Freud and Joyce, Moses and Finnegan: 
Rewriting the Primal History Scene for the Absent Mother

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“I would guard myself, however, against a possible misunderstanding. I do not mean to say that the world is so complicated that every assertion must hit the truth somewhere. No, our thinking has preserved the liberty of inventing dependencies and connections that have no equivalent in reality. It obviously prizes this gift very highly, since it makes such ample use of it - inside as well as outside of science.” (1) Sigmund Freud

Joyce's vexed relation to Freud is too complex to be easily resolved, or, worse still, openly ignored. That psychoanalysis, which has had such an impact on our century, did not also have an impact on a writer so concerned with the workings of the psyche as Joyce, there can be little doubt. Yet every one of his comments on the subject is derogatory and dismissive. As an author who distrusted authority in all its forms, Joyce had good reason to suspect the fashionable, bold claims of psychoanalysis. For its discovery he credited Giambattista Vico, an eighteenth century historian whose book is nicely titled The New Science, whom Joyce claimed had long preempted Freud. But psychoanalysis - and this is something way now find difficult to remember - is after all a speculation, more outside than inside of science. Freud was as much the poet as he was the physician, which Joyce may well have recognized. As an artist whose work consistently explored the inner life, Joyce was of necessity in competition with Freud. His hostility is understandable. After all, much has been made of Freud's efforts in self-analysis, but surprisingly little of Joyce's. His work, like Freud's, was always informed by the relentless examination of his own unconscious. Like Freud, Joyce endeavored to see into the psychic depths of the people around him. The reality of his daughter Lucia's psychosis adds poignancy to his efforts, despite any statement that he found psychoanalysis lacking in humor. As all his comments indicate, Joyce considered Freud his rival, and this is how I propose to treat the two: as rival brothers. Their careers run parallel in several ways, not the least of which is the simultaneous publication of their last books, in 1939.

Almost any discussion of Finnegan’s Wake that raises Freud's name concerns The Interpretation of Dreams. (2) But at least insofar as Joyce was inspired by Vico, and his "historical" reconstruction of the development of human consciousness from our earliest, giant-sized forebears, then Finnegan's Wake would have as much in common with some of with Freud's later books. In these he becomes increasingly absorbed by the collective character of neurosis and its origins, moving psychoanalysis towards the kind of reconstruction Vico attempts. This has been recognized, and critics have tried to point out the influence of Totem and Taboo on Joyce's book. (3) But Totem and Taboo (1912) is the early rough-draft of the work Freud himself called "my novel," Moses and Monotheism. And since I am interested here in identifying the convergence of thinking between Freud and Joyce, and not in demonstrating the possible influence, it is the latter
book that I will consider primarily, one that could hardly have influenced Joyce.

Whatever *Moses and Monotheism* is, it is certainly peculiar; in its own way, perhaps even as peculiar as *Finnegan's Wake*. In this book Freud attempts to summon up and to re-create the Primal History Scene - that earliest of primeval memories handed down to us as part of our phylogenetic inheritance - upon which all culture (society, morals, religion) is founded. (4) It is also his dramatization of the original Oedipus complex, which Freud considered the bottom source of every psychosis. Freud's "history" of universal neurosis runs in leaps and bounds. It hazards an impressive number of staggering historical hypotheses and Biblical exegeses. These, however, should not overpower his argument, since Freud's is a history of the return of the repressed, and no history at all; his theme is the inevitability of society's (individual and collective) repetition of its indestructible origins, and only the repetition counts. In *Finnegan's Wake* Joyce also imagines the Primal History Scene, that ancient event of our first ancestors' first sin. Joyce's (Vico's) history is also a history of eternal returns: "Finnagain Beginnagain." (6) The original sin of the forefathers is repeated by every generation, and, here too, it is the repetition that counts. Joyce's version of the Primal Scene is striking similar to Freud's. But the most striking similarity of all, as I hope to show, is that the same figure seems conspicuously missing from both versions: the mother. I propose therefore to return to the Primal History Scene, now my own, and to re-imagine it for the absent mother.

Dublin's Phoenix Park is the location of Joyce's Primal History Scene, a profusion of incest and buggery. The ancient event is recounted in practically every interpolated story, and it is alluded to on practically every page of the book. Yet despite this compulsive repetition, there is no "true" version given, no complete or impartial account. The incident is depicted in two scenarios that determine the configurations of all its versions. The earlier one involves HCE (father, publican, and brothel boss) and the pleasures he takes in two young whores in the park, under the watchful eyes of three soldiers. The whores are his own; they are also the incarnations of the split personalities of his daughter, Issy: "I said to the shiftless prostitute; let me be your fodder [Portuguese foder, to fuck]" (551.14), and "he selling him [self] before he forgot, issle issle" (394.20). (7) The scenario may be reconstructed as follows. HCE has gone into the bush (or the outhouse behind his pub) to defecate, where he stumbles on the two girls, their skirts raised, urinating. The girls invite HCE to satisfy himself, "gratis!" (415.20), which he does with both. This becomes the old man's claim to fame: his having achieved two erections (dying and resurrecting twice), as well as ejaculating successfully twice. It is also his ruin, since the soldiers and everyone else have witnessed his crime, including perhaps his wife, ALP, who is also the mother and madam. (8)

It would be good at this point to introduce a few basic principles of *Finnegan's Wake*. At the risk of beginning on a reductive note, any element of Joyce's dream-book may be sexually charged, as is characteristic of a Freudian dream-work. Joyce, like Freud, recognized that dreams are wish fulfillments; their grand theme is desire, which lives in the houses of Eros and Thanatos, and Phoenix Park is the dwelling place of both. In *Finnegan's Wake* almost every sexual encounter is related to the park incident. In addition, almost all sexual activity in the book is anal: "that's the side that appeals to em [them, M, HCE] the wring wrong way to wright woman. Shuck her!" (466.14-15). (9)

Finally, tellings of the incident with the girls (who may be indicated by any two
names joined by a conjunction) in which the sexual activity is specified, generally include at least two erections, two ejaculations. Here Joyce turns Yeats' "second comings" (346.3) into the "rearreaxes" of "his dickhuns" (610.3), as well as a "Number two coming! Full inside!" (588.21). This is a principle Joyce spells out many times over on the last page, and for the first and last time in the last and first sentence, a sentence which combines Viconian cycles with the sexual themes of the book:

