

## ‘I will re-create *Finnegans Wake* anyway’: Joseph Beuys reads James Joyce

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### Abstract

How did Joseph Beuys read James Joyce’s work? Beuys’ annotated copy of *Finnegans Wake*, as well as ‘Ulysses Extension’ drawings provide close insight into the artist’s thinking. Beuys’ work expands or ‘furthers’ Joyce in sculptural substances, language and by social means. Beuys used Joyce, especially *Finnegans Wake*, as a reference point of extraordinary suggestive power for the duration of his artistic career. Beuys’ current reappraisal lets us better understand his importance in pioneering ecological practices, in conceiving of art as an eco-system that sustains discursive and societal ‘force fields’—and, through this, glimpse possibilities for grasping Joyce’s ideal, indirect efficacy today.

Key words: Joseph Beuys, James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, artists responding to literature, indirect efficacy

The current exhibition of Joseph Beuys’ (1921-86) work at M HKA, Antwerp, entitled ‘Greetings from the Eurasian’,<sup>1</sup> is arguably a symptom of a cultural shift: the artist, who had (certainly in the English-speaking world) often been seen as a shamanistic embodiment of late-Modernist chauvinism (even to the extent of considering the former German soldier as an un-reconstituted Fascist)<sup>2</sup> is now being re-appraised as someone interested in expanding our focus of attention to larger frameworks than the Euro-American one—and larger historical time-lines than those dictated by election cycles or annual reports to shareholders. Beuys’ position is, rightly in my view, reassessed as one countering chauvinistic, capitalist and colonial modernity. Anti-modernity, however, is sometimes imprecisely framed as anti- or de-Modernism (in the Beuys catalogue and in some other current art theory).<sup>3</sup> The reappraisal of

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<sup>1</sup> See especially the curator, Nav Haq’s introduction in the exhibition catalogue (Beuys 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Most notably Buchloh 1980: 35-43.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Esche, Director, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, has motivated his recent practise as de- or anti-modern, corresponding to Walter Mignolo’s decolonial thinking (Esche 2017: 212-21).

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Beuys can arguably be part of more generally assessing who can serve us to address today's problems as case studies in current cultural, ecological and political discourse. I suggest that tackling the question of how Beuys read Joyce can be useful in this context. James Joyce, as one of the prime examples of Modernist culture that bears more than the seeds of Modernism's critique within it, was one of Beuys' pre-eminent sources of reference, where even the old-fashioned term 'inspiration' may make sense. How artists have responded to Joyce is also reflective of a renewed interest: M HKA will host my *Joyce in Art* exhibition in June 2018.<sup>4</sup> The larger question of how artists read canonical literary texts may at first sight seem like one of those Humanities concerns with little applicability to matters of 'real' importance. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact that reading groups of Marx's *Kapital* or Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* have been adopted as a key format of visual art practice in such spaces as the Venice Biennale<sup>5</sup> calls to mind that other cultural moment, the one leading up to the peaceful revolution in 1989, when those actively engaged for a non-totalitarian future used the(ir) reading of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1986) call minor literature (Kafka, Joyce, Beckett etc.), but also other liberating, canonical, and thus un-censorable texts, like Schiller's *Letters*, Marx himself, Hannah Arendt, Rosa Luxemburg and—centrally—the Bible, in order to forge communities, educate in ways otherwise inaccessible and live a freer life

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<sup>4</sup> Opening 14 June 2018. This is a condensed reprise of my earlier, larger exhibition 'Joyce in Art: Visual Art Inspired by James Joyce', Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, visual centrepiece of the *ReJoyceDublin 2004* Festival: 10 June-28 August 2004. For the book accompanying the exhibition (or *vice versa*), see Lerm-Hayes 2004. Here, Beuys could only be one of ca. 200 artists discussed. In the following, I am drawing particularly on my arguments in *James Joyce als Inspirationsquelle für Joseph Beuys* (Lerm-Hayes 2001). I researched this book, my PhD thesis, at the Zurich James Joyce Foundation, with the help of a scholarship of the city of Zurich. I am grateful to Fritz Senn, the Foundation and the city. I also showed 'Joyce in Art' in a different form at the Leo Tolstoy National Museum, Yasnaya Polyana, September 2010, and Museum of Art (MoA), Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea. 8 July-8 September 2011.

<sup>5</sup> The 2015 Biennial organized a continuous reading of *Das Kapital* as one of its public programme's central, interactive moments. Dora García made a documentary film of the Zurich Joyce Foundation's *Finnegans Wake* reading group. See Lerm-Hayes. 2015: 120-33.

at least in one's mind. Partly through these readings, they 'instituted otherwise',<sup>6</sup> as we would now say, with very tangible, historical outcomes, indeed. 'Instituting otherwise' is again called for, as far as many artists, curators and leading institutions are concerned. How Beuys was of importance for oppositional/dissident artists has been described by Eugen Blume (2007: 304-19). Joyce's *Ulysses* was clandestinely circulated and discussed.<sup>7</sup> Against this backdrop, I will now ask: how did Beuys read Joyce?

We are in the fortunate position of having access to the artist's annotated copies of Joyce's works in Beuys' Estate.<sup>8</sup> In 1964, Joseph Beuys wrote in his *Life Course/Work Course* that he had read James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* in 1950, in a certain 'Haus Wylermeer' (correctly: Wylerberg) on the Lower Rhine. However, the local cultural centre had waived Beuys' collaboration and thus it would likely have been a private reading at most. Along with Beuys' remarks about Joyce, which appear as mysterious and fictional as the mention of a '*Finnegans Wake* reading', comes an entry that Beuys had 'extended' Joyce's *Ulysses*, as well as the statement from 1972, chosen here as my title, that Beuys planned to re-create *Finnegans Wake* 'anyway'. In *Life Course/Work Course*, the so-called *Ulysses-Extension* carries the long title: *At the Request of James Joyce, Beuys Extends 'Ulysses' by 2 [or 6] Further Chapters*. The work that bears this title (from 1957-61, with

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<sup>6</sup> BAK, Utrecht, use this phrase as a title for a multi-annual programme of events, exhibitions and symposia. It has recently succeeded in gaining funding for a 'post-academic institution' that brings ten researchers/artists to Utrecht annually to make propositions, e.g. for non-Fascist living: [www.bak-utrecht.nl](http://www.bak-utrecht.nl).

<sup>7</sup> Elly Reichel, a Dresden artist in my family remembers this. Elly Reichel, Mirosław Balka and Zbigniew Gostomski are artists from behind the Iron Curtain, who have centrally engaged with Joyce in their work. In December 2017, I have contributed papers linking canonical texts, such as Joyce's, to the concerns of conferences on *Black Artists in Europe*: at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and *Art & Activism*, Museum voor Wereldculturen, University of Leiden, Netherlands.

