

Movement and Identity in “Cyclops”: Reevaluating *Ulysses*’s Correspondence to Its Homeric Urtext¹

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Abstract

Focusing on the “Cyclops” episode in *Ulysses*, this article proposes a new understanding of the novel’s relation to its classical Urtext by examining the ways in which Homeric ties are re-opened and re-distributed within the episode. Exploring how “Cyclops” enacts a battle for the representation of Homer’s one-eyed antagonist, the article argues that Joyce, by underscoring Polyphemos’s sympathetic qualities, not only displays an ingenious faithfulness to Homer but also rewrites heroic norms and values by forcing the *Kyklops* to undergo a process of dismemberment, a splitting in two between the Citizen and Bloom. This rearranging of Homeric parallels, in which Bloom takes on Polyphemos’s role as outsider and victim while the Citizen assumes the role of aggressor and giant, provocatively recasts the questions of heroism and of victimization.

In his *Politics*, Aristotle writes, “So it is manifest that the city is among the things that exist by nature, that a human being is by nature a political animal, and that anyone who is cityless by nature and not by chance is either of a depraved sort or better than a human being. He is like the one reproached by Homer as ‘without clan, without sacred law, without hearth’” (1.2.1253a1-1253a5). Although the Homeric reference quotes the *Iliad*, the words could just as easily describe the figure of the lawless *Kyklops*, who in the *Odyssey* lives outside the bounds of Greek civilization and religion.² The most enduring image of the *Kyklops* casts him as a violent, one-eyed giant; he is less often remembered as a victim of violence whose pleas for sympathy are dismissed by his countrymen. Within the dominant paradigm, it seems natural to equate the aggressive Citizen of Joyce’s “Cyclops” episode with Polyphemos, and to align

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Bloom with the Homeric hero (Gifford 314). But the Linati schema, while listing "No one (I)" and "Ulysses" among the episode's "Persons," fails to specify Ulysses's parallel in the episode or mention the *Kyklops* (qtd. in Gifford 314).³ This omission, only partly resolved by the Gilbert schema, suggests not only that initial metaphoric ties are reopened and rewritten within the episode, but that there may be grounds for rethinking *Ulysses*'s correspondence to its Homeric Urtext. This paper will show that, when the issue of primary and secondary representation is brought into greater consideration, Bloom is compelled not only to play the role that corresponds to the Homeric hero but also to share certain characteristics with Odysseus's antagonists. This rearranging of Homeric parallels puts the questions of heroism and of victimization into a new aspect.

As scholars have noted, Joyce's characters, while often claiming roots in one principal source, actually derive from the fusion of multiple individuals, both fictional and historical. As Gifford points out in reference to the "Cyclops" episode, "Bloom is also cast in the role of the Prometheus of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*" (314). These secondary sources of representation, threatened by the desire to locate a character's primary parallel, deserve greater attention. If Bloom (as a Joycean character) can have multiple parallels, then Odysseus and Polyphemos (as characters from Joyce's primary source-text) may also assume multiple identities; they need not be contained within any single character of *Ulysses*. In fact, the language and style of the "Cyclops" episode suggest that Polyphemos actually rotates among several characters, alternately inhabiting the narrator, Bloom, and the Citizen. While these are his most prominent manifestations, *Kyklopean* traces also appear in other characters, such as the blind man and the squabbling barflies. His identity is never completely stable. Furthermore, the consideration of Polyphemos as exile and victim in contrast to his role as aggressor and giant suggests that the Citizen and Bloom split the two halves of his identity between them.

It is the much more evidently enigmatic identity of the episode's narrator, however, which has sparked the liveliest and most diverse scholarly debate. Although many identity theories have been put forth, he still has not been positively and definitively identified with any single character. In "The Identity of the 'Cyclops' Narrator," E. I. Schoenberg argues that the narrator is actually a character in the work operating under disguise—Simon Dedalus.⁴ In "One Eye and Two Levels," Herbert Schneidau concludes, "The Nameless One's name, at last, is Joyce"