“I go back to you, my cold father...till the near sight of the mere size of him...rising! Save me from those therrible prongs! Two more. Onetwo moremens more....I'll bear it on me ....So soft this morning, ours. Yes...taddy....If I seen him bearing down on me now...like he'd come....Yes, tjd. There's where. [Phoenix Park] First. We pass through grass behush the bush to [pee]. Whish! [wish] A gull. Gulls. [girls] Far calls. Coming...Us then. Finn, again! [wakes] Take. Bussofthee [flaccid]...The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the river run [ejaculation], past Eve and Adam's [Eve and a dam], from swerve of shore to bend of bay [flacid] brings us by a commodius [commode, outhouse] vicus [Voco] of recirculation [re-erection] back to Howth Castle and Environs [HCE and the two girls]. (628.1-16; 3.1-3)

The second scenario is taken to have occurred "ages and ages after the alleged misdemeanour" (35.5), and it may be seen as an inversion and a re-enactment of the first. HCE has an encounter with a cad in the park, who may be represented by either of his two sons, Shaun or Shem. This scenario introduces into the book Freud's father-son conflict, central to his own writing of the Primal History Scene, and central to the Oedipus complex. It also introduces into the incident a historical theme, as in its many retellings HCE is represented by several native Irelanders, the cad by several foreign invaders, or the two may be represented by any opposing historical figures. Appropriately, the story is based on one Joyce's father told; he had worked briefly as a Dublin tax collector, and had once defended his pouch against an assailant in the same Phoenix Park, "ambijacent floodplain [thanks to the girls], scene of its happening" (36.15). In Joyce's remaking of the story, presented in perhaps its most complete form in Iii (pp.34-37), HCE is "accosted" by the cad with the greeting, "Guinness thaw tool in ,jew me dinner ouzel fin?" (35.15-16). It stands for the Irish Conas ta tu indiu mo dhuine uasal fionn? Meaning, "How are you today my fair gentleman?" a salutation which is repeated throughout the book in various idioms. The church bells have just rung, yet the cad asks HCE for the time. This straightforward question triggers an exasperated fit of stuttering on HCE's part, in which he spills forth an unwarranted defense of himself for some charge that is not specified, presumably the old park incident. HCE denies all accusations "upon the Open Bible and before the Great Taskmaster's [the two girls]...and before the Deity Itself...and of every sohole in every corner wheresoever of this globe in general...that there is not one tittle of truth, allow me to tell you, in that purest of fibfib fabrications" (36.26-34). In the Gaelic greeting Fenian nationalism may be implied (since the Fenians, among the competing Irish parties, were the most vehement concerning the revival of the Irish tongue), and the salutation may be interpreted as a check for alignment. But this hardly explains HCE's flabbergasted reaction to a simple request for the time. As always, Joyce's writing is richly allusive, and this passage may be read in at least two other ways, one integrating this second scenario with the first, the other
associating Joyce's depiction of the Primal History Scene with Freud's version.

As Joyce tells us, "A baser meaning has been read into these characters the literal sense of which decency can safely scarcely hint" (33.14-15). "Base" here connotes blatant sexuality, but also etymologies, Joyce's "root language" (424.17), which always underwrites whatever else may be read. Vico's "great principle of etymology," that the history of humankind is contained in the history of our words, is a principle which informs Freud's work as well as Joyce's. The cad's question, "how much a clock it was that the clock struck had he any idea by cock's luck [?]" (35.18-19), may assume another meaning when etymological associations are considered. The phrasing "how much a clock," as opposed to "what o'clock," suggests some kind of commercial exchange, an exchange which begins to make sense when we recall HCE's occupation, and consider the origins of the word "clock." According to Skeat's Etymological Dictionary, it derives from Middle Dutch clocke, or from Old North French cloque, both meaning "bell." Even in its more recent usages (late Latin cloc(c)a and Irish clog) "clock" equals "bell," which is phonetically equivalent to French belle, a beautiful young girl, such as "Isabelle" (556.7), or the "two belles that make the one appeal...[their] fourtiered skirts are up" (194.26-27). According to the OED, "to clock" is also "to cluck" (an ancient usage now confined to Scottish and Northern dialects), as of two "isabellis...chicks" (446.7-10), or of "Ahahn! Anna, ALP... that original hen" (110.22-23). "Bird" is British slang for young woman, and women are often associated with fowls in Finnegan's Wake, particularly the dove/raven combination for the Issy(s), and the hen for ALP. "Hen" is also Scottish slang for girl, and poule is French slang for whore, so that ALP becomes the "poule in the parko!" (201.1), and HCE becomes "Master Pules" (166.20). Finally, "whore" derives from Icelandic hora, an adulteress (Skeat), but Latin hora means hour, which again refers to "clock." (11) All this suggests a simple reason for HCE's extreme reaction to the cad's simple question: the cad's request may be, not for the time, but for a whore, "by cock's luck." HCE, "the bellmaster" (35.30), understanding the cad's implications, answers, "Hence my nonation wide hotel and creamery establishments, which for the honours of our mewmew mutual daughters, credit me, [it's all a huge lie]" (36.21-23), which sounds as though he's saying a few things at once.

Later in the book Joyce integrates this second scenario with a story telling how Buckley shot the defecating Russian General, dramatized by Shaun and Shem, "Butt and Taff (Staff)," as a television sketch in Ilissi, and repeated frequently in the book. It is a story of Freudian parricide, again derived from one Joyce's father told, and in it all of the shooting is anal: "blow the ass off his aceupper" (352.11). In the passage we are considering, Joyce may allude to the Buckley story with the sentence, "Excretion is cleaverly to be honnisoid" (30.33), or perhaps, Excretion is clearly to be homicide. Regardless, HCE's confrontation with the cad - that "inquiring kidder" (30.33), recalling the "kids cad who buttended a bland old isaac" (3.11) on the first page of the book - seems to involve more than an uneasy exchange of information. Having been asked the time, "The Sarwicker of that spurring [sparring] instant... unwishful as he felt of being hurled into eternity right then, is plugged by a softnosed bullet from the sap" (35.21-26). In this version, however, HCE "halted, quick on the draw, and replied that he was feeling tipstaff [himself]... adding, buttall, as he bended deeply with smoked sardinish breath to give more ponderus to the copperstick he presented" (35.26-37); he returns fire. HCE has clearly the more powerful weapon, "now standing full erect" (36.14), but the cad is
suddenly joined by four others (the four Mamalujo masters, who in Iliv preside over the bed of Tristan and Isolde (the young HCE and ALP, among others), or perhaps the cad's brother and the three soldiers). Nevertheless, HCE is undaunted. With his impressive weapon "pointed at an angle of thirty-two degrees...that duc de Fer's overgrown milestone" (36.17-18), he challenges the five to "comeraid! Me only, them five ones, he is equal combat. I have won straight" (36.20-21). The cad, "stern to checkself" (36.35), "lufted his slopingforward, bad Sweatagore good murrough and dublnotch [double-notch] on to it as he was greedily obliged, and like a sensible ham [the brother of Shem in the Biblical story of father-son conflict], with infinite tact in the delicate situation seen the touchy nature of its perilous theme...went about his business, whoever it was" (37.2-9). (12)

