hundred and forty-four pages to get to page 257, where you have thunder six. Its opening words are "Lukkedoeren". It refers to the metamorphosis of visually-biased man, the reorientation of visually-biased man with the introduction of electric environments.

Gerry: Please define what you mean or he means by "visual"?

Bob: He means that visual man is controlled by woman. It's controlled by matriarchy and it's symbolized by the Prankquean. As you get more and more into the visual phases, man takes over and becomes a patriarchy. But really woman controls him. Woman is the symbol of visual space. He is visually hypnotized. He is fragmenting and separating the extensions of himself leading up to the Industrial Revolution.

Gerry: Please define "visual space".

Bob: It is an extension of the functions of the eye which fragments, separates, rips and tears. As opposed to the ear, which is implosive and unified. The symbol of man under Prankquean rule is Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, who is the man with the initials H.C.E.

Gerry: Here Comes Everybody!

Bob: Right! Here Comes Everybody is like the visual homogenization of all

man that was extremely developed in the Gutenberg Galaxy from 1500 to 1900. So, we have the phases of the Prankquean visual space controlling the "new womanly man" which is HCE, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker. He is an egg that has been broken. He is Humpty Dumpty, who has fallen off the wall. The wall is another metaphor for visual space. The wall is the beginning of removing people from the nomadic acoustically-oriented, first-thunder phase of technology and moving toward the later technologies where people get walled in to little settlements, then villages, then towns with the castle wall around them. So, the wall is the symbol of the extreme development of visual man, a man with borders, with a center and a margin. So Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, who was an organic, wholistic, complete egg-man, back in the "baba" phase of the first thunder in the dark of acoustic space who lived in the primordial emotion of fear and sensitivity and ESP, as he gets more visualized, you crack the egg. So Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker falls off the wall and "all the king's men and all the king's horses couldn't put him back together again". That's all the failed religions, politics, ideologies, superstitions and concepts that ruled man in that period, but in the end could not put Humpty Dumpty back together again. What put him back together again is outlined in thunders six to ten. (This is just an overview explaining visual space.) Now, the sixth thunder gives the general pattern of the reconstituting, putting together, the reunifying of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, the egg. In this case the egg is put back together environmentally with the electric retrieval of acoustic space and the final extension of our central nervous system, which is tactile, that integrates Humpty Dumpty back together again. When Humpty is back together again, he is no longer controlled by the Prankquean. He is no longer hypnotized by visual space. You can even see puns on the Prankquean hypnotizing Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker. The particular word used by Joyce in FINNEGANS WAKE at one point is "happnessised" (p.261, line32), a pun on making him happy.

Gerry: Is it like hypnotizing someone with happiness?

Bob: Something like that. I would have to get the actual quote. So the sixth thunder is a transition thunder which leads into seven, eight, nine and ten. Briefly, seven is the beginning of the first electric technologies (the telegraph and radio era). Number eight is the wedding of sight and sound, the silent

movie with the radio soundtrack, the radio acoustic. So you have the integration of sight and sound again. Thunder nine deals with the technologies of the airplane and the automobile. Thunder ten deals with television. Those are the last five thunders, but number six gives the general pattern of the metamorphosis caused by these electric technologies I just ran through. Six is the thunder of exits and entrancings on the stage of the Phoenix Global Theater. The Phoenix Playhouse, the term used in FINNEGANS WAKE, is a pun on the Phoenix, the mythical bird that consumes itself in fire and then is reborn. So the pun on the Phoenix myth is the reconstitution of the electric environment, which revitalizes the Phoenix Theater. The electric environment is basically a fire environment, an environment like the element fire. As a result of the Phoenix Theater being changed, you have new characters coming on stage and old characters from visual space being ushered off. You have new entrancings, new entrances or en-trancings. Figures that en-"trance". And you have new exits. It is a time of tribal retrievals, occult retrievals and revolutions. He makes a lot out of the Russian October Revolution of 1917 in this section. It revolves around Buckley, the soldier who shoots the Russian general. The Russian general is a pun on the technology of movie rushes, the world of the movie and the camera, which is the rush in general or mass man. It is a variation on Here Comes Everybody. It is mass man who is shot by the sniper. The sniper is the symbol for the movie projector onto the screen. That's one of the multi-levels. So in thunder six, which begins "Lukkedoer", you have the closing of the old theater and you have the beginning of the new theater, which is locking down mythic stages, as I call it, or retrievals of previous media, previous happenings, previous historical events and previous styles of culture. These lock themselves down in the electric metamorphosis and battle with each other. They fight the battle of Jericho. So the "Lukkedoer", the sixth thunder on page 257, gives the style of endless replays and tribal replays of aspects of the collective unconscious as figures or actors on the new global theater stage. Then Joyce goes through the various electric technologies as they arrive. He begins in thunder seven with the words "Bothallchoractors". What you have is that both elements of the ancient visually-spaced dialectic, the dialectic of visual space, now is subsumed in the electric tactility so what was polarized dialectic becomes both ends of the same pole. They flip flop. So Shem and Shaun, the two sons of HCE, are twins. They are both capable of

all characters or the whole spectrum of the human anthropomorphic dimension. This is the effect of the telegraph and radio. The seventh thunder ends off with "maunsturnup!". It's now man's turn and man has been freed from the control of woman, or the control of visual space. During the visual-space period, man looked like he was controlling but he was controlled or hypnotized by the extension of visual space, which is symbolized by the Prankquean or the woman, who numbs man in the visual-space era with her nudity or her nakedness. This is Freudian. The mother and the Oedipus complex and all those Freudian notions are a symbolic approximation of the technological causes that Joyce lays out of how visually-biased man was controlled by woman. But when the electric environment makes everybody discarnate, and Joyce uses the word "discarnate", when the electric environment takes us out of the anthropomorphic polarity, the polarities between the male and the female, when both become all characters, when the male and the female anthropomorphic images become interchangeable, that's the turn of the 20th century. So characters like Duchamp are running around in woman's clothing, Oscar Wilde and these guys. The beginning of the sexual revolution happens with the turn of the century when the electric age of telegraph and radio moves in.

