MAJOR ADDRESSES
Joyce’s Heliotrope

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Heliotrope, the answer to the riddle of desire in *Finnegans Wake*, is a privileged figure in Joyce’s work. It is an overdetermined figure, a word that means many things at once and yet points to only one thing: desire. A heliotrope is any flower that assumes a desirous attitude, that turns toward the sun, like a marigold or a sunflower. But it is also a specific flower, a fragrant, purple annual called heliotrope, whose sweet scent draws people toward it in a desirous movement. As parts of its whole, heliotrope is the light purple or reddish lavender color of the heliotrope, and, of course, its perfume, the desirable parts of the desirable whole. Heliotrope is another name for the gem with the oxymoronic alternative name of bloodstone. Heliotropism is a gesture of turning toward the sun—a gesture whose form is a dance or a movement in a desirous ballet. As a gesture or a signal, heliotrope is implicated in nonverbal language or pantomime, for it functions as a signal that refers us to acts and gestures rather than speech—including speech acts rather than the semantic content of discourse. A heliotrope is a signaling device using mirrors to reflect the rays of the sun: a semiological technique reflected in Joyce’s works when its heliotropic references and gestures mirror and reflect each other in a thematics of desire. In all these ways, heliotrope functions as a trope, a metaphor or figure of the movement of longing, reaching, turning, communicating, and dancing that signifies desire. As all these things, in the plenitude of its overdetermination, and with its significatory function, heliotrope is the answer to the riddle of desire not only in “The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies” in *Finnegans Wake*, but in Joyce’s *oeuvres* as a whole.

By serving as the answer to a riddle, heliotrope functions as an intellectual paradigm and suggests a model of reading Joyce’s work that is unconventional both in its procedures and its goals, for a heliotropic reading of Joyce keeps its eye on the pantomime (rather
than its ear on the speech) and works to decipher nonverbal semiotics. It is a Shaunian rather than a Shemian mode of reading—not surprisingly, since Shaun (or Chuff, the angel in the "Mime") successfully solves the riddle of desire, while Shem (the devil, Glugg) fails. The basis of "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies" is a children's guessing game called "Angels and Devils or Colours," that Joyce described to Harriet Shaw Weaver like this: "The Angels, girls, are grouped behind the Angel, Shawn, and the Devil has to come over three times and ask for a colour, if the colour he asks for has been chosen by any girl she has to run and he tries to catch her. As far as I have written he has come twice and been twice baffled." Since clues to the answer of the riddle are embedded in gestures, flowers, colors, dances, charades, and the like, guessing the answer requires talent at reading the signs of nonverbal languages—the reason, presumably, why the spirit of Marcel Jousse hovers over the chapter (Weir). It was James Atherton who suggested that Joyce intended the Pantomime as a metaphor for *Finnegans Wake* as a whole, and indeed, if one thinks of the pantomime as a carnival of nonsense, of discredited, devalued, partial, truncated language whose subtraction of sense is designed to produce delight and pleasure, one has a fair description of the text of *Finnegans Wake*. As the product of an intellectual knot or puzzle, may heliotrope not reveal something hidden and disregarded—perhaps the desirous or libidinal aspect ("Angelinus, hide from light those hues that your sin beau may bring to light! [*FW* 233.5]) of intellectual activity? Is there not in the act of reading *Finnegans Wake*, in our desire for intellectual intimacy, our movement toward intellectual closure, our longing to possess its meaning, something of a heliotropic motion?

Joyce adds to the children's guessing game a small erotic twist. It is not only the little girls' colors, but the colors of their panties the boy angels must guess. The game thereby becomes a ritual of courtship and seduction, and the operatic analogues Joyce introduces into the "Mime"'s texture—the religious quest of *Parsifal* and the dangerous guessing game of *Turandot* (Hodgart)—serve to elevate the sense of the stakes in the riddle of desire, and to illuminate the logic of the repressions that produce its frustration. Perhaps this is what makes my claims for the heliotropism of the Joycean text seem so heretical. The best authorities have denied or denounced its pleasure: Judge Woolsey, who legally and officially denied the aphrodisiac
quality of *Ulysses*, and Stephen Dedalus, who terms the kinetic response to art pornographic, when it incites desire. The desirous nature of reading, the amorous or erotic relationship with the Joycean text, has been primordially tabooed. For Stephen, indeed, the aesthetic text is like a Freudian primal scene, that is, a view of the parental copulation or of the mother's body, that mandates the denial and repression of desire, and thereby becomes the site of misreading. Stephen philosophically interrogates his origin in the parental copulation—"They clasped and sundered, did the coupler's will" (3.47)—but by subtracting from his imaginings all feeling, all libido, all pleasure, his theories of love remain as sterile as his theories of aesthetics, from which he likewise amputates the kinetic, the vital, the libidinal, the erotic element. It is Stephen, I believe, who is parodied in the "Homework" chapter of *Finnegans Wake*, as one of the little boys who study the "whome" of their "eternal geomater," the mother's genitalia (whose veiled and infantile form were the colored panties) armed with surveyor's equipment, diagrams, and mathematical calculations. They may indeed succeed in mapping her geometrical surface (Solomon, Brown)—but at the risk of missing the erotic point. The "Homework" chapter of *Finnegans Wake* serves as a caveat to the reader of the Joycean text, and especially to the reader of *Finnegans Wake*. Approaching that work with theories, diagrams, numerology, and other systems, may yield much information, but at the price of missing the pleasure of the text.

