

FW 321.21 – 33

Counter Scene

by
orlando mezzabotta

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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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This brief passage doesn't pose particular problems, since it describes the innkeeper who pours drinks , but keeps them to himself until the clients put money on the counter. The description is indeed lively and full of amusing metaphors, both static and dynamic, worthy to be looked at.

321.21: Contrescene

The previous scene was basically centred around the customers' defying provocations against Porter. Here we look at the scene from a “*reverse angle*”. A “**Contrescene**” which is also “*A scene at the Counter*”.

321.22: He cupped his years

Porter puts his “*cupped hand*” to his old “ear” (**years**),



so that he may receive clearly the clients' orders. But there is also a possible hint at Porter's "*experience*", which he has "cupped", made treasure of, in the course of his professional "years".

321.22: to catch me's to you in what's yours as

321.23: minest to hissant, giel as gail, geil as gaul,

"me's to you" is what the client (**me**) orders to the host (**you**).

"**what's yours as minest to hissant**" is the host who says that the client's wish (**what's yours**) is his own (**minest**) wish, that he is ready to comply with (**hissant** → assent) what the client asks for (**hissant**→ his sent). And he does not care about the clients' languages or their Babelian confusion., due probably to their state of drunkenness. "**giel as gail, geil as gaul**" may unleash a swarm of interpretations, all acceptable no matter how fanciful. It's indeed a literary "*yellowish*" (Frisian "*giel*", Danish, Norwegian, Swedish "*gul*", German "*gelb*", Dutch "*geel*", Italian "*giallo*" : all from Indo-European base, **g^hel** : give to that "*urinish*" colour any connotation you like) "*chimera cocktail*" (Italian "*gallo*" : cock), with horny goats (**geil** : Dutch "*lascivious*"), worn-out horses (German "**gaul**"), cocks (**gaul** → gallia → gallo), wolves (**gail** → Armenian kayl "quɹɹ"), kids (**giel** → French *gilles* → Latin *aegidius* → Greek *aigidion*: young goat) &tc.

321.23: **Odorozone, now our-**

321.24: **menial servent, blanding rum, milk and toddy with I hand it**

321.25: **to you.**

Porter's epithet is “**Odorozone**”, in which we find “*odour*”, thus someone “engulfed” (**zone**) by his own scent (**Odoro** → Italian “*I smell*”). And if we, nasturtium like, twist the “**zone**”, we may get “*noze* → *nose*”, thus a snobbish fellow, with his “**zone**” in the air. The word hints at Armenian “*օտարերկրացի* → *otarerkrats’i* → *odarazin* : stranger, alien), which justifies the “**our- menial**” term; the would-be snob turned into a menial “snaky” servant (**servent** → serpent servant).

He prepares a cocktail, blending suavely (**blanding** → blend → bland), for the three clients (Tom, Dick and Harry), “**rum, milk and toddy**”; ready to hand it to them (**I hand it to you**).

321.25: **Saying whiches, see his bow on the hapence, with a pat-**

321.26: **tedyr but digit here, he scooped the hens, hounds and horses**

321.27: **biddy by bunny, with an arc of his covethand, saved from the**

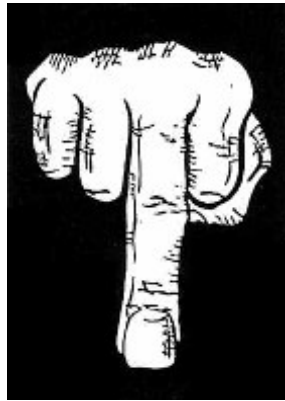
321.28: **drohnings they might oncounter, untill his cubid long, to hide in**

