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# Struggling with Waste Flow: The Wakean Dreamer's Attitude towards Life in *Finnegans Wake*<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* presents many images of flow; one of the most well-known images is the river in Dublin, Liffey, which *literally* flows from the opening word of the novel, "riverrun" (3.1), to the final definite article, which, without a period, curiously reconnects to the same "riverrun" (Campbell and Robinson 3; Miyata 23). Again, there are two other major images of flow. As Randolph Splitter suggests (194), urine and the flow of words are significant. According to Splitter, this set of three types of waste flow is informed by ambiguity, having a "*dangerous, dirty*" and "*lifegiving quality*" (194). It is commonly understood that the *Wake* is a dream (DiBernard 22-23; Norris, "Possible Worlds" 420). The flow of waste implies the life attitude of the dreamer in the *Wake*. It implicates failures in the dreamer's life, which he must face but has difficulty accepting in his sleep; social norm always troubles his conscience so that it obscures the contours of his failures. Yet, his failures in his life appear by transforming themselves into the waste flow in his dream when he struggles to accept them. In this essay, I will discuss his attitude towards life in exploring the set of types of waste flow: women's urination, the river Liffey, and flowing words.

**Keywords:** James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, scatology, dreamer

## 1. Introduction

Flow is one of the ubiquitous images throughout the narrative of *Finnegans Wake* (hereafter abbreviated as the *Wake*). Particularly, it is well known that the river Liffey penetrates the novel from the beginning to the end; at the outset of the novel, the river begins its flow with the word "riverrun," (3.1) before its water flows into the sea at the climax. This water recirculates by raining on the town again, which is suggested by the curious, famous structure of the novel in which the definite article at the end of the novel, followed by neither a noun word nor a period, connects to the non-capitalised word, "riverrun," in its beginning (Campbell and Robinson 3; Miyata 23)<sup>2</sup>.

The flow in the *Wake*, however, expands into various other streams: urine and words. These flows lie underneath Joyce's works as a hidden motif. Randolph Splitter significantly considers the Joycean flow in discussing the short story, "The Dead" :

Sordid tide of life, new filial relations: as the snowy ending of "The Dead" intimates or at least anticipates, *the idea of a dangerous, dirty, or lifegiving stream of water, bodily fluids, or even words*—as if words were the essence of life itself—recurs throughout Joyce's work and becomes the prevailing, dominant metaphor of *Finnegans Wake*. (my emphasis; 194)

As Susan Brienza agrees with this view, it is significant that the river water, urine, and words are closely related in relation to the motif of the flow since Splitter associates female urination in the *Wake* with words and the river as well as breast milk (197). This treble flow holds an ambiguous quality, just as Splitter puts it, as both "*dangerous, dirty*" and "*lifegiving*." Particularly, the heroine Anna Livia Plurabelle's (ALP)<sup>3</sup> final monologue, united with the flow of the river Liffey<sup>4</sup>, concludes the novel with its equivocal meaning as it divulges both physical and mental flowing waste, implying some moral corruption. In fact, Shari Benstock explains ALP "... especially as *water and river, urination and vaginal liquids*)" (my emphasis; 602). But at the same time, the flow accepts the same waste as a necessary element for the future development.

This paradoxical flow would lead to the assumption that the flow ingeniously presents an important theme of the novel: its dreamer's attitude towards his mistakes in his life. Joyce acknowledges that the novel's narrative is contrived as someone's dream (DiBernard 22-23). Likewise, Margot Norris points out the novel's dreamlike structure ("Possible Worlds" 420)<sup>5</sup>. In the Wakean dream, the waste flow represents the dreamer's sin. It is difficult for him to confront it even in his dream; social norm, or a set of cultural codes, still dominating his dreaming consciousness, prevents his failures from manifesting themselves since they would violate some criteria of social decency. Nevertheless, these mistakes stealthily emerge in that treble flow of waste with the result of the dreamer's acceptance of his insufferable errors in his life.