(103). Responding to this claim in “Two Eyes at Two Levels,” David Hayman argues that “turning the dun into an avatar of Joyce, one of his ‘might have been’ versions, is considerably farther out than logic should permit us to go” (109). In yet another interpretation, Richard Ellmann records that Joyce identified the first-person narrator with “Thersites, the meanest-spirited man in the Greek host at Troy. . . . His is a savage temperament, bent upon reduction” (110).⁵ This characterization of Thersites seems curiously appropriate to the self-centered, barbarian *Kyklops* as well, and in another article, Hayman implies that the narrator, “[b]lind to his own viciousness,” aligns himself with the Citizen, whose “blind rage” links him with “Homer’s giant” (“Cyclops” 244-45). But, Hayman adds, the narrator’s behavior toward Bloom both mirrors and departs from the Citizen’s own behavior, which in turn “both follows and reverses” that of Homer’s *Kyklops* (245), and the “myopic narrator” must also be differentiated from the “*arranger*” responsible for the asides (253; 265). Mark Osteen, on the other hand, writes that the “Nameless One” not only recalls Homer’s *Kyklops* but also, as “narrative exchanger,” serves as “Odysseus’ alter ego” (254). Thus the Cyclopean narrator—alternately referred to as the “dun,” the “barfly,” the “Nameless One,” or as another character in disguise—has accrued a number of seemingly conflicting identities, both from within and without the text. It may not be so much a question of which scholar gets it right and which one errs, however, but rather a question of how the text entertains all of these possibilities proposed by its critics. The very existence of these debates suggests that the narrator—rather than operating merely as Thersites, Joyce, or another individual—actually possesses more than one identity. The narrator may seem to elude identification precisely because he embodies so many identities at once.

This ambiguity surrounding the narrator has further implications for the Citizen and Bloom. Even critics who align the Citizen with the *Kyklops* and Bloom with Odysseus often hint that these identifications are not made within contained boundaries. Osteen notes that, in his refusal to buy his companions drinks at the bar, Bloom is “unlike Odysseus” insofar as he “fails to offer even a spurious gift to the Cyclopes, who view his prudence as a judgment against them” (268). Fritz Senn suggests that Bloom, “atypically wordy” in this episode (488), is unlike the Homeric hero in yet another way: “Ironically, while Odysseus is supremely more *potiphron* than anyone around him, Bloom is markedly less so, a poor but exceptionally avid speaker in public” (486). In fact it is the *Kyklopes*, in contrast to the Greek wanderer, who are not “skillful at using language” (494), and it is Polyphemos whose

name suggests the quality of being "wordy" (487). Although his own name appears in several variant forms, Bloom himself does not disguise his name in "Cyclops," as Odysseus does in Homer's chapter; his antagonist the Citizen recognizes him at once, and asks him in to the pub. As Senn notes, "The cover name of his own device, Henry Flower, does not surface (except transposed into a parodic insert, 'Enrique Flor'—*U* 12.1288). Bloom is one of the few among those present who does not engage in verbal trickery or wit" (501)—a marked departure from the Odysseus of many wiles. The Citizen, too, deviates from the *Kyklops* of the *Odyssey*: "Inverting Homer, Joyce makes him nameless" and accords him the anonymity typically associated with Odysseus (Hayman, "Cyclops" 245). In one of the asides, he also receives the designation of "hero" (*U* 12.155), and his desire for company makes him "[u]nlike the antisocial *Cyklops*" (Hayman, "Cyclops" 247). At times, then, it would seem that Bloom is more akin to the exiled Polyphemos who cannot speak without being mocked, and the Citizen more akin to the cunning no-man Odysseus.

In their exchange of *Kyklopean* identity, Bloom and the Citizen represent the broader way in which the *Kyklops* moves through his eponymous episode, choosing which individuals and entities he would like alternately to embody. Not only do characters in *Ulysses* refuse to settle upon stable identities, but the *Kyklops* himself refuses equation with any single character in Joyce's novel. As Ellmann notes, many characters act as "Cyclopeans" (112). In fact, the *Kyklops*'s name—Polyphemos—is itself suggestive of his ability to embody many individuals. His name literally means many-voiced, and accordingly he assumes many voices through the multiplicity of characters he inhabits. As Senn observes, "The entire 'Cyclops' episode is, literally, *polyphêmos*, full of voices, reports, and rumors" (488). The *Kyklops* represents both the one and the many, not only the individual singled out from the crowd, but also the multiplicity of individuals the "I" can designate.⁶

The instability of identity is present from the episode's opening sentence: "I was just passing the time of day with old Troy of the D.M.P at the corner of Arbour hill," the narrator tells us, when a "sweep came along and he near drove his gear into my eye" (*U* 12.1-3). The reader encountering "Cyclops" for the first time might recognize the Homeric reference to blinding and identify the narrator with Polyphemos. But even within the first sentence, complications with Homeric parallels already arise. The reader may also recall that Odysseus narrates his *Kyklopean* tale in the first person, and thus equate the narrator with Homer's hero.

