

Nudity / Nakedness in *Finnegans Wake* and in Opera

This opera calls for the eight principal chorus members (four women, four men) to be naked for much of the first scene of Act II, as they ritualistically wash their clothes and then exchange them: women to men and men to women. Nudity and nakedness are central interests and fascinations for Joyce throughout *Finnegans Wake* and there are many relevant evocations, allusions, and references. In addition to the multitudinous slang words for all varieties of physical and sexual interests and acts (in many languages), here are a few selected references to nudity and nakedness, with page and line citations to the standard edition:

- 016.24 “Become a bitskin more wiseable” [Ger. “ein bisschen”: a little; bit of skin; visible]
034.10 “Gob scene you in the narked place” [God sees Adam and Eve naked; in the market place]
035.04 “his mirthday suit” [birthday suit: bare skin, naked]
039.32 “he slept in a nude state ... in strange men’s cots”
067.04 “meet there night, mid their nackt, me there naket” [Ger. “nackt”: naked]
079.20 “her bare godkin out” [bare buttocks; godkin: deity, idol; bodkin: long pin for fastening hair]
107.04 “*Tell Naked Truths*” [plain truths; tell truths about nakedness]
109.10 “passion-pallid nudity or plaguepurple nakedness”
109.20 “vision her plump and plain in her natural altogether”
138.08 “git all his flesch nuemaids motts truly prural” [Fr. “nue”: naked (feminine); “mot”: word]
200.01 “beauties sreeked nith their bearers’ skins!” [sleek; shrieked; beneath; bare skin]
206.30 “mothernaked, she sampood herself ... from crown to sole”
229.30 “reading off his fleshskin and writing with his quillbone” [foreskin; Fr. Sl. “quille”: penis]
248.03 “If you nude her in her prime”
268.17 “a third person, mascarine, phelinine or nuder” [masculine, feminine, or neuter]
271.F04 “thine compliment, gymnuflashed” [compliment: religious service; Gr. “gymnos”: naked]
332.01 “Snip snap snoody.” [Danish “Snip snap snude”: formula to end a fairy tale; nude]
357.33 “contemplating of myself, wiz my naked I” [with my naked eye: in plain sight, honestly]
366.14 “out of med-dreams unclouthed” [midstream; my dreams unclothed]
435.05 “won’t you be an artist’s moral and pose in your nudies” [artist’s model]
441.02 “that nullity suit. Faminy” [nudity; Latin “femina”: woman]
461.26 “whesen with other lipth I nakest open my thigh” [Ger. “Wesen”: essence, nature; with other lips]
493.05 “in my nil ensemble” [Fr. Colloquial “tout ensemble”: (of a model) fully naked]
538.11 “their naktlives” [Dutch “naake lijf”: naked body; “nachtleven”: nightlife; naked lives]
555.05 “So, nat by night by naught by naket” [night by night by night by naked]
557.21 “from the above were of a pretty carnation” [carnation (*obsolete*): the colour of naked skin]
557.22 “some deretane denudation with intent” [It. “deretano”: buttocks; denude: to make naked]
559.22 “Male partly masking female.” [male part; skin; male masking the female]
564.34 “snaked’s eyes! Is all? Yet not. Hear one’s.” [naked eye; Dutch “hoor eens!”: listen!]
582.30 “Female imperfectly masking male.” [skin; female masking the male]
601.01 “A naked yogprieist ... oaakey doaked” [yogi; okey doke]
603.13 “night-shared nakeshift” [shared nakedness; makeshift; shift dresses were popular in the 1920s]
624.18 “Before the naked universe.”