The "touchy nature" of this perilous park theme is obvious enough. Taken together, the two park incident scenarios add up to a Primal Oedipal Scene suggestively similar to that of the primeval horde described by Freud first in Totem and Taboo, and emphasized again in Moses and Monotheism. This is particularly so when we return to the cad's Gaelic greeting, "Guinness thaw tool in jew me dinner ouzel fin?" which now seems reminiscent of a prayer (the son's) to the Father: "Give us Thou tool to injure me dinner, Our Finner!" And since "ouzel" is the name of birds belonging to the genus Turdus, such as the Ring Ouzel and the Water Ouzel, (13) we may mis-read Joyce's mis-written Gaelic in still another way: "Give us Thou tool to enjoy me sisters, Father Sinners!" There is also, of course, the famous Jewish Son who taught us this prayer, and who sacrificed himself to the Father in a sacred supper.

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In his last book Freud draws on his knowledge of individual neurosis and infant sexuality in an attempt to understand the character and origins of collective neurosis. This he identifies, first and foremost, with religious phenomena: for Freud, neurosis is a private religion, and religion is a universal neurosis. He is concerned, therefore, in tracing the origin and development of that form of religion that he considers the most culturally advanced, Jewish monotheism, and its successor, Roman Catholicism. Such a discussion must perforce take me from the track of Finnegans Wake. There may be little in this, or any of Joyce's books, to contradict Freud's notion of religion as a universal psychosis (rather, there is much to substantiate it). But it is not my intention here to demonstrate the parallel thinking of Joyce and Freud on the subject of religion. I am interested in Joyce's depiction of the Primal History Scene. Only insofar as religious themes come to bear on this scene am I concerned, and it is very likely that such themes do: according to Vico, "among all people the civil world began with religion."(14) My discussion of Freud will of necessity take me away from Joyce, and ultimately away from Freud himself; it will move me, however, towards my own fictionalization of the Primal History Scene, after which I hope to return to Finnegans Wake and Moses and Monotheism.

In this book Freud writes of a conviction gained a quarter of a century earlier while writing Totem and Taboo, which had only grown stronger: "From then on I have never doubted that religious phenomena are to be understood only on the model of the neurotic symptoms of the individual...as a return of long forgotten important happenings in the primeval history of the human family, that they owe their obsessive character to
that very origin and therefore derive their effect on mankind from the historical truth they contain" (MM, 71). Freud theorizes that the archaic heritage of humankind consists not only of instinctual dispositions, but also of memory traces of former generations. A memory may become part of our phylogenetic inheritance only if it is important enough, or is repeated frequently enough by successive generations, or in both cases. But if this "original knowledge," which is inherited attached to an instinctual disposition, pertains to some profoundly traumatic event, then most probably it has been repressed by our ancestors as well (an unconscious yet willed forgetting). What is inherited, then, is an instinctual disposition that remains vital and intact, though connected to memory traces that have been altered and distorted out of recognition. Freud further postulates that these ancient memory traces were formed in connection with the historical development of speech, and that they assume the same ubiquitous properties as Symbols - equivalent for all peoples, ignoring even the difference between languages. Finally, if these universal thought-connections come from a time when speech was developing, then they would have to be repeated when the individual passes through such a development; that is to say, between the ages of two and five, when the child learns to speak and attempts to master the Oedipus complex. Early trauma may result in a failure of such mastery, and consequently childhood neurosis; this is followed by a defensive repression and a period of latency, after which there is the outbreak of neurosis in the adult - a partial return of the repressed memories. The human child cannot be successfully "civilized" without passing through a phase of neurosis, and Freud felt sure that in the history of the human species, something happened similar to the events of childhood. This "happening" was fended off and forgotten (repressed), but it returned to plague the species in the guise of religion: "It is specially worthy of note that every memory returning from the forgotten past does so with great force, produces an incomparably strong influence on the mass of mankind, and puts forward an irresistible claim to be believed, against which all logical obligations remain powerless - very much like a credo quia absurdum” (MM, 109).

Freud therefore tries to imagine the forgotten traumatic event, undoubtedly of a sexual-aggressive nature, which occurred in our ancestral past, and was so impressive as to leave a permanent memory scar on our collective psyche; it is Freud's attempt to imagine the Oedipus complex of the species.

Freud's "fiction" has as its source a suggestion offered by Darwin, that primeval man, like the apes from which he evolved, originally lived in small hordes, each falling under the domination of a strong male. Freud supposes that at such a time speech could not have been far advanced. "The story is told in a very condensed way, as if what in reality took centuries to achieve, and during that time was repeated innumerably [by all our ancestors], happened only once" (MM, 102). It may be summarized as follows. The father, being the strongest, is the brutal master of his horde, the ancestral family. In his unrelenting jealousy he forbids his sons to copulate with their mother or sisters, and when they attempt to do so, he castrates them or drives them off. The sons hate and fear their father; they also envy him, and each desires to replace him as father of the horde. Eventually the sons gather strength and murder their father, after which they consume his body, "according to the custom of those times" (MM, 103). The murderous deed leaves them with guilty feelings, and as a concession to the dead father (and for the practical reason of avoiding a fresh repetition of the same events), the sons agree to re-institute his prohibition, to forego sexual intercourse with their mother and sisters. "Thus there came
into being the first form of social organization accompanied by a renunciation of instinctual gratification; recognition of mutual obligations; institutions declared sacred, which could not be broken - in short the beginnings of morality and law. Each renounced the idea of gaining for himself the position of the father...With this the taboo of incest and the law of exogamy came into being" (MM, 104).