Gerry: Was Oscar Wilde one of the first guys to do this?

Bob: He was well known. He was a publicist for the gay life.

Gerry: Was he actually gay?

Bob: They say he was. He was put on trial for being gay.

Gerry: Was Joyce writing about this before or after Wilde?

Bob: Oscar Wilde died in 1900. He was a biggie in the 1870's, 1880's. So anyways "both all characters" are not just the dialectics of visual space. It's also the dialectics of the battle of the sexes. So the "both" become all characters. Men and women are interchangeable because they are discarnate and do not have the biological differences when they are wearing the electric environment.

Gerry: That explains why Bob is a woman.

Bob: Yes, that's right. At the end of thunder seven, it says man's turn up. That means man is free from visually-biased history. Therefore, man takes over politically and culturally. Politically it was Hitler. Culturally it was showbiz, all the modern electric entertainment media.

Gerry: Entertainment sucks!

Bob: Yes, the entertainment-sucks syndrome. Males took advantage of that. If you think of the period of the 30's and 40's, the radio era, you just think of war and men running amok. It's hard to think of women's reality other than that they worked on the assembly lines in the factories. They were kind of liberated and they got out of the home, off of the protected "mechanical-bride" pedestal they were on in the 19th Century, the Victorian era. That was the beginning of the Suffragette movement. They wanted to vote. They started to work in the old factories.

Gerry: And they were the nurses.

Bob: Yes, Florence Nightingale was the first hero of the electric age. She was the icon of the telegraph. She was the symbol of the first Vietnam war, the Crimean war in the 1850's, out there on the fringes of the Western empires, in Turkey and Afghanistan, the war between Russia and Britain. That war is a key metaphor in FINNEGANS WAKE. That is when the Charge of the Light Brigade happened, which is the symbol or metaphor Joyce uses for television and also the electric information environment. That was the first Vietnam. That was when people were reading the first telegraph reports by reporters sent back to London. People were reading about the horrors of war on the front back at home. Marshall McLuhan said the genius of Florence Nightingale was that she was an aristocrat who was upset by this new electric implosion of the telegraph and invented a new role for herself and for women, which was the nursing profession on the front. That was the first Vietnam, the first colonial war that was telegraphed back into the homes and upset the young people. That is the seventh thunder on page 314, which

begins with "Bothallchoractors", both all characters. It ends with man's turn up. The image of man in the 30's and 40's is man running amok. The eighth thunder begins "Pappappapparras", where "poppa" appears. This is a continuation of the radio thunder of "bothallchoractors" where man's "turn up" continues and "poppa" appears as a political maniac - that's Hitler, Stalin (the radio chieftain of Russia), Churchill (the radio emperor of England- the British Empire), Roosevelt (the radio emperor of the United States), Mussolini (the radio emperor of Italy), and even MacKenzie King in Canada. Those were the new culturally defined iconic images of "pappa...appears" in the movie/radio era. This was the talking movie which came in around 1927. The wedding of sight and sound when you put the radio soundtrack with the silent movie. In that whole section you have the parable of Kersse the Tailor making the wedding clothing for the Norwegian Captain, who is going to marry the daughter. There is going to be a wedding. That's an anthropomorphic image of the wedding of sight and sound technologically. The movie medium contains all anthropomorphic times and spaces of history. It is not the mosaic mesh of the TV cathode-ray tube, which is a bunch of dots. Human beings don't look like a bunch of dots. So the movie medium is the last medium that contains stories, and replays and re-presents in big elaborate scenarios, or scenery, all the cultures of the past of anthropomorphic man, you could say, visual-space man, or even back to pre-visual space, to acoustic space, the Sheiks of Arabia. The movie is the eighth thunder on page 332. It begins "Pappappapparras", or pop appears. It's the beginning of Pop Art and pop culture. That's what Andy Warhol replayed. He replayed the pop culture. Education in the 19th Century was run by women. They were the teachers. They brought in Oscar Wilde and the poets. They created the literary saloons. They sponsored Art in their bourgeois lifestyle. The men were out working and the women were dealing with parties, social life and cultural education. They were setting up schooling for kids. The women in the 19th Century ran the Art scene. But in the 20th Century pop culture and Pop Art took over because "pop" ran the culture scene. Pop got in the act and Mom was put aside. That's the real meaning of Pop Art. It was the hidden ground before World War II. Isn't that neat?

Gerry: Did Andy Warhol know that?

Bob: No, he didn't know that. He could not take Marshall McLuhan.

Gerry: Some of those Pop Artists must know that, like Rauschenberg. Some of the artists could have read Joyce.

