

ALP's reGrettas
or
HCE's Dämnerung

(FW 619.19 – 628.15)

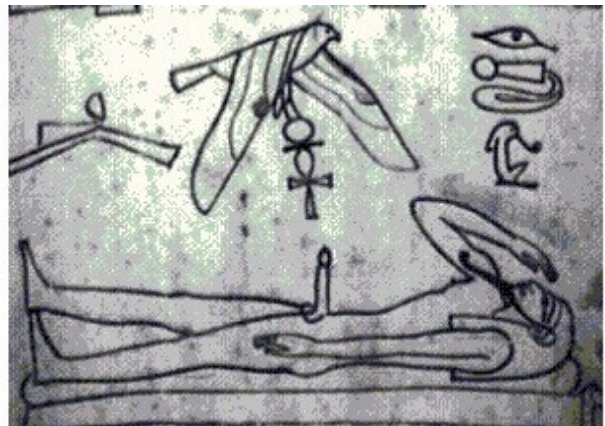
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ALP's final monologue has been flooded by and large by riverruns of scholarly essays: just google and read as you like. But I am a self-taught proletarian, what Manzoni would have called a “vil meccanico” (base mechanic); or in postmodern terms a “white hat hacker”. So I'll limit myself first to take ALP apart; then put her back together in a reassembling language, just to see how her inner clockworks.

But let me first frame out the theatrical setting. The most obvious would be that of the old couple lying in their nuptial bed, with ALP trying to revive the desires of her sleeping husband. But that would be the menial expression of a much more representative “ritual of resurrection” which, from a mythic perspective, may allude to the kite-like Isis fluttering over the corpse of her brother Osiris.



The legend says that Osiris had been hacked to pieces by his brother Seth, who scattered his body throughout the country. Isis found Osiris's limbs and put them back together. But the phallus was missing. So she made a substitute one (some say from

wood, some from clay) and, fluttering over it, she became pregnant. And this brings us back to ALP vainly trying to “re-member” the weary HCE (one of Osiris's epithet was “the weary one”). ALP does in fact go through a sequence of , hélas, “non-sequitur” re-membrances. Latinizing it we go back to “*Hic cubat edilis. Apud libertinam parvulam*” describing the “**brontoichthyan form outlined aslumbered ... by the sedge of the troutling stream**” [FW 07.20-23]; which directly leads us inside the literary landscape.

But let me be clear, just to avoid misunderstandings: I have left aside on purpose all the topographical references. It goes without saying that the basic image is that of the river Liffey flowing along the banks of Dublin in its course towards the sea; that the last part of its course is ALP's discourse to the sleepy HCE, whose head is Howth; that its leaves are the leaves on which have been recorded the chaotic events of their multifarious lives. But I think that the landscape forms a symbolic space, the literary temple within whose wheels the writual is faking PLAhce, peellowing a flutelike waving sinissyodal coovvre.

APOTHEOSIS



DEBASEMENT



Thus topography works as a sort of soundbox where side resonances bounce and rebound, festive chorus of our hacking. So:

ALP's monologue can be divided into ten constituent blocks, which can then be grouped into four sections (I, II, III, IV), mirroring the exterior framing of the four books of the Wake. Leaving aside the last one, which has only one block and works as a sort of “recourse”, each of the other three sections is formed by a group of three blocks. In order to have a comprehensive vision I submit my tentative layout which may work as a vague and provisional Ariadne's thread.

 **HCE**

| | | |
|--------|------------------|--------------|
| [I.1] | [619.19- 621.08] | STATUECHLY |
| [I.2] | [621.08- 621.33] | HOSEMASTIEER |
| [I.3] | [621.33- 623.04] | HUSBANDIT |

HCE-ALP

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|---------|-----------------|----------------|
| [II.1] | [623.04-624.21] | BOHESCIMIAN |
| [II.2] | [624.21-625.33] | PRAKESUMPTUOUS |
| [II.3] | [625.34-626.32] | REICHERCHED |

ALP-HCE

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|--------------|
| [III.1] | [626.32 - 627.13] | ANNBLOOMED |
| [III.2] | [627.13-628.01] | REGRETTHING |
| [III.3] | [628.01-628.15] | DAMYSTICATED |

ALP

| | | |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|
| [IV] | [628.15-628.16] | ANNAGAINSEVERRANN |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|

Never mind, for the moment, the titles: we'll get at them in due time. Now, begging your pardon for my disrespectful Wakese, I would like to point out the shifting focus of the two leading characters. The star of the first section is the imposing HCE, whom the others spin around like minor planets. But in the second section his figure goes through the ever-expanding critical sieve of ALP, who, in the third one, more and more aware of her value, no matter how abused, does obscure HCE's fictive greatness. So that in the fourth section she may make, all alone, her grand finale.

