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Ellen Scheible

"CALL HER CALAMITY ELECTRIFIES MAN":

ALP AND THE MOVEMENT OF ARCHIVE IN *FINNEGANS WAKE*

The analysis of the archive, then, involves a privileged region: at once close to us, and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness; it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us.(1)

Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

The existence of characters in Joyce's dream world of *Finnegans Wake* rarely proves their singular presence in the text. As readers we are led to incorporate different characters into our interpretation of any one character; the temporal and historical circularity of the *Wake* is then personified in a whirlpool of characterization. Comprising both the motion and consistency of this whirlpool, Anna Livia is most certainly the nexus of activity for the otherwise sleepy Earwicker narrative. Yet, recognizing the textual motion of both the character and concept of ALP, (or even simply the potential for signifying motion within the text) as the imperative force of the *Wake* destabilizes the relationship between reader and text and redefines the way we generate meaning, the way we read, analyze and write. The experience of such recognition can often be uncomfortable; Joyce's evocation of textual nonlinearity within the *Wake* is intensely present for the reader in a way that it is not in many other twentieth-century novels, especially in its embodiment of both the political history of Ireland and the aesthetics of that history.(2) In the discussion that follows, I will suggest that the discomfort of reading the *Wake* is a generative process that typifies not only the function of writing and why we continue to write about books like *Finnegans Wake*, but also the interminable continuation of the discursive archive, which manifests in the *Wake* as both a reproductive, memorializing motion and an impotent, often destructive representation of memory. I employ the concept of archive in this reading to signify not only the literal collection of information in the *Wake*, but, more importantly, the powerful aesthetic experience that the consumption of that information may engender. As Carolyn Steedman articulates, this experience is at once historical, linguistic, and political: "In a proper and expanded definition of 'archive' this system of recording (listing in particular), storage and retrieval, is an aspect of the history of written language, and the politics of that history."(3) Joyce's text, particularly in the Anna Livia chapter, embodies simultaneity both in its story, riddled with the dreaming language of portmanteau, and in its engagement with the very system that lends order to all forms of storytelling, historical, political, or otherwise: the archive.

The Discourse of Archive

As the epigraph from Foucault suggests, one notion of archive at play in this discussion is characterized by an analytical force that contains from without and, in so doing, generates both a sense of closeness and distance as it remains "different from our present existence." In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the project in which Foucault famously introduces his methodological theory that 'statements' as events comprise historical understanding, Foucault explains that the force of the archive within a history of discourse takes the form of a system:

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time, but shine, as it were, like stars, some that seem close to us shining brightly from afar off, while others that are in fact close to us are already growing pale.(4)

The archive, for Foucault, is what defines a discursive statement as an event; history is now the history of what is said. The archive both challenges totality and linearity and regulates the accumulation and appearance of discourse. As a system, the archive is responsible for generating the distance between discursive events, marking the continual emergence of multiple discourses within different temporal moments. It is helpful in our

consideration of this concept to remember Foucault's earlier characterization of the archive as "a web of which [so many authors who know or do not know one another] are not the masters, of which they cannot see the whole, and of whose breadth they have a very inadequate idea."⁽⁵⁾ As the voices of different discourses within an archive, authors do not have the power to control the motion of the archive or the exchanges that may occur with or without their knowledge. With its emphasis on the fluidity of discourses ranging from gossip to gospel, the ALP chapter of the *Wake* manifests as a metaphor for the uncontrollable movement of the archive, which, in Foucault's words, "establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being the forgotten and recovered origin, is the dispersion that we are and make."⁽⁶⁾ The inclination of the Foucauldian archive to claim 'difference' as both the mark and 'dispersion' of history echoes the impulse to simultaneously collect and scatter that surfaces in ALP's many appearances in the *Wake*.

