



*The Marriage
of Mystery and Mysttetry:
Blake's Apocalypse and Joyce's Last Podding*

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*The man who never in his mind
and thoughts travel'd to heaven
is no artist.*

(William Blake, *AR*, 458)

Gauze off heaven! Vision.

(James Joyce, *FW*, 566.25)

The notion of Apocalypse is explored in two of the most challenging, and for a diligent reader most rewarding, works of the last two centuries: William Blake's illuminated epic *Jerusalem: the Emanation of the Giant Albion* (*J*), written and illuminated between 1804 and 1822, and James Joyce's novel *Finnegans Wake* (*FW*), written between 1922 and 1939. The very concept of Apocalypse, and the way it is developed respectively in *J* and in *FW*, can bring to light (*reveal* should be the word) fascinating and remarkable convergences.

J appears to be a narrative written in a reasonably standard English, with a third-person narrative voice, characters, events. Nevertheless it resists being linked into a chronology of represented actions constituting a story, forming a plot. *FW*, on the other hand, deconstructs the very idea of the *gramma* being written in a "re-cycled language," an idiolect that illustrates all the major steps of human communication. Yet, like *J*, in the novel it is possible

to detect characters, a third-person narrative voice, events. But again, exactly like *J*, this is not enough to grant the reader a reliable plot. In *J*, and for certain aspects in *FW* as well, the characters seem like human personalities only for brief passages. They soon expand and contract into polymorphous personifications of psychic or cosmic categories; thereby they resist stability and definition.

In both works, space is conceived as multi-dimensional, in *J*, real places like Britain or Palestine are blended with fictional places; in *FW*, Ireland is blended with the topographies of HCE's unconscious. Time is also multiply represented, with moments and eternities each containing the other. In *J*, eternity is directly connected to Human Imagination, hence the poet's task is "to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought, into Eternity ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination." (5:18-20, E 147)¹ In *FW*, Joyce goes even further by making space and

time interchangeable elements of a Viconian multi-dimensional continuum. This is perfectly exemplified by the well-known question, “Where are we at all? and whenabouts in the name of space?” (558:33)² which is addressed to the author by a fictional reader who is at pains to locate himself.

In 1911 Joyce participated in the evening lecture series at the Università Popolare Triestina. He delivered a lecture in which, talking about the conception of space and time in William Blake, he observed:

To him, each moment shorter than a pulse-beat was equivalent in its duration to six thousand years, because in such an infinitely short instant the work of the poet is conceived and born. To him, all space larger than a globule of human blood was visionary, created by the hammer of Los, while in a space smaller than a globule of blood we approach eternity, of which our vegetable world is but a shadow. Not *with* the eye, then, but *beyond* the eye, the soul and the supreme love must look, because the eye, which was born in the night while the soul was sleeping in rays of light, will also die in the night.³

Joyce’s assimilation of Blake’s temporal and spatial categories is proved by the way he has chosen to tell HCE’s vicissitudes. As a matter of fact, when he conflates in a single piece the story of mankind and the destiny of a single man, HCE; the destiny of everyman, the memories of an individual and the conscience of the collectivity; a city and the infinity of the universe; he is (re)writing Albion’s epic, imagining his own “ever expanding Eternity” and his own Jerusalem, which he calls Dublin.

Both Blake and Joyce show a tremendous awareness of the medium they are using, even forecasting its being superseded. Blake materially creates *J*: like his fictional *alter ego* Los, it is from his forge that the text and its medium come. One of *FW*’s major hypotexts (in Genette’s conception of the term) is *The Book of Kells*. This illuminated manuscript, produced by Celtic monks around A.D. 800, is described as the zenith of Western calligraphy and illumination. In Joyce’s novel the manuscript turns into a mnemonic vector that

leads the reader through the history of literacy and of the book.