321.29: **dry.**

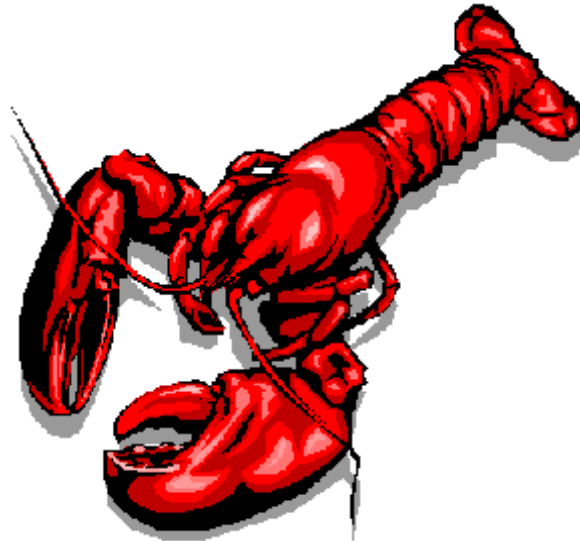
But he holds the drinks, with an ironic bow to the petty clients, “pigs” worthy no more than half pennies (**hapence**)



and, tapping with the finger (**digit**) of his mammal (Norwegian “**pattedyr**”) “paw” (French “*patte*”) on the counter,



an obvious request of money, extending all his forearm (cubit → **untill his cubid long**), like a “claw” of the lobster he is,



forming thus a “*covetous arc*” (an arc of his covethand), his personalized “*Ark of Covenant*” (clear agreements make for long friendships), he protects his “valuable drinks”, their value expressed in Irish coins,



“hens, hounds and horses”, one after the other (**biddy by bunny**),



from possible perils (**drohnings** → German *Drohung*: threat) of being “gulped down” (*drowned*) by gaping whirlpools directly from the counter (**they might oncounter**), scooping them promptly and putting them away in a safe place (**to hide in dry**).

321.29: Aside. Your sows tin the topple, dodgers, trink me dregs!

321.30: Zoot!

His gesture leaving no place to doubts. Parodying Tim Finnegan's “*Your souls to the devil, did ye think I'm dead?*” he explicitly invites, in a theatrical “**aside**”, the “toppling **dodgers**”, who can afford but a dram of liquor, to put their half-pennies (**sows & French “sou”**), their beggar's (**tin**) pennies (Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* → *Die Dreigroschenoper* → German “**trink**”), on top of the counter, if they want to drink the “**dregs**” he serves them, that “*suit*” perfectly their “**soot**”. And to do it right away (**Zoot** → French “*Tout de suite*”).

321.31: And with the gust of a spring alice the fossickers and swaggelers

321.32: with him on the hoof from down under piked forth desert roses in

321.33: that mulligar scrub.

Porter is indeed triumphing over the “**fossickers**”, who dig into ditches (Italian “*fossi*”), seeking muddy, false and fussy “clues”, insolent and arrogant (**swaggelers**) gossip-mongers; he has his “**hoof**” on them; he has not yet been butchered (**on the hoof**) by their sordid insinuations. Now there is another hidden reference applied to the customers. “**spring alice**” may of course refer to the Australian “*Alice Springs*”, a town situated in the very centre of the Australian continent, hinting at the “*aridity*” of the

clients' inner core,



which would add to the many Australian allusions already met. But “*alice*” is Italian “*anchovy*”, closely linked to the Norwegian “*spring spawning herring : Clupea harengus*”.



“**gust**” hints also at Italian “*gusto*” (taste) and the taste of herrings is indeed “salty”. Thus “*chewing bitter*” and “*seeing blue*” instead of “*seeing red*”, the clients drag out (**piked forth**) from their “deserted” pockets (**piked**) their “scraggy crowns” (**desert roses**)



in order to “scrub” their “*low spirits*” (**mulligar** → Australian “*mulligrubs*”).

Of course, from the clients' point of view it could be a metaphor for “*throw pearls to the pigs*”, since Porter's pub (Mulligar Inn, Chapelizod) is for them no more than a “*pigsty*” which should need a definite “**scrub**”.

