

FW 312.13 – 313.01

sub-textual reconstruction

by

orlando mezzabotta

312.13: -- Hump! Hump! bassed the broaders-in-laugh with a quick

312.14: piddysnip that wee halfbit a second.

The two merry customers, snickering in a bass tone (**hump** could be an onomatopoeic rendering of a snicker), exchange a rapid (**halfbit a second**), tiny (**wee**) skipping, hilarious wink, typical of “paddies”, with a malicious allusion to the Captain's hump and they wait for a second round, both of drink and tale.

312.15: -- I will do that, sazd Kersse, mainingstaying the rigout for her

312.16: wife's lairdship.

The publican (Porter) continues his narrative, naming for the first time Kersse; giving thus a concrete shape to the model (**moddle**) of the anonymous Mengarment
[311.7: before he drew out the moddle of Kersse by jerkin his dressing]

And Kersse declares that he'll adjust firmly (**mainstay**: strong rope that serves to steady and support the mainmast of a sailing vessel) that bizarre “she-male” costume (**rigout**), with a nasty allusion to the ship's husband turned into a “**wife's lairdship**”.

312.16: Nett sew? they hunched back at the earpicker.

The two customers make fun of Porter and provoke him, alluding to his “hunch”, which is both a hump and a “premonition” of the coming “suite”. Earpicker recalling
311.10: So he sought with the lobestir claw of his propencil the clue of
311.11: the wickser in his ear.

312.17: But old sporty, as endth lord, in ryehouse reigner, he nought

312.18: feared crimp or cramp of shore sharks, plotsome to getsome.

But Porter doesn't pay much attention to them. He is assured that at the end he will gain the upper hand (**endth lord**), being the master in his own house (**in ryehouse reigner**), or better “in his own tavern”. “**Ryehouse**” being both “house of rye whiskey” and a reference to the *Ryehouse plot* (Fweet) against the Stuart family, with a possible pun “Stuart/steward”, Porter being in fact a sort of steward. The customers are there, like sharks, but he does not mind.

312.18: It

312.19: was whol niet godthaab of errol Loritz off his Cape of Good

312.20: Howthe and his trippertrice loretta lady, a maomette to his

312.21: monetone, with twy twy twinky her stone hairpins,

The reason why Porter does not mind the customers' provocations is very simple. Thanks God, they have nothing to do – or, at least, he has good hope (**godthaab**) they don't – with the episode of Jarl Van Hoother (Earl of Howth : **errol Loritz**) and his tricky lady (the Prankquean), who gained indeed the upper hand on him, although she was a doll (mammet / **maomette**) in front of him (mountain / **monetone**). There is a possible Triestine and Italian pun. “Monetone” hints at Italian “big coin”, since “moneta” is “coin” and “one” is an augmentative suffix. It's a little bit spurious, since “moneta” is feminine and “monetone” masculine. But it can be accepted, especially because “monetone” hints at “montone” (ram). Now if Jarl is a “big coin” the Prankquean is a “monetina” (little coin : “ina” is a diminutive). But “monetina” may hide a pun with Triestine “mona” (pussy), in our case “moneta” (little pussy). Thus the “little pussy” (**maomette**) who goes trice (**trippertrice**) towards Jarl's gigantic (mountain) male member (montone), twittering (**twy twy**) and creamy (**twinkie** : American snack cake), having under her control both the twins (**twy**) and the **twinky** girl (Issy). With a possible reference to the Roman *Cornelia*, mother of *Tiberius* and *Gaius Gracchus*, whom she called “my jewels” (*Haec ornamenta mea*), in our case (**her stone hairpins**).

312.21: only not,

312.22: if not, a queen of Pranceess their telling tabled who was for his

312.23: seeming a casket through the heavenly, nay, heart of the sweet

312.24: (had he hows would he keep her as niece as a fiddle!)

And Porter does not mind the customers' provocations because they have not mentioned (not yet, in the good hope they won't) the incestuous allusions to the Prankquean's (Pranceess) episode and Jarl's hidden desires of playing with his young niece's fiddle. “**telling tabled**” is probably a reference to the idiomatic Italian “intavolare un discorso” (to broach) : literally “*to put a discourse on the table*”.