Both Blake and Joyce, in their own peculiar ways, question the very grounds of human understanding. As Robert Essick has pointed out, on our first reading of *J* we experience the text as “a verbal texture and a whirlwind of pictorial images” that hardly succeed in conveying a unique, non-contradictory message.⁴ For the same reason, the first reading of *FW* reveals a “kaleidoscopic verbal texture,” an engine that we must learn to start.⁵

Joyce begins his universal journey with the fall of a man, who at the same time represents both an individual and humanity. Blake in *J* explores a reality in which man (symbolized in his universality by the giant Albion) has already fallen. Like Tim Finn, Humpty Dumpty, the giant MacCool and of course HCE, Albion’s body of earth and stars, falling, is scattered away from him as he lapses into a nightmare (and sometimes, indeed, HCE’s dream turns into

a nightmare). *J* is Blake’s final and longest epic in illuminated printing, as *FW* is Joyce’s last and most complex novel. They both constitute a recapitulation and summation of their authors’ multiple interests, ranging from their own mythologies to biblical history (let us think of the Kabbalah and the myth of Adam Kadmon as a basis for the myths of Albion and Tim Finn), from sexuality to epistemology, from the Druids to Newton and scientific discoveries.

What is the role of Apocalypse in such works? How can we possibly talk of an eschatological closure/ending in two texts that systematically refuse any form of hermeneutics? Can *J*, a non-sequential narrative that begins, like a traditional epic, *in medias res*, with the word “Jerusalem” and ends with the same word, be really conclusive? Can its illuminations be part of this conclusion? And what about *FW*? What kind of Apocalypse is that recounted in the last book and prefigured from the very first page? Can a work that ends with “the most slippery, the least accented, the

weakest word in English” (“the”) and that prompts the reader to start again its mechanism admit any form of Apocalypse, of a final *Aufhebung*? Does the account of the End-of-the-World, object of the Biblical Apocalypse, coincide with the end of these epics?

I will try to answer these prominent questions by focusing on the meaning of Apocalypse.

“Apocalypse” entered the English dictionary with the meaning of “revelation” circa 1348. It comes from Church Latin “apocalypsis” which on its turn comes from the Greek “apokalyptein,” meaning “to uncover,” “to disclose,” “to reveal.” The prefix “apo” means “from” and “kalyptein” “to cover” or “conceal,” “Calypso” derives from this verb as well.

I am particularly interested in the translation of “apokalyptein” as “to reveal;” indeed the English verb contains the term “veil” that is crucial to the understanding of the conception of Apocalypse both in *J* and *FW*, especially in the Platonic sense of “removal of the veil of ignorance.” In *J*, the word “veil” occurs

more than forty times and is often employed to indicate Vala’s veil,⁶ the film of matter which covers all reality; it symbolizes the Mundane Shell and the code of Moral Law as well. In *FW*, terms like “veil” and “cloud”⁷ usually refer to the letter Mamafesta⁸ (symbol of the novel as a whole), considered as a manuscript that has to be decoded, or better “decorded,” from its hidden meanings. In some parts of the *Wake* it even seems that the Mamafesta is used to *conceal* HCE’s infraction, rather than justify it. Veil symbolizes the state of inanity, hypnosis from which we must awake. John Bishop in his *Joyce’s Book of the Dark*⁹ has selected some of the most interesting terms used by the Irish writer to express the concept of awakening. It does not come as a surprise that many of them contain the word “veil,” for example “unaveiling,” “veiled world,” “reveil,” “veiled memory,” etc.

“Awakening” is a particularly fit term also for explaining how the inception of *J* in 1804 is connected to an unpleasant episode in Blake’s life.¹⁰ In plate 3, in

fact, the poet writes, “After my three years slumber on the banks of the Ocean, I again display my Giant forms to the Public.” Blake’s “slumber” refers to the Felpham years and to the events that took place there. In August 1803, while he was in Felpham, Sussex, he removed John Scofield, a drunk soldier, from his garden. Scofield afterwards claimed that Blake “damned the King and said that soldiers were all slaves.” On Scofield’s testimony, the poet was charged with high treason and put on trial at Chichester. After Blake was acquitted of high treason he moved back to London, never completely recovering from such a bitter experience. Thus *J* comes after Blake’s trial that so strikingly resembles HCE’s.