(And indeed, the Linati schema as well as the one Joyce gave to Stuart Gilbert make explicit this parallel between “No one” and “I”—Gifford 314.) Gifford suggests that the narrator is “one of the Cyclopes” (315), but there is little preventing the unnamed barfly from embodying Polyphemos himself. Similarly, Hayman also refrains from fully equating the Cyclopean narrator with Polyphemos when he writes that the sweep’s mock-heroic violence “*almost* turns the narrator into a cyclops” (“Cyclops” 253; my emphasis). Perhaps this hesitation arises from the duplicity of the opening sentence itself, which quickly moves from “I” to “eye,” so that in a breath the narrator’s self-identification shifts from the “I” of Noman to the “eye” of Kyklops. Thus, from the episode’s opening sentence, a single individual seems to resemble both Homer’s hero and his antagonist.

As the narrative progresses, identity becomes even more complicated, and just as the Kyklops seems to have descended upon the narrator he rouses himself and enters someone else. When the barfly relates to Joe how the “chimneysweep near shove my eye out with his brush” (*U* 12.7), he seems to strengthen his identification with the blinded Polyphemos, but this reiteration does not in fact solidify his claim to the Kyklops. Just a few pages later the narrator, while still retaining Kyklopean characteristics, nonetheless grants primary representation of the Homeric giant to the Citizen. When first introduced, the Citizen displays several characteristics which suggest an affinity to the Kyklops: His fellowship with the dog mirrors Polyphemos’s intimacy with his ram, his physical position in “the corner” (*U* 12.119)—later upgraded to “gloryhole” (*U* 12.122) and then modified to “cave” (*U* 12.167)—alludes to the recesses of Polyphemos’s cavernous dwelling,⁷ and his interest in drink recalls Polyphemos’s inebriation.

These somewhat tenuous similarities are strengthened in the parodic aside, which begins: “The figure seated on a large boulder at the foot of a round tower was that of a broadshouldered deepchested stronglimbed frankeyed redhaired freelyfreckled shaggybearded wide-mouthed largenosed longheaded deepvoiced barekneed brawnyhanded hairylegged ruddyfaced sinewyarmed hero” (*U* 12.151-55). Like Homer’s Kyklops, the Citizen is also described as a giant, measuring from “shoulder to shoulder . . . several ells” and possessing “rocklike mountainous knees” (*U* 12.155-56). In keeping with Joyce’s technique of gigantism, the lengthy description of the Citizen significantly enlarges the initial description Odysseus gives of Polyphemos:

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There a monstrous man was wont to sleep, who shepherded his flocks alone and afar, and mingled not with others, but lived apart, with his heart set on lawlessness. For he was fashioned a wondrous monster, and was not like a man that lives by bread, but like a wooded peak of lofty mountains, which stands out to view alone, apart from the rest. (*Odyssey* 9.187-92)

In the *Odyssey*, a short description suffices to make the Kyklops a giant; in Joyce's *Ulysses*, however, the giant described receives a correspondingly elongated description. This lengthened description allows Joyce to embellish the Homeric account, but the parodic asides may be more interesting for what they exclude than for what they include. In the *Odyssey*, the narrator grants as much space to the Kyklops's alienation as he does to his size. Polyphemos watches his flocks “alone and afar” (“*oios ... apoprothen*”); he does not “mingle with others” (“*met allous pôleit*”) but lives “apart” (“*apaneuthen*”). Visually and socially, he stands out “from the rest” (“*ap' allôn*”). The Citizen's monstrous appearance would certainly seem to make him stand apart physically, but he engages socially with his community where Polyphemos insists on solitude and distance; the Homeric giant refrains from conversing with his fellow Kyklopes until Odysseus stabs his eye. The alienation and otherness of Polyphemos are qualities Joyce reserves for Bloom, who embodies the other half of the Kyklops.