Despite their concession, the memory of the father continues to plague the sons. In time he is substituted by a totem animal, which is revered as the paternal ancestor and protecting spirit of the clan. The relationship between the "brother horde" and the totem animal, however, retains the original ambivalency of feelings towards the father. To compensate for these feelings the "totem meal" is instituted, a festival during which the fate of the primal father is inflicted upon the totem animal: in a ritual sacrifice, he is killed and eaten by all the brothers together (as has been documented in primitive tribes by Frazier and others). This festival not only honors the totem, reinforcing his bond to the clan through the literal introjection of him, it is also a repetition and a celebration of the united sons' triumph over the primeval father. Freud concludes that this totemism "may be regarded as the earliest appearance of religion in the history of mankind...The next step forward from totemism is the humanizing of the worshiped being." (MM, 105) The farthest extension of the totem meal is the Eucharistic meal, but prior to its institution the Primal History Scene was to be repeated many times over.

In Moses and Monotheism Freud attempts to make plausible the reconstruction of a parricide that would be for monotheism what the murder of the primal father had been for totemism, as well as a repetition and reinforcement of the original deed. This sacrificial father (in Freud's continuing "fiction") was the great man Moses, an Egyptian, violently murdered by his own adopted Jews. Moses was the father of the Jewish people, and he had instituted among them the monotheistic worship of Jahve (the name borrowed from an Egyptian volcano-god), which Moses had himself created based on the earlier Egyptian religion of Aton. Following his murder the Jahve religion was abandoned (repressed), and after a period of latency that lasted perhaps a century, it was revived as the "new" religion of the Jewish people at Qades, prior to their settling in Canaan. The primeval father had recovered his historical rights, yet feelings of guilt continued to plague the Jewish people - a precursor to the return of the repressed trauma. Paul, a "political-religious agitator," and a murderer himself, would seize upon these feelings and trace them back to their original source. This he called original sin. It was a crime committed against God, and it could only be redeemed through death. In reality, however, this crime was the murder of the primeval father who was later deified, though the murderous deed itself had long been repressed. It had returned in the form of Paul's "phantasy of expiation," the act of expiation itself a repetition of the original crime: "A Son of God, innocent himself, had sacrificed himself, and thereby taken over the guilt of the world. It had to be a Son, for the sin had been the murder of the Father." (MM, 110)

For Freud, the history of religion may be understood as a series of attempts to resolve the guilt resulting from that primeval murder - the mysterious crime of our ancestral past that cannot be remembered - and to bring about reconciliation with the offended father. It is a sense of guilt that is revived in each of us through the Oedipus complex - and this, essentially, is its source - a sense of guilt which is assumed by religion. The Oedipus complex of the individual is too brief and indistinct to have inspired the father-gods; Freud had to imagine the ancestral crime of our phylogenetic
past, that original Oedipus complex of the species which would be the mythical transposition of our individual trauma, and which would in turn insure the inevitability, for each of us, of being an "Oedipus in germ." For Freud, then, all religion is reduced to a longing for the father. The final, opening passage of *Finnegan's Wake*, quoted already ("I go back to you, my cold father..."), is generally read as ALP's "spiritual" return to her longed for husband and father, the old, dead HCE ("old Mother Liffey's return to Father Ocean"). But the alternate reading I have suggested - that of the daughter Issy(s)’ return of another sort to her longed for father - may be more directly to Freud's point: our desire for the father is sexual and aggressive, deriving from the Oedipus complex, and, ultimately, from the memories of our ancestral past. Joyce's Primal History Scene, like Freud's, is an Oedipal scene of incest and parricide. Both offer similar versions of the original sin. HCE as brothel boss of his wife and daughters is perhaps the modernist equivalent of Freud's primeval father. For Joyce, as for Freud, the prime mover is jealousy: "ARCHAIC ZELOTYPIA" (264.9). It is a jealousy which incites the son(s) to murder their father: "you're shot, major; by an unknowable assailant (masked) against whom he had been jealous over, Lotta Crabtree and Pomona Evlyn [French pomme, apple/Eve]" (62.32-34). Again, my intention is not to point out an influence, but to consider the parallel thinking of Freud and Joyce. One such convergence may be seen in the following passage. Butt, a rival son, offers a version of the park incident which combines both scenarios - including the "rifal's proceedings" (352.18) concerning the murder of the father, "his urssian geminal" (352.1):

...the same old domstoole story and his upleave the fallener and is greatly to be petted...I seen his boortholomas vadnhammaggs vise a vise them scharlot runners [girls] and how they gave love to him and how he took the ward from us (odious the fly fly flirtation of his him and hers!...and, my oreland for a rolvever, sord, by the splunthers of colt and bung goes the enemay...) to blow the ass off his aceupper. Thistake it’s meest! [Take and eat of this...My body (15)] And after the meath the dulwich. [dull wish: guilt?] We insurrectioned and, be the procuratress of the hory synnotts [girls]...I shuttm, miseus, like a wide sleever! Hump to dump! [HCE] Tumbleheaver! (352.3-15)

In an exaggerated sense, Joyce seems here to have compressed the whole of Freud's "novel" into a single passage of less than fifteen lines. Like Freud's, Joyce's Primal Scene returns and is repeated in other "historical" parricides, notably that of "Sire Jeallous Seizer" (271.3): "That nasal floss of our natal folkfathers so so much now for Valsinggiddyrex and his arks day triumph" (281. 11), Valsinggiddyrex being a Celtic chieftain who revolted against Caesar. The Roman father is an incarnation of HCE, "that gamely torskmester, with his duo of druidesees [girls] in ready money rompers" (271.4). His regicide is an important motif in the book, and it is presented as a "farce of dusty" (162.2) at the end of liv--which appropriately features eating - in which the sons play the parts of Burrus and Caseous, Butter and Cheese. (16) Margarine is played by Issy, "while Burrus and Caseous are contending for her misstery" (166.36). The two brothers (who in Freud's version have been driven off by the father and have lived together in forced celibacy) band together "in temporal relief plea - let us be tolerant of antipathies. Nex quovis burro num fit mercaseus?" (163.14-15), from any butter there is made pure cheese. In a conflation of history "Antonius-Burrus-Caseous," three soldiers, merge into
one "boob caddy," who performs an "exleged phatrisight [parricide]...through the strongholes of my acropoll, as a boosted blasted bleating biatant bloaten blasphorus bleaphorus idiot who cannot tail a bomb from a painapple when he steals one [an Issy from an ALP perhaps] and wannot psing his psalmen with the cong in our gregational pompoms with the canting crew" (167.4-17).

