

FW 320.33 – 321.20

Challenge within a Challenge

by
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Disclaimer

These are tentative annotations, liable to be adjusted, modified or discarded. Many of them are highly questionable, definitely far-fetched and a few on the verge of insanity. So use them at your own risk. My aim is trying to put together controversial data in order to build a possible system. The results may not be satisfactory, but I am convinced that the strategy is the right one. McHugh's Annotations and Fweet should be always at hand.

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- 320.33:** Infernal machinery (serial number: Bullysacre, dig care a dig)
320.34: having thus passed the buck to billy back from jack (finder the
320.35: keeper) as the baffling yarn sailed in circles

The Captain's mighty tirade has silenced the scornful arrogance of the wildest component of the trio, the “**ersewilde aleconner**”. “**Infernal machinery**” hints in fact at his malicious gossips, his digging (**dig care a dig**) into what should remain buried in an old cemetery (**Bullysacre** → oldest Dublin cemetery, Kilmainham). The name is interesting, since in our case it points to the Captain (*bully*) and his area of pertinence (*acre*). The “**ersewilde aleconner**” (note that he is not even considered a person, but a “**serial number**”) is digging with care (**dig care**) in “*bullshit*”, which “*a person*” wouldn't care a “fig” about (**care a dig** → care a fig). If the “fig” holds, there might be even a reference to Jesus “*cursing the fig tree*”.

Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.
Matthew 21:18-22

“**dig care a dig**” with its possible hint at “*Hickory Dickory Dock*” (a song about a pendulum clock) triggers “**having thus passed the buck to billy back from jack**”, where “*pass the buck*” is “*pass the blame*” and “*billy to jack*” is slang for “*going back and forth*”. In conclusion the story, so hard to believe (**baffling yarn**), has circled around, like a drifting ship (**sailed in circles**), going back and forth amongst the customers, each one claiming, during his time's share, his royalty on it (**finder the keeper**), “*Finders, keepers*” being an English adage with the premise that when something is unowned or abandoned, whoever finds it can claim it.

320.35: it was now high tide

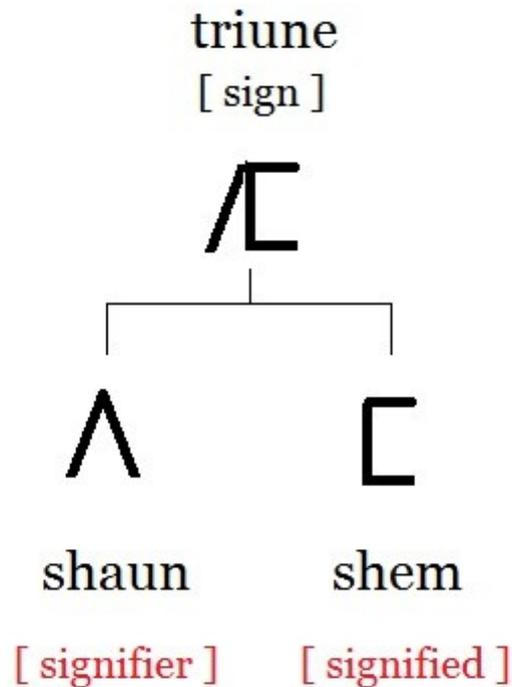
320.36: for the reminding pair of snipers to be suitably punished till they

321.1: had, like the pervious oelkenner done, liquorally no more powers

321.2: to their elbow.

So, having taught a lesson to the “*previous*” (**pervious**) ambushed “**sniper**”, quite permeable (**pervious**) to drinks (**oelkenner**), thus totally “*soaked*”, Porter thinks the time has come to “*fix*” the other two (**the reminding pair of snipers**). Now “*snipper*” is one who “*cuts with quick strokes*”; in our case with a reference to “*tailoring*” and their consequent “*suitable punishment*” (**suitably punished**). But “*snipper*” is “*hairdresser*” as well (might check, though, if it was used at Joyce's time), which might hint at the idiomatic Italian “*lavata di capo*” (lit. *head's wash* : harsh scolding → **suitably punished**). The intention is that of “*stunning them*” (Italian idiomatic “*ubriacare*” : to make someone drunk → **liquorally**), so that they be no more in a condition to lift their elbows and drink Power whiskey.