This essay will claim the dreamer's attitude to acknowledge his failures in his life by examining the waste flow consisting of the river, urine, and words. As preliminaries for the subsequent discussions, the first short chapter briefly demonstrates the ambiguous quality of the waste flow in the episode of "Fanny Urinia." The subsequent phase of discussion deals with two peculiar anecdotes of female urination to afford light on the waste flow's

disturbing quality and its connection with a sense of guilt. In the third chapter, the focus is put on the river Liffey in that its dirty water not only implies death but also regenerates the environment in the washerwomen episode. The final section concentrates on ALP's final monologue for the aim of concluding that the dreamer struggles to accept his errors by facing the waste flow.

## Chapter 1: The Equivocality of the Waste Flow

The ambiguous quality of the Wakean flow is presented in various episodes. The episode of "Fanny Urinia" most aptly illustrates the way the waste flow disturbs the cultural code of decency while paradoxically enlivening the social atmosphere. Fanny Urinia, a barmaid, serves customers in a pub: ". . . when [customers] found to their horror they could not carry another drop, it came straight from the noble white fat, jo, openwide sat, jo, jo, her why hide that, jo jo jo, the winevat, of the most serene magyansty az archdiochesse . . . Fanny Urinia" (171. 22-28). The customers cannot continue drinking because they discover that their drink has come from the mysterious vat of Fanny Urinia, making them wonder whether the drink is wine or her urine.

Despite the "winevat" signifying a vat used for wine-making, the name of this mysterious woman has a subtle implication that the served drink is her urine. First, "Fanny" means buttocks, especially pertaining to female genitals. The latter half of her name indicates the "Muse of astronomy" resounding with the Latin *Urania* and the Greek *Ourania*. But more significantly, it directly refers to urine, originating from the Latin *urina* (O Hehir and Dillon 140).

A biographical episode consolidates this entanglement between wine and urine. The word "archdiochesse" reminds Roland McHugh of the fact that "[Joyce] liked a Swiss white wine, Fendant de Sion, which he said looked like the urine of an archduchess" (171). Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon also identify the liquid of wine/urine with the Swiss wine that appears in this biographical episode: "The wine Shaun specifies as *Orina di un archiduchessa*, known to Joyce as 'the archduchess's urine,' was his favourite" (104)<sup>6</sup>.

This equivocal either-wine-or-urine liquid describes two paradoxical situations. The intermittent "jo" sound obviously imitates the sound of filling glasses with liquor as the word "archdiochesse" refers to the Irish phrase *deoch an dorais* with the meaning of "parting drink" (McHugh 171). Still, significantly, it simultaneously connotes the sound of Fanny's

urination. Again, the same “jo” also signifies the Hungarian word *jó*, meaning “good” (McHugh 171). On the one hand, it describes the cheerful voices of the customers who receive their glasses. On the other hand, it expresses the pleasant sensations of Fanny’s urinating body. In the first situation, the liquid is regarded as the Swiss wine. The sentences cut by “jo” embody the hilarious conversation between the customers while it is often interfered with the sound of filling glasses. This interpretation is consistent with the social consensus of the ordinary pub. Nevertheless, the second situation surfaces when the liquid is presented as urine. The “jo” sound, intermittently stopping the flow of the words, infers the perplexity and embarrassment of the customers as they see Fanny urinate into their glasses. Her behaviour disturbs the cultural decorum in the pub and violates the cultural decency of women.<sup>7</sup>

In this curious instance, it is evident that the ambiguous waste flow disturbs some cultural codes of decency. This episode presents the ambiguity of the waste flow that causes the situation in which the cultural decency is shockingly violated while it appears to be appropriately maintained. In this structure of the ambiguous flow, the cultural decorum of respectable society is infringed upon once the flow is recognised as waste. The recognition of Fanny’s urination destabilises the dominant cultural perception of the scene.

## Chapter 2: Provocative Waste Flow

The waste flow is often related to the protagonist H. C. Earwicker’s (HCE) mysterious crimes. Many characters gossip about his sin, but there is no shared knowledge of the specific facts of his transgressions. Nonetheless, some implications adroitly reveal that the alleged offences of HCE involve two young women against whom he commits indecencies when they are urinating in the bushes. The same structure of one male (sexual) offender and two female figures of micturition repeats itself in various episodes.