It is difficult if not impossible at this moment in critical thought to consider the theoretical connotations of 'difference', especially if we imagine it to be a concept defined by the motion of discourse, without recognizing the work of Jacques Derrida. In the recent development of a critical discourse on the concept of archive, Derrida has been a key figure, and his 1994 lecture *Mal d'Archive: une impression freudienne*, later modified and published in English as *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, addresses the implications of archive - as both action and object - and the violence inherent in any quest for a singular preservation or containment of memory as history. In a pivotal move, one that greatly informs this discussion, Derrida argues that "the violence of the archive itself, *as archive, as archival violence*" is linked to Freud's concept of the death-drive.⁽⁷⁾ In our consideration of the *Wake* as an archival metaphor, Derrida's linking of the death-drive to the archive clarifies the way we might think of ALP as a force:

[The death-drive] is at work, but since it always operates in silence, it never leaves any archives of its own. It destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement. It works to destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing but also with a view to effacing its own "proper" traces - which consequently cannot properly be called "proper." It devours it even before producing it on the outside [...] It will always have been archive-destroying, by silent vocation. [...] In other words, the archiviolithic drive is never present in person, neither in itself nor in its effects. It leaves no monument, it bequeaths no document of its own.⁽⁸⁾

Grounding his argument in a meticulous close-reading of Freud, Derrida emphasizes that the generation of archive (as language) is one that works in resistance to the death-drive; language is created when we do not give in to our urge for stasis, it is that which is left-over after the struggle, the remainder. More importantly, the 'original' archive is one that was never present in the first place - the death-drive as the "archiviolithic drive" "devours" the archive before it produces it, leaving behind only the "traces" of its attempted effacement. Such devouring occurs from silence - the death-drive's opposition to language registers in its silent presence, its call to violence. Discourse as archive is the remainder of this struggle, but it only exists as the trace of the archive that came before, the archive that was never present in the first place. Thus, language as the creation of archive is always only the movement of repetition; it registers as an 'archive fever' that seeks its own nonexistent origin in a traumatic attempt to historicize memory.

Although Foucault and Derrida appropriate the term 'archive' at different moments in time for two very different projects, both articulate the significance of archive as a process or event rather than an accumulation of information or texts. For both Foucault and Derrida, and many writers who have come after, the discourse of archive consists of many terms that do not always inform one another, but are all part of the way we understand the relationship between language and subjectivity. Such terms include: *memory, history, discourse, power, event, and place*. For every term, its relation to archive is multi-faceted and, according to Foucault, defined by the discursive system in which it appears or surfaces. These terms are always operating at different levels of signification, evoking the conceptual movement between our understanding of the archive as stored information and the archive proper as the absence of preservation, that which is only witnessed through the Derridian 'trace' or the remnants of the unspoken. In the reading of *Finnegans Wake* that follows, the aforementioned terms, among others, will provide the contextual framework for our conception of the *Wake* as an archival metaphor, the signification of the movement of difference. Although I do not conceive of the *Wake* as primarily an historical

embodiment of archive, I again find Steedman's comments on motion and space helpful for this analysis: "The Archive then is something that, through the cultural activity of History, can become Memory's potential space, one of the few realms of the modern imagination where a hard-won and carefully constructed place, can return to boundless, limitless space".⁽⁹⁾ The archive is never the realization of memory or the historicity of memory, it is memory's "potential", what memory always seeks through repetition. The archive is a "realm" that exists between "place" and "space"; it evokes both limitation and a sense of the infinite. The archive is the simultaneous generation and destruction of the historical moment.

Before we bridge the discourse of archive to the abyss of the *Wake*, I want to briefly consider Giorgio Agamben's notion of testimony as explained in his 1999 *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Although Agamben's admiration for Foucault remains vivid throughout his critique, he moves beyond Foucault's theory in a supplemental moment of revision, where testimony opposes archive as a necessary bearer of subjectivity:

The archive's constitution presupposed the bracketing of the subject, who was reduced to a simple function or an empty position; it was founded on the subject's disappearance into the anonymous murmur of statements. In testimony, by contrast, the empty place of the subject becomes the decisive question.⁽¹⁰⁾

Agamben's project in *Remnants of Auschwitz*, which focuses on an analysis of the subject as witness to the 'impossible' in Nazi concentration camps, consistently returns to the concept of testimony as an aporia in the discourse of atrocity. Instead of losing the subject position in the "murmur of statements" as Foucault did, Agamben reconstitutes the subject as the central figure in the act of testimony. Subjectivity, then, forcefully emerges from the relationship between the archive and a system of language

as that which, in its very possibility of speech, bears witness to an impossibility of speech. This is why subjectivity appears as *witness*; this is why it can speak for those who cannot speak. Testimony is a potentiality that becomes actual through an impotentiality of speech; it is, moreover, an impossibility that gives itself existence through a possibility of speaking. These two movements cannot be identified either with a subject or with a consciousness; yet they cannot be divided into two incommunicable substances. Their inseparable intimacy is testimony.⁽¹¹⁾