Porter's strategy is indeed quite sophisticated, but the first impact seems to show his Napoleonic approach, as when, before Waterloo, the Emperor succeeded in dividing his enemy's allied armies in order to fight them separately. In our case Porter , having defeated the “*triune*” coalition, represented by the “**pervious oelkenner**” may then confront separately its separate members, something like this:



321.2: Ignorinsers' bliss, therefore, their not to say rifle
 321.3: butt target, none too wisely, poor fish, (he is eating, he is spun,
 321.4: is milked, he dives) upholding a lampthorne of lawstift as wand
 321.5: of welcome to all men in bonafay, (and the corollas he so has
 321.6: saved gainsts the virus he has thus injected !) discoastedself to that
 321.7: kipsie point of its Dublin bar there, breaking and entering,

At this point begins a series of quite puzzling and overlapping criss-crossings that might lead us astray lest we circumscribe their horizons. The scene seems to proceed from the clients' vantage point, but narrated through an ironic filter. They think they are making fun of Porter, but it is quite the reverse (**Ignorinsers' bliss**). They think Porter is their “**target**”, but in fact he is the “**rifle**” that will “**butt**” their asses (**target**). They think Porter acts like a stupid dupe (**none too wisely**); that he is an easy prey, a “**poor fish**” that rises to the bait (**he is eating**); that is “*spun around*” (**he is spun**), which hints at Italian idiomatic “*portare in giro*” (lit. to take around : to pull someone's leg); that is “**milked**” (milking: *squeezing the eggs out of fish*), every juice wrung out of him, to satiate their morbid curiosity; and then let down (**he dives**) to himself.

Now, in order to get a better comprehension of the passage, we should try to reconstruct the innkeeper's action. It seems that he takes a lantern

(**upholding a lampthorne**) and goes to a puzzling “**kipsie point**”. Many interpreters are inclined to think that he goes to the *outhouse*, since one of the meanings of “*kip*” is “*hut*”; but that is hardly sustainable, since I am convinced that Joyce, according to his stylistic procedures, would have described the scene in quite more abundant terms. The only possibility of his exit and return would be “**breaking and entering**”; but that would be too elliptic and, most of all, would hardly fit the totality of the context.

So I think we should approach the sentence from another angle. Porter is beckoned by the two clients to come and serve them more drinks. I am anticipating what happens in 321.12-13 (**were signalling gael warnings towards Wazwollenzee Haven to give them their beerings**), which I'll expound upon in due time.

In conclusion: he pulls away from the counter (**discoastedself** → Italian “*discostarsi*” : to withdraw) and goes where the two clients sit (**to that kipsie point of its Dublin bar there**). Note, by the way, “**its**”, since it is referred to the “**poor fish**”. Now another meaning of “*kip/kipsie*” is “*brothel*”. Italian “*fare bordello*” (lit. make a brothel) is “*to kick up a hell of a row*”, which is exactly what the two clients are doing. And “*kip*” is also “*the lower jaw of a salmon*” and Scottish “*hook*”. Which is a further hint at the image of the “*baited fish*”.

