

A Sheaf of Araby

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The unknown author of *Kulhwch*, like Spenser in modern times in his *Faerie Queene*, seems to have made the Island of Britain the realm of Faerie — the Celtic Otherworld — and Arthur its king. . . . We may even have in the story of *Kulhwch and Olwen* a symbolical or mystical account of ancient Brythonic rites of initiation, which have also directly to do with the spiritual world and its invisible inhabitants. (W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, 1911, H. Froude, London and New York)

The whole thugogmagog . . . to be wound up for an afterenactment by a Magnificent Transformation Scene showing the Radium Wedding of Neid and Moorning and the Dawn of Peace, Pure, Perfect and Perpetual, Waking the Weary of the World. (James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* [p. 222], 1939, Faber and Faber, London, and Viking, New York)

Come into the garden, Maud . . .

(Alfred Tennyson, “Maud”, 1855)

A king is only as strong or revered as his lands are prosperous. Traditionally, he literally embodies the health of his lands. When fertility departs, so does his power (*cf.* the Medieval myth of the Waste Land). The deity of earth’s fertility is generally female, a mother goddess whose grace the male ruler must gain and maintain. He is both her lover and her son, both spiritually and physically.

As Barbara Walker writes in *The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, “Like the *devadasis* of Hindu temples, prostitute-priestesses dispensed the grace of the Goddess in ancient Middle-Eastern Temples.” They are the keepers of the hearth and of the hours, in ancient Egypt

watchers of the solar boat on its journey through the night, like Issy's college of girlfriends dancing through *Finnegans Wake* (*issi*, Finnish *myself*). From "hours" they are called whores (like the houris of Paradise; "hower" [p. 389]; and "Horoseshoew!" [p. 159], bringing in horse show [the ruler must be a good rider] and *khorosho* [*xopouo*], Russian OK). They are also virgins, being without husbands. The exalted and maternal *queen* and the brazen *quean*, prostitute or virgin, are, after all, the same word, from the Anglo-Saxon *cwen*, or woman. "Maye faye, she's la gaye this snaky woman! . . . Hohore!" (p. 20).

Such Biblical stories as David and Bathsheba seem to describe, albeit in an effort to subvert, the sacred wedding of king and goddess. The story is told in a time that has divided whore and virgin, so the act becomes secretive and surreptitious, yet still necessarily blessed. The king's virility is perversely proved by rape rather than understood as a gift of the goddess through her priestess. The iconography of the spied-upon bather, her virtue thus violated but also proved, is seen in many places. In the Bible, there are also the stories of Susannah and the elders ("that was why Blabus was razing his wall and eltering the suzannes of his nighboors" [p. 552]), Solomon and Sheba ("in my bethel of Solyman's I accouched their rotundaties and I turnkeyed most insultantly over raped lutetias in the lock" [p. 542]), David and Bathsheba ("And, remember this, a chorines, there's the witch on the heath, sistra! 'Bansheba peeling hourihoured while her Orcotron is hoaring ho" [pp. 468–469]), and perhaps even Lot and his daughters ("The Shame of Slumdom" [p. 307], "he had had had o'gloriously a'lot too much hanguest or hoshoe fine to drink" [p. 63]). In the history of Don Quixote, Dorothea is similarly discovered and becomes the Ethiope Queen Micomicona. The *Song of Songs* (or of Solomon; "Shake hands through the thicketlock!" [p. 248]) enacts the ritual more elaborately and less cynically.

In the Eastern telling of Solomon and Sheba (called Bilqis, or Balkis), Solomon (Sulaiman; whose name is derived from the Canaanite sun god Shalem, meaning *peace*) suspects that the queen is a demon (or a *djinn*; recalling the *jinnies* in *Finnegans Wake*, the paired "temptresses"

in the park), so he creates a glass stream in his palace over which she must step. As she lifts her robe, he confirms by her human feet or the lack of hair on them that she is a woman. An illustration from a 16th-century Persian manuscript in the Bodleian collection, reproduced in Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde*, shows the king and his court hiding themselves and spying on the queen as she crosses the stream and shows her legs. It would seem that the ritual coupling of king and goddess has been corrupted to a shady act of voyeurism, stealing a glimpse of that hairy part that distinguishes a woman: the holy of holies devolved to a peep show.

