

Issy's last footnotes (page 308)

not too serious annotations by orlando mezzabotta

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The two drawings at the bottom of page 308 are in fact parts of the footnotes, a sort of a polemic and sarcastic iconic comment towards the two brothers, who, in their fighting have put Issy aside (“the pussy in the corner” of FW 278.6 – or a more general “the girl I left behind me”).

The first drawing seems addressed to Dolph/Shem, the Antichrist, the “antic” (buffoon), who plays “antics” with his hand (Greek “cheir”) (anticheirst), a possible hint at masturbation; and she dismisses him scornfully giving him “the finger”, the middle finger, the third one (free/three) of her hand.

The second drawing deserves a little more attention. It is a very rude image of crossbones, not exactly like those of the Jolly Roger or of masonic symbolism. Peter has brilliantly pointed out that they have been drawn by a child, so I think any comment on its peculiarity would be out of tune and we should stick to its face value. (Although it's possible that Joyce was amused by the two circles of the bones: a grotesque reference to the two circles of the Euclidean diagram of page 293!)

I am of the opinion that the second footnote refers to Kev/Shاون, the well behaved boy who goes to school (skool) with his nice blessed (cross) cake (bun); a sort of “Hostia”, his sacramental bread. The religious student who has St Jerome's “skull”



as a virtuous example. Kev is scorned (gags) by Issy who looks at him as a “jerk-off” (enjoyim-solff), a Christian one (goyim : not Hebrew), one who sublimates his sexual instincts contemplating maiden's “drawers” (our drawings) hanged out on the line (rope) to dry.

Thus Issy's scornful farewell takes the shape of the crossbones, representing a symbolic “kiss (X) of death (bones)”.

A final far-fetched and not too serious annotation concerning “enjoyimsolff”. The final double “f” may have a Russian touch. Now the crossbones are formed by “tibiae”, quite near to Russian “tebe” [tee-byéh], meaning “to you”. Thus, the chapter ends with a “thumb nose to you”, perhaps anticipating the Russian General of the following chapter.