However does she make it or does she mimic? We'll sacrilegiously come to that. In any case, let alone how provisory, we may detect the foundation of a basic structure built upon the polarity “**Apotheosis / Debasement**” placed upon a Greimasian isotopy which may be called “**Worthicality**”. A basic structure that forms the skeleton of each section and of each block, although variously modulated in its concrete renderings so as to comply with the atmospheres of each specific context. Its sinusoidal form being, as hinted above, the objective correlative of Liffey's flowing waves. At this point let's put aside this fastidious terminology and let us give a closer look at the text. Being aware that this is only a preliminary introduction to the very “lots of fun” which we will play with in the second part of this essay.

I. 1 : STATUECHLY

[1] 619.19-29

ALP makes her entrance as a sort of druidess, albeit not so casta a diva, devestating herself for a rite of “resurrection”. An “*Introibo ad altare Dei*”. The “god” being of course HCE. That's the “introit” of the “**troutling stream**” [Liturgy of the Word]. The erotic subtext and its watery metaphor flowing softly side by side.

[2] 619.29-619.33

But, unheard as she is (HCE does not respond), ALP is also the victim, the one who offers herself (**Offertorium**). [Liturgy of the Eucharist]. As a matter of fact the **Offertorium**, which keeps showing up throughout the monologue, may be seen as a sort of “**debasement**”, since the one who offers, in our case ALP, values herself less worthy than the ONE she gives offerings to. However that could also be seen as an “**apotheosis**” when she who offers values herself so magnanimous that she can share her goods to “paupers”.

[3] 619.34-620.10

Here we have a ritual vesting. It's a litany of seven garments which will give HCE a stately build, elevating him over the common populace. In ritual terms a “Sanctus”, in linguistic ones his “**Apotheosis**”.

[4] 620.11-620.24

At this point ALP refers to the twins telling HCE how lively they are, being chips of the old block. An indirect way to assert how “potent” he is. Once again an “**Apotheosis**”.

[5] 620.24-620.32

Now it's Issy's turn. ALP knows how fond of their daughter HCE is. That's a questionable way to wake him up, since she knows how unpredictable and naïve the girl may be; so that her move can be counter-productive. But she's ready to take the risk, since her husband's desires are her wishes and, for the moment, the danger is not so near. A third “**Apotheosis**”, the third sarcastic sanctus.

[6] 620.32-621.01

In any case, since the children are still sleeping ALP assures HCE that he can “rouse up” with no fear of being disturbed. Ditto for the two servants, Sackerson and Kate, who, lazybones as they are, are still sleeping, or, more probably, are making sex. An oblique invitation to follow suit. A foreshadow of vilification (**Debasement**).

[7] 621.01-08

ALP insists that HCE wake up, since, although not young any more, they have still good days before them for satisfying sexual needs. She is somewhat disappointed and she'd rather not believe what slanderers do say, that HCE is a faggot. That would be, indeed, a “**Debasement**”.

I. 2 : HOSEMASTIEER

621.08-17

Now there is a passage from the exterior official figure, the statuesque HCE, to that of a master of the household, whom ALP dutifully offers her housewife's services to (**Offertorium**). A domestic **Apotheosis**.

621.17-26

But the housewife asks for her sacrosanct reward, urging HCE to execute his marital duties. ALP's description of it is a gentle "siren-aid" to the household's male member. (**Apotheosis**).

621.26-29

A member, though, of dubious reputation, as some gossips tell, since it seems it does not behave in the proper manner it should (**Debasement**).

621.29-33

But ALP refuses to credit such slanders. In any case, since the "fletch" is weak, it may happen that a man "phall down". But she looks at that with indulgence, steering the steer. A protective motherly attitude: HCE, right or wrong! (**Apotheosis**)

I. 3 : HUSBANDIT

621.33-622.03

ALP shows herself very proud to take the side of her husband, whom she highly esteems and whose pristine virtue, she asserts, is out of question (**Apotheosis**).

622.03-11

ALP assures HCE that, no matter what, she will always be faithful to him and will not be seduced by any-other, since there is no one like him, who will always be the best (**Apotheosis**), her pussy his own private belongings.

622.11-16

Even during his absence, when masturbating, she satisfies herself thinking of him. Once again a **debasement** rescued by an **apotheosis**.

622.16-22

She remembers the good old days of the two of them alone, no children who did disturb their joyful sex (**Apotheosis**).