A similar incident seems to have occurred in Dublin's Phoenix Park in *Finnegans Wake*. Just as Joyce took his protagonist in *Ulysses* from ejaculating at the sight of a girl's exposed underclothing to rest in the omphalos of his marital bed, so in *Finnegans Wake* a supposed crime or alleged moral weakness is in fact the diminished means by which the protagonist gains (perhaps reluctantly or inadvertently) the grace of the goddess: "the two quitewhite villagettes who hear show of themselves so gigglesomes minxt the follyages, the prettilees!" (p. 8). The agents of the goddess's grace must act as temptresses, like Sheba's exposed legs, acting outside of, though still somehow essential to, the new social order.

Sheba, as Barbara Walker tells us, was an Arabian mother goddess ("for the love of goddess" [p. 366]). The harem was her sanctuary and the meteorite within ("hurtleturtled out of heaven" [p. 5]), now in Mecca's Kaaba shrine ("black but comely" [*Song of Songs*], "brown but combly" [p. 550]; "their's hayair" [p. 4]), was her idol. Another Persian illustration, in the British Museum, shows her reclining by a river, her fluid outline suggesting that she herself is the river, between rocks and a tree, a hoopoe on a stump in the rocks holding a letter (in the story, from Solomon; "Howforhim chirrupeth evereachbird!" [pp. 98–99]). This image is very suggestive of ALP in *Finnegans Wake*. Her sons (rival aspects of HCE) are consistently characterized as stone and tree on either side of the Liffey river. The letter from ALP to HCE is discov-

ered (scratched out) by a hen (pp. 110–112; “every blessed brigid came aclucking and aclacking” [p. 256]).

As the book is named for waking in both senses, the physical and the spiritual, too, are reunited in the sleeping mind (where the soul has flown from the corpse-like body) of *Finnegans Wake*. The consequences of their division (“(may his forehead be darkened with mud who would sunder!)” [p. 20] — evoking the vow of matrimony, just as a “royal divorce” is mentioned throughout) are chronicled, as are the dramas of their interaction in love and war and all the sins between, from the holy whore to wholly war, the dance of love corrupted to predation and rape. “What bidimetoloves sinduced by what tegotetabsolvers! What true feeling for their’s hayair with what strawng voice of false jiccup!” (p. 4).

« . »

shee shee, all improper, in a lovely mourning toilet
(p. 395)

ALP is the principal female character (or female principle) in *Finnegans Wake*. As initials, ALP stands for Anna Livia Plurabelle (“Anna was, Livia is, Plurabelle’s to be” [p. 215] — *hannah* is “grace” in Hebrew) among other terms. As a word, it is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and pronounced alf. It is also a mountain, alp, from which the word elf may be derived as a spirit of the hills (it seems later to have been related to Latin *albus*, white, in a dividing of “white elves” from “black dwarves”). Folklore commonly connects wisdom and mountain, as in the Sibyl, or wise woman of the mountain, to which men venture for enlightenment. In German, *alp* is the nightmare. As an elf (“Here . . . she comes, a peacefugle, a parody’s bird, a peri potmother” [p. 11]; “damn fairy ann, Voutre!” [p. 9]), she is the prankquean, troubling the close of Jarl van Hoother (pp. 21–23). *Shee* is the anglicized Irish word for such a fairy, *i.e.*, *sídh*, which can also mean peace (“That was the tictacs of the jinnies for to fontannoy the Willingdone. Shee, shee, shee! The jinnies is jillous agincourting all

the lipoleums” [p. 9]). It is also the word for the burial mounds where they live. (The *sidh* are the Tuatha Dé Danann [people of the goddess Danu, or Anna], driven into their hills by the Milesians, iron-age Celts.) Pronounced similarly, *saoi* means *wise one*.

