

FW 310.08-21
THE EARWIG'S INN-EAR PROGRESS

by
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This passage is indeed cryptic and I worked a lot trying to make a sense out of it. Of course the general image seems to be that of rumors and hearsay that reach deeply into HCE's psyche (inner ear). And I could have limited my reading in recognizing the many references to the anatomical description of the ear. (Consult Fweet, please!). But that would have been to remain on what I call “*the Arcimboldian level*”



or the “situational” technique Joyce makes use of when he narrates through allegorical objects. Since rumors (“*rumoresque senum severiorum*” - Ah, Catullus!) constitute the dominant image of the episode it follows that the “ear” and its components build the foundation of the Arcimboldian landscape. But that is only the outer level. To reach the inner core one must assemble the parts and make the clock-work work. This is what I intend to do, quite aware of the risk of getting lost in the pit of my “lubberendth.” Let's begin giving

a look at the first part of the passage:

310.8: They finally caused, or most leastways brung
310.9: it about somehows, (that) the pip of the lin (to) pinnatrate inthro
310.10: an auricular forfickle (known as the Vakingfar sleeper, mono-
310.11: fractured by Piaras UaRhuamhaighaudhlug, tympan founder
310.12: Eustache Straight, Bauliaughacleeagh) a meatous conch ...

If we leave aside the asides we have:

310.8: They finally caused ...
310.9: ... (that) the pip of the lin (to) pinnatrate inthro
310.10: an auricular forfickle ...
310.11: ...
310.12: ... a meatous conch ...

Two things are to be noted. First: is “**a meatous conch**” (whatever it means) a variant or an elucidation of the “**auricular forfickle**” (whatever it is)? I doubt it, since in that case a comma would have been needed after “forfickle”. And I doubt also that the elucidation inside the round brackets

(known as the Vakingfar sleeper, mono-
310.11: fractured by Piaras UaRhuamhaighaudhlug, tympan founder
310.12: Eustache Straight, Bauliaughacleeagh)

[the old father (**far**) Viking who seems *far from waking*, whose legend has been created (manufactured) and slandered (**mono-fractured**) at the same time (mono) by Piaras Ua Ra ghallaigh: Piers O'Reilly, the Irish Perce Oreille (Earwig), who has no (Latin “**haud**” - by no means) light (Celtic god “**Lug**”: flashing light): thus a not reliable tale]

could be a substitute of the comma. Furthermore: if “conch” is the “concha” of the ear, that is, a sort of *shell*, it can hardly be a variant of a “forficula” (earwig). Nonetheless “forfickle” and “conch” must be linked in some way. That would exclude that “**the pip of the lin**” (whatever it means) penetrates the **forfickle**, since, in that case, the “**conch**” would have no syntactic point of attack. So I am of the opinion that we should read “**pinnatrate**” not as “penetrate”, but as “*to force into*”: thus “the pip of the lin” forces into (**inthro**)

the “**auricular forfickle**” a “**meatous conch**”. But that would sound somewhat contradictory, since logic (or legend) says that it is the earwig that penetrates the conch(a).

In fact there could be a logic explanation: the penetration of an alien body inside the earwig, a sort of tumor. But about this later on. For the time being let's try another solution and let's give a look at “**(that) the pip of the lin (to)**”. Why “**that**” and “**to**” inside round brackets, themselves enclosing “the pip of the lin”? That could be Joyce's invitation to give a more attentive look at it, its two alternative syntactic choices

- 1) *They finally caused ... (that) the pip of the lin pinnatrate*
- 2) *They finally caused ... the pip of the lin (to) pinnatrate*

being only an enhanced hint. It's possible in fact that the solution may be hidden inside the pointed to “**pip of the lin**”. It seems fairly obvious that it is a morphing of “pipeline”, where both *pipe* and *line* lose their “e”. But if the “pip” is a radio signal, what about “lin”? Could it refer to the **Lynn** of *Brian O' Lynn's* ballad and his inside out breeches?

*Bryan O'Lynn had no breeches to wear
He got him a sheepskin to make him a pair,
With the fleshy side out and the woolly side in,
"Whoo, they're pleasant and cool." says Bryan O'Lynn.*

In that case our sentence should be *reversed* (O' Lynn's style) and, following logic, it would be the earwig that penetrates the conch, or, sticking to the strict anatomical definition, “*concha*”; which, in Spanish, is “pussy”. In fact we have not “meatus”, but “meatous”, hinting at “meaty”. Thus a *fleshy shell* which leaves no place to doubts. If this holds here comes a very interesting corollary. The earwig (*penis like*) that penetrates the shell (*pussy like*) recalls the medieval *conceptio per aurem* (conception through the ear). Now, since “earwig” is also “to eavesdrop” and “to attempt to influence (a person) by private insinuation”, we have the image of gossips and rumors that impregnate the receiving ear (**conch**),