<sup>8</sup> I thank Eva Beuys for granting me access to these books in 1997 and 2001, and Erich Marx for leafing through Beuys' *Ulysses Extension* exercise books for me in a bank vault in Berlin in 1993 (he agreed to do this himself, as I had not brought cotton gloves to handle the work). This latter research enabled me to contribute to catalogues on Beuys edited by Harald Szeemann (Lerm-Hayes 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1997).

addenda) only became known to a larger audience after Beuys' death, firstly through an exhibition in Basel, and since 1997 because it found a home in the collection of the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt. For those who visited him around 1962, Beuys already 'exhibited' his copy of a translation of *Ulysses* in the windowsill.<sup>9</sup> One can, therefore, be certain that he owned and appreciated this work early on. Beuys also owned a first edition of *Finnegans Wake*,<sup>10</sup> the American version with a black linen cover (Viking Press, New York 1939). It contains handwritten notes on almost every page.<sup>11</sup> Beuys purchased the book second-hand: 'Beare' is given as the first owner's last name on the endpaper. He occupied himself intensively with the English language at two points in his biography: during his imprisonment in a British POW camp in Germany,<sup>12</sup> and in the 1970s, when he was in Ireland, before finally exhibiting at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1979. The nature of many of the notes in the *Wake* may suggest a language learning time: they are English words, most likely from the English-Scottish dictionary, which Beuys possessed, and which, like the grammar textbook with which he learned and studied English, was preserved in the artist's Estate. Beuys indicated his reading of *Finnegans Wake* in *Life Course/Work Course* for 1950 and possibly read it at that time, too, or, at the latest, parallel to the *Ulysses-Extension* at the end of the 1950s. The nature of the drawings in Beuys' *Ulysses-Extension* presupposed the

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<sup>9</sup> For the importance of this German edition for Beuys, see Lerm-Hayes 2005: 121-32.

<sup>10</sup> There is another first edition in Beuys' library in the Estate without any annotations: the English version with a red linen cover (Faber and Faber, London 1939). Bernd Klüser gave it to the artist around 1980 (Klüser 1995: 61). Beuys' financial means probably increased proportionately to the increasing price for *Finnegans Wake* first editions.

<sup>11</sup> In the Estate, Richard Ellmann's Joyce biography still exists in German (published 1961, purchased 1971). Beuys made few comments in the form of sketched triangles on the page margin. A list of authors' names written in Beuys' Ellmann's Joyce biography points out that Beuys appreciated or wanted to copy Joyce's erudition. 1972 is the earliest date he could have purchased the original version of *Ulysses*, because he owned an edition of that year (Penguin).

<sup>12</sup> Eva Beuys believes that her husband taught himself English during his captivity as a prisoner of war. Caroline Tisdall holds this viewpoint as well. Interview of the author with Eva Beuys, Düsseldorf, 25.08.1997, and with Carline Tisdall, London, 09.02.1995

knowledge of *Finnegans Wake*: there, for example, he drew book objects, where the pages, facing outward, are arranged around the curving spine in the centre. The best-known feature of *Finnegans Wake* is its cyclical structure, which means that the last incomplete sentence can be continued in the first one. It is only here (and not in *Ulysses*) that it is meaningful to turn a book around its own spinal axis.

Beuys probably only worked on the annotations to *Finnegans Wake* at the end of the 1970s: one can interpret Beuys' underlining of a passage as a concrete indication of this. It represents one of many resolutions of the initials of the protagonist HCE: 'their right renowned patriarch? Heinz cans everywhere and the swanee her ainsell and Eyewaker's family sock' (581.05-06). Joyce let a penchant for everyday culture (the inflationary appearance of cans) flow into literature as early as the 1930s, but the German artist likely thought of Andy Warhol. Externally, Beuys' copy of Joyce's late work bears no signs of adaptation on the black cover. As one opens the book, one reads 'compassion' on the endpaper, in Beuys' handwriting. Many pages follow, where, below, usually in the outer corner, one or two words are written in pencil. They are: country/ count counter/ career/ cut cutter/ cutler/ cold [title page]/ churn/ chill/ chime/ calender [*sic*, etc.].<sup>13</sup> Evidently, these are English words, which Beuys copied from the dictionary or his vocabulary books. These too, as far as they are preserved in the Estate, are arranged according to initials.<sup>14</sup>

It would be wrong to conclude that the words from the dictionary or the vocabulary books were distributed randomly in his copy of *Finnegans Wake*, which would mean that it could have been any other

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<sup>13</sup> The slashes indicate a page break.

<sup>14</sup> A note from Eva Beuys. Not in all cases has the transfer process retained the correct spelling. The same applies to the remaining notes: on all of the following pages until 195, words with 'C' are listed, now mostly arranged in small columns. On page 56 and following ones there are 10 items. On other pages a similar number can be found. On some occasions, the wordlists include grammatical forms. For instance, on page 63 'come came come' can be found, as well as different English prefixes on pages 539 and 585. Here there is the word 'mistorbing' (585.34) in Joyce's text. Alongside Beuys wrote: 'miss-, diss-', surrounded by an 'S'-shaped line. Consequently, this note is deeply linked with the text, as it shows that Beuys understood how Joyce varied the word through the change of a prefix.

book. Even if there are already words on the endpaper and title page beginning with 'C', meaning there is no text from which they could have derived, it must be concluded that most of the vocabulary from *Finnegans Wake* was looked up in the dictionary, and only then placed in the book, while reading. This is because many of the words on the first pages are taken from the *Finnegans Wake* pages up to the fifties.<sup>15</sup> The extent to which a *Wake* page corresponds to annotated words increases.<sup>16</sup> In a text full of neologisms, Beuys thus picked out words that can be found in a dictionary, and he learned them by writing them down. The surprise here lies in the observation that this 'basic vocabulary' can actually be found in the *Wake*. Understandably enough, native English speakers concentrate on what deviates from the norm in this book, whereas Beuys had to take the opposite approach. As John Cage would remark later, Beuys likely also thought that one could 'find points of access into *Finnegans Wake* from both the German as well as the English language' (Cage 1992: 83)

As was mentioned above, the 'C' (or the shape of this letter) plays a major role in Beuys' comments on *Finnegans Wake*. In order to interpret it, it must be placed in the context of Beuys' habit of marking books in his personal library with specific signs while reading.<sup>17</sup> In his copy of the

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<sup>15</sup> '[...] compassion' can be found on page 52 line 13, 'career' appears for the first time on 032.28 and 'chime' is written on page 026.28. Other words that Beuys noted down cannot be found in *Wake* or not in the same spelling: 'cutler', 'calender' and 'clumsy'. Beuys probably encountered these words in a dictionary. An exception is the vulgar expression 'cunt', which can only be found in very comprehensive dictionaries or those intended for slang. In *Finnegans Wake* it does not appear at all. Active communication is therefore assumed.

<sup>16</sup> On page 57 are written the words 'coil', 'chat', 'completely', 'certitude', 'cool' and 'complacent', while the words 'certificate', 'craving' and 'call' were written on the page margin, probably extracted from a dictionary. Another sample shows, that Beuys kept this method of learning words: On page 601 all of the words are found in the text, except 'classy' and 'carroll' (which is probably referring to Lewis Carroll). In the text there exist different but related forms ('coroll', 'corrol', 'caroll' and 'carrol'), with which Joyce is certainly circling the name of the writer. On page 611, all of Beuys' words extracted from Joyce's text can be found (611.30).