The Kyklops, then, undergoes a process of dismemberment, a splitting in two between Bloom and the Citizen. (Of course, parts of him are sprinkled around elsewhere in Dublin, but Bloom and the Citizen, with the possible exception of the narrator, are most fully developed in the Kyklopean role.) As Bloom and the Citizen argue politically and philosophically, they also symbolically fight over the representation of the Kyklops. Both unwittingly seek to promote the Kyklops's two divergent points of view—Bloom arguing in Polyphemos's role of exile and victim, and the Citizen arguing in Polyphemos's role of aggressor and giant. The twelfth episode of *Ulysses*, then, enacts a battle for the interpretation and reception of Homer's Kyklops.

In the *Odyssey*, Homer's casting of Polyphemos as an outsider and as a persecuted victim often seems overshadowed by descriptions of his ferocity, but *Ulysses* suggests that his moments of loneliness and gentleness deserve greater attention. Bloom's otherness most closely aligns him with the Homeric Kyklops. Polyphemos, like the rest of the Kyklopes, lives at a distance from the heart of Greek civilization. The

Kyklopes, as Odysseus carefully delineates, are a foreign race: They are an “overweening and lawless folk” who do not cultivate their crops as the Greeks do (*Odyssey* 9.106-08). Odysseus initially reasons that they trust the “immortal gods” to make crops grow (*Odyssey* 9.107), but Polyphemos corrects this assumption, asserting that the Kyklopes honor neither Zeus nor “the blessed gods, since verily we are far better than they” (*Odyssey* 9.275-76). Even though they share a common language, they do not engage in politics (in Aristotle’s sense of a community gathering to discuss the just and the good with reasoned speech—1.2.1253a). The Kyklopes, then, differ not only physically but also culturally from the Greeks. Even among this foreign race, Polyphemos lives in exile—at least at two removes from Greek civilization. Similarly, as Irishman and as Jew, Bloom lives at two removes from British civilization. Even among his Irish friends, Bloom stands apart by virtue of his Hungarian descent. Furthermore, his Jewish heritage, even if he does not subscribe to the religion, suggests a departure from the dominant Christian faith, just as the Kyklopes lack reverence for the Greek gods.⁸

In “Cyclops,” Bloom confesses and seeks to defend these aspects of his identity which mark him as “other.” The questions of nationality and of Jewishness are closely linked, since the Jews are traditionally without a fatherland. “What is your nation[?]” the Citizen challenges, to which Bloom replies, “Ireland. . . . I was born here. Ireland” (*U* 12.1430-31). By labeling himself as Irish, Bloom rhetorically (but not unproblematically) solves the problem of his homelessness by giving himself a nation. Bloom’s self-identification produces new complications, for it also places him within a larger web of conflicted Irish identity. As Joseph Valente explains, the Irish as subject to the British crown occupy

the hybridized subject position of semicolonialism. . . . Doubly/divisively inscribed in both the metropolitan and colonial orders, interpellated by the antagonistic yet structurally complicit discourses and value systems that bind these orders abrasively together, such subjectivities take shape through split institutional dependencies, split ethno-gender identifications, split adherences to empire and to decolonization, all operating across multiple layers of expressed and repressed motivation. (116)

It is curious that the Kyklops also appears caught in this “double bind” of colonizer and colonized. He addresses the Greeks as “*xeinoi*” (*Odyssey* 9.252), which can mean either “strangers” or “foreigners” or “guests” but

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at any rate labels the Greeks as "other." At the same time, however, the *Kyklops* also suspects that his visitors may represent an imperializing power: "Strangers, who are ye? Whence do you sail over the watery ways? Is it on some business, or do ye wander at random over the sea, even as pirates, who wander, hazarding their lives and bringing evil to men of other lands?" (*Odyssey* 9.252-55). Odysseus and his companions tremble before Polyphemos's deep, monstrous voice, but it is worthy of note that the *Kyklops*, too, fears that the foreigners may have a conquering agenda.

