ALP’s Final Monologue in *Finnegans Wake*: The Dialectical Logic of Joyce’s Dream Text

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The female in *Finnegans Wake* assumes a number of representational forms within the dream text: verbal object, the topic of the washerwomen’s gossip (*FW* I.8); visual object, the geometrical diagram studied during the math lesson (II.2); writing subject, a hypothetical author of the letter (I.5); and speaking subject, an imagined witness at the deposition (III.3). In their respective essays on Issy and ALP in *Women in Joyce*, Shari Benstock and Margot Norris both convincingly argue that the images of the female in the *Wake* are dialectically structured, a series of psychological reversals and oppositions, shaped by the male dreamer’s fears and desires. The female emerges as an enigmatic “other,” as a being whose nature is finally only speculative, as a perspectival abyss that the dreamer recurrently tries to plumb (“First he was living to feel what the eldest daughter she was panseying and last he was dying to know what old Madre Patriack does be up to” [*FW* 408]). As an elusive element, she appropriately finds her correlative in nature in the mobile and protean river, whose essence can never quite be captured and contained, and whose imagined babbling voice cannot always be clearly understood (“With lipth she lithpeth to him all to time of thuch on thuch and thow on thow. She he she ho she ha to la. Hairfluke, if he could bad twig her! Impalpabunt, he abhears. The soundwaves are his buffeteers; they trompe him with their trompes” [*FW* 23]). The larger dialectical representation of the female as speaking or writing subject, on the one hand, and as viewed or discussed object, on the other, may reflect the dreamer’s attempt to envision this “other” point of view, countered by a recognition of its inaccessibility, its remoteness.

ALP’s closing monologue seems to mitigate the uncompromising otherness of the female principle in the *Wake*: critics suggest that here we finally hear the actual voice of ALP, even those who elsewhere
in their analyses take into account the dream's unmistakably male subjectivity. Benstock, for example, suggests that ALP's monologue is divorced from the rest of the *Wake*, providing "an alternate vision against which Earwicker's dream vision can be measured" (177), and discusses the final pages of the dream as if they were not colored by male wishes and fears, as if their narrative status were comparable to that of Molly's soliloquy at the close of *Ulysses*: "It is left to Anna Livia, who has the final word in the novel, to confirm the future for her daughter... ALP's hints seem to suggest that diverse and flighty Issy will grow into the calm and unified mother/wife that Anna Livia now is" (190–191). Clive Hart describes the final pages of the book as "the closest thing to 'interior monologue' in *Finnegans Wake," as a "stream of almost unmodified Dublin speech" (55). In *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake*, Norris grants the speech a similar standing, implying that we actually hear "leafy speaking" (*FW* 619), the feminine voice unmediated by the dreamer's consciousness (96–97). In her more recent essay in *Women in Joyce*, she emphasizes the interpretive obstacles raised by the book's ending, though without resolving them:

We must understand the dreaming male figure in order to understand the female figure. Yet Joyce, paradoxically, sets up a hermeneutical spiral in *Finnegans Wake* through which the best insights into the condition of HCE (presumably the male dreamer) are given by Anna Livia in her final monologue. This interpretive doubling is a bit like Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, where we are momentarily in doubt whether Alice dreams the Red Knight or the Red Knight dreams Alice [sic]. (199)

This "hermeneutical spiral," I would argue, characterizes the structure of not simply the final monologue, but the entire dream text: although HCE does envision himself speaking at several points, most of the information (or misinformation) we are given about him is mediated, delivered via imagined others. Within this narrative constructed around the hypothetical viewpoints of other, HCE is logically identified as the dreamer not because he is the central "speaker," but rather because he is the central "spoken of"—all narrative roads seem to lead to him. The final speech, I think, is a continuation of this ex-centric dream text, the female voice imagined yet again, the fantasized voice of a fantasized other, discourse primarily upon the dream's favorite subject—the dreamer himself. The *Wake* critics who imply the voice is "real" overlook the fact that
the closing monologue contains reversals and contraries which make little sense on the level of realistic or waking narrative, and that it generates multilayered images typical of condensed, overdetermined visions of dream. The verbal and visual ambiguities of the speech, moreover, work dialectically, following the logic seen elsewhere in the *Wake*, expressing connected anxieties and desires.