Because it is apt to be disconcerting to find ourselves heliotropically reflected in the signaling mirror of criticism as pleasure-seeking readers, I chose an unconventional form for exploring the riddle of desire in Joyce's work. Instead of a scholarly anatomy or a theoretical dissection of desirous reading, I chose to do a dramatization. I transformed the Joycean text into a valentine for Joyce lovers: a romantic collage of hearts, flowers, candy, and cupids—sentimental and decorative, insipid and intellectually retrograde—with the bland wit and easy puzzling that Bloom (kinetic poet), the master of the valentine, sent to Miss Marion (Molly) Tweedy on the 14 February 1888—

Poets oft have sung in rhyme
Of music sweet their praise divine.
Let them hymn it nine times nine.
Dearer far than song or wine.
You are mine. The world is mine. (17.410—16)

It is offered with affection and a twinkle of the eye in the hope of seducing readers to the fond delusions woven into the more somber naturalistic hues of the Joycean text. If Joycean women suffer brutal lives of “commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness” (“Eveline” 40; Bauerle, Devlin), they also have their heliotropic moments: “So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake” (“The Dead” 222). These pleasures and gratifications are virtually always retrospective and textualized, represented as tender moments from the past encoded as personal myth and nostalgic history. These romantic fictions are no more and no less emotionally authentic and significant than women’s suffering, and their retrieval is a legitimate critical enterprise even when, as in this instance, it elides their dark frame. The Joycean text can be wielded in many ways and with many intentions by critics, and Finnegans Wake, especially, is easily flourished cruelly, as a punishment to teach the confident reader humility and diffidence before the indomitable text. I choose to flourish it like a fan, or a bouquet, in the hope of charming the reader with the text’s poesy. If this retrieval of the discredited feminine—both in my critical gesture and in the feminization to which I plan to subject the text—seems hopelessly regressive, I would suggest that it is not only the male writer and thinker who may appropriate the figure of “woman” and the disguise of the “feminine” to explore transpositions into states of “otherness” (Jardine, Spivak). I intend it, in this instance, only as a momentary and playful masquerade, and I ask readers to remember that my subject, the heliotrope, is, after all, embedded in a Pantomime.

I begin my floral rehabilitation of Finnegans Wake by suggesting the flower as an alternative to the architectural and geometrical metaphors that have historically dominated our thinking about its structure. Implicit in the hope of finding a “skeleton key” to Finnegans Wake (Campbell and Robinson), for example, is not only its depiction as a chamber or a building whose entry would ensure intelligibility. This architectural notion also tends to imply a logical and systematic construction on Joyce’s part, from which a coherent aesthetic and narrative structure can be deduced. This model further produces such ancillary structural concepts as the architectural hierarchization of textual effects: the illusion that one can separate structure and embellishment? As an alternative to this mode of
thinking the Wake architecturally, I suggest the flower as a textual model that is organic and generational. Flowers are not designed by a mind or constructed by hand, but grow out of other flowers, and their structure is therefore neither logical nor systematic, but evolutionary, created unconsciously out of others of their kind, under the sway of the exigencies of necessity in the interest of survival. Even if our study of the production techniques of *Finnegans Wake* were to show that Joyce indeed worked rationally and systematically at its construction, I would argue that the text represents not his mind, the actual working author's mind, but a different mind, an intuitively and emotionally remembering mind absorbed in its history, and impelled not by architectural ambitions but by the psychological necessities of desire. Flowers grow out of other flowers, and if we picture *Finnegans Wake* as stories that grow organically, unconsciously, out of older stories, stories already contained in the earlier Joycean texts, we can see its structure as floral: petals enfolding other petals—inavigated (Derrida)—to use the botanical term that preserves the female resonance, the erotic allusion. The amorous undertone of this structural metaphor is quite helpful for illuminating the emotional gesture implicit in the remembering of old stories, particularly the preservation and enfolding of old stories, as constituting a kind of narrative embrace, a textual act of love. Figuratively, *Finnegans Wake* is a flower or a bouquet embedded in a female imagination. Joyce gives us an image of such an invaginated text representing a female imagination in Molly Bloom's soliloquy, which is a bouquet of love stories that enfolds the tales of many flowers, rhododendrons on Howth Hill, poppies for her birthday, a wish for a room swimming in roses, and the most precious of all, a poetic flower of the mountain, remembered and enfolded in Molly's heart.

How does one read a floral text, particularly a lush and bountiful garden, like "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies" in *Finnegans Wake*? One reads not only about a pantomime riddle, but one begins to interpret the silent gestures and signs themselves in their overdetermined multiplicity. Because the languages acted out in the chapter are children's languages, primitive verbal and musical languages full of rhymes and rhythms and preverbal visual and symbolic languages, they require a sensual interpretive mode. Reading the language of perfume or flowers or color in the "Mime" is less a matter of decoding them according to some conventional archaic system, a scholarly foray into arcane flower symbolisms, than the
exercise of an intuitive aesthetic response armed with a finely tuned sense memory for hues of color, redolence of perfume, delicacy of texture, and a gift for recapturing the pleasures they produce. The reader of the "Mime" must, I believe, cultivate an erotic hermeneutics. Such an enterprise requires access to the workings of infantile logic—whose best model is still supplied by the theories of Freudian psychoanalysis. For the purpose of pursuing the heliotrope in Joyce's work, I will borrow only one of its procedures: free association. It functions both rhetorically and hermeneutically in the *Wake*, I believe, as symbolic codes are created by free association, and its exercise by the reader makes their interpretation possible. In practical terms, it is, of course, not a private free association that the reader practices (of what colors and fragrances and flavors remind *us*) but a literary free association, a remembrance of the remembrances of Joycean figures in *their* experiences with the aesthetics of love and seduction.