Additionally, Polyphemos faces the group of trespassing Greeks alone, just as Bloom must singly defend his ideas against a group of challengers. Valente observes that the "group's final attack on Bloom begins by pushing beyond his perceived lack of patriotism to his supposed absence, as a Jew, of any proper *patrie*, and as such it clearly acts to displace the trauma of their own undecidable social inscription in the interstice of colony and metropole" (122). When John Wyse asks Bloom if he knows what a nation means, Bloom answers in the affirmative:

—Yes, says Bloom.

—What is it? says John Wyse.

—A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place. (*U* 12.1420-23)

Ned replies, laughing,

if that's so then I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

So of course everyone had the laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:

—Or also living in different places.

—That covers my case, says Joe. (*U* 12.1424-29)

The Dublin bar scene recalls Stephen Dedalus's early encounter with Wells in *A Portrait*:

—Tell us, Dedalus, do you kiss your mother before you go to bed?

Stephen answered:

—I do.

Wells turned to the other fellows and said:

—O, I say, here's a fellow says he kisses his mother every night before he goes to bed.

The other fellows stopped their game and turned round, laughing. Stephen blushed under their eyes and said:

—I do not.

Wells said:

—O, I say, here's a fellow says he doesn't kiss his mother before he goes to bed.

They all laughed again. (*P* 14)

Like the young Stephen taunted by his Clongowes Wood colleagues, Bloom finds himself trapped by language, and as he tries to revise his verbal statements he only becomes more entrapped by his words. "What was the right answer to the question?" Stephen wonders. "He had given two and still Wells laughed" (*P* 14). When catechized by their contemporaries, both the young Stephen and the older Bloom fail to produce answers that yield their desired results and only succeed in broadening a definition and a risibility which they mean to narrow. Intended clarification only results in greater confusion.

More importantly, the Homeric *Kyklops* finds himself in the same position. Like Bloom and Stephen, he also experiences a breakdown of communication and becomes an object of ridicule. Like Bloom's failure to adequately define a "nation" and Stephen's fear that he does not fully understand what it means "to kiss," the *Kyklops*'s failure to recognize what is behind "*Outis*" results in a failure of language to convey the speaker's intended meaning. In the course of interrogation, Stephen and Bloom each produce two answers, the latter of which is intended to revise a prior statement. In Polyphemos's case, his companions press him with two questions, one of which effectively supplies an answer which Polyphemos then inadvertently reverses: "What so sore distress is thine, Polyphemos, that thou criest out thus through the immortal night, and makest us sleepless? Can it be that some mortal man is driving off thy flocks against thy will, or slaying thee thyself by guile or by might?" (*Odyssey* 9.403-406).⁹ Having accepted Odysseus's self-identification as "*Outis*," or "Noman" (*Odyssey* 9.366), Polyphemos repeats this name in his answer, "Noman . . . is slaying me" ("*Outis me kteinei*") (*Odyssey* 9.408). His fellow *Kyklopes*, who hear his cries for help, interpret his words too literally, so that they believe he is not being hurt by anyone and refuse to come to his aid. Just as the barflies laugh at Bloom, so Odysseus mocks the Homeric giant, reporting that his "heart laughed within me that my name and cunning device had so beguiled" (*Odyssey* 9.413-14), and it is likely that the audience to whom Odysseus is relating his story also

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laughs. Following this mockery, Polyphemos's companions desert him,¹⁰ just as Bloom's contemporaries also distance themselves from him.

In Joyce's "Cyclops" and Homer's *Odyssey*, spatial separation or communal desertion follows upon failure in verbal communication. When Bloom physically leaves the pub and his interlocutors after his parodied defense of love, his literal removal seems to confirm the philosophical and communicative gaps separating him from the group. The barflies' opposition to Bloom's sentiments sets him apart socially and rhetorically, and the barfly narrator mocks not only the content of Bloom's arguments but also the register that he adopts to express them. Complicating the notion of "ironic" or "critical" distance, the narrator mockingly refers to Bloom's "jawbreakers" and "his *but don't you see?* and *but on the other hand*" even as the novel itself invests great interest in Bloom's ability to see both sides of an issue (*U* 12.466; 514-15). The "Cyclops" episode is itself famously divided between the barfly's first-person narration and the parodic asides. It is not so surprising, then, that in an episode so explicitly concerned with separation, gaps in oral transmission, and the confusion that comes from so many competing voices, Joyce's characters would also separate themselves from their primary mythical prototypes, allowing Bloom (who is after all inclined to see "*the other hand*") to dissociate from Odysseus and become at times more like Odysseus's antagonist.