Although contingent on that which cannot be said (that which lacks spoken potential), Agamben's characterization of testimony as a "potentiality that becomes actual" infuses language with the ability to bear witness to a loss of subjectivity or a dehumanizing experience. Therefore, testimony does, in fact, act in opposition to archive - it is the actuality of witnessing the impossible - but it is not inseparable from it. Rather, testimony allows us to occupy the position of one who has lost language, to speak the death of that which is still alive (and vice versa). In this way, Joyce's *Wake* gestures toward a testimonial act in its archival motion; it forces the reader to give voice to the unspoken, to a certain loss of subjectivity. This point is especially made clear in Agamben's characterization of poetry as testimony:

we may say that to bear witness is to place oneself in one's own language in the position of those who have lost it, to establish oneself in a living language as if it were dead, or in a dead language as if it were living - in any case, outside both the archive and the *corpus* of what has already been said. It is not surprising that the witness' gesture is also that of the poet, the *auctor* par excellence. [...] the poetic word is the one that is always situated in the position of a remnant and that can, therefore, bear witness. Poets - witnesses - found language as what remains, as what actually survives the possibility, or impossibility, of speaking.⁽¹²⁾

Echoing Derrida's reading of archive as a type of Freudian death-drive, Agamben describes the language of poetry as the voice of a remnant, the discourse of the remainder. The poet bears witness to those who have experienced the loss of language, and reaffirms the linguistic process as the expression of a type of survival. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce not only parallels the repetition of language to the circulatory processes of the body that determine its literal survival, but also attempts to speak the impossibilities implicit in language through his representation of the discursive archive as the generation of narrative.

ALP and the “work of the remainder”

Anna Livia is the archival movement between Joyce’s linguistic representation of her character as text and the plurality of signified meanings erupting from the jagged words of the *Wake* as Joyce wages war on the linearity of reading comprehension. The movement ALP embodies in the eighth chapter of the first book of the *Wake* preserves and continues the flow of *Finnegans Wake* by never culminating as an actual figure or distinct voice in the text. Instead, as Shari Benstock explains, “The writing of *Finnegans Wake* both inhabits and is inhabited by woman [...] present in the transparent space of the hymeneal folds, in the silences of the historically interweaved, overlapped, and spiraling story, who constitute[s] the absent center of the *Wake* universe”.⁽¹³⁾ The feminine mother/wife role inhabited by ALP is not just the absence of something, but a space, perhaps like that envisioned by Steedman in her depiction of the archive, that allows the continuous movement of the text to evolve through its limitlessness. Similarly, Tony Thwaites notes that “In most of her appearances, [ALP] is a tonality or an inflection rather than a presence, and most famously in the river language which blurbles its way through the pages”.⁽¹⁴⁾ ALP becomes a flow, a rhythm, the circulation of a Derridian letter that will never and can never reach its final destination without destroying the literary archive by revealing the unspoken.⁽¹⁵⁾ The process of suspension and constant deferral that continues language and by extension, literary discourse, which Joyce exaggerates in the *Wake*, depends on referents that are never present in the text - the absent referents of both the dreamer and the movement of the dream - and, rather, manifests as what Derrida calls a “fiction of total chaos” - a river that collects as it destructs.⁽¹⁶⁾ Joyce portrays ALP as a referent that cannot present itself linguistically but, through non-presentation, generates the flow of discourse through the “work of the remainder” as Derrida puts it - our work as critics and writers in the generation and destruction of archive - or the gossip of the washerwomen on the banks of the Liffey.⁽¹⁷⁾

ALP’s delta opens the chapter, releasing the reader into the now familiar flowing conversation where first person narrative emerges as a plurality of voices, consequently identified as two women gossiping about ALP while washing clothes. The beginning dialogue moves from the “O,” the Omega of ALP, reminding us that “we all know Anna Livia” and preparing us with “You’ll die when you hear,” to the physical scrubbing of HCE’s clothes and, in turn, his sin (*FW* 196.1, 196.5-6). Within what Margot Norris calls the “complicated dialectic of the dreamer’s fears, desires, and guilts,” ALP literally cannot be collected during the present conversation, which is dominated by both literal and metaphorical dirty laundry, and instead functions as the motivator of gossip that keeps the women working: “Tuck up your sleeves and loosen your talk-tapes” (*FW* 196.8-9).⁽¹⁸⁾ Talking about ALP - invoking her history - continues the laborious activity that makes HCE’s “private linen public” and constitutes his dreaming presence (*FW* 196.16). Although ‘dying when hearing’ is a commonly used colloquialism, here the phrase also suggests that the power of ALP’s story is not only shocking, but also deadly.