The Liffey river (*An Life* in Irish, or Anna Liffey, whence Anna Livia), on whose banks the city of Dublin was built before it rejoins the ocean, arises from a bog in the Wicklow mountains. The gist of *Finnegans Wake*, acted out on the sleeping body’s landscape, is the encounter between HCE, one of the first “to bare arms and a name” (p. 5), and ALP, like that between native land and immigrant/invader (“Mearmerge two races, swete and brack. Morthering rue.” [p. 17]), or sun and moon (“my goldrush gainst her silvernetts” [p. 366]), or nature and civilization (“Hootch is for husbandman handling his hoe” [p. 5], “*Sower Rape*” [p. 72]), or like that between Solomon and Sheba: “Our cubehouse still rocks as earwitness to the thunder of his arafatas but we hear also through successive ages that shebby choruysh of unkalified muzzlenimiisilehims that would blackguardise the white stone ever hurtleturtled out of heaven” (p. 5; *choruysh* evokes the Koreshites, Muhammed’s tribe, hereditary guardians of the harem [like the Hebrew Levites]). It is also the encounter between reader (“Here Comes Everybody” [p. 32] — “Yoh!” [p. 7]) and book (“(Stoop) . . . to this claybook” [p. 18]), where one hears with one’s eyes (“*Solomon Silent reading*” [p. 176]), in the cubehouse (Kaaba) where HCE and ALP may join.

Houri of the coast of emerald, arrah of the laccessive poghue, Aslim-all-Muslim, the resigned to her surrender, did not she, come leinster’s even, true dotter of a dearmud, . . . with so valkirry a licence as sent many a poor pucker packing to perdition, again and again, ay, and again sfidare him, tease fido, eh tease fido, eh eh tease fido, toos topples topple, stop, dug of a dog of a dgiaour, ye! Angealousmei! And did not he, like Arcoforty, far-far off Bissavolo, missbrand her behaveyous with irridescant huecry of down right mean false sop lap sick dope? Tawfulsdreck! A reine of the shee, a shebeen quean, a queen of pranks.

A kingly man, of royal mien, regally robed, exalted be his glory!
. . . He hea, eyes ravenous on her lippling lills. He hear her voi of
day gon by. He hears! Zay, zay, zay! But, by the beer of his
profit, he cannot answer. (p. 68)

[Procurement, invasion, and matrimony are combined here in references to Diarmaid Mac Murrough, king of Leinster ousted by the Vikings and high king Roderick O’Conor, recruiting the earl of Pembroke, a.k.a. Strongbow (*arco forte*), with the promise of his daughter Eva and the Leinster kingship; O’Conor meanwhile restored Leinster to Diarmaid, but Strongbow came anyway and helped Diarmaid capture Dublin from the Vikings (the Norwegian king fled); then O’Conor besieged them but lost, eventually giving his daughter to wed the new English viceroy, himself returning to Connaught where he was eventually deposed by a nephew and retired to the abbey of Cong.]

In addition to a sacred wedding (and all the events before and after), *Finnegans Wake* describes a sacred meal, mocked as excessive drinking (“they had . . . that day consumed their soul of the corn” [p. 34]). Another aspect of the potent king is that he embodies the fertile crops. He is ritually sacrificed (harvested; “They have waved his green boughs o’er him as they have torn him limb from lamb” [p. 58]) and eaten and/or drunk to imbue his people with himself. And he is planted to be reborn. Obviously, he must do this through a proxy, a king for a day (or night), until the people have had enough and really do him in (often egged on by a pretender). Thus, Finnegan can not wake until Earwicker has undergone the necessary cycle on his behalf. And similarly, the reader’s experience of that cycle is by proxy (“Fake!” [p. 13]). We thus are able to eat our own bodies (hocus pocus) and the drinker may be drunk (and the tailor reclothed: “Tawfulsdreck” evokes the hero of Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh). Finn Mac Cool himself both eats the salmon of wisdom, which raises him out of slavery (“whyse Salmonsens” [p. 297]) joining him to Solomon with a

Scandinavian name), and is the salmon, as he is killed in the year 283 with a fishing pike.

These two rituals — wedding and feast — are thus able to be brought together — as in the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter (Ceres) and Persephone (Kore): The groom's bachelor self is slain upon union with the goddess. The bread of the feast is his own former body. The self is reknit after each day's collapse by rejoining HCE and ALP. And as this is a universal experience, all history and myth is echoed in it, as they are products of this psychic "coincidence of . . . contraries" (p. 49), "early bisexualism" (p. 524), as Vico tells us.