For Bloom as for the *Kyklops*, verbal distancing predicates more literal forms of separation. In his most pitiful moments, the deflated, power-deprived giant is alienated both from Greek civilization and from his own community. Blinded and friendless, he is left with only his favored ram, which he approaches to seek consolation. The rest of the flock has wandered out of the cave, but the ram remains behind. Polyphemos imagines that his seemingly loyal animal lingers out of sympathy:

"Good ram, why pray is it that thou goest forth thus through the cave the last of the flock? Thou hast not heretofore been wont to lag behind the sheep, but wast ever far the first to feed on the tender bloom of the grass. . . . But now thou art last of all. Surely thou art sorrowing for the eye of thy master, which an evil man blinded along with his miserable fellows. . . ." (*Odyssey* 9.447-454)

In this address to the ram, Polyphemos becomes a sympathetic character, a helpless victim of persecution. Albeit only momentarily, his violent threats subside as he reflects on his loss and victimization. In addition to losing companionship along with his eye, he seems to lose his monstrous aggressivity. Ironically, “when speaking to an animal, he seems to become much more human” (Senn 499). As Senn notes, the speech is “most touching,” but it is also “full of non-communication and misunderstanding” (499). “If only thou couldst feel as I do, and couldst get thee power of speech,” Polyphemos tells his ram, “[thou couldst] tell me where he skulks away from my wrath” (*Odyssey* 9.456-57). Polyphemos imagines the ram as being sympathetic to his cause, but in reality the animal is part of the deception, for he carries Odysseus underneath his belly.

Polyphemos’s pleas for sympathy and understanding link him to Bloom in another way: Both characters vocalize their suffering from persecution. Just as the Homeric *Kyklops* complains that “Noman is slaying me,” so Bloom verbally insists that he has been mistreated. In addition to modifying the modern reception of the *Kyklops*, the episode also delivers an implicit critique of Odysseus, who may be all too rash and violent in his blinding of Polyphemos. These violent tendencies of the Homeric hero, I suggest, cause Joyce to momentarily suspend Bloom’s identification with his primary mythical prototype. Bloom begins discussing persecution in abstract terms but then moves toward the personal: “Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations” (*U* 12.1417-18). Provoked by the barflies, Bloom proceeds to articulate his position using increasingly local evidence:

—And I belong to a race too, says Bloom, that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant. . . .

—Robbed, says he. Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. (*U* 12.1467-71)

The capitalized words “Robbed,” “Plundered,” “Insulted,” and “Persecuted” strengthen Bloom’s ties to the *Kyklops*, who is plundered of his wealth, mercilessly robbed of his favored ram-companion, and taunted by the escaping warrior. When Odysseus and his men reach safety, they divide the sheep among them, so that “no man might go defrauded of an equal share” (*Odyssey* 9.549). They do not consider, however, that Polyphemos has been deprived of his entire share. The

Greeks have taken what belongs to him by right, just as other races have deprived the Jews of their rights.

Indicative of the many kinds of deviations, departures, and reversals that characterize Kyklopean encounters, rights and legitimate forms of exchange are abandoned here in favor of violence and robbery, “guile” and “might” (*Odyssey* 9.406). When Kyklopean economic exchanges occur, they “foster hostility” instead of “reinforc[ing] communal solidarity” (Osteen 250). Thus, in Homer’s epic, Odysseus offers Polyphemos wine in the hopes of intoxicating him, and in return the Kyklops invites the Greeks to dinner—and adds that they will be on the menu. The Kyklops “is so barbaric a host that he literally has his guests for dinner” (Osteen 252). Odysseus presents himself and his comrades as “suppliants” who desire “some present” in accordance with host-guest relationships (*Odyssey* 9.266-71), but Polyphemos refuses to honor Zeus’s laws and declares that he will treat the Greeks as he sees fit. Similarly, Bloom in *Ulysses* “transgresses upon the prevailing economic rules: he neither drinks nor gambles. In refusing to buy a round, in effect he tells the others that they are not worthy of exchanging with him” (Osteen 267)—and the Kyklops also asserts his superiority by declaring that he is “far better” than the Greeks and their gods (*Odyssey* 9.276). But if the Kyklops is ignorant of Greek norms, Odysseus, in full awareness of Greek hospitality and exchange rules, nevertheless chooses to violate those rules. He deviates, then, from what might be expected of the proper Greek citizen, even though the Kyklops’s aggressive behavior has perhaps warranted this deviation.