Porter arrives “**upholding a lampthorne of lawstiff**”. What is “**lawstiff**”? We find “*law*” and German “*Stift*”, which is not only “*pencil*”, but also “*monastery, abbey, diocese, seminary, cathedral chapter*”: thus civic and religious connotations. So, in the clients' view, he comes with the expression (**lampthorne** → the look in his eyes) of a servant obedient to civic and ecclesiastical laws (*Obedientia Civium Urbis Felicitas* : The obedience of the citizens makes a happy city : Dublin's motto), like the man in “*good faith*” (**bonafay** → bona fide) he is (although Italian “*dabbene*” → decent, good man” has a scornful meaning: a person “*dabbene*” is a simpleton, to be made fun of); like the “*decent*” innkeeper (**bonafay** → Boniface) he is, with his welcoming attitude (**as wand of welcome**). But we may infer that the clients are somewhat envious and pissed off at him, since they must recognize that he has made his fortune (**the corollas he so has saved** → “*corollas*” are in fact “*crowns*”) with the alcohol (**virus**) he has made them drink (**he has thus injected**).

Dominique, in his "profound" wisdom, suggested that the "virus" might hint at the "*spirochaete bacterium of syphilis*" and at the "*Wassermann test*". Which would be indeed quite a hilarious touch, since our "*man of liquors*" is turned into a base "*man of water*"; "*Wasser*" being German for "water": thus "*wasser mann*".

There is, though, another totally different interpretation. The "**lampthorne of lawstift**" the innkeeper "*upholds*" may be seen, symbolically, as a threatening "*shillelagh*",



which is traditionally made from "**black-thorn**" wood (*prunus spinosa*); from its "thorns" we can see the lightnings (Italian "*lampe*" and Sir Jules Thorn's "*Electric Lamp Service Company Ltd*") and hear its menacing "*Thor's thunders*". That's indeed a "**wand of welcome**" to teach the clients how to behave according to civic and religious rules. And it is also a German "*Blaustift*" (blue pencil), like the one teachers use to mark and correct mistakes; which is exactly what Porter is going to do, "**breaking and entering**" in quite a vehement manner.

321.7: breaking and entering, from the

321.8: outback's dead heart, Glasthule Bourne or Bohernapark Nolagh,

321.9: by wattismade or bianconi, astraylians in island,

The term "*kipsie*" anticipated the "*Australian*" references we meet here, namely "**outback**", the vast, remote, arid area of Australia and the Australians gone astray in an ice land (**island** → Italian "*Islanda*" : Iceland). Read: trying vainly to corner the "Icelandic" Captain.

It's legitimate to ask: why Australia? I am of the opinion that it hints at the concept of "*polarity*", constitutive of the Shaun/Shem rivalry. Underscored by "**dead heart**", which is "*the remote interior of Australia*", as described by the British Geologist J. W. Gregory (1864—1932) in his book "*The*

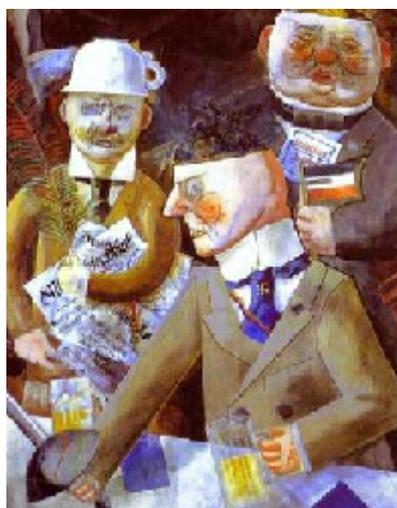
Dead Heart of Australia (1906)”; but it hints also at “*dead heat*” (a race in which two or more competitors finish in a tie). And it's exactly that “tie” that Porter “*breaks*”, “*entering*” the most remote and arid interior of the two clients' soul. Or should we say “*soil*”? In this case “**Glasthule** → Glasthule: district of Dún Laoghaire” and “**Bohernapark** → Bóthar na páirc: park road”, are directly linked to “**by wattismade or bianconi**”, since Glasthule has a railway station and “**wattismade**” hints at James Watt's steam engine; whereas “**bianconi**” refers to Charles Bianconi's stage coaches, more suited to traverse park roads. But the “Australian” reference points also to “*aborigine*”, in our case the native dwellers of the island (**astraylians in island**), gone “*astray*” with their booze and their “*boos*”, their “**gael warnings**” to the innkeeper to “*signal*” him (**signalling**) their thirst. The capital letters of their names (**Glasthule Bourne or Boehernapark Nolagh**) is quite ironic, since, in their Brown/Nolan dichotomy, they fancy they are so important as Gladstone and Bonaparte: a “*born*” Gladstone and a “*hired out*” Nolagh (Italian “*noleggare*” : hire, rent out).