We could, of course, learn all this from Molly Bloom as well as Freud. For if a floral text works like a woman's mind—a woman's mind, that is, when occupied with the figurations of her emotional life—then its technique of free association is simply a way of remembering that is impelled by desire, and a way of selecting and combining that is motivated by pleasure. When Molly moves from hill to hill, from man to man, from kiss to kiss in her imagination, she constructs neither a system, nor a lesson, nor a linear narrative, but a floral gyre of amorous experience that signifies no more and no less than does the language of a flower, whose heliotropism bespeaks only the subtle rhythms of its own virality. Insofar as Joyce's heliotrope is my lure, the riddle of desire I hope to solve and the object of desire that leads me along a trail of amorous musings in Joycean characters, I inscribe a critical heliotropism in my text. My procedure becomes as overdetermined and multiplicitous as heliotrope itself, as the trail crosses over characterological and textual boundaries—like the word "heliotrope" transgressing semantic boundaries to live, like desire itself, in a space of indeterminacy. I pursue heliotrope along a concentric journey into the old love stories of Joycean figures, on a route that leads from "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies" to "Nausicaa," and from there on to "The Dead"—then back again from the "Mime" to an elided moment in *Portrait*. Only then does the invagination of the "Mime"'s structure become clearly visible, as an experience from Stephen's childhood that was repressed and forgotten, a moment absolutely
interiorized, becomes dramatized and exteriorized, outer, in the pantomimic forms of the "Mime."

I'll begin my heliotropic pursuit of heliotrope with its fragrance, because it signifies the insubstantiality of heliotrope that seems so disproportional to its emotional power, its status as a kind of "trace," an effaced sign always there and yet not there, mysterious and elusive, invested in hints and suggestions like the word "heliotrope" in the "Mime." I first follow its redolent trail to an imaginary appearance in "Nausicaa," where it surfaces embedded in a riddle with three guesses, ostensibly as a wrong guess. "Wait. Hm. Hm. Yes. That's her perfume," Bloom thinks, as he catches a whiff of Gerty MacDowell's sachet. "What is it? Heliotrope? No. Hyacinth? Hm. Roses, I think." (13.1007). Gerty's perfume ambushes Bloom at a critical moment, as he speculates on the secret of desire in what seems like his usual, casual, pseudoscientific way—that yet masks the personal anxiety and painful urgency of the new cuckold who fears he has lost it. Gerty's perfume diverts Bloom from a fruitless foray into the positivism of physics, explaining sexual attraction as molecular magnetism ("Fork and steel. Molly, he" [13.993]), and puts him on the right track by putting him on the scent of the scent, as it were. Bloom's empirical models are inadequate to the mystery of desire because desire is premised on a lack and structured around a palpable absence. Once he leaves off science and follows the subjective colorations of his aesthetic imagination, he begins to explain the chemistry of perfume and of female fragrance in diaphanous imagery that oscillates between presence and absence: "Tell you what it is. It's like a fine fine veil or web they have all over the skin, fine like what do you call it gossamer, and they're always spinning it out of them, fine as anything, like rainbow colours without knowing it" (13.1019). Bloom comes much closer here to solving the riddle of desire than does little Glugg or Shem in the "Mime," for he understands the synesthetic ambiguities of eroticism, the sensuous response to essences as evanescent as the fragrances of flowers, the prismatic colors of the rainbow, the impalpable textures of gossamer—the whole range of responses to beauties on the edge of substantiality that prefigures the overdetermination of "heliotrope" in the "Mime"—suspended as it is between color, fragrance, substance, and gesture.

It is ironic that the heliotropic gestures of other women—Gerty opening to him and revealing her "roses," as it were—stimulate Blooms' own heliotropism toward Molly. This mirroring effect of
desire that generates many displaced versions, and demonstrates that, even if he is a Flower, one woman’s sun (her object of desire) can be another woman’s Bloom (or desiring subject), enacts the sense of heliotrope as a reflecting solar signaling device. It is Martha Clifford who produces a heliotropic trope in the rhetorical gesture of her own desire amid the forced erotic verbal postures in her letter to Bloom: “I have never felt myself so much drawn to a man as you” (5.249). Here too heliotropism expresses itself in the erotic semiology of perfume, “P.S. Do tell me what kind of perfume does your wife use. I want to know” (5.258). This would be a very funny question if Martha Clifford were a funny woman—a little joke asking Henry Flower how Mrs. Flower smells—but we must assume she betrays here a highly conventional romantic desire. Her question is aimed at discovering the secret of Bloom’s desire by eliciting the nature of his aphrodisiac. But the swift and clear certainty with which Bloom answers this question in his imagination holds out little hope for Martha Clifford’s aspirations: “Why Molly likes opoponax. Suits her, with a little jessamine mixed” (13.1010). For Molly is to Bloom a very fragrant bloom indeed, as he demonstrates how intimacy is the fulfillment of desire because it abolishes the distance, the separation, at the heart of desire. In his imagination the thought of her fragrance lures him back to their bedroom strewn with Molly’s redolent things, “Clings to everything she takes off. Vamp of her stockings. Warm shoe. Stays. Drawers... Also the cat likes to sniff in her shift on the bed. Know her smell in a thousand” (13.1022). In his imagination he follows her fragrance to its source in the “holes and corners” of her body, “Wonder where it is really. There or the armpits or under the neck. Because you get it out of all holes and corners” (13.1025). Desire is constituted of absence and distance that inaugurates a motion of yearning, a heliotropic odyssey toward the closure of intimacy, that transforms Bloom into a kind of bee following the lure of women’s fragrance from flower to flower, from Gerty’s cheap perfume, to Martha Clifford’s “no smell flower” pinned to her letter, and onto Molly’s scent that he knows “in a thousand.”