Bob: No, here is what they read. The Pop Art scene showed up in the middle 50's and it became popular in the early 60's. The very first Pop Art exhibit or artifact named by the noted critic Harold Rosenberg was Marshall McLuhan's book *THE MECHANICAL BRIDE*, which came out in 1951. McLuhan was the first to present ads as Pop culture. Interestingly, Marshall talks about popular culture in a very rare 1979 interview. He pointed out that all the great successful artists of our time came out of advertising agencies. Advertising was where the real talent was. The real modern artform was advertising. Therefore, he put advertising (an environment) in another medium. That's how you make something an artform. You take something that's a ground, or a figure, and you put it in another ground. So he took the real art of our time, the collective artform of advertising, and put it into a book. That was the first Pop Art exhibit for the culture vultures, for the world of commercial, capitol "A" art. So I'll bet that Warhol and these other Pop artists happened to see *THE MECHANICAL BRIDE* or spin-offs of it, or McLuhan's *EXPLORATIONS* magazine which talked about this stuff. That may have been how they got some of their ideas, although perhaps this is not on record, or how they got out of the conceptual bias of art up to that time - the abstract expressionists and all those movements of the first part of the 20th Century which were philosophically oriented. Whereas Warhol took the ultimate cliché, the Campbell soup can, and put it in the museum, which act was outrageous at the time, this was first done by McLuhan. He was the first one to give serious art criticism to the world of ads. Now, Joyce knew this because the main character in *ULYSSES* is Leopold Bloom, who is an ad salesman. The references to advertising in *FINNEGANS WAKE* are very well marked out by Joyce. It is one of the few parts in the book where he has the word "Jymes" when he talks about himself. So Joyce knew the role of advertising.

Gerry: So, he's advertising himself? Self-promoting?

Bob: No, it's a clue to the hidden cultural role of advertising because it's the only time he uses a word very close to his name, James. "Jymes" is the way the Irish say James. It's a clue and it's in the part that refers to advertising. I'm digressing about McLuhan and advertising. Pop culture was the fact before World War II, and then it was replayed as artform and it was called Pop Art, which was dealing with advertising images. Campbell soup cans, promotional commercial images, were put into the galleries. The first Pop Art exhibit, or turning advertising into artform, was McLuhan's book THE MECHANICAL BRIDE. So these other guys started doing it. The key fact about these guys, including Zappa, is that a lot of them came out of advertising agencies. If you are in advertising, you learn a lot about what's really going on and the molding of commercial design and commercial life - the real Orwellian/Huxleyan world of advertising.

Gerry: And the psychology of persuasion.

Bob: Yes. You are working with external space and internal space. McLuhan pointed out that all the successful artists come out of advertising agencies, a lot of them did. It's surprising. Zappa, although on a puny level, even worked in advertising. Advertising is the real artform of our time. Those who want to split off into the specialist ancient artform of painting or exhibiting in galleries, who want to fragment themselves and retrieve and prop up the world of commercial, Fine Art, they drop out of advertising into that little sub-world. Warhol expressed the ambience of that, the ambiguity, because he was not so enraptured with the content of the art he produced in the commercial gallery world. He always played in the interval between that and the promotional artform, or advertising. He was the best symbol of promoting oneself as an artform. Pop Art replayed the ground of the pre-World War II world of the eighth thunder where "Pappappapparras", Pop Art appears. Pop Art is not just some fine art. Pop Art, basically, in the pre-World War II era, is the whole entertainment world of Tin Pan Alley, Swing and all the content of radio - serials, soaps, comedy and the whole American entertainment scene.

Gerry: Comic books.

Bob: Yes, comic books were made into radio drama. Detective fiction, police stuff. All that's called popular culture was created in the radio environment, the radio-movie environment. It was a social fact, a "content" ground. The real ground was radio and movies, but at the content level, it was a new genre of entertainment. That was the popular culture of the pre-World War II period that was turned into artform by the Beatniks and Warholians. The ninth thunder deals with the other amazing technology of the first part of the 20th Century - the Wright brothers and the airplane, and Ford and the automobile. Those were the technologies that really changed the world. On page 414, the ninth thunder, about the car and the plane, begins with the words "husstenhasstencaffincoffin" which refers to the haste and rush of urban life in the early part of the 20th Century. The automobile came in when the airplane came in, creating auto-exhaust pollution, death on the roads - a coffin, creating death as the mafias take over the cities, creating coughing from smoking and the automobile engine - and the caffeine, coffee world of the cities. So the rush and speed and death of the cities brought in by the car and airplane is in the first eight syllables of the ninth thunder, "husstenhasstencaffincoffin ", or the caffeine coffin.

Connie: Haste makes waste and you end up in a coffin.

Bob: Haste makes waste. You end up coughing from your caffeine and you end up in a coffin. In the 20's and 30's, you had the airplane. The car created the suburbs. The car turned the city into a ghetto and created suburbs. Then the airplane went around both the city and the suburb, making both ghettos. The cities were in a period of crisis. The gang wars were running amok. The city was obsolete so the gangsters took over the clubs, the entertainment, the politics, the liquor business and the entertainment consumables. Just after the ninth thunder on page 414, Joyce uses the fable of "The Omdt and the Gracehoper", the ant and the grasshopper. The ant is the car and the grasshopper is the airplane. He has the battle between these two media. He also makes a subplot - the battle between James Joyce, who's the grasshopper, and Wyndam Lewis, the ant. He plays with that theme as well as the battle between the car and the airplane. The tenth thunder is on page 424, ten pages after the ninth thunder. It begins "Ullhodturd" and refers to the post-visual and post-acoustic tactile man.

Gerry: What's "turd" mean?

Bob: Yes, we'll get back to that. Remember when you asked about mud being the fifth element. We've come back to the mud. "Hello, turd."

Gerry: TV is shit?