312.24: but in the

312.25: mealtub it was wohl yeas sputsbargain what, rarer of recent, an

312.26: occasional conformity, he, with Muggleton Muckers, alwagers

312.27: allalong most certainly allowed, as pilerinnager's grace to peti-

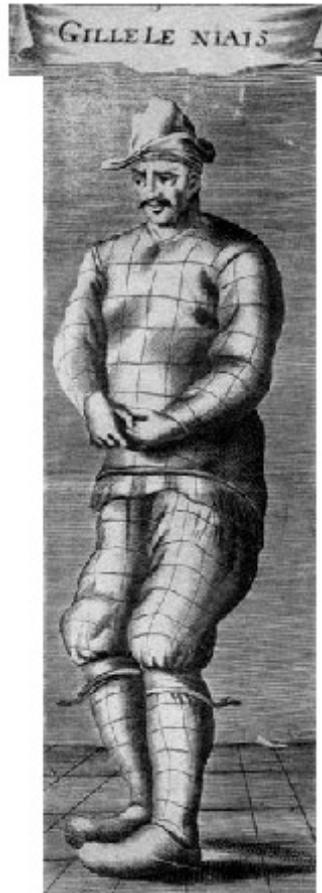
312.28: tionists of right, of the three blend cupstoomerries with their

312.29: customed spirits, the Gill gob, the Burklley bump, the Wallisey

312.30: wanderlook, having their ceilidhe gailydhe in his shaunty irish.

In fact the confrontation between Porter and the two customers at the counter deals mostly with the father/sons conflict. The *baas-brothers* mirror (or play the role of) the

sons who are working out a conspiracy (*Mealtub plot*) against their father (the publican). Disguised as the three antagonists of Swift's "*Tale of a Tub*", the story that Porter and the customers are talking about (**telling tabled**) concerns the hunchbacked sailor ("**gob**" is slang for "sailor", but also Italian "*gobbo*" : hunchbacked). "**Gill**" is "half a pint" and Old French "gille" (tub, vat); and "*Gille le Niais*" (Gille the simpleton).



a stock character of French farce. Then there is Buckley (**the Burkley bump** : bumper : a cup filled to the brim) who shot the Russian General (son/Shem vs father); and finally Wellington (**the Wallisey wanderlook** : the far-seeing one) the winner of Waterloo (son/Shawn vs father/emperor). There is a general agreement (**sputsbargain** → spit on hands to seal a deal) about that topic. An occasional consonance (**conformity**), never seen before (**rarer of recent**) between the publican (**he**) and the two customers. "**Muggleton Muckers**" hint in fact to Shem and Shaun. Shem because "*Muggletonians avoided all forms of worship or preaching, and met only for discussion and socializing.*" Shaun because the sect of the **Muckers** had a strong rationalist tendency, influenced by Kantian idealism. Porter, as father, seems to be condescending to the requests (what they want to hear about) of his two sons/customers (*Pilgrimage of Grace* and *Petition of Right* being examples of the temporary solution of the conflict between king and subjects : father vs sons); but in fact **he** is the one who gives stage directions and tunes up the *sea shanty* (a song originally sung by sailors, especially a rhythmic one forming an accompaniment to

work) that the puppets (**the three blend cupstoomerries with their customed spirits**) sing in his shanty (a crudely built hut, cabin, or house.)

312.31: Group drinkards maaks grope thinkards or how reads rotary,
312.32: jewr of a chrestend, respecting the otherdogs churchees, so long
312.33: plubs will be plebs but plabs by low frequency amplification may
312.34: later agree to have another. For the people of the shed are the
312.35: sure ads of all quorum. Lorimers and leathersellers, skimmers and
312.36: salters, pewterers and paperstainers, parishclerks, fletcherbowyers,
313.1: girdlers, mercers, cordwainers and first, and not last, the weavers.