Both in *J* and *FW* the idea of an imminent revelation, of a turning point in the narrative, is always alluded to and widely influences the narrative. The semantic isotopies about “covering,” “concealing,” “obscuring” constitute a geography of their own in the textures. It is as if the reader’s view were obstructed and

momentarily incapable of dissolving the thick mist that metaphorically wraps the text. In the title I have chosen for this essay I use the Finneganesse “Last podding.” The expression is employed in the very last part of the novel, when we have arrived at the moment of Recorso and of the recycle, just a few pages before the reader’s biggest dilemma: to restart *FW*’s engine or to activate “the stand-by modality” (since you can never finish with *FW*). This is what Joyce writes: “The big bad old sprowly all uttering fool! Has now stuffed last podding. His fooneal will sneak pleace by creeps o’clock toosday. Kingen will commen. Allso brewbeer” (617:19-21).

In this final, but not conclusive, part of the *Wake* the references to Apocalypse (mainly in the sense of the second coming, “Kingen will commen”) become page after page more copious. At this point, “Last podding” could be understood as an ironical interpretation of the Last Judgement, Apocalypse’s objective correlative. “Podding” refers to both “pod” and “pudding.” As for the first, “pod” means “seed of beans” which, in the

image of the seed that gives life to beans, symbolizes the beginning of a new natural cycle (in this case probably the last). The mentioning of the last biological cycle suggests a connection with Gautama Siddharta (“the last Buddha”) as well, in his role as the one who has achieved his final incarnation and is ready for Nirvana. Buddha is echoed in the word “pudding”—the second possible reading of “Last podding”—especially if related to the French “boudin” or the Italian “budino,” the most plausible origins for “pudding.”¹¹ If we consider the root “pud” (“to swell”) in its Middle English slang usage, that is “penis,” it opens out a new semantic field. The sense of reproduction and procreation not only of beans, but also of human beings, hinting at the beginning of the last stage of man’s life. Furthermore, “Last podding,” precisely because it employs as its first semantic field that of food, reminds us of the “Last supper” as well, conflating in a sole expression Jesus’ first and second coming.

On reading the quotation again, though, we notice another semantic field worth mentioning, that of “thievery.” Words like “sprowl,” “sneak,” and “creeps” refer all to “stealthy and furtive movements” (OED) appropriate to someone who enters a house in order to steal. Interestingly, both Peter and Paul describe Jesus’ advent as that of “a thief in the night,”¹² faithfully reporting the words of their master in the Olivet Discourse. In some biblical (apocryphal) accounts Jesus’ coming coincides with his arrival at a wedding feast in the moment in which the bride and the bridegroom take their nuptial veils off as a sign that the sacrament has been administered. Significantly, this rite is described as “Apocalypse.” Hence, the three words, thief, veil/revelation and wedding (the uncovering of the bridal veil is a metaphor for wedding) share the same root “apokalypto,” I remind you here that Apocalypse literally means “away with the veil.”

In the first chapter of *J*, one of the conflicts which sets the various characters into motion is between

Albion and the Saviour for the love of Jerusalem (here representing both the city of redemption and a woman, predestined to become the bride of the Lamb by marrying the Saviour).

The poem opens with Albion's rejection of Jesus. In jealousy he hides, conceals, *veils* Jerusalem, even accusing Jesus of his Bride's abduction. The Saviour is therefore introduced from Albion's perspective frame as a thief.

Revelation as the uncovering of the veil is taken literally by Blake. At the same time Albion conceals Jerusalem from the Saviour and the reader's view and unveils Vala, whom now he considers his real bride. In such a context, she is Jerusalem's counterpart; she represents nature and lust, in a word, the negative side of the Feminine Will. As a consequence of his mistake, Albion falls asleep. When he wakes up, at the end of the poem, he will try to unveil Vala again, this time not out of a wedding rite but of a new awareness about reality. If he wants to survive and redeem

humanity he needs to know who Vala truly is.

In the Bible, the Apocalypse entails the revelation of the mysteries; things lie beyond the ordinary range of human knowledge. God gives to prophets or saints instructions concerning such hidden matters. Both in *J* and in *FW*, Blake and Joyce are the prophets of an analogous initiation. The difficulties and ordeals disseminated in their works are a means of putting readers to the test, and selecting the "chosen one," i.e. the reader who proves to be worthy of the "final message." From this perspective, the well-known declarations of both writers on the possibility that someone could eventually understand their artistic effort can be read as something more than a narcissistic statement.