<sup>17</sup> The sign for books and catalogues in which Beuys was himself included, was a cross on the cover, drawn with 'brown cross paint'. This is evident from books

biography of Ignatius of Loyola, published by rororo, for example, he placed notes in the shape of a circle with a dot in the margins (Mennekes 1992: 39ff). This is known as a sun sign. Joyce, who himself attended a Jesuit school and read a biography of Loyola as a six-year-old,<sup>18</sup> refers in *Finnegans Wake* to the founder of the order as ‘the ignacio’ (228.11), which may refer to fire and therefore to the sun, or gold. Beuys thus chose the sign he repeated at the edges of the page with certain intentions: it characterizes Ignatius on the grounds of a similarity between his name and words derived from the Latin word for fire, *ignis*. The circle with the dot is an abbreviation of this connection in the visual field. This way of taking things literally and believing the saying ‘nomen est omen’ connects, as can already be determined, Beuys and Joyce as the starting point of many of their artistic discoveries.

To what extent can the ‘C’ in Joyce have been of importance to Beuys? In *Finnegans Wake* itself it plays a specific role: the male protagonist is given the name of the quasi-chemical formula HCE, which is concretized in many different ways and keeps us from pinning down his changing identity. The best-known versions of the name are ‘Here Comes Everybody’ (32.18-19) and ‘Humphrey Chimpden [...] Earwicker’ (30.02, 07). The ‘C’ as a letter is thus already suited to absorb a variety of different meanings in *Finnegans Wake*. It is part of a formula and thus also used by Joyce as a substitute, but not for just anything. The ‘chemical’ formula has certainly been decisive for the choice of letters, though, for Beuys, the visual artist for whom materials or substances were of particular importance, one presumably has to emphasize this aspect even more strongly. Beuys mentioned Berzelius, who established the chemical sign language, in the context of Joyce: the name is placed next to *Hvedekorn*, the name of the journal in which a first, short piece about ‘Beuys’ Joyce’ appeared (referring to the *Ulysses Extension*).<sup>19</sup>

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that used to belong to Beuys and that are now part of the library of the Beuys Archive, Museum Schloß Moyland. At the beginning of 1995, I worked there and packed these books for removal.

<sup>18</sup> For an illustration of Joyce’s childlike signature and the handwritten chronicle of the year 1888, see Igoe 1998: 26.

<sup>19</sup> See Huber 1992: 26. The ‘H’ of hydrogen became more important in the context of Beuys’ *Westmensch* books of drawings, as part of the ‘new cross’, meaning one that is superimposed on Eurasia and connects the parts, and later as cipher for human, redeemer (*Heiland* in German), hour etc.

Carbon, in the form of coal, graphite, soot, carbon dioxide and as the basis of all organic compounds, fats, oils and proteins, must be regarded as the most important reason for the choice of this particular Joycean abbreviation in Beuys. In dealing with the 'C' in *Finnegans Wake*, did he realize the special qualities of the substances that were to become 'his' signature sculptural materials, fat and felt? More evidence for this will need to be sought.

With Joyce—and subsequently also with Beuys—the aspect of language families plays a significant role. Perhaps Beuys noticed the overwhelming number of words beginning with a 'C', when he was learning English with the use of the dictionary. Many of these were derived from Latin or other Romance languages (and their basic forms were known to Beuys, as he had learned them at school), while others are of Germanic origin but are not written with a 'K' (any longer). The vocabulary he learned in this way is a formal one, judging by the average of the words that start with different letters. Beuys thus learned the opposite of what he himself described as 'low' language (Kramer 1991: 15. By this he meant the English that he heard in Scotland and Ireland, including the accent in which Joyce let many of his characters speak and that can, e.g. be seen in *Finnegans Wake* often with its Dublin-phonetic spelling. Are Beuys' comments to be understood as a 'counterweight' to the text? This claim can only be made with certain limitations. The annotated words with a 'C' are continued in the Scottish dictionary, which Beuys used as a reference and which remained in his possession: words beginning with this letter are also written there, next to and beneath the text of the preface. Beuys thus had something 'Celtic' in front of him, while he learned and wrote English of Romanic origin. He may have noticed that Joyce's text contained words of Celtic origin, though Joyce's Latin, Italian, French and German were certainly better than his Irish or his Scottish Gaelic.

Among the possible motives for Beuys to choose precisely the letter 'C', it is striking that it was the connection with Celtic rather than the Romance language element in which Beuys was interested: the 'C' is, of course, the initial of such words as 'Celtic' or 'Cleve', as Beuys wrote the name of his 'Celtic' homeland in his 1974 will for instance. Max Reithmann, without knowing of Beuys' *Finnegans Wake* annotations, already pointed out that the 'C' is, of course, to be interpreted as the beginning of the spiral, to which Beuys often refers as 'threshold sign'



(1994: 148). Similarly, the ‘C’ can be seen as a semicircle. This is quite meaningful in connection to *Finnegans Wake*, as cycles are determinant for this work in terms of content as well as form. One can even go further and recall the staff or walking stick, which was not only one of Joyce’s and Beuys’ trademarks (along with the hat), whose shape also often found its way into the artist’s work as an extended ‘C’.

Within the Joycean oeuvre, particularly looking back from *Finnegans Wake* to *Ulysses* (the order in which Beuys may well have experienced it), the extended ‘C’, turned on its side, can also be seen as a ‘U’: as the first letter of *Ulysses*. It has exactly those qualities that Beuys clarified with the cane. He ‘extended’ it repeatedly. An energy flow, also in the form of writing, bundles in one direction, turns around and goes back. When Beuys read *Finnegans Wake*, he would surely have first of all explained the meaning of the title to himself and come to the conclusion that ‘wake’ is not only a wake (of the dead), but also the trace of a ship’s keel, or that of a quill, an energy trace in the sense of the developing work of the artist—as clearly expressed, for example, in the *Ulysses-Extension*. As an energetically flowing ‘U’, Beuys used the cane as part of his *Honey Pump in the Workplace*, 1977. His *Eurasia Staff* motif transfers these qualities to the geographical area (and serves the mentioned Antwerp exhibition as a central theme).<sup>20</sup> In the *Interview with Hagen Lieberknecht*, from which the claim of wanting to re-create *Finnegans Wake* stems, Beuys confirms the connection here proposed and expands it into a ‘spiral, horseshoe, form of hearing, primordial sign [and] sign of the gate’ (1972: 13). In the text, he had also just reflected theoretically on the use of letters as ambiguous motifs (signifiers/signified): ‘Werner Hofmann from Hamburg. [...] great discovery, multifaceted and more ... [...] The letter[.] can also be a beam at the same time’ (1972: 8).

In research on Joyce, letters and other ambiguous abbreviations used by the author while writing *Finnegans Wake*, some of which are included in the text itself, are called sigla.<sup>21</sup> One may doubt if the ‘C’ already takes on the qualities of such a sign, just because the annotated words

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<sup>20</sup> In this regard, the magnet was important for Beuys. Already in 1949 he sketched a skull with a reversed ‘U’ above it. The ‘U’ is positioned to the skull like a magnet to an iron piece. The sketch is portrayed in the *Secret Block* as no. 31 (Beuys 1988).