As a movement toward the sun, as a desirous motion, heliotropism enacts a romantic ballet or a seductive dance. If we strip from “Nausicaa” the seductive language of the narration, that urges us to believe its flattery of Gerty and tempts us to assume the admiring posture of the hypothetical suitors she wishes for but never possesses, we are left with a nearly silent pantomime or dance that
can be recognized as a model for "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies." For the scene consists of three girls dancing to attract the attention of Bloom: Edy to a lesser extent, but Cissy's leaps and gambols are choreographed, if comically, like a ballet, and Gerty in her stationary high-kicking does indeed, like the flower girls of the "Mime," show Bloom the colors of her drawers. As a Pantomime, "Nausicaa" functions like the adolescent screen memory that is replicated in an infantile retrieval in "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies": Bloom is Chuff, the angel who is the object of the flower girls' heliolatry; Gerty, Cissy, and Edy are the seductive flower girls; and Tommy Caffrey is Glugg, the little devil who is rejected and rebuffed by the girls in favor of his rival—Bloom. The verbal echoes that make the tripartite riddle of Glugg ("—Haps thee jaoneofergs?—Nao" [FW 233.21]) a replay of Tommy Caffrey's own tripartite riddle ("Is Cissy your sweetheart?—Nao, tearful Tommy said" [13.66]) make the figures of the two little boys analogues as failed riddlers and rejected suitors. This echo in the "Mime," of the infantile riddle of desire, obliges us to interrogate the function of the children in "Nausicaa" as Ulysses does not. Why did Joyce add the children, the twin boys and the baby, to "Nausicaa," when they are absent from the Homeric narrative? They serve virtually no plot function in the chapter, and could be omitted without altering the erotic dynamic of Bloom and the girls. Did Joyce plan to have the children's perspective, occluded in Ulysses, become retrospectively important through its retrieval in the "Mime"? Does the "Mime" oblige us to reread "Nausicaa" from Tommy Caffrey's point of view? Does Tommy come close to tears because the delay of the teasing sweetheart riddle nearly causes him to wet his pants (as the riddle in the "Mime" does Glugg)? Or does Tommy Caffrey have a sweetheart after all, and is he sweet on Gerty, or even his sister Cissy, as Glugg is sweet on his sister Issy? Does the sweetheart riddle therefore sexually excite him and create in him the infantile version of an erection, which a child could construe only as a need to urinate? Did he feel rejected and rebuffed when the girls teased and titillated him with their sweetheart riddle, but then gave their real attention, their adoration, to his rival, Bloom? I would argue that the children's game in the "Mime" reenacts a hidden childish love story concealed in "Nausicaa" of a little boy who feels teased and excited by a bevy of girls, and who watches in baffled frustration as they caper and gesture their pantomimic seduction of a lucky rival,
a victorious other, who appears to possess the answer to the riddle of desire.

This structural reversal, of foregrounding occluded perspectives from the earlier works in *Finnegans Wake*, allows the later dream work to retrieve infantile experience and feeling. Once Tommy Caffrey is recognized as a prototype for Glugg, the little devil of the “Mime,” other verbal echoes become audible in the “Mime” that confirm its organic generation from the thematic structures of “Nausicaa.” The infantile equation of love and sweet food is one such structure. We learn in “Nausicaa” that “Tommy Caffrey could never be got to take his castor oil unless it was Cissy Caffrey that held his nose and promised him the scatty heel of the loaf or brown bread with golden syrup on” (13.30). In the “Mime” the golden syrup is embedded in the formal structure of a children’s game that mimics courtship and marriage while preserving the connection of love and food as parallel forms of gratification and frustration—

As Rigagnolina to Mountagnone,
what she meant he could not can.
All she meant was golten sylvup,
all she meant was some Knight’s ploung jamn.

(*FW* 225.15; rhyme structure added)

McHugh (225) and Rose and O’Hanlon (129) provide much useful information about this game, including the original rhyme:

There stands a lady on a mountain,  
Who she is I do not know.  
All she wants is gold and silver;  
All she wants is a nice young man.

We see here the technique of invagination, as the inchoate feelings of an interiorized, infantile trauma are translated into the exteriorized, public, conventional form of the game, play, ritual, and song. This game, titled “Lady on a Mountain,” is an infantile parody of romantic and worldly desires that acts out infantile fears of rejection and hunger through the form of a courtship ritual. In the game, the little boy’s marriage proposal, “Madam, will you marry me?” is turned down with a resounding “No!” and his request for breakfast, “What’s for breakfast, love?” is answered with an increasingly repulsive menu, degenerating from “Bread and butter, watercress” to “Squashed flies and blackbeetles” (Rose and O’Hanlon 129). Glugg presumably fails to guess that the lady wants golden syrup and nice plum jam (the infantile versions of gold and silver and a
nice young man). He gets neither castor oil nor golden syrup to alleviate his gripes, nor even bread and butter. His breakfast is first "breath and bother and whatarcurss," degenerating into "no breath no bother but worrarwarwarwurms." Infantile rejection and lovelessness is figured as a diet of bread and water and curses, or a Diet of Worms, or a diet of nothing at all, like Baby Boardman, who is given an empty nipple to suck. Bloom predicts that this deprivation will produce a colicky baby—"Oughtn't to have given that child an empty teat to suck. Fill it up with wind" (13.958) and, indeed, a devilish or Mephistophelian stomachache, a "muffinstuffinaches" afflicts the little devil, Glugg. The "Mime" aggravates the significance of this deprivation even further by having the little girls promise Chuff, the Shaunlike angel, a sort of gustatory Bloomusalem, an infantile Schlaraffenland or Good Ship Lollypop, in which sweet foods are personified and elevated into an accommodating aristocracy of sweet figures—