The episode of “the Willingdone Museyroom” (8. 10) introduces a museum guide who shows us many relics of the Napoleon Wars. This seemingly ordinary exhibition of the war objects, however, implicitly describes a fictional, sexual incident set in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. In history, a famous military figure, Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, enormously contributed to the victory. He appears in the episode as “Willingdone” while Napoleon turns out to be “Lipoleum” (8. 16; *Glosses*). What concerns our discussions of the waste flow is two bizarre female characters called “the jinnies,” who cunningly seduce “Willingdone” and lead him to demean himself (8. 31).

The sexual incident in which “the jinnies” ensnare “Willingdone” parallels the historical narrative of the battle. The museum guide shows us the relics in a way that illustrates the event:

This is the jinnies with their legahorns feinting to read in their handmade's book of strategy while making their war undisides the Willingdone. The jinnies is a cooin her hand and the jinnies is a ravin her hair and the Willingdone git the band up. . . . This is the jinnies' hastings dispatch for to irrigate the Willingdone. . . . That was the tictacs of the jinnies for to fontannoy the Willingdone. Shee, shee, shee! . . . And the Willingdone git the band up. (8. 31-9. 9)

The main context is the museum exhibition that displays the historical mementoes of the battle while this decent narrative is disturbed by the potential one in which the urination of “the jinnies” titillates HCE. The passage reveals the sub-narrative of the minor incident in comparison with the dominant codes of the war-narrative. The phrase “making their war” intimates “make water” as well as signifying the Battle of *Waterloo*, eloquently pointing out the jinnies's act of urination (McHugh 8). This is their “stralegy [strategy]” or “tictacs [tactics]” (McHugh 8-9) performed under their body or in their underclothes as the word “undisides” suggests either their “underside” or “undies” (McHugh 8).

Their dubious operations succeed when they make Willingdone get an erection. In the phrase “git the band up,” both the French *bander* and the English slang “get it up” indicate the erection of his penis (*Glosses*). Following this, the jinnies “irrigate” and “fontannoy” Willingdone; the word “irrigate” might imply making him wet in his groin as well as sexually irritating him (McHugh 9), while “fontannoy” means not only annoying him but also fountaining him. In other words, they succeed in making him ejaculate. The obscene moment in which the war hero is degraded penetrates the museum narrative. This leads to the revelation of a stain concealed in the hero's life, which potentially suggests the sin of the Wakean dreamer.

A similar episode describes HCE's questionable crime in the Phoenix Park. The narrative suggests his indecent behaviour towards two servant-class women in the park at night: HCE “behaved with ongentilmensky immodus opposite a pair of dainty maidservants” (34. 18-19). The words “ongentilmensky immodus” apparently hint at “ungentlemanly immodesty” or an “ungentlemanly manner” derived from the Latin *modus* (*Glosses*).

However, the veracity of the report is put into question by the ambivalent narrative. Despite the narrative's focus on the prosecution of the offender, the narrator regards

those who denounces HCE as “detractors” and their report as “[s]lander” (33. 21, 34. 12). Thus, he aptly claims that “[t]o anyone who knew and loved the christlikeness of the big cleanminded giant H. C. Earwicker throughout his excellency long vicefreegal existence the mere suggestion of him as a lustsleuth nosing for trouble in a boobytrap rings particularly preposterous” (33. 28-32). HCE has led a saintly innocent life, as the word “vicefreegal” means “vice-free” or “frugal with vices,” so that the report of his “lust[-]sleuth[ing]” act becomes extremely hard to believe.