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Bazarnik 2011: 138-46.

begin with this letter. But because of the peculiar nature of the markings in the *Wake*, Beuys demonstrated his openness toward the way in which Joyce worked with the help of geometric abbreviations. In the work *Telephone S — E* from 1974 ('S' standing for 'sender', 'E' for 'Empfänger/receiver'), Beuys turned the 'E' by 180° (1992: no. 136), in order to underline, using a means inspired by Joyce, the letter's receiving character. 'S — E' consists of two empty cans, connected to one another by a string: it is the toy many parents make for their children in order to demonstrate playfully how sound waves are conducted. Beuys artistically appropriates this by adding the title with the indicatively turned-around letter on one of the cans. As early as 1959, the formulation 'S — E' can be found in a drawing on a ledger page, a work contemporaneous with the *Ulysses Extension*.<sup>22</sup> The turned-around 'E' is one of the sigla in *Finnegans Wake*, where it also usefully stands for the ear, or sense of hearing (McHugh 1976: 16). In his work, Beuys thus connects the ear as *siglum* with the 'E' for 'receiver' in order to clarify doubly what kind of receiver is meant.

The lying 'F' is also a *siglum* from *Finnegans Wake*. For example, on page 18 of Joyce's book, there are two 'F' letters lying on their sides, referring to HCE who is portrayed as lying in the Dublin landscape. In *Kadmon*, a drawing from 1948/49, Beuys showed an early interest in the theme of Golem and Adam Kadmon. In 1977, however, he likely worked more directly with the help of the Joycean *siglum*, when he created *Unschlitt Tallow*. He had part of a pedestrian underpass in Münster poured out with fat (tallow) and cut the shape into anthropomorphic, lying and successively growing 'F' letters, to, among other things, point out the fate of the homeless who actually live and lie in the landscape. These he thus connected not only with the 'everyman' lying in Dublin, but also with mythical figures like Golem. Beuys valued Joyce for such connections of the socio-politically poignant everyday and the mythical (Beuys 1980: 40).

So far, I have only reflected on the pages up to 195 in Beuys' copy of *Finnegans Wake*. After page 197, there are many more pages containing annotated written words. However, Beuys' treatment of the book changes on page 169, as here for the first time Beuys makes

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<sup>22</sup> Next to it the terms 'plastisch [und] elastisch' are written (Beuys 1988: no. 262).

comments in direct connection to the text. Beuys' actual work on *Finnegans Wake*—rather than just vocabulary learning—commences here. The truly radical change lies in Beuys' reaction to page 196 of *Finnegans Wake*. It is the beginning of the so-called Anna Livia episode. Joyce lets it begin with a large 'O', which is centred over the next two lines consisting respectively of four and seven equally centred words. Beuys recognised this as a subtle typographic intervention, as a kind of artwork by Joyce. His reaction was not to make a mark here: the pencil annotations are not resumed until the next page. And Beuys treats all the other pages that Joyce created visually in this same way. That gives the impression that Beuys was aware that even the smallest changes in the otherwise conventional typography are meaningful. He sensitively lets the artist Joyce take precedence here, and makes his own interventions in the way in which Joyce also proceeded on some pages—by means of 'footnotes' or marginal notes, i.e. short columns of words that can also be found in *Finnegans Wake* itself. It may be concluded that Beuys reacted to the text especially in those places where he did not intervene. What does it mean in terms of content, and what about Beuys' actual markings in the text? How did Beuys read and understand *Finnegans Wake*?

He copied words and expressions from the book into the back cover. The arrangement of the word sequences underneath each other is revealing and suggests, at least on the left side, a continuous direction of the list. If one traces back those words, one achieves the following result: the artist did not read this book linearly. In the process of reading, he went to and fro several times between pages in the 300s and 500s and responded very flexibly—and adequately—to this extraordinary book. He delved into great detail, but read *in* this universal work, instead of treating it as a conventional piece of linear narrative.

*Finnegans Wake* certainly accompanied Beuys over a longer period of time. The book taught him new reading habits and let him seek and find his own interests in the world of Joyce. Thus, Beuys did not, as many readers likely do, start with intensively reading the beginning and putting the book aside after a few pages. He started on page 169 with another, more intensive way of reading (possibly continuing on from the claimed reading in the 1950s). On page 171, a kind of speech bubble can

be seen at line five, which develops on the following pages<sup>23</sup> into a triangle or Delta: first drawn irregularly and in a rounded-off manner, then drawn clearly (page 206), before being variegated again. This development occurs particularly in the mentioned Anna Livia episode. Her sign or *siglum* for Joyce is the Greek letter delta, which stands for the female protagonist, ALP, a personification of the Dublin River Liffey, a river delta. Joyce approximated a visual delta with the first three rows of the chapter centred, topped by an 'O' that can be read phonetically as French *eau*, water. In addition to this, the 'O' is an egg, the female sex and source of the origin of life. With the Joycean Delta, Beuys found an abbreviation, which he could use, in order not only to mark important passages in the Anna Livia episode (and also later in his copy of Richard Ellmann's Joyce biography). Within *Finnegans Wake*, the delta seems appropriately multiplied. It is an abbreviation that is similar to the 'C', albeit more recognizable. Beuys' markings of the text starting on page 169 continue for the rest of *Finnegans Wake*, intensifying page numbers of the 300s and 500s, to be continued alongside rows of c-words until the end of the book. Oftentimes, a line underlining a combination of words is extended and, in the margin, is bent to form a spiral, which may just as easily refer to a stick or the 'J' as the initial of James Joyce or Joseph. Especially from page 388/389, such forms are common. The lines marked with the delta, the actual underlining, as well as the words and expressions that Beuys copied from the text onto and inside the back of the book cover show the artist's great interest in Joyce's language games and neologisms.

Beuys also seems to have appreciated the humorous nature of *Finnegans Wake*. If one could follow Beuys' reading of *Finnegans Wake* in more detail here, it would be clear how revealing Joyce's language games and themes are to the context of Beuys' own evolving work. Some passages make a very concrete reference to the works of the artist, both in regard to substances and their properties (especially their smell) as well as other motif-related points of reference: 'making his hay for whose sun to shine on, as tough as the oaktrees (peats be with them!)' (202.29-30). Oak and 'peat', the latter used as peat bricks in Beuys' *Irish Energies* multiple (two such turf bricks sandwiched with butter in

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<sup>23</sup> Pages 175, 181, 183, 184, 190 and pages 198 to 211 (several times on each page).