Lady Marmela Shortbred will walk in for supper with her marzipane switch on, her necklace of almonds and her poirette Sundae dress with bracelets of honey and her cochineal hose with the caramel dancings.... And the Prince Le Monade has been graciously pleased. His six chocolate pages will run bugling before him and Cococream toddle after with his sticksword in a pink cushion." (FW 235.32-236.5)

Although "Lady on a Mountain" belongs to a large repertoire of children's games in "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies," it describes—in its social and spatial elevation of the unattainable object of desire—the psychological abyss of the rejected suitor. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud explains the function of this type of children's game by arguing that children will often repeat unpleasurable experiences in their games in order to acquire mastery over their own painful feelings and fears. Once cued to its figure and its function, we can see the typology of "Lady on a Mountain" occurring earlier in "Nausicaa" where its meaning shifts with the relative position of the suitor. If beautiful Gerty MacDowell sitting on her rock on Sandymount strand were indeed an unattainable Lady on a Mountain to little Tommy Caffrey, she is no more than a girl on the rocks to Bloom, who has his own Lady on a Mountain: the beautiful Marion Tweedy of the Rock of Gibraltar, who many years ago, on another mountain, or hill, the Hill of Howth, answered his implicit proposal, "Madam, will you marry me?" with her breathless
"Yes I will yes," and his tacit "What's for breakfast, love?" with a bit of seedcake from her kiss. Bloom himself remembers that meal—"Softly she gave me in my mouth the seedcake warm and chewed" (8.907)—but it is joy he eats, "Joy: I ate it: joy" (8.908).

There is an earlier figure who, like Bloom, eats joy—for breakfast. Indeed, Gabriel Conroy announces many configurations of desire that Bloom will either enact or reverse: for example, the ironic "Judgment of Paris" or celestial beauty contest he invokes to compliment the three Morkan spinsters, which Bloom later enacts with Gerty, Cissy, and Edy, and which is further miniaturized in Tommy Caffrey's riddle ("Is Cissy your sweetheart?... is Edy Boardman your sweetheart?" etc.). It is in relation to Gabriel that heliotrope is first announced in Joyce's fiction, not as a flower, but as its light rosy purple color that becomes, even more remarkably, the color of a text: "A heliotrope envelope was lying beside his breakfast-cup and he was caressing it with his hand. Birds were twittering in the ivy and the sunny web of the curtain was shimmering along the floor: he could not eat for happiness" (D 213). Amid the starburst of romantic memories that Gabriel Conroy conjures for himself in "The Dead," the image of a heliotrope envelope blooms. By contextual inference, and borrowing the "Mime"'s Lady on a Mountain motif, one could construct the following plausible narrative fiction of this moment at the breakfast table: Gabriel has posed to Gretta the game's question, "Madam, will you marry me?" and her heliotrope letter answers, like Molly, "Yes I will yes." Gabriel reads the letter and cannot eat for happiness, for, like Bloom, "Joy: I ate it: joy." The ludic question, "What's for breakfast, love?" has become its own answer, "What's for breakfast: love." But Gabriel's heliotropic envelope, in its multiple displacements, opens up to us the painful truth of desire, that it is constituted of a gap, a space, a lack, an absence, a distance at the heart of desire, that the heliotopic gesture, the gesture of yearning and longing, is meant to conquer. "A heliotrope envelope was lying beside his breakfast-cup and he was caressing it with his hand." The heliotrope envelope is itself a trope, a metonymy, that simultaneously announces Gretta's absence from and presence at that breakfast table. It is a synecdoche, a part of Gretta, a metonymy, a symbolic extension of her, and Gabriel caresses it as Gretta's proxy. It is further synecdochic because it is not even a letter, but only its tinted cover, bearing, presumably, Gabriel's name. It therefore represents Gretta not as an object of
desire but as desiring subject enacting a heliotropic gesture: Gretta as reaching out to Gabriel and returning to him his own name encircled in heliotrope, encoded as the object of her desire, the sun of her universe, her Lord on a Mountain, as it were.

This is the rhetorical function of "heliotrope" as a trope, a poetic figure in Joyce's work. His symbolic act of love often takes the form of a poetic gesture, a verbal embrace, a transformation of the beloved's name into a flower of rhetoric: Gabriel Conroy's name inscribed in heliotrope, Bloom transforming Molly into a Bloom, a moly, a mountain flower, and HCE giving ALP all the things a Lady on a Mountain could desire: gold and silver, a nice young man (himself), and a nice young name—"I am leafy, your goolden, so you called me, may me life, yea your goolden, silve me solve, exsogerraider!" (FW 619.29). He named her Liffey, he called her his golden leaf, he called her his life, his treasure of gold and silver: and he thereby gave her her name back embossed in love, enriched in value, enfolded in his poetry. But it is the elided love song of Simon Dedalus to May Goulding as well—elided because Stephen either does not know it or does not wish to own it—Simon Dedalus calling his beloved, his May Goulding, his golden, his May, his life—"I am leafy, your goolden, so you called me, may me life, yea your goolden." ALP remembers this flowery language with awe—"But there's a great poet in you too.' The gift of an amorous antonomasia is a love gift without substance, made up purely of words, of verbal gestures. But it is the most enduring token of love in Joyce's universe, because it enhances in value over the years, it becomes more precious with age, and it remains transactionable for it may always be returned again, enriched in value, with a glorious patina, as a cherished memory. It is the gift ALP gives HCE when she reminds him that she has remembered and treasured his ancient and poetic gift of her transformed name over all the years. It is the gift that Molly returns to Bloom—who gave her a potentially inelegant name ("bloomers...I suppose theyre called after him" [18.839] that he poetically translates for her, "he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is" (18.1576). Bloom transforms Molly into a moly, a flower, a heliotrope with himself as the sun that shines for her, and after sixteen years of marriage she remembers his poetry verbatim,
embraces it, and imaginatively returns his gift. Heliotrope as a trope, a rhetorical figure, has the power of sealing the temporal and naturalistic chasm that the years of marriage, childbearing, poverty, and death open between lovers.