The most crucial point is that the victims themselves seem to have provoked HCE to commit the inappropriate action. The narrator implicitly discloses his impression of the unreliability of their testimonies. This dubious evidence reinforces the suspicious nature of the women in question:

Slander . . . has never been able to convict our good and great and no ordinary Southron Earwicker [HCE] . . . of any graver impropriety than that, advanced by some woodwards or regards, who did not dare deny . . . that they had . . . that day consumed their soul of the corn, of having behaved with ongentilmentsky immodus opposite a pair of dainty maidservants in the swoolth of the rushy hollow whither, or so the two gown and pinnars pleaded, dame nature in all innocency had spontaneously and about the same hour of the even tide sent them both but whose published combinations of silkinlaine testimonies are, where not dubiously pure, visibly divergent, as wapt from wept, on minor points touching the intimate nature of this. . . . (34. 12-25)

Although the narrator highly evaluates HCE’s humanity, he cannot definitely demonstrate HCE’s immunity from the crime. However, he intimates that the women’s testimonies are unreliable; his obscure statement, “or so the two [women in] gown and pinnars pleaded” (34. 20-21), seems to be meant for his subtle exemption from his responsibility of reporting the truth. Additionally, the unreliability of their suit is further reinforced by the fact that the witnesses were dead drunk when they saw the incident: “they had . . . that day consumed their soul of the corn” (34. 16-18).

The women’s testimonies divulge their cunning nature. The narrator describes the testimonies as doubtful; their statements are mostly “dubiously pure” while the other part is so divergently composed that there seems to be some calculation with only “on minor points touching the intimate nature of this” incident (34. 23-25). The women claim that they had to go to the park because of the “dame nature” (34. 21) that implies the call of nature, but their overemphasised immaculacy, or “all innocency” (34. 21), again hints at their suspicious

character. If the first episode of female urination echoes in this episode, it is further probable that these two "maidservants" have sexually stimulated HCE by their micturition.<sup>8</sup>

It is implied here that the act of female urination may transform the "maidservants" into prostitutes. In addition to their "apple harlottes" alias (113. 16), we must contemplate the contemporary controversy about public restrooms. In the nineteenth century Europe, "[p]rivate, sex-segregated lavatories" were invented along with urbanisation involving sanitary reform. "However, the vast majority of public facilities were for men only" while the public conveniences for women were not established until a much later period (Gershenson and Penner 4-5). In fact, Leopold Bloom reflects on this social issue, saying, "Ought to be places for women" (*U* 8. 415-16) since "the Corporation steadfastly refused to provide a public lavatory for the women of Dublin" (O'Brien 120). The significant point is the deep-rooted conviction against the female public toilet:

[s]anctioning the women's lavatory effectively sanctioned the female presence in the streets, thus violating middle-class decorum and ideals of women as static and domestic. . . . By making women's bodies and their "private" functions publicly visible, the lavatory threatened to transform its users into "public women." (Gershenson and Penner 5-6)

The utilisation of public restrooms symbolically transforms women into prostitutes by exposing their bodies and private functions to the public. The scene of female urination in our concern would be the emphasised description of this situation.

For all that, HCE's sin remains on the surface of the narrative, as the sexual incident(s) by no means vanish(es) from the dreamer's consciousness. The narrator speaks for HCE, but the very words of justification unintentionally acknowledge HCE's fault. The textual alteration from "misdemeanour" in the first draft to "impropriety" (Hayman 63) does not seem to be intended to affirm his sexual offence, but it still implicates certain errors on his side with the word "incautious" in the narrator's defence (34. 26). Furthermore, the words "first offence" is intended for justifying HCE, but simultaneously associates his mistakes with the original sin (34. 25). In this way, as this dubious sin of the male protagonist is often repeated throughout the narrative, I strongly assume that the dreamer in the novel attempts to confront his irreparable mistakes in his life.

In these episodes, the narrative code of decency is infringed by both HCE and women of possible conspiracy. While the waste flow brings the sin to the surface of the decent narrative, the female figures of urination reveal those repressed situations. In particular, the latter episode emphasises the prostitutes effaced in the decent narrative. In this way,



although the decent narrative attempts to expunge the repressed elements, the motif of waste flow still brings them to light.