Interestingly enough, in the midst of the children's "farce" Joyce alludes to one of Freud's well known cases of childhood neurosis, that of "Little Hans." Hans features as a rival brother of Burrus and Caseous, together with a couple of Biblical brothers: "This, of course, also explains why we were taught to play in childhood: Der Haensli [little Hans] ist ein Butterbrot. mein Butterbrot! Und Koebi [Jacob] iss dein Schtinkenkt! [Ham sandwich] Ja! Ja! Ja!" Despite Joyce's parodic intentions here, it is worth noting that Hans' case, described in Totem and Taboo and elsewhere, is an example of how children displace ambivalent feelings for their father onto the totem animal, which becomes his substitute. Little Hans' "horse phobia" is the result of "having admired his father as possessing a big penis [and there is none larger than HCE's, "the fifteen inch loveseat" (384.22)] and feared him as threatening his own. The same part is played by the father alike in the Oedipus and castration complexes - the part of a dreaded enemy to the sexual interests of childhood." (17)

Another of Freud's well-known childhood cases (which Joyce does not seem to mention, though its repercussions in his book are strong enough) is that of "Little Arapad" and his "fowl phobia." Arapad identifies his father with a cock, his mother a hen, and himself with a chicken. At one point he abandons speech in favor of cackling and crowing. In Finnegans Wake one of the more prominent incarnations of ALP is the mother hen, Biddy Doran, who discovers a letter in the dump that appears in fragments throughout the book. This letter is an especially important motif in Finnegans Wake, and sometimes it seems to be the book itself. Appropriately ALP, the mother hen (like little Arapad), cackles on several occasions: "Ald Letty Plussiboots to scratch his cacumen and cackle his transitus" (415.4), and "my litigimate was well to wrenn tigtag cackling about it, like the sally berd she is" (364.30). In addition, "Hatches Cock's Bggs [HCE]" is the "rummest old rooster...cock of the wark" (383.9-10), and in the "Paraskivee...the cockcock crows" (192.21). Little Arapad's favorite game is "slaughter the fowl," the bird substituted by a toy, which he pretends to kill and afterwards caresses. He speaks of becoming a cock when he's bigger and of marrying his mother. Based on these and other cases of childhood neurosis, Freud concludes that the totem stands in place of the father, and that the "two principal ordinances of totemism, the two taboo prohibitions which constitute its core - not to kill the totem and not to have sexual relations with a woman of the same totem - coincide in their content with the crimes of Oedipus...as well as the two primal wishes of children, the insufficient repression or the reawakening of which forms the nucleus of perhaps every psychosis" (TT, 132). That the totem stands for the father, Finnegans Wake would seem to seem to agree, "with their familiar, making the totem' (389.33), considering particularly "his elevation of one yard" (689.24) a few lines above. And since German toten is "the dead," HCE is again implied, though the old man seems quite alive at the moment. (18)

Both Joyce and Freud imagine original Oedipal scenes, or as Joyce calls it, in a repetition of the prayer to the father who "forbids us our trespassers as we forgate [forget] him...an eatupus complex" (128.34-36). Joyce's family romance is a story of "incestuish
salacities among gerontophils" (115.12), but there is more incest in *Finnegan’s Wake* than that which occurs between old HCE and his sons and daughters: there is further incest between the brothers, between Issy and her (imagined) sister, and between the sister(s) and brothers. In addition, there are ample sexual encounters between HCE and ALP, both as youthful lovers and as old-aged parents, with ALP often playing the role of the two girls on such occasions. Levi-Strauss tells us that a myth consists of all its versions, and all of these versions of park incest are given, explicitly or implicitly, many times over; again, no one account takes precedence. But at least insofar as *Finnegan’s Wake* represents, essentially, a Freudian dream-work (whether or not this is due to Joyce’s own investigations, or Freud’s influence, or both, is not a factor here), and it is the purpose of dreams to communicate to the conscious mind secret and forbidden information, contrary to the efforts of the dream-censor to block it, then presumably the most "forbidden" material would be the most deeply hidden. Perhaps, then, we might approach the problem from the other direction. We might reformulate the question which is as old as the book: instead of asking, "What happened in Phoenix Park?" we might ask "What didn't happen?"

"Night Lessons" (IIii) is the central chapter of the book, and the principal subject of this central lesson concerns the diagram of ALP’s genitals that appears on page 293, the mystery of which Shaun and Shem seek to understand, with Issy nearby: "to see figuratleavely the whome of your eternal geomater" (293.31). (19) The chapter occurs in the middle of the night, during deepest sleep, and it is therefore one of the most dense in the book; presumably, also, it is closest to the forbidden material. Significantly, the lesson results in a battle between the brothers, after which they make up and merge, physically and incestuously: "I plant my penstock in your poststern" (305.26-27). (20) Of all that seems unclear in this chapter, one thing does not: the diagram of ALP's genitals remains a mystery, representing a knowledge Shaun and Shem seem to forgo in honor of their father: "Heavysciusgardaddy, parent who gives sweatmeats, will gift uns his Noblett's surprize [noblesse oblige]. Abnegation is Adaptation. With this laudable purpose in loud agility let us be singulfied.” (306.3-4, R, 5-6) Considering the many sexual configurations which Joyce positions the five (six) members of HCE's family, there is one which does not seem to occur, though Joyce comes close on a few occasions, as when “the hiesindensity buck [Buckley] far of his melovelance tells how when he was fast marking his first lord for cremation the whvfe of his bothem [ALP] was the very lad's thing on his mehind... Prostatates, pujealousties!" (350.13-18). It is difficult, if not impossible, to be sure of anything in *Finnegan’s Wake*. Nevertheless, of all the park incest Joyce is able to squeeze between the covers of this book, there is one form which does not seem to occur (at least it never occurs explicitly), and all of the others, to greater or lesser extent, do: there is no apparent incest between ALP and her sons (or between ALP and Issy, though this does not stand out as much). Of course, the Issy(s) are also always ALP, and Shem and Shaun are also always HCE; but again, Joyce has the remarkable ability to keep his "characters" separate and autonomous, while at the same time merging them with the two gender foci. We might therefore posit the one version of the park incident that the book does not seem to offer. Instead of the father, HCE, and the two young girls who are also his daughters, we might imagine the mother, ALP, and the two young boys who are her sons. Better yet, we might imagine the mother, ALP, and the two young boys who are the split-personalities of a young HCE (just as Shaun and Shem
frequently substitute their father).