Now let the centuple celves of my egourge as Micholas de Cusack calls them, . . . by the concidance of their contraries re-malgamerge in that indentity of undiscernibles where the Baxters and the Fleshmans may they cease to bidivil uns and . . . this outandin brown candlestock melt Nolan's into peese! (pp. 49–50; theological philosophers Nicholas of Cusa and Bruno of Nola are evoked here)

Much of the first part of *Finnegans Wake* is the process of establishing the cast and setting — as well as the need — of this drama for the return of the fallen hero, buried or exiled, hibernating or lost at sea, or rendered in a thousand and one pieces, our waking selves, and the morning sun ("Cocorico!" [p. 584]).

The mysteries of Eleusis are evoked in the fourth paragraph of *Finnegans Wake*: "Brekkek Kékkek Kékkek Kékkek! Kóax Kóax Kóax!" This is chanted by the chorus in Aristophanes' satire *The Frogs*, who later in the play are initiates in the mysteries. They preside over a contest between Aeschylus and Euripides (like Shaun and Shem), which echoes the ritual battle in Eleusis between the brothers Demophon and Triptolemus (like Shem and Shaun [Demophon sacrificed, Triptolemus graced (yet burdened by the murder of "himother" [p. 187] — such murder being the foundation of religion, according to Freud])), as Dionysus's journey to Hades echoes that of Persephone upon her abduction and the journey that initiates must take. As in *Finnegans Wake*, the mys-

teries involve 2 women and 3 men (in the person of Triptolemus, *thrice daring*, who is both first planter and the crop itself). The three (who are also Triptolemus, Demophon, and their father Keleos) represent what is behind and the two what is ahead, between which the initiate moves (“between three masses a morn and two chaplets at eve” [p. 410]; “three for two will do for me and he for thee and she for you” [p. 584]). (With the threefold man prodding the male protagonist from behind, many jokes of buggery are made; when the protagonist is female, a history of rapine is decried; and when the protagonist is absent as a unified body, many couplings both amorous and belligerent occur, or one of the five tries to step in as the one — cf. *Eternal Geomater* by Margaret Solomon.)

Another parallel is the ritual abuse that initiates are subjected to in their journey, like the accusations against HCE, as well as terror (causing Dionysus to “invoke the god” by shitting himself). Further, as HCE stands for the dreamer (Finnegan) as well as only a part of him, Dionysos represents the initiate as well as being one of the players in the drama as Demeter’s consort. Similarly, Demeter is both mother and sister to Persephone, Persephone is her younger self, and she is supreme goddess of life — as ALP is writer of *Finnegans Wake*, paired with Issy, and her mother. And Persephone herself is separately paired with Hecate, with whom she shares time in Hades (Hecate also makes up the third person of the threefold goddess with Demeter and Persephone, represented in patriarchal retellings as maid, mother, and crone). Finally, just as Persephone must spend a third of the year underground because she ate food that Hades offered her, the mysteries involve a sacred drink made with barley, an herbal beer, and *Finnegans Wake* is nothing if it is not about the consequences of drink: It is drinking that causes Finnegan’s fall, whether by willful sin or accident (“O foenix culprit!” [p. 23]), and it is whiskey (Irish *usqebaugh*, *life water*) that proves he is not dead. Porter (a dark beer) is literally the keeper of the doors the dreamer/reader must pass through to wake, as well as the bearer of burdens (like the ass that the four old men bring with them in *Finnegans Wake*). Beer was a gift of Brigid in Ireland, as it was of Demeter in Greece. Guinnesses are thus indeed a part of this Irish Genesis.

In addition to Dionysos's messing himself, after which he cleans himself with a ready sponge, *The Frogs* mentions Kinesias, a poet accused of defecating against a statue of Hecate, which becomes one of the accusations against HCE, especially as he is identified with the Russian General, who is observed at this office by Private Buckley. This ties in (comically) with the ancient Egyptian act of peopling the world from Atum (or Tim, as in *Finnegan*) masturbating into a mudheap. This occurred at Heliopolis, *a.k.a.* Anu. Dublin was called Healiopolis after Tim Healy, the first governor-general of the Irish Free State (before the civil war). The name Solomon means sun-god of Anu, or Anna.

The Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, a guidebook for the recently deceased to join Osiris on the boat of the sun in its nightly journey through the underworld (or antipodes), is prominent in *Finnegans Wake* (see *Mummeries of Resurrection* by Mark Troy; the Osiris story also involves 3 men [Set, Osiris, and Horus] and 2 women [Isis and Nephthys]; and the deceased is portrayed with a beard, the sign of rule that even female pharaohs donned in their role ["in her fullbottom wig and beard, (Erminia Reginia!)" (pp. 390–391)], which is a distinguishing feature of the fallen hero of *Finnegans Wake* ["Woowolfe Woodenbeard" (p. 467)]), so thus we have a mystery play modeled on the Osiris story in which the dreamer/reader experiences the journey as, among others of course, Solomon in quest of union with the life-giving goddess. After which he or she may wake to become a creator as well, a mother or father, or poet or painter, or (not so) simply, like Mr Dooley in Joyce's poem "Dooleysprudence", "to paddle down the stream of life his personal canoe".

"Phew! What a warm time we were in there . . ." (p. 10)

« . »

Diarmaid Mac Murrough was mentioned above. Not only did he invite the English in — Strongbow arrived with an army of Normans, Welsh, and Flemings in 1169 — he was also responsible for the central crime that haunts *Finnegans Wake*: the rape of the abbess and destruc-

tion of Kildare in 1132 (“the mossacre of Saint Brices” [p. 390; more directly referring to the St Brice’s day massacre of the Danes in England as ordered by Ethelred the Unready]), as recorded in the *Annals of Loch Cé*, the *Chronicon Scotorum* (“The successor of Brigit was betrayed and carried off by Diarmait son of Murchad and forced to submit to him and seven score killed in Cell Dara and most of it burned”), and the *Annals of Ulster*. Kildare was sacred to saint Bridget and before her the goddess Brigid (or Bride [The O.E.D. says that bride means daughter-in-law in old teutonic languages and may derive from her duty to brew the household ale, which duty the sons have usurped: “Rot a peck of pa’s malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arclight” (p. 3)]). With the destruction of Kildare, Mac Murrugh broke its power in the name of the Roman church, whose agent Malachy arrived later in 1132 to impose compliance, and personal ambition. When the English broke from Rome, yet a new liturgy had to be imposed on their Irish subjects, a new excuse to take their land, first by Henry VIII in Ulster and then by Oliver Cromwell in Munster and Leinster. In 1690, the catholic earl of Lucan led the armies of James II against those of protestant William III (of Orange) in the battle of the Boyne river. The “Penal Laws” against catholics followed their loss in that battle. In the English satirical song “Lillibulero”, James’s Irish viceroy, the earl of Tyrconnell, Richard Talbot, is called an ass (in some versions James is the ass and in others Talbot is both ass and dog).

The refrain “Lillibullero bullen a la” likely comes from the Irish *Lilli bu léir; O, bu linn an lá*, meaning *Lilly will be clear, the day will be ours* and said to have been the watchword in the uprising of 1641, when many Protestants were slaughtered. With the new ballad, the English made it their rallying song, too. William Lilly, the “English Merlin”, who died in 1681, was the foremost astrologer of the time. Invoking his name gave power to the wish (“There was an old prophecy found in a bog”, the song mocks, seemingly describing the discovery of the letter in *Finnegans Wake*).

The rape of Brigit is related to that of Persephone: “At this time it fell out that a brazenlockt damsel grieved (*sobralasolas!*) because that

Puppette her minion was ravisht of her by the ogre Puropeus Pious” (p. 14).

« . »

Besides wedding and feast, we are reading about “these funeral games” (p. 515). As George Gibson describes in *Wake Rites*, the great gathering at Tara when the high king died (“The Games funeral at Valleytemple” [p. 602]) included elaborate rituals to choose and prove his successor, ultimately by his coupling with the goddess of Tara, Tea, or The (“Diu! The has gonig at gone, the is coming to come” [p. 598]). Here again is the sacred wedding of king and goddess after death, ensuing battles, and sacrificial meals — out of which light returns to be distributed across the land (“securst jubilends albes Temoram” [p. 593]; *Tara* was often anglicized to *Temora*, from Irish *Teambhair*). Pages 510–512 follow this theme by combining Finnegan’s wake and the wedding party of the Norwegian Captain and the tailor’s daughter. And in pages 552–554, HCE asserts that all he has done is for the honor and pleasure of Anna, and his right to consort with her is still being assessed throughout the next chapter, *e.g.*, on pages 573–576.