### Chapter 3: Washerwomen and the River Liffey

The Wakean flow of waste is closely related to the dreamer's sin as his sufferance is attributable to its negative aspects. Nonetheless, creative possibilities immanently reside in the waste flow. It seems that when the dreamer accepts the waste flow—his sin—a transformation occurs. The episode of the washerwomen (I. 8) is a case in point; the dingy water of the river Liffey transforms two washerwomen into a tree and a stone. The episode epitomises the creative power of the waste flow in the *Wake*. Being suffused with the dirty water as well as HCE's sin, the washerwomen become liberated from the human limitations.

The language of the episode constitutes the waste flow of the river. The very shape of the text at the beginning of the chapter imitates the water flow:

O  
tell me all about  
Anna Livia! I want to hear all  
about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course. . . .

(196. 1-4)

As Roland McHugh notes the “delta shape” of the sentences’ arrangement (196), the flow of language is modelled after the river flowing into the sea. The words become the flow of the river while the river water acquires the quality of language.

On either bank of the flow of the river, the two washerwomen are gossiping. Short, crisp sentences create a cheerful atmosphere. The washerwomen are frivolously talking about ALP and her husband HCE. As one of them mentions that “they threed to make out he thried to two in the Fiendish park” (196. 10-11), the main theme of their gossip turns out to be HCE's sin in the park. She tells that those three night watches, “they three[ ],” witnessed HCE “t[r[ying]” to do improprieties against the “two” women in the park, with the unvoiced sounds of the words—“*threed*” and “*thried*”—creating the confiding tone of her voice.

The mixture of their gossip, dirty water, and HCE's sin forms the trinity of waste. The words of one of the washerwomen, “your slur gave the stink to Carlow,” give the waste quality of their gossip to the river (214. 29-30). Again, as Sheldon Brivic and Margot Norris point out, their gossip is associated with both material and moral waste in the intersection of

labour and words (37; *Joyce's Web* 155). Finally, HCE's sin appears as the dirty water: "He's an awful old reppe. Look at the shirt of him! Look at the dirt of it! He has all my water black on me" (196. 11-12). His notorious sexual offences, implied by the word "reppe [rape]," leave the blot on his shirt with the result of soiled washing water. Thus, the words, the river, and HCE's sin all make up the waste flow.

In the historical context, the river Liffey was the malodorous flow of waste. William Sayers points out that "Anna is also anal, and the Liffey . . . was an open sewer in the early twentieth century, the 'bumgut' of Dublin" (158). This is due to a situation back in the nineteenth century, where a city engineer, Park Neville, had claimed the urgent need for new sewers. As an ironic result, the construction of the sewer produced "the general offensiveness of the river" (Daly 248). After the serious concern with the river pollution gradually declined due to the denial of "the miasmatic theory of disease" in the late nineteenth century, the river continued to torment the olfactory sense of the citizen for a while (Daly 253). Besides, the famous phrase "DEAR DIRTY DUBLIN" (*U.* 7. 921), adopted for the title of Joseph O'Brien's book, exemplifies this deplorable situation.

It is notable that Liffey, a woman/sewer figure, is associated with the female urination in the previous two sections. In Joyce's peculiar imagination, the sewerage system corresponds to the digestive apparatus in the body. Leopold Bloom ponders closestools:

Bare clean closestools waiting in the window of William Miller, plumber, turned back his thoughts. They could: and watch it all the way down, swallow a pin sometimes come out of the ribs years after, tour round the body changing biliary *duct* spleen squirting liver gastric juice coils of intestines like *pipes*. (my emphasis; *U.* 8. 1045-49)

He compares the human body to the sewer. In the case of Liffey, this sewer is the female body through which dirty streams flow. In short, the river is another variation of female urination.