between) are important to the artist. The language game peats/peace, implying the social component of the substances in Beuys' (and Joyce's) works, is addressed in a way that is almost too literal. Beuys responded quite similarly to Joyce's repeated language game, which connects 'grace' and 'grease' in Hiberno-English through their pronunciation. Towards the end of the Anna Livia episode, it is most obvious: 'Mary, full of grease' (214.18). In a remarkable way, it shows on what an evocative and extensive source of references Beuys could build when he was reading *Finnegans Wake*. Of course, it is Beuys' merit to have recognized the possibilities of this conception of substances in the sculptural field.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Page 206 of the *Wake* features a passage, which also—for those who read the book with a knowledge of Beuys' visual vocabulary—contains elements reminiscent of Beuysian actions, especially the *Bog Action*, *Eurasia Staff*, *Mainstream* and *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*. 'First she let her hair fal and down it flussed to her feet its teviots winding coils. Then, mothernaked, she sampood herself with galawater and fraguant pistania mud, wupper and lauar, from crown to sole. Next she greesed the groove of her keel, warthes and wears and mole and itcher, with antifouling butterscratch and turfentide and serpernthyme and with leafmould she ushered round prunella isles and eslats dun, quinecunct, allover her little mary. Peeld gold of waxwork her jellybelly and her grains of incense anguille bronze' (206.29-207.01). In the text, a bath in the mud is first described; then fat in the kneepit and finally gold leaf on the gelatin belly are referenced—if one can shorten the *Wake* language in such a way. Various herbs can also be found as part of the description of Anna Livia in the Liffey. She is also described as having a post bag or food bag over her shoulder and as having an oyster face. Beuys found this remarkable and perhaps remembered it in *La rivoluzione siamo noi*. He also drew attention to a passage relating to electricity, which contains another solution of the initials HCE: 'Call her calamity electrifies man' (207.28). After the 'actio' of Anna Livia, the description of her appearance was of some importance to Beuys,<sup>24</sup> as he also drew markings on pages 201-11. Here a variety of references to their androgynous appearance, as well as motifs, can be found, which in turn remind one of Beuys' works. The round 'bicycle glasses' ('owlglassy bicycles') and especially 'her blackstripe tan joseph', belonging to Anna Livia's uniform, for us draw attention to the clothing of the artist Beuys himself. Even if a fishing net as a veil is part of the outfit, one misses the (fishing) vest and jeans: Of course, the point cannot have been an exact imitation of an eccentric appearance, such as it is described here. The contents of the bag, however, become just as

Anna Livia's 'sugarloaf hat with a gaudyquiviry peak' (208.07), i.e. delta-shaped cap, stands in relation to Beuys' so-called Penninus motif in the *Ulysses-Extension*. That motif consists of one ascending and one descending line, with a small circle or point on the summit. The artist seems to have realized that Joyce himself had 'extended' *Ulysses* through *Finnegans Wake* and alluded to the iconography of *Ulysses* through Anna Livia's pointed delta cap and the typography of the beginning of the episode. Moreover, Odysseus is usually depicted with a peaked cap. Yet, Beuys himself adhered more to Joyce than to Homer. He was attracted to the new Odysseus from *Ulysses*, not the one sea-faring, but the one wandering over land: Leopold Bloom (originally from Szobathely). Beuys created an 'equivalent' with his main 'character' or motif in the *Ulysses-Extension*: It is the mountain god Penninus with a delta-shaped cap, a trait that he thus shares with both Odysseus and Anna Livia.<sup>25</sup>

In the Anna Livia episode, Beuys read about a 'Moor; and oakanknee [... and] a stoncold shoulder' (211.28, 32). These words introduce the metamorphosis that washerwomen undergo on the shores of the Liffey. It is a transformation of the Indo-European languages 'out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan!' (215.26-27), a fusion of language and water, wakefulness and sleep, and of sexes ('All Livia's daughters' 215.35).<sup>26</sup> The 'fluid' nature of language, which is filled with names of rivers, reads as if anticipating the art movement Fluxus, in which Beuys would temporarily situate his works. Above all, in this well-known section of *Finnegans Wake*, a metamorphosis occurs of two washerwomen into tree and stone, a motif that seems to resonate in Beuys' work: *7000 Oaks*, Beuys' last major project for Documenta 8, Kassel, 1982 (only completed after his death). It shows a combination of trees and stones and involved planting 7000 deciduous trees, each

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important as they are in *Ulysses*, and 'al-pheubett buttons' seem to have inspired drawings rather than the artist's clothes.

<sup>25</sup> A compilation of Beuys' *Penninus-Sketches*, 1958, with the picture of a mountain (the Appenin) and a lamp from *Voglio vedere i miei montagne [sic]*, derived from the New York catalogue (1979: 222) is very informative.

<sup>26</sup> Another passage in the text that deals with androgyny and is underlined by Beuys in *Finnegans Wake*: 'hadn't the heart in her to pull them up—poor Matt, the old perigrime matriarch, and a queenly man' (392.19-20). In *Ulysses* this theme has a more intensive focus.

accompanied by a basalt column, taken from a triangular heap that the artist had formed in the city's main square—exactly where, after the bomb nights of WWII, citizens had placed the charred remains of their loved ones. A metamorphosis occurs of people into a tree and a stone, i.e. living or formerly fluid elements (see Lerm Hayes 2008).

Beuys read Joyce's motifs for the aforementioned social components and long historical lines, encouraged by the 'world history book' of *Finnegans Wake*. The theme of washerwomen in conjunction with tree and stone is even more apparent in *Wet Laundry Virgin* (1985), an installation with clothes lines, in which the viewers can imagine themselves as wading through water. The stone has become soap, which illustrates better than the stone itself the washerwoman's tool and the transformation of the state of matter, or the metamorphosis of living beings into a rigid object. Beuys will have appreciated Joyce exactly because of his attention to substances and the sensitive materiality of his language. Now he seems to correct the writer, though he himself greatly valued the once liquid nature of lava rock (basalt), as he highlighted during his visit in 1974 to the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland.

Like the typographically designed beginning of the Anna Livia episode, pages 293 and 308 are significant in a graphic sense. Again, Beuys did not make a mark or vocabulary list; again, as argued here, the page is highlighted by just this absence. The first of these pages not only carries Joyce's (printed) marginal- and footnotes, but also a geometric figure: two circles intersect at their centres. These are connected and labeled  $A\alpha$  and  $\lambda L$ . The upper intersection of the circles is  $\pi$ , the lower  $P$ ; the points  $\alpha\lambda\pi$  are connected by continuous lines as a triangle, while  $ALP$  is connected with dashed lines.  $ALP$ , be it in Greek or Latin letters, stands for Anna Livia Plurabelle. Again, as with HCE, the formula is often used 'scientifically'. For the artist Beuys, the visual realisation of Joyce's concept was once more particularly important. How else could it be explained that Beuys clarified the concept of his own work on Joyce, the *Ulysses-Extension*, in precisely these geometric metaphors:

A peripheral part of the Celtic Circle overlaps my six further chapters [of *Ulysses*] or a part of the Celtic disc covers part of my six further chapters. If I now take out the surface of the circle that does this [...], I have a 'form' which seems concentrated in power from the east [*sic*], not at all from the west [*sic*]. (Beuys 1972: 20)

The circles are seen as Western (Celtic) and Eastern discs, the centres and edges of which overlap in *Finnegans Wake*, presenting a diagrammatical formulation of Eurasia. The different alphabets (Greek and Latin) indicate such a cultural synthesis. Two circles, each struck with a chisel on slate, are also to be found in *Show Your Wound*, 1974/75, one of Beuys' works most directly addressing the War. The two circles may well have been inspired by William Blake (his *Newton* from 1795, for example), but the duplication of all elements makes us think rather of Joyce, or Euclid, from whom the writer had borrowed this diagram. By contrast, *Show Your Wound* and *Palazzo Regale*, from Beuys' last, quasi-funerary installation (1985), feature two non-intersecting circles. The reason why these works are probably images of death is that the potential for a delta to exist in an intersection is not realised: the energy flow of the deltas is dissolved.