Elsewhere I have argued that the dream text of the *Wake* betrays a male fear of the female “‘eye’ (the literal visual organ and the alien perspective it represents) as an unwelcome critical vantage point, as an agency of potential exposure (“‘The Female Eye’” passim). In the final monologue, though, ALP is imagined tactfully censoring her visual field, reassuring her spouse that she will not look at him in his fallen state, that she will think instead of how he looked when young:

> Maybe that’s why you hold your hodd as if. And people thinks you missed the scaffold. Of fell design. I’ll close me eyes. So not to see. Or see only a youth in his florizel, a boy in innocence, peeling a twig, a child beside a weenywhite steed. ([FW](#) 621)

This image of the politely veiled female eye, blocking out unpleasant sights and replacing them with happier ones, provides an apt correlative for the dominant discourse of the final monologue: the kindly, optimistic, and circumlocutory speech is the verbal equivalent of ALP’s censored gaze. As constituted by her language here, ALP is endowed with many of the trappings of a fantasy woman, a male ideal of the perfect wife—adoring, soothing, forgiving, and redemptive (although this is only one extreme of a dialectical image). Her mellifluous voice becomes the agent of renewal in itself, bidding HCE to rise and giving him the encouragement to do so. The close of the dream, I would like to suggest, represents an invalid’s vision of being revived from a coma by a caring mate, of suddenly waking up from a deathlike state—a sort of plausible version of the “‘Tim Finnegan’s Wake’” song. It is surely a wishful vision, but also a fearful one, the dreamer imagining not simply revival, but also how he might be treated and spoken to upon his return to the world of the waking—the pictured situation is not altogether heartening.

During the first part of the monologue, ALP is represented performing a series of nurturing and redemptive activities for HCE: laying out clean laundry, boosting his ego, taking him on a rejuvenatory outing, speaking to him with fondness and optimism. But her monologue generates a double discourse, the surface statement often
contrasting with the insinuation, the sanguine circumlocution with
the sad implication. ALP's inventory of HCE's apparel, for instance
(“Here is your shirt, the day one, come back. The stock, your collar.
Also your double brogues. A comforter as well” [FW 619]), may
evoke a simple domestic image of a wife picking out her husband's
clothes, or a sadder vision of her helping an invalid get dressed,
perhaps even trying to reteach him the names of common objects.
Indeed, the emphasis on identification, naming, and basic recall at
many points in the speech may imply an assumption (on her part)
of a derangement in the mental faculties that control such abilities:
HCE envisions himself being addressed as a victim of senility, as a
person well into his second childhood. Her offer to hold her spouse's
“great bearspaw” (FW 621) when they go on their imagined walk is
a gesture that can be construed as affectionate, romantic even, or
utterly humiliating: it may reveal the dreamer's anticipated unstead-
iness and his need of guidance, for at points in this closing dream
vision he does not seem to know where he is (“You know where I
am bringing you? You remember?” [FW 622]). ALP's remarks on
the locales that they pass sound, on one level, like idle and friendly
conversation, but betray, on another, HCE's possible disorientation.
He seems to envision himself in a situation identical to Rip van
Winkle's, returning to a world suspiciously unfamiliar to him, awak-
ening from what he feels has been a single night's sleep only to find
his environs have drastically changed. The dream woman is heard
passing off this change as perfectly natural and plausible, pretending
that cities can literally spring up over night, presumably in order to
circumvent the truth of the dreamer's prolonged slumber: “Why,
them's the muchrooms, come up during the night. Look, agres of
roofs in parshes. Dom on dam, dim in dym. And a capital part for
Olympics to ply at” (FW 625). When one inquires into the logical
motives behind the imagined speech acts that comprise the final
monologue disturbing possibilities frequently emerge, creating a sub-
text that bespeaks all too clearly the dreamer's dread of his own
potential helplessness and subsequent infantilization.