622.22-623.02

But then the troubles came: the twins fighting against the father, the gossips of the populace, like dogs hunting a stag; the rumours about his spying on pissing girls, his alleged incestuous drives (**Debasement**).

623.02-623.04

Muckraking that she refuses to listen to. A repression which is in fact an indirect **apotheosis**.

II. 1 : BOHESCIMIAN

623.04-24

However, since his carnal resurrection seems still on pause, ALP tries to raise up HCE's social status (**Apotheosis**) asking for an audience with the Earl of Howth, and teaching her almost brute husband the proper manners. But she realizes those are just vain fantasies and that they had better come back down to earth. The noble Howth becomes the more modest promontory (**Debasement**) couples mount for mounting.

623.24- 624.02

And they sit there, just making love and doing nothing, two hearts one soul, waiting for the rising sun, namely good tidings that might change their life. In fact a manuscript in a bottle that will clear HCE's name and restore, no matter what, his "higher state" (**Apotheosis**).

624.03-14

But ALP herself had her own dreams which she could not even name because of her husband's dislike (**Debasement**). She wanted no more than a decent house and a quiet existence. But he bit off more than he could chew: he built an imagined tower (**Apotheosis**) from the height of which he fell down, causing also the ruin of his family (**Debasement**).

624.14-624.21

So she had to take up the reins of the household, opening a pub (**Offertorium**). An indirect further **debasement**, which, hélas, did not stop HCE's suspicious conduct (**Debasement**). But as always she forgave her husband's misdeeds, letting him take advantage of her indulgent nature (**Offertorium**).

II. 2 : PRAKESUMPTUOUS

624.21-27

Evidently she believes that her tolerant attitude will produce amorous effects on HCE, whom she offers herself to (**Offertorium**) with flattering words.

624.27-625.17

ALP remembers how attracted she had been to him, from the very first (**Apotheosis**), no matter what people said about his dubious origin (**Debasement**). But when she found evidences of his unfaithfulness she began looking at him from a more realistic perspective, sadly realizing what a presumptuous rake he had always been (**Debasement**). Nonetheless she had never been able to free herself from the grasp of his fascination: his **apothecosis** being her own **debasement**.

625.17-27

She realizes, however, that HCE's authority (**Apotheosis**) is going to be undermined (**Debasement**) by his own sons and his daughter, the new generation.

625.27-29

In other times she would have run in defence of her husband. But now she starts to feel the tiring weight of the age. Or perhaps she is not so sure that she should, once again, play the role of the devout servant of such a master (**Debasement**).

II. 3 : REICHERCHED

625.29-33

But ALP is not yet able to free herself from HCE's dependence. And she tries once again to revive him (**Offertorium**).

625.33-626.20

For a moment she feels she can't do it; however the remembrance of things past bursts into her with the overflowing and overwhelming vigour of a high tide. And she revives in her imagination the sexual joy HEC gave her when they first made love (**Apotheosis**). But she also remembers how smugly, after that, he looked at her (**Debasement**).

626.20-32

A polarity that has always been a distinctive mark of his character. From one side a romantic aspect (**Apotheosis**), from the other his violent one (**Debasement**). And, worst of all, her masochistic submission (**Offertorium**).

III.1 : ANNBLOOMED

At this point the “**Worthicality**” is no more HCE-, but ALP-oriented. From now on she is the one “**brightening up and tightening down**” (626.36-627.01). A pivotal reversal in accord with the tidal Liffey.

626.32-627.03

ALP has to admit that the inevitable change has taken place (**Debasement**), that her efforts to awake HCE have no more sense, since she is an old woman who must yield her function to the young one who comes on her wake (**Offertorium**).

627.03-06

Looking at Issy ALP nostalgically brings back to memory her own, hélas gone, lively youth (**Apotheosis**).

627.06-13

But, at least apparently, there is no resentment in her. Being also the Great Mother she kindly passes the baton wishing happiness to the new couple. It is her final self-offering (**Offertorium**).

III.2: REGRETTING

627.13-21

However, as I suggested, ALP's benevolence could be only apparent. The last block may also be read as a bitter ironic foreboding. She knows that Issy, her younger aspect, will suffer her own same tribulations. And that presses her to look back at her past life from a new angle. She realizes how many “**debasements**” she has imposed on herself for the benefit of the others (**Offertorium**); who now avoid her, showing no trace of gratitude, when not undisguised annoyance (**Debasement**). So that she regrets her past servile disposition. That is the beginning of her self-esteem, in a sort of way: her own “**Apotheosis**”.