« . »

I considered the lilies on the veldt and unto Balkis did I disclothe mine glory. And this. (p. 543; *cf.* “the lilliths oft I feldt” [p. 366])

Her eye’s so gladsome we’ll all take share in the ——groom! (p. 189)

Humperfeldt and Anunska, wedded now evermore in annastomoses . . . (p. 585)

The time of lying together will come . . . (p. 244)

Before the Aryan Greeks arrived in Hellas and imposed a masculine pantheon, Demeter, Persephone, and Hecate told their eternal story of sky, earth, and the cycles of animal and plant life and death without a role for Hades (and in this story, his trick of keeping Persephone by

having her eat while she is in his “burrow” seems to be the same as that of northern fairies luring and entrapping mortals into their dance — “Will you walk into my wavetrap? said the spiter to the shy” [p. 287]). As Jacquetta Hawkes has written (in *Dawn of the Gods*), the Greeks created a singularly rich religion by combining the native matriarchal and inserted patriarchal pantheons. Society is made up of both men and women, after all, and all life exhibits sexual dualism (“bisexualism” [p. 524]) — so must the divine. Similarly, Ireland’s history is one of absorbing invaders, with “foreign” ways becoming incorporated into new “native” ways (and vice versa — this is reflected in the characters of *Finnegans Wake* as they merge with each other and exchange characteristics). Thus an ambivalence regarding the insults and violences of conquest may be entertained, recognizing in time that the conqueror, even the violator, is now one of our selves (especially when a new invader looms). Ireland enjoyed a “golden age” after Patrick christianized the old ways, rewriting the laws with the help of Brigid, *i.e.*, the college of priestesses of that fertility goddess, later saint Bridget. The Vikings, though antagonistic to christianity and covetous of the monks’ gold and gems, built Ireland’s cities (including Dublin, which Joyce in *Finnegans Wake* often calls Copenhagen as an extension of their influence) and added their germanic tales to the mix.

But most of that ended with the apartheid rule of the English. And the turning point was January 31, 1132, the only date that is clearly given in *Finnegans Wake*: “31 Jan. 1132 A.D.” (p. 420), the eve of St Brigid’s feast day, of ancient Brigid’s new year (“old year’s eve 1132” [p. 397]), with the recent rape of Kildare’s abbess by Diarmaid Mac Murrough (“the year of the flood 1132” [p. 387], “the year of buy in disgrace” [p. 391]). (I have written previously about this, for which credit belongs to the late Clarence Sterling, in the essay “The Ravisht Bride” included in my book *A Word in Your Ear*.) Life goes on, though, and we must, too. The progress in *Finnegans Wake* may be seen as an exorcising of the memory of that crime (“repeating himself and telling him now, for the seek of Senders Newslaters and the mossacre of Saint Brices, to forget the past” [pp. 389–390]; “Begin to forget it. . . Forget! [p. 614]),

of reasserting the wedding of equals that is indeed possible between peoples, as it is between two individuals, as man and woman must come together to create new men and women (Ah ess, dapple ass! He will be longing after the Grogram Grays” [p. 609]).

“As above, so below — as below, so above”, the hermetic philosophers say (“The tasks above are as the flasks below, saith the emerald canticle of Hermes” [p. 263]), their communication represented by the multihued rainbow (the Greek goddess Iris) or the ladder of Jacob’s vision full of angels going up and down it. For the artist, this becomes: “as within, so without; as without, so within” (microcosm and macrocosm, dot [“a tiler’s dot” (p. 626)] and circle in the symbols of alchemy). The “royal divorce” — of our fall, of our self from our nature, of our violent history — implies in return (“by a commodius vicus of recirculation” [p. 3]) a royal wedding or divine union, the union of opposites (“the coincidance of their contraries” [p. 49]) if not before than necessarily after (which implies another divorce: “Tiers, tiers and tiers. Rounds.” [p. 590]: tears of relief, tears of happiness, tears of grief, around and around on many levels: a harmony of the cosmic and human music that binds us). (Speaking of rounds, note that the number of pages in *Finnegans Wake* is 628, representing 2 times π , the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter; page 314: “Let there be. Due.”; the two circles, worlds conjoined, are drawn [by “a daintical pair of accomplasses” (p. 295)] on page 293; cf. “the zeroic couplet”, page 284, the symbol for infinity, which concept was made possible by the concept of zero, the uncracked egg-point [“how carefully my nocturnal goosemother would lay her new golden sheegg for me down under in the shy orient” (pp. 449–450)].)