The proposed rejuvenatory outing is envisioned as a return to a
romantic spot on Howth from ALP's and HCE's earlier days together
(“You'll know our way from there surely. Flura's way. Where once
we led so many car couples have follied since” [FW 623]), with the
young courting couple represented as primordial lovers, succeeded
by countless others, including no doubt Molly and Leopold Bloom
"All quiet on Howth now. The distant hills seem. Where we. The rhododendrons. .All that old hill has seen. Names change: that's all. Lovers: yum yum" [U 377]). At the end of the *Wake*, as at the end of *Ulysses*, sexual reminiscence provides a means of psychic rejuvenation, though ALP uses it to revive the other rather than the self, recalling for HCE his gentler moments as a lover as well as his fiercer ones ("One time you'd stand fornenst me, fairly laughing, in your bark and tan billows of branches for to fan me coolly. And I'd lie as quiet as a moss. And one time you'd rush upon me, darkly roaring, like a great black shadow with a sheeny stare to perce me rawly" [FW 626]). The ensuing fond recollection of their marriage vows, however, turns suddenly sad as ALP realizes that the death described then as the remote and hypothetical condition of separation has become a not-so-distant reality ("How you said how you'd give me the keys of me heart. And we'd be married till delth to uspart. And though dev do espart. O mine!. .And can it be it's now fforvell?" [FW 626]). The nostalgic return to the past in *Finnegans Wake* has a very different associative and affective end point than in *Ulysses*, the return evoking not simply memories of initial union but also the projected moment of parting.

The most disturbing ambiguity of the outing lies in the way it is described, ALP referring to it as a "journee saintomichael" (FW 621)—a journey sentimental or a journey to Saint Michael, whom Adaline Glasheen identifies as "the receiver of the souls of the dead" (193). The thought of being escorted to the spot of a romantic tryst becomes confused with the thought of being escorted to the grave, as in a funeral ritual, sexual "death" perhaps being associated with actual death, the first sexual fall with the final physical fall into mortality. The implied psychological linking of different types of "falls" here has clear precedent in "Circe": when the nannygoat present at the Blooms' lovemaking on Howth enters the parade of phantasms, a vision immediately ensues of Bloom falling "from the Lion's Head cliff into the purple waiting waters" (U 550). In *Finnegans Wake* the association is synchronic rather than diachronic, the envisioned journey emerging as a dual-layered image, like a picture produced from two negatives. The dreamer imagines his wife leading him to the tip of Howth Head or to the outermost bourne, the afterlife, to the house of the Earl of Howth or to the house of God:
We might call on the Old Lord, what do you say? There's something tells me. He is a fine sport. Like the score and a moighty went before him. And a proper old promnentory. His door always open. For a newera's day. Much as your own is. You invoiced him last Eatster so he ought to give us hockockles and everything. Remember to take off your white hat, ech? When we come in the presence. And say hoothoothoo, ithmu-thisthy! His is house of laws. (FW 623)

Previously in the dream, HCE has had explicit visions of his wife not only interring him, loaming him from head to foot, but also actually weaving his grim fate, like an implacable goddess of destiny: "Now she's borrid his head under Hatesbury's Hatch and loamed his fate to old Love Lane" (FW 578). In the final monologue the image of the woman burying the dead male is more strongly repressed, carefully hidden beneath an antithetical screen vision, an image of her trying to rejuvenate him.