Bob: TV is what is called the murky, muddy wake of tactile man. Now, if man is no longer anthropomorphic, he is no longer acoustically or visually controlled. He is controlled by the raw central nervous system which is an extension of the tactile sense. Therefore, he is blind, dumb and deaf. He has to operate by pure instinct and feeling in this new environment he is swimming in. It is basically very hard to get perspective on it. It's a muddy environment. The pun on "turd" is, turd becomes toured, the tourist. In the moviecar-airplane-radio era, the world was the oyster for Western man, or a large part of humanity. They could travel anywhere on the planet. That was when the global village happened - under thunders seven, eight and nine. The tourist finally conquers space and time. Then the global village flips into its opposite, which is television, where the tourist is sent instantly rather than having to go someplace kinetically. The environment comes to the tourist. "Hello tourist" is television talking to the previous extensions: airplane-man, car-man, radio-man and movie-man. The global village made the world your oyster. But then the world was wiped out and propped up as a theater under the impact of television. "Ullhodturd" is a reference to the muddy wake, the tactile environment of feces-like water and pollution. It starts to make people aware of the industrial environment. The old content looks polluted. So it becomes shitty. In that sense, it is a pun on shit or turd. Pollution sensitivity increases under TV. On another level it refers to Ford, the inventor of the automobile. It is another way of satirizing the last phases of the industrial environment, the car. Because the automobile is like the movie, it combines the mechanical and the electrical. The wheel, the mechanical engine, needs the electric spark to make it go. The movie is a mechanical, visual thing but also has the electrical, acoustical factor. So "Ullhodturd" refers to the tourist, the shit, and to Ford. It's like the television environment goes around all the previous thunders of the electric era - six, seven, eight and nine, says "Hello",

and swallows them up. The tenth thunder is the murky, muddy tactile wake of visual man creating post-visual, nonvisual man with music as its anaesthetic content. Everything becomes musical, including politics. Music becomes politics. That's the tenth thunder on page 424. Every thunder has one hundred letters except for the last thunder which has one hundred and one letters. The next paragraph after the statement of the tenth thunder has a character saying there's that "hundredlettered name again, last word of perfect language." It is ironic because that thunder actually doesn't have one hundred letters in it, it has one hundred and one. If you put the ten of them together, you have a thousand and one letters, which symbolizes THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS, or ARABIAN NIGHTS.

Gerry: Who wrote that?

Bob: It's a 16-volume collection of folk tales translated by Sir Richard Burton - it's part of the oral tradition. It's made up of a thousand and one stories told by Scheherazade. She was a prisoner of the Arabian sheik, who would have a new woman every night. They would have to entertain him. When they ran out of stories to tell him, he would kill them. So Scheherazade was famous because she successfully told him stories for a thousand and one nights. She conquered the dilemma. So each letter is a story. There is a thousand and one of them in the ten thunders. The "last word of perfect language" refers to the reconstitution of every technology that each thunder talks about. Every technology is a fragmentation of the original medium, speech. Some people get religious about it - "In the beginning was the Word." Speech was the most comprehensive medium. In the beginning, it was a tactile medium. It contained and worked with all the senses. But as speech fragmented into the succeeding technologies, represented by the thunders, the people who lived under those various phases of technological history were biased and were not comprehensive or wholistic like the speech environment at the beginning of human social communication. The problem is that in the beginning man lived in the tactile environment of speech, but he was in the collective unconscious. He had to go through all these various technological phases so that he would be awakened to the pattern of the technologies being extensions of his senses and having various biases and effects. When Joyce says that the tenth thunder is the last word of perfect language, the tactile spoken word environment has

been reconstituted electrically. Acoustic space and acoustic wholism has come back but conscious of itself because TV is an extension of tactility itself. Its content is all the senses: sight, sound, movement (kinetic), proprioception and smell. You have the Word (speech) reconstituted, but it's a new kind of word. The evolution of man has been finished. You have created the last word of perfect language. The phrase "last word" refers to television because all technologies are words and extensions of words- the original medium. That's why he says "last word of perfect language." Television is almost the perfect medium, but it isn't completely. You have to realize that it is a tactile medium and it is tactility in excess. The final extension of man's technologies is the extension of consciousness itself. Consciousness is extended via FINNEGANS WAKE because this book replays the history of the technologies and their biases, visually, acoustically, and haptically - via the "performative" style in which it is presented. You get a second look at the whole history of the modulations of man. In other words, you are a "Finnegan" awake.

Gerry: Could you please discuss the title of the book and why it appears to be a super collage? The collage effect?

Bob: Joyce was referring to the fairytales and the myths of history and culture. He imbedded all these cultural myths, histories and stories into the history of technology. His insight was that every technology created a mythic environment in its own right. Mythic in the sense that people "believed" it. Each technological environment had a certain bias and the people (its users) were shaped by that bias, and believed in it. All the fairytales are symbols for the mythic aspect of each technological environment. Finn is an ancient tribal group. All the tribal aspects, including the traditional meaning of myth as superstition, come back, i.e. the superstitious life of tribal, pre-literate man. This is in the sixth thunder of the retrievals, returns and entrancing of tribal Finns. Tribal man is awakened. Ironically, he is reawakened and he is living at the speed of light. Pattern-recognition takes over so that these tribal retrievals suffer the syndrome that Warhol talked about when he said "In 15 minutes everybody will be famous". This turn-over of the retrievals creates a new form of consciousness for man. This is the service effect of television and the electric environment. It makes man aware of all these patterns. It