HCE is the grand listener of the *Wake* - he is the ear behind the dream - and, as John Bishop suggests, the sleeping rhythm of HCE’s blood flow in this chapter is integral to the continuation of the dream: “if you can’t hear it, you’re dead”.⁽¹⁹⁾ But hearing ALP, who is the circulating, cleansing blood flow of the Liffey and the catalyst of discourse, is precisely what might kill the listener or the dreamer. HCE’s sleep, and thus the jumbled persistence of *Finnegans Wake*, depends on a movement preceding a blood flow or a beating heart - the movement of something that cannot and should not be directly heard, whose presence threatens productivity, yet functions as a creative force, even in the dream world. The invocation of ALP’s story carries the force of the death-drive, as Derrida portrays it in *Archive Fever*, in the sense that the washerwomen repeat the gossip of ALP in their quest to reveal her secret. This repetition generates the memory of ALP that continuously gets rewritten and revised throughout the text.

As dreamer, HCE unconsciously tries to master the dangerous flow of his river dream and gain control over ALP, even though the words of the washerwomen are not his own and ALP remains both their missing referent and the literal circulation of their conversation. The origin of HCE and ALP’s relationship and their sins, one of the first main topics in the washerwomen’s discussion, exposes HCE’s violent tendencies toward ALP and his urge to dominate her, revealing his fear of her vitality and rhythm - a fear that inevitably becomes linked to his impotence and stasis. HCE eventually becomes a metaphor for static impressions of historical memory; his part in the story is characterized by his urge to contain and control the different figurations of ALP. A series of questions about HCE’s name and marriage to ALP place him in opposition to her fluctuating role as river:

How elster is he a called at all? Qu'appelle? Huges Caput Earlyfouler. Or where was he born or how was he found? [...] Was her banns never loosened in Adam and Eve's or were him and her but captain spliced? (FW 197.7-9, 197.12-14)

Because he is both the subject of the dream by night and an expression of patriarchal subjectivity during the day, naming HCE and locating his different origins is important to the gossip narrative, regardless of the many titles or positions he assumes throughout the text. His roles are more clearly defined than those of ALP, even in the fluctuating world of the *Wake* - he is the dirty laundry rather than the rolling river. The repressed feminine qualities of HCE's daytime identity (which are allowed to roam freely as ALP during the dream) even appear as dangers that need to be contained or ruled. Kim Devlin describes ALP as "the instigator of the desire for mastery in itself, as the cause of the need for the prestige conferred by victory".⁽²⁰⁾ ALP's relationship with HCE is associated with a sin like 'Adam and Eve's,' and thus needs to be controlled through a marriage performed by a 'captain,' who generally attempts to master the sea on which he sails. Although McHugh tells us that Adam and Eve's is a church in Dublin⁽²¹⁾, the reference to the original fall and the 'looseness' of ALP foreshadows the discussion of her promiscuous sexuality that occurs later in the chapter and emphasizes HCE's discontentment with her unpredictable nature as a river-wife - in his mind, she needs to be tamed and domesticated. Yet, this never happens, not even on the last page of the text. Instead, the novel sends us back to where we started to read once again.