As the couple travel in the dreamer's mind from inland out towards the open sea, ALP eventually acknowledges her own fatigue ("For I feel I could near to faint away. Into the deeps") and the increasing frailty of her own senses: "Illas! I wisht I had better glances to peer to you through this baylights growing. But you're changing, acoolsha, you're changing from me, I can feel. Or is it me is? I'm getting mixed" (FW 626). ALP's concessions of personal debility and her sudden confusion as to who is "changing" signal a major reversal, a key switching of roles, providing the first definite hints that it is the female—and not the male—who is ultimately envisioned as dying. Shortly afterwards, however, ALP insinuates that she is not actually dying, but rather is sneaking off, running away from the family she has become disgusted with, tired of their failure to take an interest in her concerns or to appreciate her sacrifices:

A hundred cares, a tithe of troubles and is there one who understands me? One in a thousand of years of the nights? All me life I have been lived among them but now they are becoming lothed to me. And I am lothing their little warm tricks. And lothing their mean cosy turns. And all the greedy gushes out through their small souls. And all the lazy leaks down over their brash bodies. How small it's all!...I'll slip away before they're up. They'll never see. Nor know. Nor miss me. (FW 627)

The final vision of the Wake reflects the male's fear of being abandoned by his weary mate—a fear, according to Richard Ellmann,
that Joyce himself was only too familiar with. The dream woman's embittered lament sounds like it comes from an overworked and disillusioned housewife, leaving it ambiguous as to whether she departs through death or fatigued disloyalty.

This final female confession of disillusionment and despair is not unanticipated. Throughout the monologue, disgruntled complaints qualify the professions of tenderness and love, just as surely as the veiled allusions to a funeral ritual undermine the encouraging discussion of a rehabilatory walk, a critical female voice interrupting the dominant strand of the discourse with incremental recurrence. The speech contains yet another subversive subtext, related to HCE's sense of his spouse's estimation of him, a subtext that stands in dialectic opposition to the image of ALP as adoring wife. One of the first hints of dissatisfaction is heard when ALP concedes the vanity of her high hopes for her husband's future, her unfulfilled dreams of his attaining royal honors or at least a position of municipal power: "He might knight you an Armor el'or daub you the first cheap magyerstrape... And I'll be your aural eyeness. But we vain. Plain fancies. It's in the castles air" (FW 623). The disappointment here is expressed in mild and even self-reproachful terms, but shortly afterwards ALP closes her remembrance of HCE's architectural ambitions to "scale the summit" with the more straightforward accusation: "All your grandplotting and the little it brought!" (FW 624). At the end of her speech she acknowledges even more frankly the discrepancy between her wishful estimation of her husband and the reality of his achievements: "I thought you were all glittering with the noblest of carriage. You're only a bumpkin. I thought you the great in all things, in guilt and in glory. You're but a puny" (FW 627). The female voice grows more and more overtly dissatisfied, ALP ending her speech with both a verbal and physical rejection of her spouse. As the fantasy of the adoring and forgiving helpmate gives way to the more mundane and disturbing vision of the malcontent housewife, the image of the male self that this female other creates and defines crumbles simultaneously.

This subversive discourse can actually be traced to the monologue's very outset, in what sounds on the surface like unequivocal flattery: "You make me think of a wonderdecker I once. Or somebalt thet sailder, the man megallant, with the bangled ears. Or an earl was he, at Lucan? Or, no, it's the Iren duke's I mean" (FW 620). This verbal image of ALP comparing HCE to various heroes and
adventurers, both mythic and real, appears to be a blatantly gratifying and egotistical fantasy, until one remembers that elsewhere in the dream HCE is Van der Decken, he is Sinbad, he is Magellan, he is Wellington, the Iron Duke. ALP's "compliment" reduces what was hitherto metaphorical to mere simile. The ultimately deflationary intent of the comparison is hinted at in the word "wonderdecker," which combines the captain of Wagner's The Flying Dutchman (Van der Decken) with wonderdoktor, the Dutch word for a quack (McHugh 620). This ironic conflation and the emphasis on mere similitude both make clear that HCE's prior heroic guises are simply wishful imagoes, quixotic masks.