In a letter to his friend Cumberland (1754-1848) Blake writes: "The Last work I produced is a poem entitled Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion, but find that to print it will cost my time the amount of twenty Guineas. One I have finished: it contains 100 Plates but it is not likely that I shall get a Customer for

it.”¹³ Similarly, Joyce in a conversation with Eugen Jolas (1894-1952) on *FW* honestly declares: “I imagine I’ll have about eleven readers.”¹⁴ Anticipating one of the most controversial issues of post-modern literature, i.e. the relation between author and reader, not only do Blake and Joyce make the latter negotiate the meaning of every line and page, but also impose/propose a reconfiguration of the roles of producer (author) and consumer (reader).

As the title of this essay suggests, part of my investigation on *J* and *FW* focuses on the very concept of the marriage/union between mystery and “mystettry.” I have already noted the relation between mystery and Apocalypse in terms of revelation of that mystery. Now I would like to concentrate on the pun “mystettry” concocted by Joyce and employed in the last book of the *Wake*.

“Mystettry” is a particularly complex and dense compound. We might unzip it into at least seven main words, it depends of course on our reading: “my,”

“mist,” “tet,” “try,” “tree,” “mystery” (which we may also read as “mystery tree”) and “mystory.” First, I would like to analyze the symbolic expression “mystery tree,” frequently mentioned by William Blake to whom Joyce seems to allude when in *FW* he refers to trees (it usually occurs in the last chapters, but it is not a rule).

In William Blake, the symbolism of trees, and in particular of the Tree of Mystery, recurs throughout his works. The Tree of Mystery is mainly connected with false morality, the false church of mystery, and the whore of Babylon. It represents the tree on which Jesus was crucified as well. Its roots and branches form a labyrinth. On this tree Urizen crucifies his son of fire, Fuzon. Most of all, however, the Tree of Mystery is the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, by its fruit man sets himself up as a God (thus it is the deadly tree).

In *FW*, a first Blakean hint at trees occurs on page 58: 20 when we read: “Ashu ashure there, the unforgettable threeshade [...]” A part from “threeshade,” also “ashu”

and “ashure” echo the word “tree.” In fact “shu” in Chinese means “tree;” here Joyce uses it as a pun for “sure,” “assure.” This reference is particularly meaningful if we think that, just on the previous page, he has introduced for the first time the four old chronicles/judges, Mamalujo, who overtly assimilate the Four Zoas by calling them “Zoans.”¹⁵

Reading on in the chapter, it is quite apparent that something in the narrative has changed or is about to change, something connected with the dominating semantic field of the passage, as if Joyce had switched to a sort of “William Blake Modality.” Indeed, exactly on page 58, we read: “As holyday in his house so was he priest and king to that: ulvy came, envy saw, ivy conquered. Lou! Lou! They have waved his green boughs o’er him as they have torn him limb from lamb.” (58:5-7)

The sentence “As holyday in his house so was he priest and king to that” is taken from the letter (that we have already mentioned) written by William Blake

to George Cumberland where the poet observes: “the Mind, in which everyone is King and Priest in his own house.” The rest of the quotation might be a reference to Blake’s Felpham incident and his subsequent trial, especially because this is the chapter devoted to HCE’s trial and incarceration. “Lou! Lou!” echoes “Los,” and the last sentence “They have waved his green boughs o’er him as they have torn him limb from lamb,” not only contains one of the most important Blakean symbols (i.e. the lamb) but also reminds me of a particularly violent episode in *J*, considered by many scholars the poetic translation of Blake’s trial, when in plate 25, Albion/Blake is tortured by three cruel dominating females,¹⁶ who draw out his entrails (“the Divine Lamb is cruelly slain”). Back to the *Wake*, a few pages ahead we are introduced to the “mysttetry,” as we read: “Sankya Moondy played his mango tricks under the mysttetry.” (60:18)

Mark L. Troy, in his “Mummeries of Resurrection: The Cycle of Osiris in Finnegans Wake,”¹⁷ considers the

compound “mystettry” strictly connected with the cult of Osiris. He focuses on the word “Tet,” which “was a wooden pillar of some sort, and it may have been the stylized representation of a tree, perhaps that in which the body of Osiris had been concealed.” In ancient Egypt, the setting up of the Tet was the symbolic action signifying that the god himself had risen.