As the story progresses, HCE's stagnancy and uselessness are contrasted with his violent treatment of ALP. The washerwomen become more descriptive:

Don Dom Dombdomb and his wee follyo! Was his help inshored in the Stork and Pelican against bungelars, flu and third risk parties? I heard he dug good tin with his doll, delvan first and duvlin after, when he raped her home, Sabrine asthore, in a parakeet's cage, by dredgerous lands and devious delts, playing caught and mythed with the gleam of her shadda. (FW 197.17-23)

HCE's 'wee follyo' - the text of his dream, also the *Wake*, perhaps even his penis - needs to be 'inshored' against catastrophe, against flooding and ultimate destruction, because he is incapable of protecting it. He is unable to defend himself against the wildness of nature or contain the river of ALP that winds past 'dredgerous lands and devious delts,' in a playful game of 'caught and mythed.' The only action he performs in this section is an attempt to bring or keep ALP at home through a violent rape - he must master his desire. Again, Margot Norris points out, "fantasies of rape may function as a defense against fears of both impotence and rejection".⁽²²⁾ ALP's 'home' is also her body - a body of water polluted with the dirt of HCE's sin and raped by him out of an urge to command or contain her virility while masking his fear of sexual failure. The gossip persists:

In a gabbard he barqued it, the boat of life, from the harbourless Ivernikan Okean, till he spied the loom of his landfall and he loosed two croakers from under his tilt, the gran Phenician rover. By the smell of her kelp they made the pigeonhouse. Like fun they did! But where was Himself, the timoneer? That marchantman he suivied their scutties right over the wash, his cameleer's burnous breezing up on him, till with his runagate bowmpriss he roade and borst her bar. (FW 197.28-35)

In this fantasy of control, HCE guides the 'boat of life' across the river, in search of land. Again he seeks to prove his sexual prowess; he is a consumer, a 'marchantman,' who rides the river of ALP with his criminal penis - a reference to his sin in the park - hoping to 'borst her bar' and penetrate her being. A narrative seemingly devoted to colonial conquest, this part of the gossip story highlights ALP's inaccessibility - HCE dreams about raping her without being able to calm her roaming impulses; even his violence is useless. She cannot be conquered or colonized, however; she continues to give force to the archive of the dream. Norris describes HCE's attempt to master ALP as "the wish to anchor the woman, who is mediated by the fantasies of the male, to a status ultimately beyond the dreamer's fear or desire".⁽²³⁾ ALP is not simply a projection of the male dreamer's consciousness or desire, but a friction forcing his dreams to express and manipulate the concerns that remain hidden during his daily, waking life. She attempts to reveal the unspoken fragments of a lost memory.

The sin and rape composing HCE's sexual frustration and violent inclinations lead the washerwomen to explore and question the anti-climactic sexual relationship between him and ALP, thus exposing the sleeping HCE's hidden fears concerning his sexual performance. References to ALP's sexual proclivities also litter the chapter, from her solicitation on behalf of her husband to her early sexual experiences with "a hound" and "the bold priest" (*FW* 204.12, 204.4). In effect, she becomes a sexual agent for her husband as well as her own sexual being. Again, ALP represents an active sexual movement while HCE is often unable to perform any action at all. She assumes the duty of satisfying his sexual urges, whether that satisfaction is derived from her or the women she pursues for him. Thus, she becomes an image of reproductive repetition.

ALP tries to rouse HCE to a productive state by employing a variety of different methods from pimping - "throwing all the neiss little whors in the world at him!" - to feeding - "she'd cook him up blooms of fisk and lay to his heartsfoot her meddery eygs" - to letter writing - "*for the putty affair I have is wore out, so it is sitting, yapping and waiting for my old Dane hodder dodderer ... to wake himself out of his winter's doze and bore me down like he used to*" (*FW* 200.29-30, 199.15-16, 201.7-12). Richard Beckman suggests that "perhaps ALP understands just how polymorphously perverse he is and how, if it is to be revived, his sexuality must be addressed at a level beneath differentiation".⁽²⁴⁾ Because of the stagnancy of his character, HCE demands that ALP satisfy his needs through such a plurality of ways and, thus, relies on her constant 'doings' and attention for motivation. While she gives life as she destroys, ALP is one of the main sources of frustration in HCE's dream, yet she can never be released from his thoughts - she is the source of and the only potential cure for his impotence.