Prior to the close of the final monologue, the dreamer's preeminent concerns have been his own guilty desires and fears, his own human mortality. The unsettling image of the wife's departure or demise may seem to indicate a sudden male sensitivity to the frustrations felt by the female, a lapse in that egocentricity which Freud argued characterizes the dreamworld (301). But as Joyce shows through the figure of Simon Dedalus in Ulysses, the thought of a spouse's death can occasion a sadness that is in part selfish, rooted not only in sorrow for the absent mate but also maudlin self-pity. Simon laments not only his wife's death but also the more personal repercussions of it, the imagined effect it has had on his own familial position: "You're like the rest of them, are you?" Mr. Dedalus grumbles to Dilly. "An insolent pack of little bitches since your poor mother died. Wouldn't care if I was stretched out stiff. He's dead. The man upstairs is dead" (U 238). The fallen patriarch of the Wake betrays very similar fears about how he will be treated by his female offspring, but protects himself from the fate of Simon Dedalus through a sanguine fantasy: he hears the departing ALP reassuring him that the daughter will be "sweet for you as I was when I came down out of my mother" (FW 627). The anxiety occasioned by the wife's possible flight is negated by wishful thoughts of union with her younger incarnation—a clear example of psychological compensation betraying the dreamer's concern with how marital disaffection and defection would personally affect him.

In Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake Clive Hart has demonstrated that ALP's monologue contains a significant cluster of verbal echoes of phrases from the end of "Eveline" (53–55). Indeed, the close of the Wake and the disturbing story from Dubliners share not only specific resonances but also a larger situational similarity.
Just as the *Wake* suggests that ALP’s flight is motivated by maternal fatigue, by “a hundred cares, a tithe of troubles,” “Eveline” similarly hints that Mrs. Hill’s death is precipitated by the day-to-day demands placed on her as mother and wife: she has led “that life of commonplace sacrifice closing in final craziness” (*D* 40), a final craziness that ALP shares, conceding that she has grown “loony in me loneness” (*FW* 627)—not only lonely but also loony. In both works the departing mother expects that the dutiful daughter will take her place. Young Eveline must raise “the two young children who had been left to her charge” (*D* 38), having given her ailing mother “her promise to keep the home together as long as she could” (*D* 40). ALP also expresses a hope that her family will stay together—“Try not to part! Be happy, dear ones!”—and leaves in her wake “a daughterwife from the hills again” (*FW* 627—note the allusion to Eveline’s last name). The father’s desire for the daughter, blatant in the dreamworld, finds a more devious and sinister outlet in the waking reality of *Dubliners*. Eveline lives in fear of her father’s violence, afraid that he might “go for her,” even though she is nineteen, well beyond the age when children are reprimanded through physical punishments: “she knew that it was that that had given her the palpitations” (*D* 38). The aggressive father in the *Wake* has a similar effect on the daughter, or so he imagines, Issy glossing “the backslapping gladhander” in her footnotes with the remark, “He gives me pulpititions...” (*FW* 276).

The palpitations of the young woman signify fear and loathing but also their opposite—unacknowledged desire. A repressed Electra complex lies at the heart of Eveline’s story, a complex unwittingly encouraged by the defeated mother, reinforced by the bullying father, and unconsciously acceded to by the passive and paralyzed daughter, who implicitly opts for the stultifying bond to Mr. Hill over a union with someone her own age, a new life with Frank, however ambiguous and uncertain that new life may be. In *Finnegans Wake*, of course, this incestuous drama is played out not within a waking narrative of the daughter’s thoughts, but rather in a dream narrative of the father’s. In accordance with the perspectival shift from conscious to unconscious psychic life, Joyce foregrounds the taboo desire only hinted at in “Eveline,” bringing it to the surface. Shifting from the daughter’s to the father’s point of view, Joyce also represents a very different dialectic of anxiety and desire, significantly revising the outcome of the earlier short story. Although the dreaming father of
the *Wake* hopes that the daughter will dutifully replace his spouse, he suspects and fears simultaneously that she will not stay with him, that like the mother, she will abandon him. He imagines the fleeing ALP offering her pity, gently hinting that he will have to compete with a younger generation of men for the daughter’s loyalties and affections: “I pity your oldself I was used to. Now a younger’s there” (*FW* 627). Running counter to the father’s incestuous desire for the daughter throughout the dream is the grim epiphany of normal generational cycles, children ineluctably replacing parents rather than bonding with them.