Page 308 in *Finnegans Wake* also shows a diagram, in the form of 'footnotes' and printed 'annotations' in the margins, but, once again, no annotation from Beuys' hand. Here readers find themselves at the end of the so-called *night-lesson* in *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce's drawing is an angle, likely a nose. The thumb of an outstretched hand touches the tip of the nose. Below are two crossbones, which also look like spoons. The pirate sign seems to be connected with a disrespectful gesture. The first of Joyce's footnotes explains that the gesture is directed at the devil, while next to the bones there is mention of 'skool and crossbuns',<sup>27</sup> meaning skull and crossbones, the pirate sign and at the same time a reference to (the pranks of) school(children). Crossbones can occasionally be found in Beuys' drawings, too, because the artist was interested in what might be called interior drawings of the human body (e.g. in the *Ulysses-Extension*). However, they are nowhere else as similar to those spoon-shaped *Wakean* crossbones as on a drawing from the *Cologne Folder: Untitled*, 1953 (Beuys 1987). In this date may lie another indication of the artist's *Wake*-reading in the early 1950s. Beuys himself seems to have applied a graphic variation of this Joyce diagram to page 550 of *Finnegans Wake*: beside the last seven lines, one can see in his copy an angle with a hooked staff-shape, crossed by a horizontal line. It is what Beuys called his 'Eurasia-staff': tracing the movement of

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<sup>27</sup> *Crossbuns* are predominantly consumed in England and Ireland at Easter. They have a crosswise indentation on their upper side.



peoples from the Russian steppes to the West and back again. The ‘nose’ was just one reading of the angle at which the outstretched hand is located. Elbows or knees are just as conceivable.

Body angles have a great significance in Beuys’ actions—e.g. *Titus/Iphigenia*, 1969. In *Hand Action / Corner Action*, 1968, Beuys held ‘the right open hand in front of [the] face [... in many different ways]’ (Schneede 1995: 216). This hand gesture of pointing to body angles in many of the actions may be a response to *Finnegans Wake*. His underlining of the relevant passages in the *Wake*, where the precise gestures of the actions are anticipated, may point towards a direct inspiration:

His handpalm lifted, his handshell cupped, his handsign pointed, his handheart mated, his handaxe risen, his handleaf fallen. Helpsome hand that holemost heals! What is het holy! It gested. (407.23-25)<sup>28</sup>

Beuys also marked: ‘more grease to your elbow the merrier fumes your new Irish stew’ (190.09). ‘More grease to the elbows’ is literally carried out as margarine applied to the knee-pit in many actions, especially *Eurasiastaff*, 1967/68, and in *Mainstream*, 1967.

If the markings that Beuys made in *Finnegans Wake* had previously been few and meaningful to the developing work, they are greater in number on the last three hundred pages. Here they mostly concern themes, vocabulary, etc., which the artist recognised. Markings become a reading aid. Special interests that recur in his works are still to be found. Beuys marked words and sequences of words that relate to the historical, Irish and Nordic mythology in the broadest sense. One can find German allusions and puns, as well as, of course, those in English and in other languages that Beuys apparently liked. There are religious themes, a great deal of culinary and also ‘personal’ themes, that is to say, occasions where what Joyce addressed incited something, be it personal experience or knowledge, as it inevitably happens when reading this book. Among these themes are allusions to the Crimean War, including the mentioning of Sevastopol and the Tartars, as well as wordplays with Joyce’s own name, in one instance connected with Jacob, the name of Beuys’ father. Beuys and Joyce both played with names, their meanings, and possible

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<sup>28</sup> See Beuys’ illustration *Schwurhand*, 1988 (Beuys 1997: ill. 13), reference from Antje von Graevenitz.

puns, as was already mentioned in relation to Ignatius. Thus, the artist could assume that Joyce would have also attached importance to the homophony of their surnames if he had learned of Beuys' work on the *Wake*: most notably, one finds a pun on 'Beuys' among the marked passages of *Finnegans Wake*:

The boyce voyce is still flautish and his mounth still wears that soldier's scarlet [...]. It is bycause of what he was ascend into his prisonce on account off. [...]. Some day I may tell of his second storey. Mood! Mood! It looks like someone other bearing my burdens. I cannot let it. Kanes nought. (536.21-27)

'The boyce voyce', Beuys' voice, is in this context the apparent dissolution of this sequence of words, even if Joyce had certainly thought of a boy's voice, as well as of a composer and a Dublin mayor named Boyce. The prison (POW captivity?)<sup>29</sup> does not refer to an event after the publication of the book (1939), either, but to Oscar Wilde's incarceration in Reading Gaol. It seems that Beuys, the artist, reacts to Joyce's 'Beuys references' with a drawing in the margin amounting to a variation on the writer's initials: Two 'J' letters can be seen side by side, the second rotated around the vertical axis and slightly longer, so that it looks more like a staff than a letter. This shape is now the intersection of three lines that appear as a star or a collection of sticks or rods (such as what Beuys later created in *Fireplace II*). Reading the lines as sticks could be an echo of the text in which canes were mentioned. Above all, it should be noted that this complex 'highlighting' originates from thoughts on Joyce's initials. Here, one can see a nucleus of further motif-building in Beuys' occupation with Joyce. It is possible that the artist was thinking of the writer when he presented himself with a reversed walking stick, for example in the action *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me*, 1974, and also when he prominently installed such an upside-down cane in *Directional Forces*, 1974-77.

On the following *Wake* pages, which still deal with soldiers and war, fat is central once again: 'Alma Luvia, Pollabella. P.S. Soldier Rollo's sweetheart. And she's about fettet up now with nonsery reams' (619.16-18). Beuys' underlining of this passage turns into a delta with an exclamation mark in the margin. 'Fed up' Joyce spells 'fettet up' and thus establishes the link between the idiomatic expression and the

<sup>29</sup> Also: 'wageearner freshly shaven from prison' (543.27).

substance fat. The artist created a work titled *Fat up to this level I*, 1972. The wordplay from *Finnegans Wake* returns here and can be understood by the beholders as an invitation to imagine themselves wading in fat.