Curiously, mother-son incest also seems absent in Freud's Primal Scene. Earlier in *Totem and Taboo* he stressed that although the totem stood for the father, "Totems were inherited only through the female line" (TT, 109). The reason for this maternal inheritance was the specific avoidance of incest between the son and his mother and sisters; if the totems were inherited through the father, the prohibition would be directed against the daughter's having sex with her father and brothers. "It is interesting to observe that the first restrictions...affected the sexual freedom of the younger generation (that is between the brothers and sisters and between the sons and mothers) whereas incest between fathers and daughters was only prevented by further extension of the regulations" (TT, 121-122). (The latter is of course the form of incest that predominates in Joyce's book.) Furthermore, Freud quotes Frazier's conclusion that "totemism would be a creation of the feminine rather than the masculine mind: its roots would lie in the sick fancies of pregnant women." "Anything indeed that struck a woman at that mysterious moment of her life when she first knows herself to be a mother might be identified by her with the child in her womb. Such maternal fancies, so natural and seeming so universal, appear to be the root of totemism" (TT, 180). With *Moses and Monotheism* Freud's emphasis shifts almost completely to the father and sons. Yet the mother's position in the Oedipus complex is as equally important as the father's, at least insofar as she is the forbidden object of desire (together with the sisters). Her role may be more passive, but the taboo actually informs the mother, not the father, who merely enforces it. As early as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1910), Freud writes "many men dream of having sexual relations with their mothers....It is clearly the key to the tragedy and the complement to the dream of the dreamer's father being dead. The story of Oedipus is the reaction to these two typical dreams." (21) Yet the Primal History Scene of Freud's last book seems conspicuously singular. Again I would like to reformulate an old question, this one as old as Sophocles' tragedy: But [s]he, where is [s]he? Where shall now be read the fading record of this ancient guilt? (22)

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Ten years ago I began a novel that was published in 1991 as *Divina Trace*. (23) In it I attempt to create the myth of my own origins, of my own family history, and I attempt to create it around the figure of a mother-goddess who has long inspired me: she is La Divina Pastora, the black madonna who features in the Catholic church of Siparia, a small East-Indian village in southern Trinidad. She is a collective goddess, worshipped by Catholics and Hindus alike, the former as an incarnation of the Virgin Mary, the latter as the goddess of creation and destruction (and one of the most important deities of the Hindu pantheon), Kali Ma. For her annual Hindu festival East-Indians make pilgrimages to Siparia from all over the island, they spend the entire night of Holy Thursday in the church praying, and on Good Friday they parade the black madonna through the streets. When I began my novel I had not read the work of either Freud or Joyce. Yet I realize now that my own fiction contains all the essentials of their Primal History Scenes, transposed in my own way, but clearly identifiable: the father-daughter incest, the father-son rivalry, the parricide. There is even the suggestion of cannibalism. But there is one event (as I reconstruct my own Primal Scene), that does not seem to have its correlation
in either Freud's or Joyce's versions. This event, which is perhaps more outrageous still than the parricide and the cannibalism, actually occurs twice in my book. I remember troubling over it (I could not understand it, I tried to refuse it) but the event pressed itself on my imagination: it is the brutal gang rape of the mother-sister by the band of rival sons. It is this frightening event that I would attempt now to understand, and in order to do so I would like to return to Freud's Primal Scene. In the original horde it is the Father's role to keep his sons from incestuous relations with their mother and sisters. As the horde grows larger and more unmanageable, it seems likely that his attentions would be directed towards the most coveted female: I suggest this would be the mother. The sons would feel a stronger attraction for their mother for several reasons. She had suckled them, and had established a powerful bond with them from earliest infancy. The mother would be more attractive to the sons as she would be more sexually mature, farther removed from them than their sisters. Finally, the mother would be most attractive as the female most taboo. As the sons mature and become threatening, the primal father castrates them or drives them off. The band of exiled brothers, who have lived in forced celibacy for some time - who have lived with the fear of castration for some time - gather strength and murder their father, whom they consume in the frenzy of their deed. With the father eliminated, what would prevent them now from taking advantage of their mother and sisters? More bluntly, what would prevent the brutal gang rape of the highly coveted mother?

Freud suggests that the sons forgo sexual intercourse with their mother and sisters out of remorse for their murdered father, but surely this remorse is a much-delayed affection. It hardly seems a plausible explanation for such a denial of the instincts at all, even after the pleasant memories of their father have returned (undoubtedly they have been repressed), so as to play on their consciences. On the other hand, if they have abused their mother (who after all remains in their midst as a living remembrance of their deed), then their remorse for the wrongdoing they have perpetrated on her, coupled with the remorse that may develop due to their murder of the father, could perhaps bring them to deny their instinctual urges. And this of course after an initial indulgence. The question that arises, however, is why should the Primal Scene include this offensive rape (rape after all is a sexual assault)? Freud stressed that the incest taboo is in no way instinctual: it is strictly a social intervention, which indeed the instincts oppose. There may be no reason, under normal circumstances, for the mother's refusal of her sons. If, however, she has just watched them murder and eat their father - and fears, perhaps, that the same end may be in store for her - she is not likely to be receptive, no matter how common such events were for the primeval family. In addition, the sons may have transferred some of their feelings of hostility for their father onto their mother, whom they may have felt rejected them.

Let me continue my fiction by suggesting that if the sons did repent for their deed by proclaiming their mother "untouchable" (as Freud describes royalty is honored), then perhaps they would give her an exalted status as well. Freud suggests that between the murder of the primeval father, and the restitution of the patriarchal order, matriarchy would intervene, though he does not say when this shift might take place or why it might occur. I suggest that following the father's death the brother horde would shift naturally to a matriarchal structure. As I have said already, the sons' institution of exogamy is the only way to prevent another primal father; their shift to matriarchy would enforce this
still further. It also seems likely that at this time the mother would adopt the totem animal as a replacement for the absent primeval father; as stated already, the totem is inherited through the mother. The totem meal would then be instituted as a means of honoring the dead father, as well as a means of repeating the crime. But according to Freud, the killing and the consuming of the totem animal is not the only form of excess in the totem feast: there is license for every kind of instinctual gratification. The totem meal, like festivals and carnivals in general, "is a permitted, or rather an obligatory excess, a solemn breach of prohibition." (TT, 140) It is possible that just as the prohibition "not to kill the totem" was suspended for the occasion of the totem feast, so also would the prohibition "not to have sex with another member of the clan," particularly since only members of that clan could take part in the feast. This excess would have been the gift of the mother: a means of insuring her place of honor through a repetition of the terrible deed that established it. (24)

By his own admission, Freud does not know what role to assign to the mother-goddesses in his genesis of religious illusion. He is unsure how or when they may have evolved, though he does suggest they probably anticipated the father-gods (just as matriarchy anticipated the restitution of the patriarchal order), and they were worshipped side-by-side with the male deities for a long time to come. If, as my fiction suggests, the wronged primeval mother was subsequently exalted by the brother horde, this may have been the first step towards her later deification. Such an evolution of the mother-gods would probably precede that of the father-gods, which, as Freud suggests, would appear with the humanizing of the totem animal. In any case, at one period the great mother deities appeared, and if they appeared once (according to Freud's history of the return of the repressed), they would appear again. Following this suggestion, I would like to take up briefly Freud's history of monotheism where he leaves off, with Paul and his "phantasy of expiation:" just as Freud leaps from the primeval father to Moses, I would like to leap from the primeval mother to Mary.