321.9: astraylians in island, a wellknown

321.10: tall hat blown in between houses by a nightcap of that silk

But, as mentioned above, they are only native and cynic (*ice land*) drunkards (**astraylians in island**). And here comes a more detailed and sarcastic description of the couple, or, if we like, of their polar aspects. (Please note: polar → ice land → island).

We have a pretentious “**tall hat**” and a “**nightcap**” likewise (**of that silk** → of that ilk) pretentious, allegedly made of silk. And since “**tall hat**” hints at “*toilet*”, I wouldn't exclude that “**a nightcap of that silk**” might refer to a “*chamber-pot*”, put on like a “*bowler hat*”.



So we have the image of a self-styled “*highbrow*” (Brown → Bruno), dragged from a pub (or a brothel) to the next (**blown in between houses**) by a mean and base “*bourgeois*”, a sheer “*nullity*” (Nolan → null).

321.10: or it

321.11: might be a black velvet and a kiber galler dragging his hunker,

And here again a variant of the same polarity. “**black velvet**” is a “sophisticated” cocktail made of champagne and Guinness; in “**kiber galler**” we find a “peasant” (**kiber galler**) who drinks “*gall*” (**galler**), and, totally drunk, drags his ass (**his hunker**). And since “**kiber**” is a Maltese verb (to become big), cognate to Arabic “*kabir*”, in “**kiber galler**” we may also find a quite “*bilious*” individual, who has “a flood of gall”. “*Black bile*” quite different from the other’s “*black velvet*”. But of course it might also be a “*peasant*” dragging the highbrow’s ass, which complies better to the Shakespearean citation:

“the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe” (Hamlet V.1, 130-132)

321.12: were signalling gael warnings towards Wazwollenzee Haven to

321.13: give them their beerings, east circular route or elegant central

321.14: highway.

In conclusion we have the two intoxicated clients summoning (**signalling**) Porter (**Wazwollenzee Haven** → German “*Was wollen Sie haben?* : What do you want? → the innkeeper ready to satisfy his customers’ desires), with tempestuous and threatening calls (**gael warnings** : gael → gale & Gaelic) for other rounds (**rings**) of beverages (**beer**), no matter whether popular common booze (**east circular route**) or sophisticated high-balls (**elegant central highway**). Or: no matter if it is “the menial servant” or the great ECH himself who serves them. That will be in any case their “*heavenly haven*”.