If Beuys read about fat in a variety of contexts in *Finnegans Wake* and made the connection with the triangle or Delta, this of course only becomes meaningful and interpretable once the artist carried out the 'request' to 'extend' Joyce that he had mentioned in his *Lifecourse/Workcourse* and created his famous fat corners, which take the shape of three-dimensional deltas: the corners of rooms filled with margarine. Though fat is important to Joyce, and is even a leitmotif in the fable of Burrus and Caseus in *Finnegans Wake*, it does not by itself take on the programmatic dimension that Beuys attributes to it in his work. It is, therefore, not a matter of Beuys understanding Joyce's intentions, but of us interpreting the artist in the sense of his own interests, in this case the combination of reason (represented by geometric or crystal shape) combined with intuition (chaotic atomic structure of biological substances like fat). Joycean remarks and motifs are selected and inserted into another field of meaning, were they are partly recognisable, but receive a life of their own as leitmotifs and carriers of artistic and social messages: Joyce is not illustrated, but has an effect.<sup>30</sup>

It thus becomes apparent—if the *Wake* annotations can, indeed, be brought in connection with the dictionary consulted in 1979—that during this period, Beuys did not preoccupy himself so intensively with the world of the 'night book' for the first time: he returned to a familiar and biographically as well as artistically decisive book. In addition to these correspondences and the aforementioned chemical formula 'C', further indications can be found that Beuys had developed fat as 'his' material (in interaction with felt) in the Joycean context from a *Wake*-like language play. More specifically, in the *Ulysses-Extension*, a drawing originating from the notebooks, which is now in another compendium, *The Secret Block for a secret person in Ireland*, he shows various words next to a shape that looks like a weightlifter's torso with square weights. Here it says: 'filz/ felt/ fett/ felt'. Each word points with an arrow to one of the weights or body parts. The drawing is signed and dated 'Beuys

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the concepts of influence, inspiration and effect, see Lerm-Hayes 2007a: 318-40.

62', so it may be one of the addenda to the *Ulysses-Extension*. On the other hand, the dating can also have been applied later, as another drawing, *Score*, dated 1957, carries the words 'felt → ← filz/ Sonnenmeteorologie/ Hogan' (Oliva 1984: 34). The first drawing, along with another page of the *Ulysses-Extension* (book 2, page 4), which depicts a 'coil of chaos', a heart and a pyramid alongside the terms 'mind, consciousness, eternity, soul, life, time; form and space', is of importance: both are to be identified as preparatory to Beuys' *Diagram of Sculptured* from 1969. This work is depicted time and again and has become a standard document of sorts in the explanation of Beuys' 'Theory of Sculpture'.<sup>31</sup>

In the upper half of the page, next to the lines of the diagram, there are words of explanation that were written in German, in accordance with all spelling conventions. In the lower half of the page, however, there are only two words alongside some lines: 'fat' and 'felt': these are the ones that could be read in the earlier drawing. It is noticeable that Beuys wrote the initials the same way (in small letters?), although at least some of the words would have to be nouns (capitalised in German), others verbs.<sup>32</sup> The unusual word in this context provides the explanation: 'felt' in English refers to the material, as well as the past tense of the verb 'feel': feeling and substance melded together in a meaningful way.

Beuys establishes the place of 'his' materials, fat and felt. He clarifies the qualities of the two substances, which to him are similar, by equating their referents as much as possible.<sup>33</sup> For this he chooses a second language and violates—perhaps, rather, bends—the spelling conventions. This is exactly Joyce's approach in *Finnegans Wake* (see Eco 1990: 426). The place where Beuys takes over this Joycean technique is his own contribution to the situation shown in the upper half of the diagram. The balance of reason and intuition that Beuys strives for

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<sup>31</sup> It broadly calls into mind polarities that Joyce addresses. He does that mainly with references to Bruno's *coincidentia oppositorum*: 'Giordano Bruno may be added to Shakespeare and Odysseus as a third exemplar of the mediating art in which extremes meet and contraries coincide' (Weir 1996: 181).

<sup>32</sup> Dieter Koepplin believes that the 'F' letters do not necessarily form small letters (conversation with the author, Kranenburg, 1995). The observation regarding the same shape of the initial letters remains.

<sup>33</sup> See Vischer 1983: 19 and Graevenitz 1981: 134-38.

can, indeed, be very well explained by equating inner qualities or primary material symbolism. What is inherent to fat and felt is shown through the correspondence of words. It is also useful to change spellings and to go beyond the scope of one language: Joyce allegedly used 62 languages in *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>34</sup> The two drawings from the *Ulysses-Extension* and the 1957 *Score* mention the words ‘fat’ and ‘felt’ and are thus likely the first manifestations of these substances in Beuys’ work. Was Beuys referring to these connections when he said his path had gone through language (Beuys 1986: 38)? Can one then, in a global sense, speak of a ‘re-creation’ of *Finnegans Wake* in Beuys’ case?

The text in which the desideratum is located is the ‘Conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht’, from a catalogue from 1972. It was ‘written’ by Beuys himself.<sup>35</sup> It is generally assumed that he closely adhered to a recording. This is not the case.<sup>36</sup> A subordinate clause, which Beuys uttered during another conversation, one with Georg Jappe about key experiences, changes our knowledge with regard to the Lieberknecht ‘interview’: It was not one. Jappe adds to the transcript of his interview in brackets: ‘(Tape change. He alluded to a key experience in the interview, the fictional one, because Lieberknecht did not finish the text)’ (Jappe 1977: 77). Beuys apparently wrote this extensive ‘conversation’ in every sense of the word: it is possibly based on an actual interview in 1970, but becomes a literary work by Beuys, in which he centrally deals with Joyce. Eva Beuys confirmed my hunch that this is a creative, a literary work: Beuys allegedly sat laughing on the sofa for two weeks and wrote this text.<sup>37</sup> Some of the pages of this text became works that were at times stamped with Beuys’ ‘mainstream’ stamp and published as

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<sup>34</sup> See the introduction in McHugh 1976.

<sup>35</sup> Compare with the published interview of Hagen Lieberknecht (Beuys 1971: 7-19). Similar are solely the comments on the theme ‘Hirsch und Hase’, the remark that Beuys can be interrupted and some other details.

<sup>36</sup> Monika Angerbauer-Rau described the text ‘in parts as a literary work’. Nevertheless she classifies it into “Gattung: Gespräch” (Type: discussion) (Angerbauer-Rau 1998: 97, 98).

<sup>37</sup> This anecdote reminds one remarkably of another: Nora Barnacle reported that she could not sleep at night, because her husband laughed loudly as he was writing *Finnegans Wake*.

multiples (Beuys 1973: n.p.).<sup>38</sup> The formulation from this text that Beuys wanted to ‘re-create’ *Finnegans Wake* in the sense of a new *Book of Kells* refers to Joyce’s late work: not only are the Celts meant here—or celts, as in the passage about the hand ax underlined by Beuys and cited here. Joyce himself offered the *Book of Kells* as an aid to understanding *Finnegans Wake*, and established it as a parallel to his own approach (Ellmann 1983: 545).

Furthermore, it is necessary to discuss the form of the ‘Conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht’. Beuys’ text itself, which contains the statement of wanting to ‘re-create *Finnegans Wake* anyway’, can be recognised as an execution of the intention: the overall form is borrowed from *Finnegans Wake*, as the first word is written in small letters and the last sentence suddenly breaks off. There are even certain thematic similarities, such as the mentioning of bird flight towards the end. Beuys reflected the cyclical structure in numerous works in the Joycean context, such as in *Arena: work in progress*, 1973, with the prominently displayed photograph of the work *JOYCE* from ca. 1962 as number 1 of the 100 frames that make up this (ideally cyclically displayed) installation. In 1974, Beuys associated: ‘the continuous flow: *Finnegan[s] Wake*; the beginning and end of all life on earth...the collective unconscious.’<sup>39</sup>

Now that ‘Conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht’ is recognised as a literary work with reference to Joyce, hitherto unexplained connections open. This is all the truer, since the work was probably created around the time when Beuys read Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, that is, at the time when Beuys had detailed knowledge of Joyceana, which he could conveniently refresh with the help of the index in Ellmann’s book. For example, the repeated mention of the mythical flower Moly in Beuys’ text (Beuys 1972: 14, 15), accompanied by a variety of bibliographic information, likely relates to *Ulysses*. Ellmann explains Joyce’s

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<sup>38</sup> That Beuys sometimes crossed out his handwritten words did not form an act of improvement as he did with the typescript of the interview about Christ with Friedhelm Mennekes (Mennekes 1989). This can be seen as a confirmation that Beuys only formulated while writing.