The mother’s disillusioned leavetaking at the end of the dream is foreshadowed much earlier, in the daughter’s devious commentary on the grammar book in the homework lesson (*FW* II.2). Appended to the instruction that counsels Issy to “mind your genderous towards his reflexives such that I was to your grappa...when him was me hedon” is an exclamatory footnote that reads, “Frech devil in red hairing! So that’s why you ran away to sea, Mrs Lappy. Leap me, locklaun, for you have sensed!” (*FW* 268). The apparent incongruity between the text counseling female deference to the male and the marginal comment recording female disloyalty and abandonment can be resolved by stressing the latter’s interpretive status. The daughter is imagined here reading between the lines of “gramma’s grammar” (*FW* 268) and finding in the conventional wisdom of the maternal text—in its ostensible endorsement of stereotypical sex roles—an epiphanic explanation for ALP’s flight. The subversive notation assumes that the older woman has in fact grown tired of acting “genderous” towards male “reflexives,” weary of playing the wife who caters selflessly to her husband’s whims. Although her ensuing departure may be a sin, it may also reflect her good sense (“Mrs Lappy...you have sensed!”). Issy is envisioned as understanding a silent discourse of the female text, detecting the dissatisfaction inherent in its advice, hearing in it not a complacent admission of male superiority but rather a veiled complaint against male egotism.

This footnote is interesting to consider in the context of “Eveline,” for Eveline too reads and understands an alternate discourse of the mother. Mrs. Hill’s implied request to the daughter to assume her role and responsibilities is subverted by her final mad and incoherent exclamations, the specific plea qualified by the larger behavioral statement. The daughter perceives a sad logic behind the mother’s retreat into lunacy and death, just as Issy intuits the logic
behind ALP's analogous departure in the *Wake*: Eveline's thought of her mother's "life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness" puts selfless maternal duty and ultimate insanity into a disturbing cause-and-effect progression, an alarming sequence of inevitability. She decides to break the promise to the mother because she interprets her crazed demise as a counterstatement to the request, as an admonition of what that elicited promise may lead to. Her "sudden impulse of terror" (*D* 40) can be best accounted for if one assumes that Eveline recognizes unconsciously in her mother's death a premonition of her own possible fate, the memory ultimately fortifying not her sense of duty but rather her resolve to leave. The daughter vows an active physical escape from her oppressed position—a contrast to the mother's passive psychological escape into madness—though she is pathetically unable to carry through her resolve, apparently forgetting the warning embedded in the earlier recollection. That closing scene of "Eveline" in which the young woman stands suspended between flight and duty reappears at the very end of the *Wake*, I would like to suggest, albeit in a much altered and complicated guise.

The final vision of the dream is a highly ambiguous one, one that expresses both a desire and a fear through a rapid alternation of images. ALP's union with her "cold mad feary father" (*FW* 628) reduplicates the previously envisioned union of HCE and his "daughterwife" Issy, providing an overdetermined expression of the desire for father-daughter incest and of the implicit attendant wish for recaptured youth, for eternal renewal through a bonding with the female child who is reminiscent of the wife when young. In this protean vision of human roles so typical to the dream, Issy is not only wishfully imagined as spouse, but ALP is also seen as daughter, and it is in this capacity that her final gestures—both physical and verbal—become most equivocal. One moment ALP is the obedient daughter dutifully returning to the father, but in the next she is the rebellious daughter, turning away from the father towards the younger lover, the lover whom she sees as a means of escape from patriarchal oppression: "it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father, till the near sight of mere size of him, the moyles and moyles of it, moananoaning, makes me seasilt saltsick and I rush, my only, into your arms. I see them rising! Save me from those therrble prongs!" (*FW* 627–628, my emphasis). The intensifying vision of the father's wrath ("my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary

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father’’) and the interesting pronomial shift that follows can be logically connected. At first ALP addresses the father himself (as a “you”), but then after envisioning his increasingly threatening mien, she suddenly refers to him more distantly, in the third person (“the mere size of him”), so that she is now imagined talking about the father to someone else. This second addressee is the lover to whom she ultimately turns for a saving embrace (“I rush, my only, into your arms...Save me from those terrible prongs!”), like Eveline fantasizing about Frank before she leaves home (“Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her” [D 40]).