As the washerwomen tell the story of "riverend [...] Michael Arklow" and his "fairy ferse time" with ALP, the extent of HCE's impotence is even further illuminated (*FW* 203.18, 203.16). The description of the 'riverend' is filled with vigorous language:

He plunged both of his newly anointed hands, the core of his cushlas, in her singimari saffron strumans of hair, parting them and soothing her and mingling it, that was deep-dark and ample like this red bog at sundown. By that Vale Vowclose's lucydlac, the reignbeau's heavenarches arranged orranged her. [...] He cuddle not help himself, thurso that hot on him, he had to forget the monk in the man so, rubbing her up and smoothing her down, he baised his lippes in smiling mood, kiss akiss after kisokushk (as he warned her niver to, niver to, nevar) on Anna-na-Poghue's of the freckled forehead [...] That was kissuahealing with bantur for balm! O, wasn't he the bold priest? And wasn't she the naughty Livvy? (*FW* 203.23-27, 203.32-36, 204.1, 203.3-5)

Although Bishop argues that "substantial parts of the chapter are not directly 'about' Anna Livia at all" but are rather about "the vitality of [HCE's] own bloodstream," the aforementioned sections, among others, suggest otherwise.⁽²⁵⁾ ALP's red hair becomes the streaming expression of her sexuality, reminiscent of the blood flow characterizing menstruation. She is the personification of reproduction as potential, as the constant possibility of supplementation. The priest, also characterized as a river, 'plunges,' 'parts,' 'soothes,' and 'mingles' in her gushing hair, bringing out the glow of the rainbow that represents fertility throughout the *Wake*. ALP's sexual power is enough to convince a priest to 'forget the monk in the man' and 'kiss akiss' her. The 'rubbing and 'smoothing' rhythm is as instinctually human as the river tides are naturally wavy. Both motions involve an 'up' and 'down' that culminates as a sexual drive between ALP and the priest and emphasizes the natural pull of the moon on the tides. ALP's sexual performances identify her as the 'waters of babalong' and she becomes a "scarlet thread" linking the chapter and the language of the *Wake* together, keeping the activity of reading central (*FW* 103.11, 205.8). ALP's hair, as red as her blood, symbolizes the provocative feminine sensuality that HCE is unable to satisfy and the blood that will continue the generation of family, discourse, and an endless reading of the intertextual and interlinguistic signs of the text's archival function.

Since ALP assumes different forms within the chapter, she often masquerades under unusual identities that shift and change with the elements of the story, leaving her oppositional connection to HCE unaffected. Her age constantly fluctuates as the washerwomen's account progresses; she graduates from the role of sexual woman to the role of mother and caregiver, yet neither of those categories is ever a stable position. While she is a caregiver, she is also manipulative and cunning. The washerwomen warn us of ALP's necessary deceitful acts when they

say earlier in the chapter, “she’s nearly as badher as him herself” (*FW* 198.9). Once she “made herself tidal to join in the mascarete,” ALP spends plenty of time dressing and disguising herself, preparing to provoke HCE with her physical sensuality:

First she let her hair fal and down it flussed to her feet its teviots winding coils. Then, mothernaked, she sampood herself with galawater and fragrant pistania mud, wupper and lauar, from crown to sole. Next she greased the groove of her keel [...] And after that she wove a garland for her hair. She pleated it. She plaited it. Of meadowgrass and riverflags, the bulrush and waterweed, and of fallen griefs of weeping willow. (*FW* 206. 13-14, 206.29-32, 207.1-4)

Her ability to alter shape and appearance is great - in fact, she can never remain a static entity and still fulfill her textual function. Her blood red hair, the most dominant representation of her sexuality, unwinds down to her feet as she prepares to entice HCE with her ‘mothernaked’ body. Within this description, as in earlier passages, Joyce renders ALP sexually fertile, which is reinforced by the gift distribution that commences in the following pages.

Through all of the lies and trickery, HCE and ALP remain intrinsically connected - ALP is the current characterizing the space where the opposition thrives between HCE and the archive of his dream. Even after she presents multiple women to HCE as a cure for his impotence, ALP continues to participate in a sexual relationship with him, mostly as his wife. She does not judge, but instead remains faithful to the necessary functions that keep the relationship, and the text, in motion. Margot Norris’ comments on this passage are essential:

[ALP] does not arrange, regulate, designate, or judge, but merely gathers together her children and the fragments of her fallen husband. The linguistic correspondence of her function is the potentiality of language for an infinite number of combinations within a finite system, rather than the semantic function of language.(26)

In the *Wake*, Joyce parallels the wide range of portmanteaus and multi-lingual signifiers perpetuating the non-linear narrative of HCE’s dream to ALP’s urgent attempts to combat HCE’s sexual failure. Language functions closer to its potential when the ‘infinite number of combinations’ of signifiers are exposed, and, similarly, ALP hopes to stimulate HCE’s sex drive through many different partners. However, HCE and language are not at all interchangeable in this text. He is the ‘dreamer’ of the dream, yet, in order for the dream to continue, so must his impotence or stagnancy. If every text were written like the *Wake*, our ability to communicate would be ultimately threatened - we ascertain meaning by reducing and isolating the text, by restraining language to its impotency. ALP, however, personifies the force that resists linguistic isolation; she is not the text nor the dreamer, but the regulating motion of the dream.