makes everybody aware. It's a collective classroom. It's like a drug that makes everybody stoned and pattern-recognition takes over. No culture ever lived in a mode where it was aware of its own cultural bias. We move through so many different cultural phases in time and space today, all as figures in the global theater, that we begin to see the hidden patterns and bias in each culture. The retrievals of Finn are figures within the ground of pattern-recognition which makes tribal man retrieve awake. It makes all tribal institutions be retrieved and suffer awake themselves, as you move into electric autonomy. It is also the death of tribal man. The 20th Century has been a chaotic century because you have all these tribal replays of the tribal unconscious as ersatz, or fake, anti-environments. These shortlasting environments like Fascism, Communism and Nazism, have come and gone. Amazing mass movements and even cults in the 20th Century have come and gone. That is because tribal man is retrieved as a bias for electric man. But as the century unfolds he becomes more aware of the fact that the electric environment is not really a retrieval of tribal man. It is a development into a new form of consciousness of electronic autonomy. It's an ambiguous consciousness of electronic autonomy as well as ultimate merging with everybody into one human tribe. Man is both figure and ground in that situation. That is part of the meaning of FINNEGANS WAKE and why Joyce has tribal myths from all cultures. He uses languages which are great stores of mythic history, mythic stories. He would use all kinds of languages to refer to all the different cultural fables that we look at now in retrospect as the history of culture. Myth is both a figure and a ground in FINNEGANS WAKE. The story does not have a beginning. It does not have an end and it doesn't have a middle. Every page is the whole story as well as a part of the story. You know the book is circular. The last sentence on the last page, page 628, merges back into the beginning of the book, page 3. Most people see that as a cycle. But the cyclical view of history, as a kind of pattern-recognition, in ancient tribal institutions is the content of the electric age because we cannot totally retrieve the occult sensibility, or the astrological sensibility to the cycles of nature. Pre-literate societies were nonlinear and they had a great sensibility to the cyclical patterns of nature. That is a characteristic of Finn. FINNEGANS WAKE points out that in the 20th Century you have a cyclical replay of tribal sensitivities as content for the simultaneity of electric space. This electric space puts all times and spaces in

touch with each other. The rubbing of these times and spaces against each other is not cyclical. Simultaneity is different from cycles. Cycles have a sense of duration. There is no duration when everything is in touch with everything at electric all-at-onceness. Today, we have a paradoxical situation of living in cyclic simultaneity. Every page has aspects of the theme of Vico's cycle. You will find aspects of other themes, including the theme of simultaneity of time and tense, all on the same page. Vico's cyclical view of history as well as simultaneity of other themes are on every page like the little pulsating dots in the TV screen. The narrative part, the idea of a story beginning on the first page, is basically the biographical details of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, his wife Anna Livia Plurabelle and their three kids - the twin sons and the daughter. That narrative is always in there, but it basically starts on page 30. FINNEGANS WAKE, in Irish cultural history, is a take-off on the ballad of Tim Finnegan. He's a bricklayer's assistant who climbs up a ladder drunk, falls off and dies. People have a wake for him. At the wake everybody is partying in traditional Irish gaiety and merriment, a whiskey bottle is flung across the partying room and hits the corpse of Tim Finnegan on the head. He wakes up. Joyce uses that as a punning parable and metaphor for all the great religions, including the theme of the resurrection of Christ, and all the pagan religions that Christianity echoes. Joseph Campbell points out the archetype in the great religious and spiritual traditions of the hero who overcomes death. Joyce makes fun of that with the ballad of Tim Finnegan. He takes Tim Finnegan, who is a folk-hero in Irish culture, and makes him represent the emerging heroic individuation process during the transformation of Finn, the tribal archetype, via visual space. So, from page 3 to page 29, as visual space starts to surface in the second thunder on page 23 and the third thunder on page 44, visual space starts to break up tribal, acoustic space and evokes the individualizing archetype, the wrenching of the individual "talent" out of the tribal kinship bonds. The private individual, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, becomes the personalization of the Tim Finnegan symbol. As the demise of Finnegan happens in the first 29 pages, you have the surfacing of the private individual or the fragmented eggshell. He has an "eggo". McLuhan always used to pronounce "ego" as "egg-o" as a pun on the Humpty Dumpty fragmented man/eggshell. So Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker surfaces on page 30, and till page 103 the chapters are all about his life and the various phases he goes through as a tavernkeeper

and politician. He was very popular, then there's a scandal and he is put in jail like all political leaders of the 20th Century. They always end up as terrorists or in jail at one point in their political life, as we see with LaRouche's career. After the trial, he resurrects and escapes from jail. There are cross-cultural linguistic parallels with other cultures via this one character. Joyce is talking about different individuals from different cultures in history. This symbolic individual dies and is resurrected. He replays the ballad of Tim Finnegan. On page 104 you begin to hear about his complement, Anna Livia Plurabelle. Page 104 to 125 is about the manifesto/letter (visual space) of Anna Livia Plurabelle, which also represents FINNEGANS WAKE itself. It is written by Shem, the creative, filthy, unkempt son, the outcast. But it is delivered by the shining perfect boy, Shaun, his twin brother, the mailman. This letter is found by the hen. Shem had written it and Shaun had delivered it. In the modern situation, you have a song. A good singer records it. The singer has to go through the medium of the mafia, the bureaucratic management of entertainment, the money level, which is represented by Shaun the postman. Shaun claims he wrote it. Shem actually wrote it. There is a close relationship between Anna Livia and Shem. Remember the traditional idea of the artist inspired by the Muse, which is the feminine principle. Shaun is the apple of HCE's eye. He's the perfect successful citizen. Shem and Shaun have a flirty, silly sister, Issy, who evokes many other themes. Finn dies before page 30 . Tribal man dies as Prankquean-controlled man, womanly-controlled man, the matriarchy-controlled man, Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker(=HCE), surfaces with a visual bias (symbolized by the Prankquean). By the time the reader gets to the fifth thunder (page 113), there is no Finn at that point in the "narrative". From pages 429 to 590 you have the gradual re-emergence of Finn. Finn returns in the last 100 pages of the book. Finn has come back as a tribal content under the TV effect. HCE disappears. There is a long ham radio, frantic dialogue (page 500ff.) which evokes, among other things, the theme of a seance. There are four parts, or Books, in FINNEGANS WAKE. Book Three is based around the four phases of Shaun. So Shaun has four chapters in Book Three, which goes from page 403 to 590, as Shaun replays his father HCE and goes through these various social postures. He gets pummelled because he stole Shem's letter. In the seance, eventually the four interrogators get past Shaun and actually achieve contact with HCE. In the Shaun chapters of Book Three, he is riding on his dad's reputation. So