Despite their cheerfulness, the two washerwomen severely suffer from their social conditions. Their lives are bound by their labour, which is symbolised in their hands always engaged in the washing:

Throw us your hudson soap for the honour of Clanel! The wee taste the water left. I'll raft it back, first thing in the marne. . . . Wring out the clothes! . . . Will we spread them here now? Ay, we will. Flip! Spread on your bank and I'll spread mine on mine. Flep! It's what I'm doing. Spread! It's churning chill. (212. 24-13. 23)

Norris explains that "[t]he washerwomen's discourse is created by their labor: they speak

because their hands are occupied but their mouths and minds are free while they work.” However, the freedom of their “mouths and minds” is actually limited: “their gossip is frequently interrupted by the contingencies of their work . . .” (*Joyce’s Web* 154). Moreover, their historical situation emphasises their sufferance: “the hidden pipes of the new ‘sanitary water closets’ of Dublin contributed to Dublin’s staggering rates of mortality and disease” (Freedman 864). Presumably owing to their daily exposure to the waste flow, in the nineteenth century, “[o]ver 40% of washerwomen died of respiratory disease and a further 23% from epidemics . . .” (Daly 241). Howsoever merry and bright their conversation seems, the lives of the two washerwomen are threatened by the flow of waste.

Nevertheless, the waste flow simultaneously effectuates their liberation. It unyokes them from their daily life, even from the range of human life. As the washerwomen become covered with grimy water, they are released from their lives of sufferance. One of them says, “Look at the shirt of him. Look at the dirt of it! He has all my water black on me” (196. 11-12). She receives the soiled water with the implication of the same situation for her companion. As has been already discussed, this polluted water symbolically corresponds with HCE’s sin.

Miraculously, this bodily and mentally filthy water culminates in their emancipation not only from their severe labour but also from the boundary of human life:

I feel as old as yonder elm. A tale told of Shaun or Shem? All Livia’s daughtersons. Dark hawks hear us. Night! Night! My ho head halls. I feel as heavy as yonder stone. Tell me of John or Shaun? Who were Shem and Shaun the living sons or daughters of? Night now! Tell me, tell me, tell me, elm! Night night! Telmetale of stem or stone. Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of. Night! (215. 34-16. 5)

The soiled river water transforms them into an elm and a stone, releasing them from the human limitation to the natural environment. The questions asked by one of them still concern HCE’s family, but as their bodies become the elm and the stone, their topic moves from human interests to nature. At last, their conversation stops at nightfall when they are completely transposed into nature. The waste flow liberates nature repressed by the cultural codes of human activity; the filthy water assumes a figuratively regenerative power.

## Chapter 4: The Dreamer’s Acknowledgement of Mistakes

All these motifs of waste flow subtly form the dreamer’s attitude toward his failures

in his life.<sup>9</sup> His attitude towards his sin is implicated in the river Liffey, embodied in ALP's final monologue.<sup>10</sup> As Splitter points out, her monologue flows into the consciousness of the dreamer as "magical, fertile, liferestoring stream of words/water/urine" (200). The river filled with both wastewater and HCE's sin becomes the flow of words in ALP's rambling soliloquy at the ending of the *Wake*. Although the dreamer's attitude toward his life cannot be clearly revealed, ALP's view on her husband's sin would suggest the total attitude of the novel towards the mistakes in the dreamer's life.

ALP's monologue describes the way all the words in the *Wake* are turned into the river with the definite article at the end without a period, restarting the flow with the noun word "riverrun" in the beginning. However, her monologue also expresses her attitude towards the mistakes of her husband in his life. She intends to accept his sin and acknowledge his life so that they can pass the baton of life to the next generation: "All men has done something. Be the time they've come to the weight of old fletch. We'll lave it. So. We will take our walk before in the timpul they ring the earthly bells" (621. 32-34).

She says that all men get "the weight of old fle[sh]" by having done something. As the incarnation of the river, she washes the withered body of her husband. However, her action seems paradoxical; it purifies HCE's body and sin while the filthy river accepts both his soiled body and disgrace. The coinage "timpul" epitomises this situation: the waste elements of HCE's body and life are accepted and purged by the river since the word simultaneously signifies "sinful" (as HCE is sinful), "time" (implying his past life) and "church" (the place of absolution) (McHugh 621).