<sup>39</sup> From the *Telephone Conversation* with Caroline Tisdall, 1974 (Beuys 1988: 48-50). The title *Fin[-]negans Wake* already contains the cycle of rebirth: *Fin* (frz., finis lat.) and *negans* (lat.), respectively *fin* in combination with *again* (engl.).

‘symbolic’ use of the plant (1983: 496-97). The name of this plant, as Beuys could read, was the reason for the choice of the name Molly Bloom for the female protagonist of *Ulysses*.

It was obviously a desire of Beuys’ to provide information (or better: material) about his references to Joyce. He formulated thoughts on Joyce freely and his priorities are easily recognised. A problem, however, also becomes apparent, which concerns other mentions of the writer by Beuys: the artist brought Joyce up again and again, but rarely encountered deeper knowledge of the writer among his interlocutors. In the work presented here, the Lieberknecht ‘interview’, he created the ideal conversation partner for himself. He, thereby, in many ways constructed the text for oral conversation. When Rhea Thöngens-Stringaris remarked to the artist that she found the explanations of drawings in the ‘Conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht’ quite cryptic, Beuys simply laughed and said that they were ‘like a poem’.<sup>40</sup> Towards the end of the text, Beuys puts the words ‘two hands hold such a disc’ (1972: 43) in Lieberknecht’s mouth. This is exactly what is to be seen in one of the drawings. Was Beuys once again referring to the ALP diagram in *Finnegans Wake*? He clearly liked to cultivate a sense of mystery—especially in the context of Joyce, it seems—and enjoyed the fact that his work was understood to be an interview. The text sheds light on the interweaving of work and commentary, sculptural work and language, art and life in Beuys’ practice. Tobia Bezzola is of the opinion that it is generally possible to consider the era in Beuys’ work of which the last great document is the conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht as the one inspired by Joyce.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the artist wanted to clarify the variety of references that his motifs make to Joyce and thus produced another, complex work that

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<sup>40</sup> Interview of the author with Rhea Thöngens-Stringaris, November 1994.

<sup>41</sup> Tobia Bezzola (1993: 284) writes: ‘Man könnte die [...] Werk-] Phase, deren letztes großes Dokument das Gespräch mit Hagen Lieberknecht ist, global als die von Joyce inspirierte deuten.’ The ‘Conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht’ is directly related to drawings that Beuys titled *Conversation with Hagen* and published concomitantly with his work discussed here. What one can see is clearly related to what he writes, e.g. in the text it says: ‘large tube-like formation[s that occur] very often in my Joyce’ (Beuys 1972: 9). The drawing then shows a form that corresponds to the description and is accompanied by the word ‘tubular heart’. Published again in Beuys 1977.

multiplies them. This gives encouragement to interpret many works as executions of Beuys' expressed intention to 're-create' *Finnegans Wake*. Beuys thus indeed created a (provisional) summary of Joyce-related strategies, before he turned to the 'Joyce region' of Ireland in 1974. The 'Conversation with Hagen Lieberknecht' is far from being the last work inspired by Joyce.<sup>42</sup> Among the works that emerged from the 'interview' text is *Joyce with Sled*, 1985, one of the artist's last multiples. Beuys wrote a quasi-confession of faith on the importance of Joyce as something that 'changes the universe' and was of importance as substance or as 'medicine' to him. Here, the text is centred: like the beginning of the Anna Livia episode, but it may also allude to the positioning of Joyce's alter ego in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. At the bottom of the page, the writer's initials reoccur, like in the annotations to the *Wake*, but this time the two 'J's loop around each other, combining East and West in a manner similar to the *Book of Kells*; a yin and yang 'signature' emerges, a truly Eurasian formulation. The *Joyce with Sled* multiple also bears two 'J's in 'brown cross' paint over the text: the initials of the Hibernian, i.e. Irish and 'wintry' writer.

Beyond works with clear and direct references to Joyce's works and persona, the 're-creation' of *Finnegans Wake* can be said to refer to Beuys' complete oeuvre—not as slavish copying, but as an independent creation by other means, which recognises Joyce's potential for sculpture and independently relates his innovations to Beuys' own (often corresponding) interests. Beuys' work expands or 'furthers' Joyce in sculptural substances, language and by social means. Beuys was (along with John Cage) the first (perhaps only) artist to take up this gigantic task so explicitly. He used Joyce, especially *Finnegans Wake*, as a reference point of extraordinary suggestive power for the duration of his artistic career—and became the first artist to allow Joyce to flow into his own life course and work course so clearly.<sup>43</sup>

The later Beuys may have wanted to be too many things to too many people and counteracted the openness and emancipatory force of his own work at times (in the sense of Umberto Eco and Jacques Rancière). The current reappraisals, however, make it possible that we may now come to

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<sup>42</sup> See Lerm-Hayes 2001 for interpretations of works after 1977.

<sup>43</sup> Committed, critical and even subversive art is very suitable as a reaction to Joyce's works, which I outline in Lerm-Hayes 2006 and Lerm-Hayes 2007b. I developed this argument further in Lerm-Hayes 2007a: 318-40.



better understand the importance of Beuys' thinking in pioneering ecological practices, in conceiving of the need for a basic universal income, establishing communities to work with a holistic perspective on art as an eco-system that sustains (discursive and other) 'force fields'. We may today realise Beuys' importance for us to 'institute otherwise'. One key ingredient to this understanding is arguably Beuys' meaningful encounter with Joyce's 'minor' literature. One may or may not wish to borrow Beuys' words and call the famous *Finnegans Wake* reading group at the Zürich Joyce Foundation a Free International University for Interdisciplinary Research,<sup>44</sup> but one could do worse than begin with reading the *Wake* in Beuys' wake, in order to de-modernise to full—but only ever obliquely achieved<sup>45</sup>—effect.

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<sup>44</sup> Beuys founded this loose, anti-institutional institution in 1973 (EEC application 1974) with others, such as the writer Heinrich Böll. For an outline of the importance (in Ireland) of Beuys as an early practitioner of social practice see Lerm-Hayes and Walters 2011.

<sup>45</sup> It was a friend of Beuys', artist Royden Rabinowitch, who has particularly responded to my *Joyce in Art* book's insight (developed with Sarat Maharaj's 'Perfidious Fidelity' (1994: 28-35) essay in mind) that artistic responses to Joyce should by necessity be 'faithfully unfaithful', i.e. indirect. This has had a crucial (oblique) effect on his work. I thank my research assistants Emily Rhodes and Julia Kraemer for translating large parts of this essay from the German.

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