The list of ALP’s gifts during the ‘Santa Claus’ episode consumes almost three pages of the *Wake* and reads more like a list of revealed secrets than presents from a sack of goodies. The river recycles fears and histories as well as belongings; ALP’s list functions as a type of negative astrology, foretelling the past, present and future:

A tinker’s bann and a barrow to boil his billy for Gipsy Lee; a cartridge of cockaleekie soup for Chummy the Guardsman; for sulky Pender’s acid nephew deltoid drops, curiously strong; a cough and a rattle and wildrose cheeks for poor Piccolina Petite MacFarland; a jigsaw puzzle of needles and pins and blankets and shins between them for Isabel, Jezebel and Llewelyn Mmarriage. (*FW* 210.6-12)

The references are not at all like Christmas presents, but rather like bad curses given to many of her descendants. ALP’s fertility has given her the skill to reveal and often satisfy the needs and desires of all earthly descendents while also exposing the weaknesses that may affect their future; she is the river and the rain that circulate, cleanse, and nourish growth while threatening floods and storms. ALP’s gifts also function as medicines that are often dismal revelations of secret problems that need solutions - receiving a cure means risking shame or exposure. She becomes a type of *pharmakon* that poisons as she cures.(27)

By the end of the chapter, after “the he and the she of it,” the washerwomen “Wring out the clothes! Wring in the dew!” and reminisce about the continuum of ALP’s ties to the many tributaries of her being:

Warnow are alle her childer, say? In kingdome gone or power to come or gloria be to them farther? Allalivial, allaluvial! Some here, more no more, more again lost alla stranger. I’ve heard tell that same brooch of the Shannons was married into a family in Spain [...] And one of Biddy’s beads went bobbing till she rounded up lost histereve with a marigold and a cobbler’s candle [...] But all that’s left to the last of the Meaghers in the loup of the years prefixed and between is one kneebuckle and two hooks in the front. (FW 213.12, 213.19-20, 213.30-34, 213.36-214.1, 214.3-5)

The clothes that the washerwomen are spreading on the banks of the Liffey have been scrubbed clean of HCE’s dirt, and as they perform this last task, ALP becomes a more nostalgic subject of their conversation. They wonder how many of her children are alive still and how many have become strangers. Biddy’s regaining of ‘lost histereve’ suggests that every past originates in sin. This moment of work in the lives of the washerwomen will be repeated again and again; in the archive of narrative, there will always be sins to cleanse and always a discourse of history to retrieve from the process. As Bishop writes, “the *Wake*, because it is about the night, is also necessarily a cosmogony, whose subject is the fluid torrent of creative power out of which the world originates every morning and always”.(28) Everything ‘original’ still takes part in a greater process of circulation - the river of ALP becomes rain, the washerwomen end their shift only to begin again the next day, and finally HCE begins to recover from his impotence and his sin. At the same time that the washerwomen finish their chores, they think they see the “great Finnleader himself [...] on his statue riding the high horse” and Joyce reminds us that “Ireland sober is Ireland stiff” - erections always prevail in the sober hours of the morning (FW 214.18, 214. 12-13). Although Joyce implies the possibility of rejuvenation for HCE - perhaps a cure is in his future and he will ride once again - in the dreaming archive of the story, this will never happen. His stagnancy is as important to the system of the *Wake* as ALP’s fluidity.