everyone wants to find out what HCE was like. We find out what he's like. While HCE starts speaking through Shaun in the seance section, he is overcome in the later stages of Book Three by Finn, the tribal giant. Finn comes booming through causing all kinds of earthquakes and revolutions. Finn is retrieved. The "narrative" part of FINNEGANS WAKE goes from page 30 to 500, and then it is swallowed up.

Gerry: What was Joyce's motivation in structuring FINNEGANS WAKE so alienating to the normal storytelling technique?

Bob: That's easy. Why didn't Joyce make a nice effort to communicate? Do you know why he didn't, Connie? Because in the electric age of information overload, of excessive communication, where everybody is trying to communicate and technologically does communicate with everybody to the point where we are all extrasensorially, telepathically, in touch with each other, the only anti-environmental stance you can take would be a massive effort of non-communication in this Age of Communication. That is why Marshall McLuhan once said at a conference of therapists that in our time, our goal is not to communicate. One of the therapists, who makes money by communicating with his patients on a therapeutic basis, was shocked by McLuhan's statement. He said, "I think McLuhan is totally wrong. Today, the problem is people don't communicate enough" - you know, that plaintive cliché "we need to communicate more". So you can see which point of view has more staying power. We are now sick of people communicating with each other. We don't listen to talk shows. We don't care about them. We even have a new phrase for the problem of excessive communication - "hate-speech". McLuhan and Joyce are right. The appropriate, critical, anti-environmental posture is not to communicate, or to develop a way of communicating that makes you aware of the processes and biases of communication.

Gerry: You've said Joyce invented rock'n'roll.

Bob: No, I've said his book anticipates rock'n'roll and the rhythms of it. If you just take sips of it, FINNEGANS WAKE is like the mechanical-tactile music of rock'n'roll. It's rock'n'roll in print. There is so much grunting and

syllabalic chaos. The ten thunders are like ten electronic screeching guitar notes or chords. Actually, I think the ten thunders together sound like the opening notes of Frank Zappa's instrumental called "Black Napkins".

Gerry: Feedback!

Bob: Yes, feedback, not to mention feedforward. And they do feedback because every thunder assumes and resumes the other thunders. It is a resonating echo chamber. "Echoland" is a phrase used throughout FINNEGANS WAKE. It is really the echoing of rock'n'roll. The whole psychedelic echoing effect of amplified music, which Joyce didn't have access to, is the method of FINNEGANS WAKE. Isn't that amazing? Is it going to rain? Look out, Gerry! (A HEAVY RAIN SUDDENLY STARTS TO FALL) We ended with a thunder and rainstorm which is what each thunder also is in FINNEGANS WAKE. It's a stormy night.

Gerry: Please talk about "riverrun" and the metaphor of water.

Bob: Well, all of nature is metaphorized in FINNEGANS WAKE. Joyce said that he was trying to awaken from the nightmare of history. FINNEGANS WAKE, on one level, is a man dreaming during the night. He dreams the whole history of man. Part of it is a nightmare. H. C. Earwicker's got all these thunders, noises and rainstorms going on during his dream. That's what we are hearing right now.

Gerry: Till the end of time? Is FINNEGANS WAKE predicting? Will man ever end?

Bob: No, it doesn't end. Remember, it doesn't end. FINNEGANS WAKE does not end with a period. But what is interesting - a few lines before the non-ending ending on page 628, it says "End here." (Laughs) Joyce wrote "End here." That's a few lines before the actual last words on page 628.

Gerry: Do you think that FINNEGANS WAKE will ever be obsolete?

Bob: No, it is the new Bible of the future. He has created a new religion, a

new myth, just like all the great religions were.

Gerry: Will a new "James Joyce " ever come along and write a new "FINNEGANS WAKE"?

Bob: That is being written by all of us. That's what FINNEGANS WAKE means. All of us now in the global theater are both actors and audience participating in our own action, in our own participation, under electric conditions. The computer environment feeds on itself - "Here Comes Everybody", because you don't need visionary awareness, extraordinary awareness or extraordinary talent, to provide content for the electric environment which creates endless diversity and unity at the same time. So, finally, man is no longer controlled. He is free to co-create and become like a god.

Gerry: But we are not going to have a book that is passed down?

Bob: No, that passed-down book is FINNEGANS WAKE. It is an endlessly regenerative book. We can and will get millions of personal, "user-as-content" experiences out of it.

Gerry: Will people ever be able to read it?

Bob: Yes.

Connie: If they come to Bob's university.

Bob: If they get the basic ground rules, which will help them not be so alienated from it, then they will learn to enjoy it and use it.

Gerry: Is it good that not many people can use it now?

Bob: No.

Gerry: More people should use it. They are lame because they are not using it?

Bob: The problem is the electric environment is driving everybody crazy with too much pattern-recognition to the point we know too much for what we are prepared to understand. So that is why we recommend turning off the electric environment for a little while so people can realize the drug they've been on that's given them the highest decibels of human consciousness and experience. So, people have to realize the drug they have been on.

Gerry: But my question was - should man be adapting to understanding FINNEGANS WAKE?