In this passage, HCE’s imminent awakening (physical and metaphorical) is intertwined with two other kinds of awakening: that implied in the Biblical Apocalypse as well as that implied again in the prophetic character of Buddha. As stated in McHugh’s *Annotations*, the expression “Sankyamundi” can be read as Sakya Muni, another name for “Gautama Siddhartha” or Buddha. According to tradition, Siddhartha’s first words at his birth were: “I am the leader of the world. This is my final birth.” Thus his last reincarnation might be read as an allusion to HCE, to the novel’s last cycle and to the reader’s “Last

podding.” Equally important, the appellative Buddha in Sanskrit means “the awakened one,” “the one who has fully achieved consciousness,” which establishes a direct correspondence between the prophet and HCE.

Besides, the second part of the compound “Sankyamundi,” that is “mundi,” can be read as the genitive of the Latin “mundus” which means “clear,” “purified,” “humanity” and “profane world.” The latter, in particular, in the context of *FW* might be interpreted as if Joyce wanted to convey in a single expression all the world’s faiths and confessions (including the pagan). Finally, “mundi,” meaning “pure,” refers to a sense of pureness or purification, crucial in the passage in which HCE is on trial for his obscure infraction.

The Joycean quotation might also be connected to the discovery of the sculpture of Buddha Sakyamuni. Soon after the mass destruction of Buddhist monasteries in Tibet in the Sino-Tibetan border war of 1905-1918, a medical missionary, Albert L. Shelton, found the statue of a Buddha, which was brought to the Auckland

Museum in 1920. It is likely that English newspapers wrote about the discovery and that Joyce might have been so fascinated by the images of the statue to “use” them in *FW*.

From these observations, it is clear that Joyce’s intention is that of creating a kind of collision among all the possible forms of Apocalypse, linked one to the other by the expression “mystettry,” that eventually turns into “mystory.” Once again, to be really appreciated, the *Wake* has to become a personal experience; the reader has to change into a *homo viator*, who with his own, unique, interpretive tools starts his journey through its mysteries and codes. Likewise, the reader of *J* has to wake up and discover (“apocalypto”) the ultimate meaning of a work in which “Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place” (3, E 146). Conceived as palimpsests of human experiences, these two texts do not admit any form of revelation that is not personally lived and felt. To be free from the roots of the labyrinthine “Tree

of Mystery,” the reader has to create his own exegetical system; he has to take off the veil that covers his eyes.

As Fred Dortort has noticed, in *J*, the text of plate 3 contains indications that its readers will benefit from a certain degree of circumspection.¹⁸ The words “Sheep” and “Goats,” above on the side of the address (perhaps the words of the narrator, perhaps not), symbolize the process of selection. Readers may then proceed to read the text in the manner either of the docile sheep, or the more cantankerous goats, paradoxically inverting Matthew’s account in the apocalyptic sections of his book.¹⁹

On page 563:7-9 of the *Wake* completely devoted to William Blake,²⁰ whom Joyce calls “pale blake,”²¹ we read: “You will know him by name in the capers but you cannot see whose heel he sheepfolds in his wrought hand because I have not told it to you.”

The passage refers to Jesus’ second coming and Matthew’s biblical account (“caper” in Latin is “goat,” and “sheep” is contained in the compound

“sheepfolds”). But here again, as in Blake, Apocalypse is used as a metaphor for describing the author/reader relation and for investing the reader with his own responsibility in the *wreading* of the text.

Unquestionably, the longing for Apocalypse in these two textures becomes a longing for liberty and emancipation from every form of intellectual restraint. Only if we allow such an investigation can Los’ strong resolution in *J* be ours: “I must create a system or being enslav’d by another man’s” (10:20-21, E 153).

Notes

¹ All the quotations from *Jerusalem* follow the Erdman standard edition of Blake’s works (E): David Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake. Newly Revised Edition* (New York and London: Anchor Books, 1988).

² James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939). All editions of *Finnegans Wake* follow the same pagination as the first one.