For that matter, purification should not be viewed as an expurgation of “dark” matter from spiritual “essence”, or liberation of the “divine” from the “physical”, but rather the elimination of what is not yourself, throwing off the clothes that don’t fit and tailoring a suit that does, a process that is never ending.

Which brings us back to the mysteries of Eleusis (to which initiates returned year after year to experience them anew on different levels),

which, as already mentioned, are evoked at the start of the fourth paragraph of *Finnegans Wake* by the chorus of frogs greeting Dionysus in Hades who are later the chorus of initiates as Dionysus enacts a satire of the mysteries. It seems also to be evoked by “Xanthos! Xanthos! Xanthos!” on page 235, referring to Dionysus’s servant Xanthias, who must walk the long way round into Hades (rather than weigh down Charon’s boat with an extra passenger), just as Glugg in that chapter (the 9th) must make a long circuit between his ritualistic non-namings of the color (or character) of his sister’s underpants. One might even see in the book’s 18th word, “commodius”, *komodos*, *i.e.*, the village bard of ancient Greece, whence the word “comedy”. And Grace Eckley, in the first chapter of *Children’s Lore in Finnegans Wake*, describes repeated references to Dionysus’ “bull foot”. The second paragraph of the book ends with the history-making act of brewing (which process informs not only chapter 9 but also the similarly structured Prankquean story of pages 21–23), which according to some was the compulsion for agriculture, followed by “The Fall”. The Eleusinian mysteries seem designed to reconcile not only the patriarchal invader and matriarchal native, but before that the inversion of the human relationship to nature that agriculture represents — the subjugation of nature to our own ends can be superficially masked as a gift from the gods, but we also need to feel that we deserve it. Hence, the quest for purification and cleansing, even if only subconsciously, while asleep, in dreams.

As in the sentence that closes the second paragraph of *Finnegans Wake* — “Rot a peck of pa’s malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arlight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface.” — the sons are responsible for both the fall of the king from the old order (sunset) and his rebirth in the new (sunrise). So let us return to the mysteries of Sheba (the fifth paragraph describing Finnegan the “freemen’s mauerer” (German *vreimaurer* = freemason) is salted with the names of biblical books, firmly establishing one context which must involve Solomon, who built a great temple in Jerusalem: From next to nothing he builds a “skyscape” with a burning bush on top (evoking the evergreen that skyscraper builders in the U.S. tradi-

tionally haul up to mark their accomplishment, following the old-world custom of thus hoping to appease the tree spirits for taking the beams) and workers “clittering up” and “clottering down” (and clattering in their babel of tongues) like the angels on Jacob’s ladder (which serves the same function as the rainbow [“regginbrow”, or king’s brow or brew], connecting earth and sky); and while scrying in a tub of Guinness he drinks it all up, connecting him with early shamans (“Mrs She-mans” [p. 397]) and agriculture and an uncommon drunk.

It is a shaman who also resolves the mummers’ plays of the winter solstice (which is also referred to in the many references in *Finnegans Wake* to the wren, called “the king of all birds” and knocked off a wall and buried after being shown from house to house by children, who embody his heir (“Derzher” [p. 289], one of the myriad echos of “there’s hair”, might be heard to include “the heir’s heir”). (The wren carries with it a world of associations: It is also called the jinnie (as are the temptresses in *Finnegans Wake*, and in Scotland it was called the Lady of Heaven’s hen; it is sacred to thunder and to poetry.) After the darkness kills the light, the doctor revives him, like Finnegan at his wake, with a magical elixir that appears to be the very bottle of wine or beer or spirits which he required for payment, or sometimes with the smell of fish, as is offered in eastern countries to St Nicholas (“and so now pass the fish for Christ sake . . . the way they used to be saying their grace before fish . . . for auld lang syne” [p. 284]; this also evokes the Greek pun $\text{IX}\Theta\text{Y}\Sigma$ from the initials of “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, and Finn Mac Cool’s [again] presence as a salmon). In Scotland the players (guisers, or guisards; “I apologise, Shaun began” [p. 414]) often covered their faces with coal soot (“We were waiting and there was a knock at the door and they all came into the room shouting ‘Here comes in Galahun, Galshun is my name’ roared like a battle slogan. The five or six boys, black-faced, wearing old country felt hats, old jackets and long trousers, and they immediately began to batter each other with sticks, and I sat petrified by the waving of the sticks, and the clatter and the noise of the fighting. Then one of the combatants fell, the boys performed their party pieces, and were given lemonade and