Turning into tree and stone at the end of the chapter, the washerwomen become the symbolic representation of the suspension of discourse that must defer an ending in order to continue the archive of HCE’s dream. As Derrida explains:

An individual death, a destruction affecting only a part of society, of tradition, of culture may always give rise to a symbolic work of mourning, with memory, compensation, internalization, idealization, displacement, and so on. In that case there is monumentalization, archivization and *work on the remainder, work of the remainder.*(29)

Because we are the remainder of culture, we erect monuments so as to ‘immortalize’ the dead and avoid or displace our “encounter with the wholly other.” The tree and the stone become these monumental representations that immortalize the text of the *Wake* through their playful and repetitive discourse. However, there is no specific, individual death at the end of ALP’s chapter, and because “Anna was, Livia is, Plurabelle’s to be,” we learn that a part of ALP’s history is forever lost to memory, just as many of her children are strangers. Within the process of circulation, nothing remains the same; each reading of the *Wake* will be different. Thus, the washerwomen cannot speak the name of the river at the very end of the chapter:

Can’t hear with the waters of. The chittering waters of [...] all thim liffeying waters of [...] Who were Shem and Shaun the living sons or daughters of? [...] Telmetale of stem or stone. Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of. Night! (FW 215.31, 215.33-34, 216.1-5)

Anna Livia Plurabelle is the name that is missing. She has fully assumed her role as “the name of nothing”(30). ALP has become a missing event. Her name cannot be spoken because she is a space for movement, a space where monuments are built to remember the dead and are then washed away to create room for other monuments, a space for continuous textualization and archivization - she has become only, and most importantly, the speed and flow of *Finnegans Wake*. Derek Attridge emphasizes the textual motion of the *Wake* when he describes the text as a “fullness of narrativity, a rich layering of stories allowing narrative echoes to fly back and

forth”.(31) Reading the *Wake* becomes a never-ending process of narrativity rather than narrative - the experience teaches us to embrace discomfort, to never finish a text, and to never settle for the illusion of linguistic mastery.

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1 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 130.

2 Although this discussion will not deal overtly with the historical politics of Joyce's text, I believe it is impossible to separate Ireland's linguistic past, particularly the loss of the Irish language through British colonization, from any discussion of Joyce's aesthetics. It goes without saying - and much critical discourse has been generated concerning this issue - that the Irish language consistently saturates the portmanteau configurations of language in the *Wake*. Arguably, the loss of the Irish language is the lacunae around which the entire system of *Finnegans Wake* develops.

3 Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers U P, 2001), ix.

4 Foucault, 129.

5 Ibid, 126.

6 Foucault, 131.

7 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996), 7.

8 Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 10-11.

9 Steedman, 83.

10 Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Aushwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 145.

11 Agamben, 146.

12 Agamben, 161.

13 Shari Benstock, "Nightletters: Woman's Writing in the Wake," in *Critical Essays on James Joyce*, ed. Bernard Benstock (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1985), 231.

14 Tony Thwaites, *Joycean Temporalities: Debts, Promises, and Countersignatures* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 157.

15 In "No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)", Derrida describes the power and circulation of the letter: "Just as all language, all writing, every poetico-performative or theoretico-informative text dispatches, sends itself, allows itself to be sent, so today's missiles, whatever their underpinnings may be, allow themselves to be described more readily than ever as dispatches in writing (code, inscription, trace, and so on). That does not reduce them to the dull inoffensiveness that some would naively attribute to books. It recalls (exposes, explodes) that which, in writing, always includes the power of a death machine", 29.

16 Jacques Derrida, "No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives)," *Diacritics* 14 (1984): 28.

17 Ibid, 28.

18 Margot Norris, "Anna Livia Plurabelle: The Dream Woman," in *Women in Joyce*, eds. Suzette Henke and

Elaine Unkeless (Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 1982), 211.

19 John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake* (Madison: U of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 344.

20 Kimberly J. Devlin, *Wandering and Return in Finnegans Wake: An Integrative Approach to Joyce's Fictions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 134.

21 Roland McHugh, *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 3.

22 Norris, *Women in Joyce*, 211.

23 Norris, *Women in Joyce*, 212.

24 Richard Beckman, "Perils of Marriage in *Finnegans Wake*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 33 (1995): 88.

25 Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, 342.

26 Margot Norris, *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake: A Structuralist Analysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 69.

27 For Derrida's full explanation of the *pharmakon*, see "Plato's Pharmacy" in Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: Chicago U P), 1981.Â

28 Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, 379.

29 Derrida, "No Apocalypse, Not Now", 28.

30 Derrida, "No Apocalypse, Not Now", 31.

31 Derek Attridge, "Countlessness of Livestories: Narrativity in *Finnegans Wake*" in *Post-Structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French*, eds. Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 292.