627.21-24

She looks with overt contempt at HCE, who now is for her no more than an insignificant braggart.

627.24-30

She is disgusted by her daughter's impudence, which has nothing to share with the joyful effervescence of her own past youth.

627.31-33

She can hardly believe the scornful attitude of the twins who get rid of her with contemptuous words, to the point of denying she is their mother.

In all three instances, as soon as ALP vilifies them, she does raise herself up: their **Debasement**, her **Apotheosis**.

627.34-36

Nonetheless she must recognize how lonely and weary, how insignificant she is (**Debasement**). Is she the “straw” of the last words of Thomas Aquinas? “*Mihi videtur ut palea*” (It looks to me like straw).

III.3 : DAMYSTICATED

627.36-628.01

Weary and weak and small as she is (**Debasement**) ALP imagines herself as a baby in the arms of her father (**Apotheosis**).

628.01-07

She begs him to save her from the three pronged HCE, whose smallness (**Debasement**) she compares with the infinite immensity of the encompassing Father Okeanos (**Apotheosis**), in whose mystic embrace she shall be purified. But there is an ironic, or should we say grotesque?, touch. Okeanos sometimes is depicted with claws of a crab in his head. Isn't that the mark of Earwicker?



628.07-11

And in fact there is a sudden and unexpected shift of perspective. The last leaf that clings to ALP's body is *Eve's* fig leaf; and she does not let it leave. Apparently she

keeps it as a warning against past errors; in fact it is HCE's *virus* which she cannot get rid of. Should her fancied HCE (**Apotheosis**) come down to her, she would throw herself at his feet, begging his pardon (**Debasement**).

628-11.15

Which is in fact the rehearsal of the original sin. Although this is not the place to expand on elucidations (that's the task of the second part) I think it's important to show a vague script of the scene, since it is somewhat different from the common comments more inclined to underline the gentle traits and the nostalgic landscape (which, of course, are there).

628.12 tid. There's where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush

tid: Time (Danish)

dan Alt har sin stund og hver en Ting under Himmelen **sin Tid**

To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven [Ecclesiastes, 3.1]

There's where → Eden.

First → Original (sin) → sin Tid

We pass through grass behush the bush → Adam and Eve hiding themselves

And Adam and his wife hid themselves [...] amongst the trees of the garden. [Gen. 3.8]

628.13 Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us

Whish → the serpent

A gull. Gulls. Far calls. → God's call [And the Lord God called unto Adam...] [Gen. 3.9]

Far → Father (Danish)

Coming, far! → The Parents coming to the coming Father

the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day [Gen. 3.8]

[cool of the day → **my cold father**]

End here → no more excuses! That's the end of it!

Here.Us → heraus! (German: get out!)

628.14 Finn, again! Take. Bussoftlhee, mememormee!

GOD: **Finn, again!** → You have sinned once again!

GOD: **Take** → beatings

ALP: **Bussoftlhee** → but softly! [Busse → Italian: beatings]

GOD: take busse, you hunchback (French: bossu)!

ALP: **softlhee** → Please, softly, not so hard against heem!

ALP: **Mememormee!** → It's me, it's me, kill me (mori me → mock Italian: kill me)

(I leave aside, of course, the other thousands and one allusions)

628.15 Lps. The keys to. Given!

Lps → loops → ricorso

The keys to. Given! → kiss goodbye to heaven,

but also the rescuing keys-kiss of Arrah-na-Pogue

to → two → the two keys

Given! → once again she gives up, she renounces heaven, to look after her man.

In conclusion what I like to point out is ALP's unavoidable submissive attitude towards the man she depends on, as if she be Ann HCE addicted (**Debasement**). But we may also see in that the self-sacrifice (**Offertorium**) of the too indulgent mother (**Apotheosis**) for the benefit of her thankless child (**Debasement**).

[IV] ANNAGAINSEVERRANN

618.15-618.16

628.15 A way a lone a last a loved a

628.16 long the

Leaving aside once again the delicate poetic comments and keeping running along my rocky road, we can see ALP:

chased away (**a way**)

by herself (**a lone**)

carrying a weight (**a last**) → Last (German) : burden

namely her beloved (**a loved**)

but by whom she is not loved (Greek privative “a” → **a loved** → not loved)

longing for (**a long**)

her disconsolate and missing “**the-e**”

[last verse of the song “*I will give you the keys of heaven*”: I will walk and talk with thee.

The missing last “e”, showing **His Eviration Complex**]

whom, noneth-e-less, once re-turned the last leaf, she is going to meet again in **Howth Castle and Environments**, as ann Eve who is ever Ann.

To be continued