After forgiving HCE's sin, she envisages the future: "To hide away the tear, the parted. It's thinking of all. The brave that gave their. The fair that wore. All them that's gunne. I'll begin again in a jiffey" (625. 30-33). When she considers her parting with her family in the near future, her tears keep some of the sentences from completing. Again, she thinks of the people and events already "gunne." At last, she resolves to "begin again" as the river "jiffey," the addition of the letter "e" in its spelling to the "jiffy" in the first draft (Hayman 285) confirming its meaning as the river "Liffey."<sup>11</sup> Her beginning again suggests that she decides to entrust her hope to the younger generation: "Now a younger's there. Try not to part! Be happy, dear ones!" (627. 6-7), and that the couple will be reborn as a son and a daughter themselves: "Yes, you're changing, sonhusband, and you're turning, I can feel you, for a daughterwife from hills again" (627. 1-3). Dreaming of their bright and blissful future and looking back at her memory of her husband, she seems to flow downstream ceaselessly.

However, her optimism about the future and acceptance of her life with her disgraced husband are not without regrets.<sup>12</sup> Her reluctance to leave her life is expressed in her monologue, the flow of which is often disturbed by periods so that her words and the river intermittently flow downstream. This is in the acute comparison with Molly Bloom's monologue whose smooth flow is frequently facilitated by the affirmative "yes" as well as having no punctuations but the final period. ALP's lingering attachment appears as a leaf floating on the water surface: "My leaves have drifted from me. All. But one clings still. I'll bear it on me. To remind me of. Lff!" (628. 6-7; "Lff" signifies "Liffey," "whose Irish name, *An Life* . . . is even closer to English *life*" [McHugh 628; Sayers 158]).<sup>13</sup> While all the other leaves flow away from her, she determines to bear the only one remaining on her. Considering the association among the words, "leaf," "life," and "Liffey," the leaf reminds her of her past life. Not only envisioning the hopeful future, but she also feels inclined to affirm her life with her husband's disgrace. The intense surge of her emotion is visible in the suggestive stop before "Lff [Life]" interrupting the preceding "To remind me of."

Her affirmation of the life immediately conjures up the words "yes" twice in the total appearance of only four times in her monologue (621. 4, 627. 1, 628. 8, 628. 11). Although she would want to forget her life as it is closely knitted with her husband's disgrace, her hope for the future needs this very life of hers. The final segment of her words would implicate this: "The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the . . . riverrun . . ." (628. 15-3. 1). As ALP has determined to bring the leaf reminiscent of her life, it seems that at least one of "[t]he keys" is her life/leaf. The phrase "The keys to. Given!" evocative of a song "I Will Give You the Keys to Heaven" (McHugh 628), expresses the moment of utmost felicity in being bestowed the keys to heaven. As such, acknowledging her past life filled with waste, ALP, being the personification of the river, is willing to go into Dublin Bay. Its waste flow is very pacific as is represented in the final strain of words without a period, "A way a lone a last a loved a long the," in which the sounds of "a" and "l" alternate with each other making the smooth flowing rhythm of the ending. ALP's all-encompassing state of mind accepts all that her life offers including the disgrace of her husband. This unconditional acceptance of life is what the dreamer is desperate for. Nonetheless, as the final sentence does not end with a period but recirculates back to the first word "riverrun," it is ruthlessly implied that the dreamer has to endlessly confront his mysterious sin and disgrace which only covertly appear in the images of waste in his dream. As his sin violates the codes of decency, it only appears as the waste images to be accepted through the help of his all-embracing woman/

river.

## Conclusion

The treble, watery association among urination, the river, and the words holds an equivocal power. On the one hand, it causes troubling situations in which the dominant codes of decency are destabilised, and on the other hand, such cultural situations are often transformed by incorporating the repressed cultural elements. In the first section, although the “jo” sound seemingly represents the ordinary act of serving drinks, it is still possible that Fanny Urinia urinates into glasses, violating the cultural discipline of the place. Furthermore, the second section has dealt with the urination of those two women cunningly inducing HCE to conduct himself into the sexual indecency. Both HCE's sin and the repressed existence of the prostitutes violate the code of decency in the narrative. At the same time, in the third section, we have examined how the waste flow liberates the washerwomen from the limited sphere of the human world and releases them into natural environment. Finally, HCE's disgrace embodied in the waste, always rejected in the narrative, is eventually acknowledged as the precious element of one's life.