310.12: a meatous conch culpable

310.13: of cunduncing Naul and Santry and the forty routs of Corthy

310.14: with the concertiums of the Brythyc Symmonds Guild, the
310.15: Ropemakers Reunion, the Variagated Peddlars Barringoy Bni-
310.16: brthirhd, the Askold Olegsonder Crowds of the O'Keef-Rosses
310.17: and Rhosso-Keevers of Zastwoking, the Ligue of Yahoouth o.s.v.
310.18: so as to lall the bygone dozed they arborised around, up his
310.19: corpular fruent and down his reuctionary buckling, hummer,
310.20: enville and cstorrap (the man of Iren, thore's Curlymane for
310.21: you!), lill the lubberendth of his otological life.

with the consequent formation (condense) of a nonsensical (**cun-
dunce**) concert (**concertiums**) of voices. Gossips coming from
villages (**Naul**) and city districts (**Santry**), collectively and
individually (*all and sundry*); from far away places out of their
minds (Ennis-Corthy loses its head “Ennis” and becomes curtly
“**Corthy**” - in Italian “corti” is “short”) that disperse their rumors
(the filaments of the organ of Corti) in their wanderings (routes),
chaotic (**routs**) and several (**forty**: like the forty years wandering of
Moses in the desert). The concert of voices (or their consortium) is
composed by:

Brythyc Symmonds Guild : dirty (Italian “immondi”) British
simonists. (Here “guild” could also hint at “guilt”).

Ropemakers Reunion : people inclined to lynching, hangmen.

the Variagated Peddlars Barringoy Bni-brthirhd : a
brotherhood (**brthirhd**) of merchants (**Peddlars**) of any kind
(**Variagated**), Gentiles (**goy**) or Jews (**Bni-brthirhd**). [A vague
hint at T.S.Eliot's “Death by water”, with the Phoenician Phlebas
and the verse “Gentile or Jew”.]

the Askold Olegsonder Crowds of the O'Keef-Rosses :
autocratic Russian monarchies.

Rhosso-Keevers of Zastwoking : the Russian revolutionaries,
up to then just “bugs” [*Russen Käfer*: a species of cockroach
(literally 'Russian beetle') FWheet]that have just (**zast**) woken up
(**woking**), and have started *walking* on their own.

- **Ligue of Yahoos** : a union of violent and ignorant (**Yahoo**) youths, probably the Nazi *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth).

A medley of infantile and defective voices (**lall** – lallation) mumbling (lull) a drowsy lullaby (**dozed**) about the genealogical trees (**arborised**) and the good days of old (**bygone dozed**) of the ancestors (“**They**”: the Hiberio-Miletians and Argloeo-Noremen of 309.11). It is a monstrosity (**meatou-s conch** : “*sconch*”, Italian “*sconcio*” : obscenity, disgrace – a sort of “abortion”, with its malformed meat) that “**pinnatrates**” and contaminates his **corpular fruent** : his body (corpus), his humble (military corporal) progressive (the Spanish leftist *Frente Popular*) and fruitful (fruent : Italian “*fruenta*” : he who enjoys : from Latin “*fructus*”) spirit; and his **reuctionary buckling**, the instability (in science, **buckling** is a mathematical instability, leading to a failure mode) of his reactionary attitude. The opposition between progressive and reactionary spirit (Shem/Shawn polarity) is underlined by **hummer, enville and cstorrap**. The *hammer* of the proletarian worker vs. the lobster attitude (German **Hummer**) of the backwards going reactionary. The *anvil* of the smith (Latin Faber – *homo faber*), perhaps envious (French *envie*) of the bourgeois citizen who lives in the city (French: *en ville*). The industrious and hard-working beaver (Latin “*castor*” → Castor) and the “polluted” (*Pollux*) Hans Castorp of Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (The magic mountain) , an engineer (opposed to the castor, the beaver worker) who is in fact a symbol of decadence. Winking at the “man / mann” of Iren, the “Man of Aran” of Flaherty's movie, whose hard life is so different from that of the “*beau*” making a proud show of his “*curly mane*”. Rumors (otological) that – at the end of his chaotic progress (**lubberendth**) - will reach the roots (real and imaginary) of his ontological hearsay formed life.

Note that “**lill**” probably refers to **Lill's method** (*a visual method of finding the real roots of polynomials of any degree. It was developed by Austrian engineer Eduard Lill in 1867. A later paper by Lill dealt with the problem of imaginary roots. [WP]*)