This is what Gabriel Conroy believes and desires ("Their children, his writing, her household cares had not quenched all their souls' tender fire" [D 214]) but cannot achieve. Curiously, it is an antonomastic failure that symbolizes Gabriel's marital failure. His gift to Gretta is not a verbal embrace, a poetic translation of her name, but its opposite: a refusal and inability to rename her in words of love. He gives Gretta a poetic negative, an image of his own self-consciousness as a poet that effaces her altogether from his words:

In one letter that he had written to her then he had said: *Why is it that words like these seem to me so dull and cold? Is it because there is no word tender enough to be your name?*" (D 214)

The artifice of the rhetorical question betrays his total negation of her even as his addressee, for it makes the question one she could never properly answer except by appreciating the litotic intention, and thereby admiring his poetizing more than his ardor. His language transforms her from love object to audience, and effects that subtle egotistical boomerang by which attention putatively paid to her is diverted back upon himself. Because he has given Gretta no verbal gift of love, Gabriel gets none back. The night of the Morkan's party, when Gabriel desires desire, he tries to close the distance between himself and his wife by writing in his imagination a heliotropic script for her to enact:

When the others had gone away, when he and she were in their room in the hotel, then they would be alone together. He would call her softly:

—Gretta!

Perhaps she would not hear at once: she would be undressing. Then something in his voice would strike her. She would turn and look at him..." (D 214)

In the ellipsis that follows, Gretta's heliotropic gesture is proleptically inscribed. She is to turn toward him like a flower to the sun. But, of course, she turns instead to the memory of a man who gave her a gift of love, a song, a devotion, a life. Unlike Joyce's other lovers, Gabriel cannot receive from Gretta the rhetorical keepsake the other
wives can return to their husbands, enriched with their own loving remembrance. The auto-eroticism of his enamourment with his own language, his own poetizing, leaves him with nothing to quote but his own cold love letters, in which he tells his beloved that he has no metaphors, no tropes, no love name to give her. One of the bitter secrets of desire that Gabriel learns late in his life, and late in his marriage, is that the object of one's desire is also a desiring subject, and can therefore be both coveted and won by a rival. Bloom even knows that the same lure that excites him works in the same way on his rivals, as he remembers being enticed by Molly's perfume on the very night she meets Boylan: "At the dance night she met him, dance of the hours. Heat brought it out. She was wearing her black and it had the perfume of the time before" (13.1011). Joyce structures the romantic fates of Gabriel Conroy and Leopold Bloom as precise opposites. Gabriel desires his wife in the present, but is defeated by a rival from the past; Bloom appears to be vanquished by a rival in the present, but remains the successful suitor from her past. With respect to the secret of desire, Gabriel is Glugg or Shem, the poet who fails; Bloom is Chuff or Shaun, the angel who succeeds—like Michael Furey, the Archangel Michael, the Mick of "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies." The ability to collapse adult and infantile rivalries as versions of one another, to see the triangles of Glugg, Issy, and Chuff as homologous and analogous to those of Gabriel, Gretta, and Michael Furey, or Tommy Caffrey, Gerty MacDowell, and Bloom, or Stephen, Emma Clecty, and Father Moran, bespeaks the organic and floral structure of psychic life. Psychoanalytically, the adult still enfolds the child he or she once was, and adult erotic behavior reenacts infantile erotic desires.

This leads me to the final love story that I find embedded in Finnegans Wake's "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies." It accounts, I believe, for its most aesthetically and erotically appealing features: the wonderful concatenation of flowers, girls, games, and desire in the magic childhood garden of the "Mime." The "Mime" enfolds "Nausicaa" with its infantile and adult games of desire, yet "Nausicaa" itself already enfolds another such memory of a lovely springtime garden party that was the setting for adolescent, and perhaps also infantile, love. "Mat Dillon and his bevy of daughters: Tiny, Atty, Floey, Maimy, Louy, Hetty, Molly too. Eightyseven that was" (13.1106). This is Bloom's heliotropic memory, and he turns toward it frequently, for it offers him the gratifying image of flowers
and girls conflating into a seductive beauty that opened itself to him. "But it's the evening influence. They feel all that. Open like flowers, know their hours, sunflowers, Jerusalem artichokes, in ballrooms, chandeliers, avenues under the lamps. Nightstock in Mat Dillon's garden where I kissed her shoulder" (13.1088). Mat Dillon's bevy of six daughters, who together with Molly form a group of seven so pretty they rival the flowers in loveliness, prefigure the dancing, seductive flower girls of the "'Mime'—now named "Winnie, Olive and Beatrice, Nelly and Ida, Amy and Rue. Here they come back, all the gay pack, for they are the florals, from foncey and pansey to papavere's blush, foreseake-me-nought, while there's leaf there's hope, with primitim's ruse and marrymay's blossom, all the flowers of the ancelles' garden" (FW 227.14-18).