At the end of the earlier short story, the lover is associated with the sea, envisioned as the element that will drown the self (“All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her” [D 41]); at the end of the Wake the father himself plays this annihilating role, cast as he is as “Old Father Ocean” (U 50), as both the Irish and Greek sea gods, Mananaan (“moananoaning’) and Poseidon, the latter’s threatening trident providing a rough imagistic variant of Mr. Hill’s threatening blackthorn stick.

The frightening image of the violent father reverses itself in the subsequent image of the protective father gently carrying the daughter along as he did when she was a child (“Carry me along, taddy, like you done through the toy fair!” [FW 628]). The dialectical structure of this mediated self-image is anticipated when ALP is envisioned remembering her father ambivalently (“I’m sure he squirted juice in his eyes to make them flash for frightening me. Still and all he was awful fond to me” [FW 626]), like Eveline recalling both her father’s violence and his kindness. The double resonance of the phrase “Far calls. Coming, far!” (FW 628) reintrojects into the dream text the uncertainty of ALP’s imagined response to the patriarch, the ambiguity of her nature—either fond, submissive, and childlike, or fearful, mistrusting, and defiant: she may be responding dutifully to the voice of the “far,” the distant unknown Eveline is tempted by but ultimately rejects. In his mapping of the verbal correspondence between the end of “Eveline” and that of the Wake, Hart juxtaposes one of Frank’s last words to Eveline—“Come!” (D 41)—with this “Coming, far!” spoken by ALP (54). The two cries make sense, though, not as verbal analogies or parallelisms but as an entreaty and a response, as a plea and an answer. What is heard here on the final page of the dream, in short, are the words Eveline
is unable to speak. In this ambiguous rerendering of the close of the earlier short story, the daughter is imagined acquiescing obediently to the demands of the father or responding fervently to the cry of the lover, depending upon what one chooses to hear in that final equivocal ‘far.’

