

FW 294.27-295.15

## Gaudyanna's singing over her possetpot

by  
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I am aware that there are very strong objections against the evenemential (factual) approach to FW (trying to find out what's happening), but personally I am convinced that it may be efficiently used as an Ariadne's thread to explore with a certain safety the many intricacies of our labyrinthical text. So this is my tentative interpretation which takes into account only a small part of the many allusions, inside their specific contextual frame.

In our case we have just seen Dolph drawing the first circle (FW 294.4-11) that caused Kev's sarcastic remarks (FW 294.12-26). But Dolph shuts him up telling that he has not yet finished his work, since there is another circle to draw, following the trail of the word **Byzantium** (**One recalls Byzantium – 294.27**). We know that Byzantium was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, with its own "sphere" of influence; a "circle" that intersected the one of the Western Empire, which had Rome as capital. But we should note that Byzantium recalls "bis-antium" thus the two (bis) Annies: "**Ante Ann**" and "**Antiann**" of **293.32** and **293.35**. Thus a Byzantium (Double Ann, Double-N, Dublin) stating that "**mystery repeats itself**" (**294.28**); and we could be so bold as to read "mystery" as "*mysterious history*"; the wheel/circle of life which keeps turning around (repetition) and which doubles (repeats) itself, anticipating the drawing of the second circle (the "*eastern*" one, whereas the first was the "*western*" circle).

Ann is portrayed as "**Gaudyanna**" (**294.29**); a word that hints at the Spanish river Guadiana [fweet] ("guado" is Italian for "ford", Dublin = ford of hurdles ; and Italian "guadiana" could be a neologism for "she of the ford"); and since "gaudeo" is Latin for "I rejoice" [fweet], we have a joyful, gaudy river: the mother as the

flowing river of life. A mother image underlined by "Gaudy" which hints at the Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi, who dreamed up and designed his renown cathedral “Sagrada Familia (Holy Family)”, in Barcelona. A few pictures, just to give an idea of it. (How not to think of the Book of Kells?)



The Spanish touch is reinforced by her father who is a "**tanner** – **294.30**", with explicit allusions to Don Juan Tenorio (who seduced Donna Anna: thus one more hint at the incest motif -- especially if we note that Tanner is the "superman" of G.B. Shaw's "*Man and superman*"). But tanner/tenorio hints at "tenor" which introduces the continuous "**singing**" of the mother, her monotonous (**homolocus**) basso continuo (**humminbass** – **295.1**), her riverine murmuring piss (**over her possetpot** – **294.31**). Where *possetpot* is very likely "chamberpot", with overt allusions to Joyce's "Chamber music".

*Richard Ellmann reports (from a 1949 conversation with Eva Joyce) that the chamberpot connotation has its origin in a visit he made, accompanied by Oliver Gogarty, to a young widow named Jenny in May 1904. The three of them drank porter while Joyce read manuscript versions of the poems aloud - and, at one point, Jenny retreated behind a screen to make use of a chamber pot. Gogarty commented, "There's a critic for you!". When Joyce later told this story to Stanislaus, his brother agreed that it was a "favourable omen".[WP]*

But a **possetpot**



*(a posset pot was a two handled mug, with a lid and a long curved spout originating from the bottom of the pot, used for drinking posset. The spout rising from the base of the mug allowed the posset to be drunk from the bottom leaving the floating scum of the posset in the mug)*

is not only a chamber pot: it is also a "passport" that keeps note of Gaudyanna's endless spatio-temporal wanderings, from the past

(**hesterdie** / yesterday – **295.1**) to the present (**ist-herdie** / iste die -- **295.1-2**), in a sort of hysterical/historical never-ending (forever) flowing (fo-river). All this according to the designs of God, Great Shapesphere, the Great One who gives shape to the worlds (spheres). "**As Great Shapesphere puns it**" ( **295.4**).

*(In Ulysses, Leopold Bloom reflects, "Chamber music. Could make a **pun** on that." [WP])*

It is the song of life that Dolph has heard since he was a child, when his mother attired him in his best clothes ( **Sundaclouths** – **295.7**), so that he could attend, properly dressed, his father's funeral (**Tate and Comyng** – **295.8** : Tutankhamen), knowing that the "**Faithful departed** ( **295.10**)" (resting in the **Tate** Gallery) would surely be brought back (**Comyng**) to light, like Pharaoh Tutankhamen had recently been.

[With a possible allusion to John Comyn, 3rd Earl of Buchan and the buchan/book analogy: dead buchan, book of the dead].

A sort of game of hide and seek ( **his old game of haunt the sleeper** – **295.9-10**), "hunt the slipper",



and a psychic seance (**ghost in the candle** – **295.8-9**) as well.

But all this points to the "vanity of vanities" (*Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas* : *Ecclesiastes 1:2;12,8*),



**Vanissas Vanistatums!** -- **295.2**, (the beatings of a butterfly's wings) to the futility and the lack of sense of life, to the insignificance of the single living being. People are no more than minuscule dots in a black infinity, like the stars of the firmament, that may be enlarged (have some scope) only if viewed through telescopes (**we're only all telescopes** – **295.12**). People are no more than almost invisible grains of sand, that believe they are unique and different only because they can change their exterior appearance, like chameleons (**comeallyoum saunds** – **295.12**). They may well believe that they have dominion over the desert, like camels (**comeallyoum**); but such a camel turns into a dromedary, (**I dromed I was in Dairy** – **295.13**) and the dromedary turns into a dream (dream of a day, day dream). But all of a sudden the grain of sand awakes with a kick in the ass (**wuckened up with thump in thunderdown** – **295.14**). A thunderdown that announces his falling (down) with its ominous thunder.

Thus, turning back to the Ecclesiastes, there is a time to rest in peace, day dreaming; and there is a time to return to reality: the Freudian principles of *pleasure* and *reality*. Was it not J.L. Borges who said: "*We are doomed to immortality*"? Or something like that?