³ James Joyce, “William Blake,” in *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*. Eds. Mason Ellsworth and Richard Ellmann (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959): 214-222. Page 222. For further readings, see also Robert F. Gleckner, “Joyce’s Blake: Paths of Influence,” in *William Blake and the Moderns*. Eds. Robert J. Bertholf and Annette S. Levitt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982): 135-163.

⁴ Robert N. Essick, “Jerusalem and Blake’s Final Works,” in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*. Ed. Morris Eaves (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 251-271.

⁵ Cf. Jacques Aubert, “riverrun,” in *Post-Structuralist Joyce. Essays from the French*. Eds. Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 69-77.

⁶ Vala is the Goddess of Nature and Luvah’s Emanation.

⁷ Again the term conveys the idea of “covering” and “concealing,” as in Blake who presents the Divine Vision always hidden in a cloud.

⁸ We know that Issy too is represented by a “Nuvoletta” (a Little Cloud), since she is often described as a being who, from the sky, watches over her family’s actions (“That little cloud, a nibulissa, still hang isky,” 255:31). We might say that hers is a privileged further point of view proposed to the reader. In such a context, Issy’s function is to complete/enlarge the picture.

⁹ Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1986.

¹⁰ Cf. Harold Bloom, *Blake’s Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument* (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1963).

¹¹ Generally speaking, “pudding” connotes “a kind of sausage” or “a dessert” (OED).

¹² We can find references to Jesus’ coming as a thief in the night also in Thess. 5:2: “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.” and in Apoc. 3:3: “Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

¹³ The reference here is to a letter written by William Blake to George Cumberland on April 12, 1827, in which the poet says: “Flaxman is gone & we All soon follow, everyone to his own eternal house, leaving the delusive Goddess nature & her laws to get into freedom from all law of the members into The Mind, in which every one is king & Priest in his own house. God send it so on Earth as it is in heaven.” Cumberland was an amateur artist and engraver, author of *Thoughts on Outline*; instrumental in the founding of the National Gallery; Blake’s friend for more than thirty years. For him Blake made a number of illuminated books as well as his last engraving, a small allegorical calling card.

¹⁴ Cf. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969): 588.

¹⁵ According to Northrop Frye (“Quest and Cycle in *Finnegans Wake*”, in *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1963): 256-264) it is too reductive to speak of a direct correspondence between the Four Zoas and the Four Judges Mamalujjo: “The parallel sometimes suggested between Blake’s four Zoas and Joyce’s four old men is not a genuine one. The Zoas in Blake are his major figures Los, Orc, Urizen and Tharmas, and are fully individualized; the four old men in Joyce are always a chorus, and seen unintegrated to the rest of the symbolism. These four men are inorganic tradition, or, more accurately, the conscious memory: they are linked to the four evangelists, the four historians of Ireland, and to the psychoanalytic technique of trying to clear the mind of guilt by awakening the memory. In Joyce, as in Blake, the memory and the creative imagination are distinct or even opposed principles. The nearest equivalent in Blake to the four old men would be the four chief sons of Los in their ‘abstract’ form.”(2)

For completeness’ sake it must be said that Roland McHugh (*Annotations to Finnegans Wake* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980)), in opposition to Frye, admits a possible equation between the Four Zoas and the Four Judges (100).

¹⁶ They can be compared with the three drunken soldiers who witness HCE’s sexual abuse.

¹⁷ <<http://www.kirbymountain.com/Troy-Mummeries/troybook.htm>>, 04-20-06.

¹⁸ Cf. Fred Dortort, *The Dialectic of Vision: A Contrary Reading of William Blake’s Jerusalem* (Barrytown: Station Hill Arts, 1988).

¹⁹ “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world [...] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels....And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matt 25:31-34, 41, 46)

²⁰ In the novel “Blake” refers to both the poet and one of the twelve tribes of Galway known as “The Blakes.”

²¹ The Pale or the English Pale comprised a region in a radius of 20 miles around Dublin, which the English in Ireland gradually fortified against incursion from Gaels. From the thirteenth century onwards the Hiberno-Norman invasion in the rest of Ireland at first faltered then waned, allowing Gaelic Ireland to become resurgent.