In Bloom's memory, Mat Dillon's Maytime garden party held at Roundtown in 1887, is remembered as a triumph. There he first met and wooed Molly, his future wife. But there is an infantile witness to their meeting: Stephen Dedalus—and, indeed, all three principals of Ulysses possibly all meet there for the first time: Bloom at twenty-one, Molly at sixteen, and Stephen at five. There, at the very dawn of their story, they play a game of desire and form a romantic triangle, no less intense for its incongruous configuration. Since Stephen was there, Mat Dillon's garden party ought, hypothetically, to be an event in Portrait where it would have occurred just prior to Stephen's entry into Clongowes; but it is elided and thereby serves to remind us how partial and selective the strokes of Portrait's portrait are. In Ulysses Mat Dillon's party emerges as a collection of memory fragments, distorted and colored by desire. It is not until the "'Mime'" that the event's repressed and emotional residues are exteriorized and dramatized as a Pantomime that replays this springtime festival from the emotional perspective of its youngest guest, the five-year-old Stephen. I will now reconstruct Mat Dillon's garden party, not as history—for we can never know what happened—but as a fable of the experience of an overstimulated little boy who, intoxicated by the perfume of spring flowers and dazzled by the glamour of a bevy of beautiful young girls, is heartbroken when they turn heliotropically toward the dashing older man who becomes his successful rival—the twenty-one-year-old Leopold Bloom.

The setting is Mat Dillon's opulent villa in Roundtown, a grand house whose gorgeous implements of hospitality are remembered by the Blooms as including a solid silver coffee service on the mahogany
sideboard, fine cigars, and "Tantalus glasses" (6.1008; 18.723). The spacious grounds include a lilac grove and a green on which bowls could be played on a warm May evening. Leopold Bloom and the law student John Henry Menton are among the players, and they are highly self-conscious of being watched in their game by the pretty young girls:

A shaven space of lawn one soft May evening, the well-remembered grove of lilacs at Roundtown, purple and white, fragrant slender spectators of the game but with much real interest in the pellets...And yonder about that grey urn where the water moves at times in thoughtful irrigation you saw another as fragrant sisterhood, Floey, Atty, Tiny and their darker friend with I know not what of arresting in her pose...'' (14.1362)

Their "darker friend" is the buxom and exotic looking daughter recently brought back from Gibraltar by Major Brian Tweedy, who is partial to his drop of spirits, and who is friendly with his host, the kindly (''Heart of gold really" [6.1010]) and jovial Mat Dillon. The darling little boy Marion Tweedy and her girl friends are holding aloft on an urn over the pool, like a little Cupid, is Stephen Dedalus, who is there with his mother. ''A lad of four or five in linsey-woolsey...is standing on the urn secured by that circle of girlish fond hands'' (14.1371).

What happened at this garden party? Very little, probably, except perhaps some small romantic dramas that were never forgotten and never forgiven. Bloom's ball sails inside Menton's during the game of bowls, and Menton treats Bloom contemptuously seventeen years later at a funeral. There were parlor games and entertainments, but the outcome was not only a tie at musical chairs, but marriage and a daughter and a son mourned. Yet on this evening Molly Tweedy still distributes her favors among her rivals, dancing with John Henry Menton, but letting Bloom turn the pages for her when she sings the song Waiting, at the piano perhaps gallantly offered by the kindly Mat Dillon, "her father was an awfully nice man he was near seventy always goodhumored well now Miss Tweedy or Miss Gillespie theres the piannyer" (18.721). Later, on a walk in the garden scented by the opening nightstock, Bloom kissed her shoulder. How much of this does Stephen take in and see? Did the girls show him the flowers still furled in their buds and ask him to guess what their colors were? Did he, dazzled by their gossamer, tissue-thin dresses, confound the girls and the flowers, and find himself stupidly
unable to answer the question because it had become for him a sexual question, and a sudden inhibition made his myopic eyes erotically blind? Did his spectacles become the true "Tantalus glasses"—proffering objects of irresistible desire that he could not grasp? Was he smitten by one of the girls, perhaps the dark one with the Spanish eyes and the cherries hung like earrings on her ears? Molly seems to think so, "I suppose 'he's a man now by this time he was an innocent boy then and a darling little fellow in his lord Fauntleroy suit and curly hair like a prince on the stage when I saw him at Mat Dillons he liked me too I remember they all do" (18.1310). Was little Stephen first titillated, and then heartbroken, when his flower girls abandoned him to give their attention heliotropically to another? And did he then despair of ever guessing the riddle of desire? Of course, I am speculating a great deal here. But my aim is to show how easily and naturally this romantic garden party could have become the dream of "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies." The first erotic experience of a five-year-old, presenting to him the mystery of sexuality in the images of flowers and courting couples, of music, dances, games, and riddles, could in later years have resurfaced in a dream—perhaps on the very night he encountered again the very same romantic couple, Leopold Bloom and Molly Tweedy, now long married and living in prosaic domesticity on Eccles street. Stephen could have dreamt Mat Dillon's garden party again as his private Paradise Lost, enhanced with the glamour of Boxing Day pantomimes and the music of opera, the half-remembered nursery rhymes and children's games, the flower girls from Parsifal merging into the Dillon girls, the worrisome questions they asked him taking on the danger of the naming riddle from Turandot, Ophelia's flower speech from Hamlet echoing from his library lecture, and the celestial battle of Lucifer and Michael restaged not over the theological issues that Stephen claims as the motive of his non serviam, but over love. Stephen, like Bloom after his heliotropic experience, could have dreamt a pantomime, and where Bloom dreamt the mime of his imago, Sinbad the Sailor, at the end of "Nausicaa," Stephen might have dreamt the mime of "Mick, Nick, and the Maggies."