Bob: Of course, that's why I did my radio show and then my book, PHATIC COMMUNION with BOB DOBBS.

Gerry: But you don't want people to buy your book. You don't want a lot of listeners to hear your radio show.

Bob: I'd like to have a lot of listeners and people to read my book, if they make the effort to understand it. It's just a guide to understanding. So a lot of people should have that kind of understanding.

Gerry: And their wanting it should come from inside them and not be a fake motivation.

Bob: I don't care where it comes from as long as they make an effort to understand. McLuhan wrote a letter to PLAYBOY which is featured in the third PERFECT PITCH newsletter. The letter, published in early 1970, says that "the auditory imagination", which was a phrase used and promoted by T. S. Eliot before World War II, is now "an ordinary form of awareness". And that is because acoustic space is the content of tactile space. So, the auditory imagination is a cliché situation that offers no perception. It's archetypal - cliché becomes archetype. The new hidden awareness, which people are not conscious of, was the pattern-recognition expressed by Joyce in FINNEGANS WAKE. McLuhan writes to PLAYBOY in 1970 that FINNEGANS WAKE has not entered the "waking life of our world" for people of the 20th Century. They are not aware of it. It's a hidden

environment. It's a hidden organism, a hidden nutrient, a hidden guide to media ecology, just sitting there waiting to be understood. That's why people will only read ULYSSES. They can't handle FINNEGANS WAKE, they don't know how to get into it.

Gerry: So, are you here to promote FINNEGANS WAKE?

Bob: Yes, I'm a "Finnegan". I'm here to point out what has been achieved.

Gerry: So, at your funeral, we should whup a bottle at your head?

Bob: No. I won't have a funeral. That won't be necessary.

Gerry: Yeah! It's just been declared Bob will never die.

Bob: He's just been declared immortal.

Gerry: If you had a zillion dollars, would you promote buying FINNEGANS WAKE on the home shopping club on TV?

Bob: Oh yeah!

Gerry: Do you feel it's your mission to get people to read FINNEGANS WAKE?

Bob: That's one of my missions. You've got to understand part of the message of FINNEGANS WAKE is that it's a vast mirroring of nothing by nothing. Because the whole point of FINNEGANS WAKE is that the last word of perfect language, television and the modern electric environment, is the means to wake people up. McLuhan explained that point. The multiplicity-of-the-media experience we have today will alienate people from identifying with any medium. So people will finally get detached from the hypnotic effect of each medium. The multiplicity of mixed corporate-media as an artform is creating the collective consciousness of today. I don't have to get people to understand FINNEGANS WAKE. That is being done by the electric environment. The problem is they cannot see that. They can

understand it in a non-visual way, but they don't know how to retrieve their visual sense. Joyce states this situation on page 54 - "Television kills telephony in brothers' broil. Our eyes demand their turn. Let them be seen!" FINNEGANS WAKE retrieves visual space and shows you how to see the electric Esperanto that has made everybody collectively conscious.

Gerry: What's "telephony in brothers' broil" mean?

Bob: "Telephony" is the telephone. "Brothers" evokes the theme of Cain and Abel. "Broil" means to fight. So Cain kills Abel in a fight between brothers. That's an anthropomorphic view of reality. A technological view, as extensions of us, is "television kills telephony in brothers' broil." It's like a newspaper headline. Then it says, "Our eyes demand their turn." So Joyce is pointing to the senses. He's pointing out that television is not an extension of the eye, and how the human organism, collectively and unconsciously when a new environment comes in, demands a rebalancing of the sensory structure. It's called "sensory closure", which is the eyes necessarily demanding all to be rebalanced within the tactile mesh of television, or to have a function within it. Different cultures express their particular biases in sensory closure in relation to the TV environment. Joyce then says, "Let them be seen." So the way to have the eyes "be seen" is to have the eye as an ear, which is what happens under TV conditions, and to express it via the visual medium - the book. The book consists of a soundtrack separate from a visual track. What you see/hear when you read it silently is different from what you hear when someone else reads it out loud to you when you are not looking at it. Joyce found a way to solve the geometric problem of "squaring the circle" by figuring out how to write a book with the "keys...given" (page 628). The keys to the book are given to you. He has learned how to revitalize the medium of the book itself. This is a solution to a 20th Century scientific problem in communication that post-Einsteinian scientists do not include in the Quantum Project. That is quite an amazing achievement.

Gerry: Did James Joyce do this because he was an incredible writer, or do you believe he actually had some form of ESP because he knew this would be an effective work for all times?

Bob: It's like Oliver Stone's movie JFK which seems amazing to people because all that information was already there. The vast majority of people who've seen this movie have not heard of Mae Brussell, Sherman Skolnick, Lyndon LaRouche, Dr. Beter, or these various other people who knew all this stuff a few years after Kennedy was shot. The knowledge about Mae Brussell and Skolnick is suppressed just as the knowledge of what James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats and Wyndham Lewis knew and of the discourse between them at the turn of the century has been suppressed. McLuhan had always been angry about that. He wrote about it in his letters. What the "men of 1914" talked about is very close to what McLuhan studied. McLuhan retrieved their discourse which was suppressed by the spreading of post-World War II university education, just like in medicine. The modern pharmaceutical medical Establishment suppressed the natural therapies when chemistry, Hitler and I.G. Farben took over. The poets of the 30's, the 40's, and the 50's, from W. H. Auden to Allen Ginsberg, did not understand this lost discourse and were not able to be as encyclopedic as the "men of 1914". Combined with breakthroughs in esoteric anthropology, sociology and psychology, their creative imaginations allowed them to synthesize the knowledge of their time and develop this wisdom. That fact is not known. Today, the academics don't even teach FINNEGANS WAKE. McLuhan was a lone crusader who taught their discoveries in his classes. But he was ostracized. He learned a lot by corresponding with Ezra Pound in the late 40's. When McLuhan started to read Pound's literary criticism, he was amazed and delighted at what Pound and these associates wrote in the 10's and 20's of this century. So Joyce's work was a result of this clique of good minds dealing with the possibilities of their time, and studying each others' works and coming up with new patterns. Pound attempted to make a FINNEGANS WAKE, too. It was called THE CANTOS, and Pound admitted that he failed. He did not master the whole process like Joyce did. It is interesting to study what Eliot, Lewis, Pound, Yeats and Joyce accomplished. They all did great things to help Joyce produce the greatest artifact fashioned by man.