things to eat. I don't remember any further noise or dialogue. At the time I didn't realise it was a play." — Brian Hayward, *Galoshins: The Scottish Folk Play*, 1992). So, too, the phallus bearer before the ancient Greek satire, showing its origin in Dionysian festivals, was smeared with soot. Blackface is referred to throughout *Finnegans Wake*, starting with "all christian minstrelsy" in the third paragraph, which also evokes the christmas/easter version of the solstice performance and the mysteries. And "Auld Lang Syne", already heard above, is also seen elsewhere (e.g., "any of the Zingari shoolerim may pick a peck of kindlings yet from the sack of auld hensyne" [p. 112]) and is a motif through the reminiscings of the four masters in page 386–399. (The mummers' plays are also evoked in the title under which much of the first chapter of the second book of *Finnegans Wake* was published: *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies* [p. 219], for "mummers" is likely related to "mime" (deaf and dumb show ["the domnatory of Defmut" (p. 593)]; "It's driving her dafft like he's so dumnb" [p. 225]), and the traditional rival characters of the Scottish guisers, St Michael and Beelzebub, appear on page 230: "Michelangelo and . . . Bill C. Babby"; also: "the gist of the pantomime" [p. 599], "*Read Your Pantojoke*" [p. 71], "their gaiety pantheomime" [p. 180], "before my Geity's Pantokreator" [p. 411], "our Theoatre Regal's drolleries puntomine" [p. 587].) By recognizing that the christian holidays have to a great extent emphasized the opposite of what they are about, we can see that Jesus is murdered on Christmas and reborn at Easter. And the sacred wedding, exemplified in that between Solomon and Sheba, is the bridge that ties the two events, death and birth, together.

In the Scottish May ballad "The Gowans Are Gay", suggested by "The Gowans, ser, for Medem, me" (p. 624), an anonymous sexual communion in a garden is described (gowans are daisies). Another cycle of death and rebirth, including a sexual union, is described in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. Osiris begins his rise back to the day by rejoining with Isis (as enacted by the Porters of the penultimate chapter, the Mrs described with "Nubian shine" [p. 559]), whose tears caused the Nile to flood and who gathered all the pieces of his body that Set

had torn apart and scattered (this echos sowing of seed and the subsequent gathering of the crop; “The eversower of the seeds of light to the cowld owld sowls that are in the domnatory of Defmut . . .” [p. 493]; Tefnut is the sister/wife of Shu (“She. Shoe. Shone.” [p. 441]) (Atum is their father), who separates their twin children Nut [the sky] and Geb [the earth], who are the parents of Set, Nephthys, Isis, and Osiris; Horus is the son of Isis and Osiris), though she had to fashion a wooden phallus to replace that part which she couldn’t find. And so we are back in the land of Shem and Ham, where Sheba met Solomon (“solomn one and shebby, cod and coney” [p. 577]), whose name means Sun God of Anu, or Heliopolis in Egypt, which is also the name of the ancient goddess of Ireland, also known as Anna, whose people (Tuatha Dé Danann) became the fairies that live in the burial mounds. The river lures invaders to reinvigorate the land. But they see the graces of the goddess only as temple prostitutes, invoking violence instead of renewal (“Rape the daughter!” [p. 500]). Starting the whole damn process over again to turn death into life, tragedy into comedy, “a gracecup fullled of bitterness” (p. 561):

Phall if you but will, rise you must. (p. 4)

A way a lone a last a loved a long the
(p. 628)