Joyce, with a psychoanalyst's respect for the significance of childhood experience, cues us in the "Mime" to the historiographic functions of the retrieval of children's memories. The dreams of a
Stephen, who in his waking hours teaches history and hallucinates its apocalyptic end, may well offer, as Freudian wish-fulfillment, a benign dream of organic history figured as floral pollination, regeneration, and perpetuation. Joyce wove into the *Wake* the sentence from Edgar Quinet that he loved, and that imagines the continuity of natural life in the universal and eternal endurance of wildflowers:

> Today, as in the time of Pliny & Columella, the hyacinth disports in Wales, the periwinkle in Illyria, the daisy on the ruins of Numantia; & while around them the cities have changed masters & names, while some have ceased to exist, while the civilisations have collided with one another & smashed, their peaceful generations have passed through the ages & have come up to us, fresh & laughing as on the days of battles. (McHugh 281)

This is the submerged reassurance that eludes Stephen’s waking nightmare eschatology of history culminating in toppled masonry and shattered glass—and that appears to become available in dream only as the vision he cannot glimpse, the truth he cannot guess. The secret of desire, the mystery of sexuality, offers not only the personal salvation of regeneration and propagation, but it offers a saving historical perspective as well, a vision of perdurable organic life surviving repeated colonizations with vigor and joy. Floral history is the dream antidote to an apocalyptic cultural history, and in it sexuality is history in the making, a ballet of pollination and procreation—

> Just so stylled with the nattes are their flowerheads now and each of all has a lovestalk onto herself and the tot of all the tits of their understamens is as open as he can posably she and is tournesoled straightcut or sidewaist, accourdant to the coursets of things feminine, towwooers him in heliolatry... *(FW 236.33–237.1)*

The flower girls, the angels, dance around Chuff, Mick, Bloom the heliotropic dance of the flowers, their version of the dance of the hours, the organic dance of history. Because the “Mime”’s floral history is a vital, erotic, kinetic history, Joyce emphasizes its heliotropic momentum by retelling Quinet’s sentence in the “Mime” as the eternal history of dance *(FW 236.19–32)*, of stately pavanes giving way to lively waltzes in the suburban streets of Dublin, Miss McCloud’s Reel (“mismy cloudy”)—the same to which the Donnelly children danced in “Clay”—is tripped daintily by Issy’s “hercourt,” and rigadoons and modern ragtime lead to zany cancans (“cancan-
zannies'') of the kind Gerty imitates in her high-kicking for Bloom. But in the end, it is the female imagination in Joyce's text that intuitively grasps, in waking thought, this floral philosophy which may elude Stephen even in dream. Perhaps you have to be a Bloom to understand the cosmic significance of flowers, and to intuit Quinet and encode his floral philosophy as a kind of religion. 'I love flowers,' thinks Molly.

Id love to have the whole place swimming in roses God of heaven there's nothing like nature the wild mountains then the sea and the waves rushing then the beautiful country with the fields of oats and wheat and all kinds of things and all the fine cattle going about that would do your heart good to see rivers and lakes and flowers all sorts of shapes and smells and colours springing up even out of the ditches primroses and violets nature it is as for them saying there's no God I wouldn't give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning'' (18.1557).

NOTES

1. Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 22 November 1930 (355).
2. See Derek Attridge's "The Backbone of Finnegans Wake" for an interesting discussion of this issue.
3. I am not suggesting here that the 'dreamer' of Finnegans Wake is female, but that the dreaming mind, insofar as it can be thought of as enfolding the old stories of its history, acts like a female imagination.
4. Although I had mentioned this echo in my Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake, (135-36), John Gordon recently pointed out to me that Adaline Glasheen had mentioned it even earlier in "A Riddle Not Answered." A Wake Newsletter IV/5 (1967):100-101.
5. The draft evidence for this chapter (II.1) is interesting, because it indicates that the "Nausicaa" references, while not belonging to the very earliest draft, were added soon after, as if to deliberately cue readers to the similarity. See MS 47477-64, for example, where Glugg's answered "Now" and "Nowhowhow" is changed to "Nao" and "Naohaohao," or MS 47477-10, where "All she meant was multimoney, all she meant was a nyums nyum nyam" was changed to "All she meant was golten sylvup, all she meant was some knight's ploung jamn."
6. Grace Eckley's Children's Lore in Finnegans Wake is the only book length study of children's games in the Wake, but it neither mentions nor discusses the role of "Lady on a Mountain" in the "Mime."
7. Vincent Cheng points out that this is one of many versions of Ophelia's disbursement of flowers in the Wake (67-68). Its appearance in the "Mime" is especially motivated by the complex role of Hamlet motifs in the children's games: an incongruence softened by remembering that the "low art" of the Pantomime readily assimilated popular bits and pieces from the "high arts." Insofar as this spreads a dark lining under the flower motifs in the "Mime," it may well allude to more tragic female fates, for example the martyrdom of Issy's prototype Isabel in Stephen Hero, following her banishment to a nunnery, or ALP's shedding all of
her leaves (or leafies) but one, as her death approaches and she leaves (Rose and O'Hanlon 328).

8. Molly does some of this arithmetic herself in "Penelope": "I wonder is he too young hes about wait 88 I was married 88 Milly is 15 yesterday 89 what age was he then at Dillons 5 or 6 about 88 I suppose hes 20" (18.1326).

9. One can readily make guesses about the nature of this inhibition. My own best inference is that Mat Dillon's garden party might serve as a screen memory for another kind of infantile scopophilia: the desire to see the mother's body that is dramatized in the next chapter, the "Homework" chapter. This may also have been the transgression censored in Portrait, for which Stephen is threatened with the ocular punishment of blindness. The larger consequence of such an infantile trauma might be a taboo on any kind of desirous seeing, a fear whose adult rationalization might be found in Stephen's promotion of a static response to art over the more dangerous and culpable kinetic response to beauty. That not only Stephen's, but Joyce's, constitution as artist is reworked in the serious Shem parodies of Finnegans Wake is an important theme in Bernard Benstock's Joyce-Again's Wake.

10. Patrick McCarthy points out the similarity between Glugg and Stephen in that, even though they themselves pose riddles, they are unable to solve others (141).

WORKS CITED