321.14: Open, 'tis luck will have it! Lifeboat Alloe, Noeman's

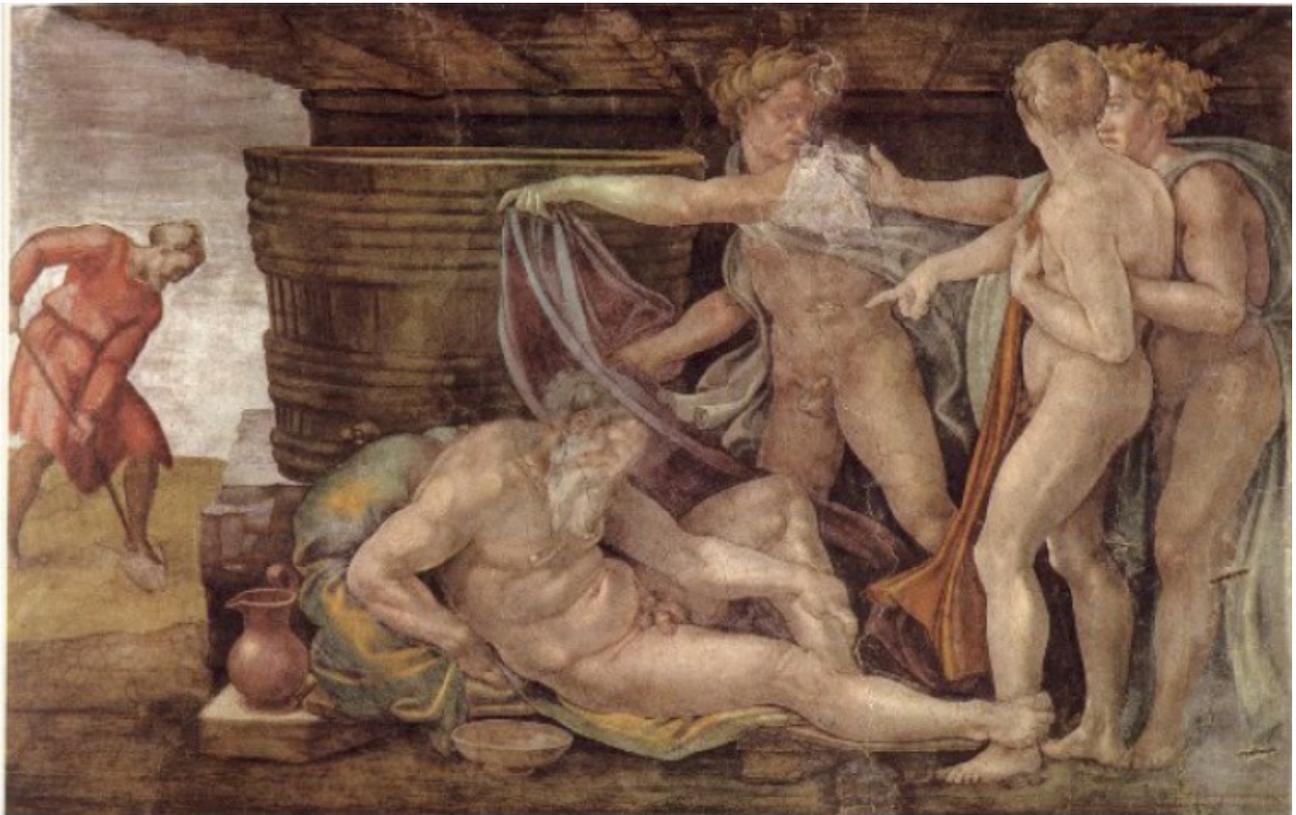
321.15: Woe, Hircups Emptybolly!

The two clients are ready to open their mouths and be inundated, like a second deluge, and he is indeed lucky the one who enters the “boat of

life” (**Lifeboat**): Noah's (**Noeman's** → the man Noah) Ark. Which is the Ark of Covenant (Alliance → Ally → **Alloe**) and the “*boat of immortality*”, since “*aloe*”, according to ancient Egyptians, assured long life to the mummified body of the Pharaoh. It's thus a sailing on the “*water of life*” (*usquebaugh*), and a toast to all (**Alloe**). A toast, though, intended to play a foul trick on Noah (**Noeman's Woe**):

And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. (Genesis 9, 24)

“**Hircups Emptybolly**” is in fact not only Porter/HCE/Noah bringing drinks to the clients, but also the father scorned by his younger son who would like to lay him bare.



He is a drunken goat (**Hircups** → hiccup & hyrcus) who should “*empty his belly*” (**Emptybolly**), hinting at Italian “*pallone gonfiato*” (lit. inflated ball : full of himself) and a possible vulgar “*vai a cagare*” (go shit! : fuck off!).