It seems that under the Biblical Magdalene, Mary the virgin was only another form of Mary the whore, perhaps even the Great Whore of Babylon worshipped beside her savior-Son in the Jerusalem temple. According to Robert Briffault, the term "virgin" originally connoted the very reverse of what it has come to imply. (25) "Holy virgins" were originally "sacred prostitutes," and during early Catholicism sacred brothels were frequently attached to churches and religious houses. (According to Briffault, organized prostitution derives directly from these prevailing religious institutions, for which a system of medical inspection and quarantine was enforced.) Throughout the Middle Ages virgin and whore were exchanged attributes of Mary, when she was adopted as the patron saint of prostitutes. By a papal Bull Pope Julius II instituted a sacred brothel in Rome, which prospered under the patronage of Leo X and Clement VII, the earnings of which went to the support the Holy Sisters of the Order of St. Mary Magdalene. (26)

Nevertheless, it was the virgin attribute of Mary in its modern sense that was to take precedence. This may have begun with the translation of the word *almah* ("young woman") in the Hebrew Gospels as "virgin," leading to the acceptance of the virgin birth of the Son as central dogma of the Roman Church. These were perhaps the first steps toward the deification of Mary as the Virgin Mother. In 1858 Mary appeared to St. Bernadette and revealed to her the truth of her own Immaculate Conception, announced to the world by Pope Pius IX: that the Virgin Mary, unique among the human race, had
been born without the stain of original sin. (There are interesting repercussions here to my fiction: if Mary represents the return of the primeval mother, she could hardly share the responsibility for the original crime, any more than could the father.) Finally, in 1950 Pope Pius XII announced the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven, reconfirmed by the Credo of Pope Paul VI in 1968.

According to Freud, Paul traced the original sin back to its source, to the murder of the primeval father, and seized upon the guilt which had been its consequence, festering in human hearts ever since. Paul imagined a "phantasy of expiation" involving a sacrificial Son, who could assume our guilt for the original parricide. The Eucharistic meal could then be instituted as its fresh repetition and absolution. The repressed had returned, disguised by a thin veil. But if, as my own fiction suggests, the primeval mother had also been the victim of that original crime, then perhaps the "phantasy of expiation" imagined by Paul was only partial, laying the ground for a more complete expiation that would come with the phantasy of the Virgin. If the original crime also included the brutal rape, what better way for the sons to deny it, than to have the primeval mother declare herself eternally virgin? Together the sacrificial Son and the Virgin Mother could be all of our two-way resolution of the Oedipal conflict: the Son could dissolve our guilt for the murder of the father, since he had sacrificed himself in our atonement; and the Mother could dissolve our guilt for the primeval rape, since as Virgin she was herself proof it had not occurred. The problem with such a resolution, perhaps, is that while the Son in the Eucharistic meal provides a means to satisfy our second wish (at least indirectly), the Virgin Mother would seem to deny our first wish absolutely.

Both Freud and Joyce have been praised and condemned for their frank treatment of women. Both were eldest sons. Both had obsessive relations to their mothers. Both seemed inordinately dependent on their wives. For both their relations to women, in their work as in their private lives, were exceedingly complex, and I have neither the knowledge nor the space to attempt to assess them here. It is interesting, for whatever reasons, that although Freud emphasis again and again our desire for the mother as a key to understanding our emotional lives, the mother figure seems absent from his Primal History Scene. As I have suggested, his interest seems to shift increasingly towards the father as his work proceeds. Certainly he felt he could understand men better than he could women, who, by his own admission, were to him an enigma. But why does Freud's psychoanalysis privilege the father figure over the figure of the mother? This is a question Paul Ricoeur raises at the end of Freud and Philosophy. His answer is brief and not altogether satisfying. The primeval father is the "lost archaic object," of greater symbolic power since he is the name-giver and law-giver, less the begetter of the mother. The fantasy of Freud's Primal Scene refers us back to an unreal and impossible father, a father who is missing from our personal and collective history. He cannot "return" except as a cultural (religious) theme: "he is not an object of desire but the source of institution. The father is an unreality set apart, which, from the start is a being of language....Thus the father figure was bound to have a richer and more articulated destiny than the mother figure." (27)