The two visions of the daughter that emerge through the rapidly shifting images and various verbal ambiguities are incompatible within the framework of a realistic narrative—the daughter cannot return to the father and abandon him simultaneously—but they do make sense as a dialectical narrative of dream. In fact I would argue that the logic of the Wake’s seemingly contradictory ending can be best understood if one imagines the dreamer at this point as Mr. Hill and then speculates about what he might have dreamed about after reading Eveline’s letter on the night she attempts to leave her family. The possibility of the daughter’s departure, made clear by the letter, would logically produce an intensified unconscious desire for her loyalty, that desire expressed in such clear and overdetermined form at the close of the dream. Mr. Hill’s probable conscious response to the attempted escape is anger and violence, a response apparently recalled in the image of the ‘cold mad feary father’ authoritatively brandishing his trident or blackthorn stick: the dream text here may provide us with a disquieting hint of what Eveline encountered upon her return to the home. But the very threat of the daughter’s departure would probably awaken in the father not only feelings of outrage, but also ones of vulnerability and weakness, a sense of uncertain control over the daughter he needs: hence the opposite and fearful dream vision of her opting for the lover over the father, defiantly breaking the familial bond. Indeed, in that final vision of the daughter turning away from him—both verbally and physically—at the sight of his ‘‘terrible prongs,’’ the father recognizes his violence not as the means of controlling the daughter, but as the very thing that frightens her away from him: she is not simply lured away by another but also driven away by his aggression. If earlier in the Wake the daughter is envisioned as understanding a silent and subversive discourse of the mother, here she is imagined (on one level of the dialectic) as acting upon that wisdom of the malcontent, seeing the sense and not the sin in running away to sea, realizing the danger inherent in staying with the father and the attraction of that mysterious ‘far.’
At the end of her monologue ALP embraces the sexual, imagining her own erotic surrender: "If I seen him bearing down on me now under whitespread wings like he’d come from Arkangels, I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly, dumbly, only to washup" (FW 628). The image stands in opposition to one of Eveline’s closing visions at the station, her “glimpse of the black mass of the boat” (D 40), inverting color (black/white), religious association (Black Mass/Annunciation, demonic/angelic), and implicit emotional effect (fright/acceptance), while maintaining the linking impression of massiveness. The “black mass of the boat” may embody a vague sexual threat and contribute to Eveline’s distress and hesitation (in Finnegans Wake boats often become explicitly phallic—“with his runagate bowmpriss he roade and borst her bar” [FW 197]); at the end of the dream, however, the daughter is represented overcoming all sexual fears, envisioning not only her sexual surrender but also her survival, seeing erotic “death” as leading inevitably to self-renewal, resurrection (“I sink I’d die down over his feet, humbly, dumbly, only to washup”). The man ALP gives herself to remains characteristically equivocal, the resonances of the Annunciation suggesting the father-lover, but the allusion to “Arkangels” suggesting the younger lover as well: as B.J. Tysdahl points out, the conclusion to the Wake envels a reference to Ibsen’s Lady from the Sea (178, 210), the lover “from Arkangels” being the Stranger in the play, the sailor-lover who (as in “Eveline”) serves as the father-lover’s rival.

In “Eveline” the mother’s death and the daughter’s possible flight are separate narrative events; in the dreamworld they are conflated, intermingled, recognized as analogous departures with similar causalities—weariness over female roles within the patriarchial family. ALP’s dual status as both dying mother and fleeing daughter leaves the ultimate vision of female journeying and bequeathal of keys ambiguously suspended. Although there is a logical critical tendency to interpret ALP’s keys symbolically, their more literal and mundane significance should not be forgotten: they may simply be house keys, like those in anyone’s pocket or purse. On one level these keys left behind at the final decision to depart (“Lps. The keys to. Given!” [FW 628]) are perhaps passed from ALP-as-mother to Issy-as-daughter, in a wishful vision of dutiful female succession; but in her capacity as daughter, ALP may be returning those keys
of the house back to the master himself—they are the keys which may have logically accompanied Eveline's farewell letter, keys perhaps associated with domestic responsibility.

What happens after the female return in "Eveline" can be imagined and is indeed explored from a new perspective in the final dream vision of the Wake; what happens after the female departure projected within this dream vision on the other level of the dialectic cannot, in contrast, be so easily conjectured. In an ending that resonates of Ibsen's A Doll House, the leave-taking female relinquishes the keys of her safe but oppressive domestic position to embrace an unknown that defies conception, resists articulation, arrests the flow of the dream language in midstream. When Joyce revisits and revises "Eveline" from its inherent male point of view, he adumbrates its abyss, that region beyond envisioning: that region is surely death itself, but also the female other who eludes the dreamer both physically and psychically, perhaps coursing fatalistically towards "that other world," perhaps ecstatically towards freedom.

NOTES

1. For an account of Nora's threatened departures, see Ellmann's James Joyce, 687-688.

2. This is not to suggest that Mr. Hill is the dreamer, that I pretend to have solved the riddle of HCE's identity (which ultimately, of course, remains indeterminate). What I am suggesting in a larger study of Finnegans Wake (of which this essay forms a part) is roughly this: in constructing the dream of a dying "anyman," who relives the successive phases of his life in the dream text, Joyce uses a lot of the content of his earlier works—content both psychical (states of mind) and concrete (material, situational details)—to express the desires and fears encountered in and attached to these successive phases. HCE is a composite figure, created from figures not only from history, myth, and earlier works of literature, but also from Joyce's own canon.

WORKS CITED