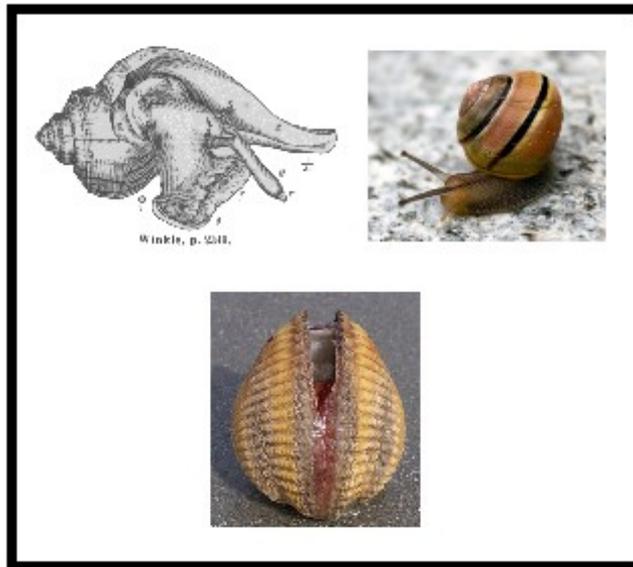
321.15: With winkles whelks and cocklesent

321.16: jelks. Let be buttercup eve lit by night in the Phoenix! Music.

321.17: And old lotts have funn at Flammagen's ball. Till Irinwakes from

321.18: Slumber Deep.

“winkles”, “whelks” and “cockles” are all molluscs, but the first two are “sea snails”, the other a “bi-valve”.



I think it's pretty clear that we are dealing with sex, penis and vulva. “winkles” and “whelks” smelling the “scent” of the “cockle” (cocklesent) and getting “jelly jerkings” (jelks). That is a prelude to an imminent brothel scene, full of sweet (**buttercup** → a cup of butter), but poisonous (**buttercup** → ranunculus) tastes, a bewitched wake (eve) in the “moon-night” (lit by night) in **Phoenix** park, accompanied by the music of *Tim Finnegan's* ballad and *Lannigan's ball*.

“old lotts” are the participants of the feast (“lotto” is Italian for “batch”); and there is a possible hint at the Biblical “Lot” who committed incest with his daughters;



and at “*the two lustful elders*” (**funn** → faun) that observe the lovely Susanna (book of Daniel).



This is justified by “**Flammagen**”, where we might detect the Shakespearean “*Imogen*” (in *Cymbeline*) who is uncovered (Norwegian “**funn**”), in her sleep, by the cunning Iachimo.



An infernal scene, indeed, full of flaming images (**Flammagen**), like those depicted by the Flemish (**Flammagen**) painter Hieronymus Bosch.



A “fiery” image connected with “**Irinwakes**”, which may be read as “*ironworks*”: the revolution which will trigger the patriotic “*awakening*” (from **Slumber Deep**) of the native Irish. But “**Irinwakes**” may conceal a sarcastic reference to Georges Ohnet's novel “*The Ironmaster*” . Its French title is “*Le Maître de forges*”; with a possible pun “*forge* → *forgery*”. Thus the alleged rebellion would be just a nice example of wishful thinking, a typical feature of drunken patriotism.

**321.18: How they succeeded by courting daylight in
321.19: saving darkness he who loves will see.**

And this may be exactly the clients' wishful thinking: to reach the dawn, to “*conquer the day*” (**courting daylight**) without passing out in the course of the wake (**saving darkness**). But also to reach “*the light*” (of reason) without disconnecting from the “*unconscious roots*”. A further hint at the already described “*polarity*”. And they throw down the gauntlet at Porter with a provocative demeanour (**he who loves will see**).

321.20: Business. His bestness. Copeman helpen.

Since the innkeeper's job is that of complying with his customers' wishes (**Business. His bestness** → *business is business*) he is ready to do his best (**His bestness**) to satisfy them. So “**CHE**”, the “*man with the cup*” (**Copeman**),

the man who is not afraid to “*cope*” with them, takes on the challenge and shows himself, sarcastically, ready to be of *help*.