For whatever reasons, the mother figure seems even more noticeably absent from Freud's final depiction of the Primal Scene in Moses and Monotheism, than in his earlier version in Totem and Taboo. Since that early book, Freud is insistent that "the beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex" (TT, 156). And the
Oedipus complex is for Freud always essentially dual, deriving from dual dreams, dual wishes. Yet despite such dual principles - always so fundamental in Freud's thinking - his original Oedipus complex of the species seems conspicuously singular. For Joyce (whose thinking is also always fundamentally dual) the Primal Scene does seem to embody dual wishes, and, as I have suggested, dual sins. Nevertheless, mother-son incest is not one of them, which I have proposed as the counterpart of the original parricide. In that case, Joyce's depiction of the Primal Scene may be no different from Freud's; after all, the primeval father copulates with his daughters as readily as HCE. As I have suggested, however, Joyce may actually be placing greater emphasis on incestuous desires for the mother by highlighting other forms of incest, and making these least prominent in his book: in a dream-text the most "forbidden" material would presumably be the most carefully hidden. Admittedly, this is a very peculiar way of reading, a method that may easily be attacked from all sides: to attempt to identify what is missing in the text, and to turn around and call this missing element somehow the most vital. Then again, *Finnegan's Wake* is no ordinary book. Then again, it is impossible to be sure of anything in *Finnegan's Wake*, even what is not there. It is interesting, however, to return to Joyce's previous book, *Ulysses*, and to note that at least insofar as Stephen Dedalus is a symbolic son in that book, then Molly Bloom's frank sexual desires for him may be interpreted as incestuous. In that sense, the name of Molly's accomplice in adultery, Blazes Boylan, is also suggestive: Boylan also seems something of a symbolic son, and the counterpart, not so much of Leopold Bloom, but of Stephen - suggesting, perhaps, an altogether different way of reading that book. Regardless, my point is simply that at least by Molly Bloom's final soliloquy of *Ulysses*, Joyce was to some extent absorbed specifically with the theme of mother-son incest. It is possible that Joyce may have abandoned this theme in turning to *Finnegan's Wake*, but it is not probable; as radically different as each of Joyce's books is, each also builds upon and enlarges the books that precede it. I suggest that if mother-son incest is an absent element of *Finnegan's Wake* (and not, simply, a blind spot in my own enthusiastically biased reading of the book) then Joyce knew that it was. Certainly the mother figure, ALP, is not missing from *Finnegan's Wake*, and neither is there an absence of desire for her; ALP, the mother, looms large in *Finnegan's Wake*. She stands beside HCE as perhaps his equal, and it may be argued that the book belongs as much to her as it does to him. Nevertheless, the mother figure, ALP, does seem absent as the object of desire for Shaun and Shem (and for Issy) in Phoenix Park, just as the mother figure seems absent as an object of desire for the primeval sons in Freud's Primal History Scene. It is this absent mother figure that my own fiction, fifty-five years later, attempts to restore.


4. This is not to be confused with Freud’s Primal Scene, in which the child observes or fantasizes intercourse between the parents. The scene is generally interpreted by the child as an act of aggression and violence on the part of the father, and, interestingly enough for Joyce, as anal coitus.

5. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970) pp. 236-247. Ricoeur writes, “There is hardly any need to state that Monotheism does not operate at a level of exegeses of the Old Testament and in no way satisfies the most elementary requirements of a hermeneutics adapted to a text” (p.545).


8. One version of this scenario, perhaps the most complete version offered, occurs in the lengthy opening paragraph of iii (pp.30-33). According to David Hayman, this long paragraph originated as the sketch with which Joyce began his composition of the book. (The second scenario is presented in complete form two pages later.) This suggests that Joyce was aware of the park incident from the outset, not simply as a theme, but as an important structural principle, and to some degree organized his book around it. See: *First Draft Version of Finnegan’s Wake* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1963) p.6.

9. HCE, the Earwicker, is by name an arse-dicker, since “arse” is derived from Old English ears, the buttocks, and “wick” in usually associated in the book with the penis: “[He] Who gets twickly [gets his erection quickly] fullgets twice” (467.27), and “wick-in-her, ringeysinge...too [two] thick of the wick” (583.31-32).

10. To complicate matters, ALP and HCE are the foci of all characters in the book, including their children. Issy and all female figures (there are no “characters” per se in the book) may therefore represent ALP, and Shaun and Shem and other male figures may represent HCE. Joyce’s genius, however, is not that he can combine so many into these two, but that he can keep them at the same time separate and autonomous.

11. That clock is etymologically related to bell and cluck, and therefore circuitously related to *poule* and belle, may be little more than an accident, but it is an accident which suits Joyce’s purposes; etymological meanings, phonetic associations, and multilingual cross-references are all made active in context.

12. There may be many (political) reasons for Joyce’s emphasis on anality in this book and elsewhere. It is not my intention to analyze them here, except to suggest one logistical explanation: anal sex is a sex act the father can perform with both son and daughter (thereby integrating the two scenarios, and allowing for a confusion between them); it is also a sex act the father and son can perform with each other (thereby bringing to the fore sexuality as the motive and enactment of the father-son power struggle).

13. Just as fowls are associated with females in *Finnegan’s Wake*, so also is water, from ALP as the river Liffey, to the girls’ urination in the park, to Issy as a cloud. In addition, any ring (such as the letter O, often appearing in duplicate) is frequently used to designate the females of the book: “to find a locus for an ALP
get a howlth on her bayrings as a prisme O and for a second O unbox your compasses” (287.9-11). Note also that “ring” is derived from Latin *anulus*, which in this sense equals anus.


15. The consecration of the bread, Catholic Mass.

16. Of course, “cheese” should equal “penis,” as indeed it does; its second meaning is derived from Hindi *chiz*, a thing, and *Thing* (with a capital T, as of all capital Ts) is usually the penis in *Finnegan’s Wake*: “His Thing Mod have undone him; and his mad thing has done him man” (58.1-2); and “his Thing when the wholyway setup Suffrogate Strate” (242.24).

17. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, tr. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950) p.130. Indicated parenthetically as TT. It is also noteworthy that “horse” is a prominent word in *Finnegan’s Wake*, where the animal is associated with “arse,” as in Wellingdone’s “big white harse” (10.11); with “whores,” as in “the whorse prodeedings” (610.2); and with “hose” (penis), as in “Santa Clauthes stiffstufs your hose and heartsies full of temptiness” (434.24), and “Up the hind horse of hissars” (619.2).

18. But since ALP is busy waking the dead through the book (and the Issy(s) in another sense), the totem could as well be identified with her. As usual, Joyce’s writing is admirably and frustratingly ambiguous.

19. The diagram also represents HCE’s genitals, and, appropriately, both of their buttocks.

20. Perhaps the buggery and the previous battle - which ends “twofeller longs kill dead finish bloody face blong you” (303.29-30) - also represents the sons’ murder of HCE, who seems appropriately exalted afterwards, at the end of the chapter. Curiously, he is the “parent who gives sweetmeats” prior to the children’s “feed.”


22. Ibid., p.295. Quoted by Freud from Lewis Campbell’s translation.


24. Though there is no space to develop it here, I suggest that the ancient and bizarre practice of male circumcision may have, around that time, also been instituted by the mother - or that the sons may have agreed to it in her honor - as a visible sign of their promise of exogamy. Freud suggests that circumcision was an Egyptian ritual practice (and Egypt from time immemorial was a land of pronounced matriarchal character), re-instituted by Moses among the Jews as a means of hallowing them. He stresses, however, that circumcision is a symbolic castration. Is one hallowed by submitting to a symbolic castration? On the other hand, what better sign of the sons’ promise to their mother, of their covenant with her?


26. Ibid., p.216.

27. Ricoeur, p.542.