Gerry: Who was suppressing them? Were they aware of what they were suppressing? Did they have a motive? Again, did Joyce have ESP?

Bob: Oh yes. ESP is something most poets have in a slight way. But it is not important to have ESP, today. He had a cultural ESP. As McLuhan says in his book TAKE TODAY, "ESP is old hat when effects precede causes." When you can understand the effects and see where the causes of those effects come from, you are seeing things beyond any cultists. One of the reasons these poets were suppressed was that they were visual, literate people. Part of their message concerned the death of the visual medium by the new 20th Century electric technologies. You can say, on a top-down level, the Nazis, the Fascists and the Communists suppressed Eliot and these writers in their countries as bourgeois literature, as 19th Century indulgent farts.

Gerry: Because they knew these guys were dangerous?

Bob: They interpreted them as dangerous because they projected certain neuroses they had on the artists. Also, these totalitarians did not care about literature. They wanted to ride in and get new power via new media. So they rode in on movies, radio, airplanes and cars. They just took over. That's FAHRENHEIT 451. They burned all the books. So the effects of the electric environment of "finnegans awake" is symbolized by the newspaper headline style of the title of Joyce's book. It's a warning - Finn's awake. The electric environment ties us to the whipping post. Part of Joyce and Company's ethos was media ecology. They knew the electric environment was a new ramparts, a new battle cry, a new fire from outer space, that was consuming the whole planet. And it did happen. It ended with the Bomb. For some literate scientists, the atomic bomb was predicted by FINNEGANS WAKE. These scientists later saw the title as a phrase that expressed what happened to humanity when they ended history with the atomic bomb. They ended warfare on a huge level. Everybody who talks about that period in 1945 when they saw the Bomb at the first test site knew they had shifted society into a new zone, a new world. That's one level that you can use to interpret Joyce for the scientific community - he predicted the new world. When FINNEGANS WAKE was published in 1939, people did not know about the atomic bomb. It wasn't known until August 1945. However, it took decades for people to understand it. Its collective effect was an invisible environment for a while. Joyce predicted this whole process. On page 81, Joyce wrote,

"Yes, the viability of vicinals if invisible is invincible." Remember, the Chinese word "chin" (which means man) is embedded in the title FINNEGANS WAKE. So man's awake. The atomic bomb made man awake. It made him get out of the nightmare of history. It stopped the ancient conflict. It created a new ground for a new kind of conflict. Joyce predicted that with his headline book, FINNEGANS AWAKE. Now, I want to make a wrap-up statement about the ten thunders. Remember Connie said the third thunder, "klikkakkakkak", referred to the train. The ten thunders span the history of humanity which I just ran through. But Joyce being... Oh, Gerry, you got the keys? I almost shut the door. There's no key there.

Gerry: Here they are, right here. I got the key to FINNEGANS WAKE.

Bob: You do have the key. It was given to you. So, Joyce not only spanned the history of technology, but also included simultaneity. You can look at the first five thunders as echoing life in the 19th Century and the second five thunders as life in the 20th Century. Therefore, the third thunder, "klikkakkakkak", can refer to the railroad. Even though the railroad appears chronologically too early in the sequence of the first historical pattern I laid out, if you think of the ten thunders as technologies and environments of the 19th and 20th Centuries, the third thunder does refer to the railroad, "klikkakkakkak". You can look at the book from different chronological frames, which is only natural, since it contains all times and spaces. The ten thunders can span different lengths of time - rather than all of human history, maybe just 50 years.

Gerry: Is there anyone else swinging their arms and talking about FINNEGANS WAKE?

Bob: No, I'm the only one who does that. I have a world monopoly on that phenomenon.

Gerry: How did you develop it?

Bob: From excessive pattern-recognition...

Gerry: Of?

Bob: Of the addiction to pattern-recognition by my peers.

Gerry: Who are your peers?

Bob: Everybody! Everybody is my peer. I just don't have time for all of them all the time. Right?

Gerry: Right!

Bob: So that's it. This interview will not be printed due to budget cuts.

Gerry: And who controls the budget?

Bob: Those who have the knife that cuts.

Gerry: And who sharpens their knife?

Bob: The electric environment.

Gerry: And who provides the electricity for the sharpener?

Bob: We do. It's an extension of us. So we do it to ourselves.

Gerry: Will we ever learn?

Bob: Objects are unobservable. Only relationships among objects are observable. So if you think that the question, "Will we ever learn?", implies a goal, a particular point and time we will arrive at, a particular object, we will never know that. Because objects like that do not exist, only relationships among objects exist. It is like asking, "Will there ever be silence?" It's like, "Will you ever die?" Well, you'll never know because to be dead is a specific experience that seems to imply isolation which could not be known. Because nothing exists in isolation, you will never experience death. You will only experience those things that involve relationships. The end point of time,

death, cannot be experienced because it's not a relationship among events.