The shanty is part of a *céilidh*, the traditional Gaelic social gathering, joined by the representatives of many crafts, in our case twelve, like the twelve citizens, the *vox populi* present in the pub. People of low rank, dwellers of the sheds, indirect advertisers of all brands of liquors (**sure ads of all quorum.**) They get drunk and by consequence they grope in their thinking, being hammerheads (**thinkards**); and the reverse (**reads rotary**) is true: flat-heads are necessarily drunkards.

312.32: jewr of a chrestend, respecting the otherdogs churchees

is indeed tricky. Apparently it depicts the mutual respect and tolerance of the three religions: Jew, Christian and Muslim (**chrestend**: crescent). And if “*in vino veritas*” the group drinking would be a sign of peace among people of different cultures, their basic truth being the same. Thus the tavern would become the place of accord and harmony. Especially if we read “**quorum**” as Italian “*cuore*” (heart) – “accord” comes from Latin *cor, cordis* (heart).

But this would not fit the general atmosphere of the pub, which is conflictual. The tavern is in fact a *bottle-field* where **blend cupstoomerries** are fighting each other. So there is another interpretation of the above line: it is a mutual exchange of insults between members of different faiths (or cultures). In this respect, “**respecting**” is to be read not as “*showing deferential regard*”, but as “*referring to*”. Thus two “devotees” (**churchees**) fronting (**respecting** : opposed to) each other and calling each other “dog” (**otherdogs**). A scene like this:

Muslim : *Giaour Jew of a Christian!*

Christian: *Giaour Jew of a Muslim (crescent)!*

(both agreeing only in their antisemitism!). Disputes, quarrels, altercations are the keynotes of the whole episode, a very “*Night of the Rabblement*”. A rabble out of which only confusion can result. And this will keep going on so long as the pubs are frequented by plebeians (**so long plubs will be plebs**); but should they stop shouting and keep their voices down (**low frequency amplification**) like well behaved gentlemen, modifying their “e” (**plebs**) into a more refined “a” (**plabs**), in that case they would choose not “**plubs**”, but more elegant “clubs”. Though “rabble” would they remain.

No man, said the Nolan, can be a lover of the true or the good unless he abhors the multitude; and the artist, though he may employ the crowd, is very careful to isolate himself.

(James Joyce : The Day of the Rabblement)

One final note about the composition of our rabble, the twelve representatives of vox populi. They are all members of specific guilds. The question is: why did Joyce choose these particular trades? Is it a random choice or is there an intention behind it? Since I am convinced that Joyce had always a precise aim in his enumerations I have tried to reconstruct his mental process. Of course it is a highly questionable attempt, but I feel that “*Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.*”

So, let's give a look at the guilds.

312.35: Lorimers and leathersellers, skimmers and

312.36: salters, pewterers and paperstainers, parishclerks, fletcherbowyers,

313.1: girdlers, mercers, cordwainers and first, and not last, the weavers.

First we must note that the weavers, though last are, in fact, the first; which obviously reminds us of the “*Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard*” [Matthew 20:1–16]. The allusion to the “vineyard” in a tavern scene is quite hilarious. Thus, since (*the last shall be first, and the first last*) we should read the enumeration from the bottom up. The object under examination is of course the “**telling table**”, namely the tale (concerning HCE – and FW, of course!). So we start with “weavers” - a courteous and deferential bow to Miss Harriet Shaw!



- 1) **weavers** : weave the **texture**, interlacing strips and strands to form a “tale”
- 2) **cordwainers** : put shoes on the tale, so that it may walk his way
- 3) **merciers** : display it in the shop windows and put it on sale
- 4) **girdlers** : embellish it through embroidery and adornment
- 5) **fletcherbowyers** : run arrows through it, taking digs at it
- 6) **parishclerk** : look at it with philistine eyes
- 7) **paperstainers** : stain its reputation on papers
- 8) **pewterers** : provide dishes on which to serve him
- 9) **salters** : sprinkle salt and spices on it
- 10) **skinnners** : peel it and skin it alive
- 11) **leathersellers** : bind it and whip it
- 12) **Lorimers** : prod it with their spurs