On the broader framework of the narrative, it would be a crucial supposition that the flow of waste can be seen as one of the representations of the dreamer's sense of guilt. His untold disgrace is faintly expressed in the various forms of waste. He cannot confront the negative aspects of his life even in his dreaming consciousness. Instead, his conscience evokes the images of waste in his dream so that he can attempt to accept his life with waste. Since the existence of the dreamer is merely implied in the narrative as pointed out in the previous research, it cannot be denied that this line of thought is only a possibility. However, on the grounds that the images of waste often appear representing the protagonist's mysterious transgressions on the codes of decency, and that his taking of various historical and fictional personae makes sense only when the whole narrative is considered as someone's convoluted dream, it seems that the waste images are the oblique expressions of the dreamer's sin in his past life. Experiencing those images of waste in the Wakean dream, or the possible phantasmagoria, the dreamer repeatedly struggles to acknowledge his life even if it is soaked in the flow of waste.

## Notes

- 1) This paper is based on the presentation I gave at Symposium 2 “*Finnegans Wake* (1939) pp. 619.21-628: Reading the Monologue of Anna Livia,” the James Joyce Society of Japan, 12th June 2021, and on the Chapter 5 of my doctoral dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University in December 2020.
- 2) In their classic study on *Finnegans Wake*, Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson call it “a circular design” (3). Kyoko Miyata also points out this structure in which “the” at the ending comes back to the beginning “riverrun,” and puts it that the river Liffey penetrates through the novel and recirculates back to the beginning (23).
- 3) It is a long-established scholarly tradition in the Joycean studies that Anna Livia Plurabelle is abbreviated as ALP while her husband and the protagonist H. C. Earwicker is denoted as HCE.
- 4) “She [ALP] is specially Dublin’s little winding, brown, polluted river, Anna Liffey. . .” (Glasheen 10).
- 5) Campbell and Robinson also point out that “[i]ts mechanics resemble those of a dream . . .” (3). On the one hand, Bernard Benstock suggests that “[t]he Dreamer in the *Wake* is more than just a single individual, even if one assumes that on the literal level we are viewing the dream of publican H. C. Earwicker,” adding that Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* corresponds to HCE (91, 97). On the other hand, John Bishop puts it: “Since “Finnegan,” by associative “sound sense” (109.15), modulates through “Finnegan” into “Finn, again” (5.10, 628.14), and since Joyce erratically conceived of the *Wake* as “the dream of old Finn lying in death beside the river Liffey” (*JJ* 544), we might momentarily regard the man lying “dead to the world” at the *Wake* as the “sleeping giant,” “Finn MacCool” (540.17, 139.14)” (146).
- 6) I have already referred to this biographical episode in a note in another essay as an evidence for regarding Fanny’s serving drink as her urine (Miyahara 6).
- 7) Elsewhere, I have already discussed Fanny’s urine as one of the accusations by Shaun against Shem (Miyahara 6).
- 8) Despite the possibility of mischievous intention on the side of these two women, Suzette A. Henke still considers that “(Female micturition is apparently a source of polymorphously perverse arousal for HCE, whose voyeuristic interest in his daughter Issy’s urination and in the titillating tinklings of two girls in Phoenix Park may well be constitutive of his mysterious sin.)” (Henke 179)
- 9) Acknowledging the ambiguous identity of the dreamer, Bernard Benstock seems to present the correspondence among the dreamer, HCE, and Bloom (91, 97). As he also points out “what troubles Earwicker” is originated from “his nocturnal encounter in Phoenix Park, with two maids . . .” , he seems to suggest that the dreamer suffers from the same troubles, too (93).

- 10) Shari Benstock explains ALP "... especially as water and river, urination and vaginal liquids)" (602).
- 11) McHugh notes that "jiffey" stands for Liffey (625).
- 12) Kyoko Miyata points out ALP's own life is also not without stains as the river brings waste in its flow (232).
- 13) "But one clings still" also refers to the "last leaf of" the novel (McHugh 628).

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