Likewise, the Citizen in *Ulysses* departs from his identity insofar as he does not act as a loyal Irish citizen properly should. As Ellmann notes, he “is not so Irish as he pretends,” since (according to the circulating rumor) “he has broken the patriotic code by buying up the holding of an evicted tenant” (112). If the rumor is true, then the Citizen “is only half the man he seems” (Ellmann 113). In addition to exhibiting poor Irish citizenship, he also falls short of the ideal Greek model of the community-oriented citizen. “But anyone who lacks the capacity to share in community, or has no need to because of his self-sufficiency, is no part of the city and as a result is either a beast or a god,” Aristotle writes (1.2.1253a26-1253a28). In “Cyclops,” the “jeering” Citizen (*U* 12.701) often seems to have a greater affinity with beasts than with his fellow humans. His conversations with Garryowen suggest that the “hauling and mauling” Citizen (*U* 12.705) struggles to rise to discourse on the human level. As Schneidau notes, “Humans are the only animals who, by using

language, can pass on images from the past to newer generations. . . . For human life, language . . . is sine qua non” (*Waking Giants* 13;15). Schneidau’s comments echo Aristotle’s: “But speech serves to make plain what is advantageous and harmful and so also what is just and unjust. For it is a peculiarity of humans, in contrast to the other animals, to have perception of good and bad, just and unjust, and the like; and community in these things makes a household and a city” (1.2.1253a13-1253a17). It is not the Citizen but rather Bloom, as “participant-outcast” (Valente 121), who works toward community by seriously exploring questions of justice and the good life. It takes a foreigner, someone “Greekier than the Greeks” (*U* 9.614-15), to demonstrate proper civic behavior.

Like the horse Throwaway, Bloom is a “rank outsider” (*U* 12.1219) who ultimately triumphs, symbolically winning the Gold Cup by provoking his listeners to reconsider their identities as they examine their prejudices. “And after all . . . why can’t a jew love his country like the next fellow?” John Wyse is prompted to ask (*U* 12.1628-29). The question receives a sarcastic response, but as Valente points out, it also affirms the “analogy of the Irish to the Jewish condition” (123) and suggests a movement in the episode toward reconsideration of identity categories. The reader himself, Osteen argues, is compelled to re-examine his own identity: “Just as Joyce and Odysseus revise their identities as authors within their own tales, so the reader must revise his or her identity as reader while reading” (279). While this may not be the experience of all readers, the episode is nonetheless successful in extending debates about identity beyond Barney Kiernan’s pub into conversations taking place outside the text.

Although these debates have often centered on the identity of the narrator, the episode also opens doors for a yet more radical consideration of Kyklopean identity, prompting both a new interpretation of Homer’s Polyphemos and a re-evaluation of how Homeric correspondences function within *Ulysses*. Even as Bloom urges his auditors to treat the Jews with greater sympathy, Joyce uses Bloom to bring out the sympathetic qualities of the traditionally villainized Kyklops. Like Elijah and Throwaway, Bloom has endured great trial and doubt before his ascension into the skies at the episode’s conclusion.¹¹ Within the “Cyclops” episode he must face the “cabbagelooking” Citizen as his primary antagonist (*U* 12.752), and within the larger realm of the novel as a whole he must contend with the “ignoramus” Boylan who “doesnt know poetry from a cabbage” (*U* 18.1370-71), but even while acknow-

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ledging their conflicts Bloom still strives to mediate their differences and finds love a more appropriate response than hatred.

Throwaway, Lenehan observes before examining the empty biscuit tin, "[t]akes the biscuit" (*U* 12.1227), and Bloom, the "dark horse" (*U* 12.1558), takes a near-hit from the biscuit tin the Citizen launches his way even as he also "takes the biscuit" in a metaphorical sense. By the biscuit tin scene, of course, Bloom has reassumed his primary role as Odysseus, and the Citizen is clearly cast as the *Kyklops*, who launches a boulder at the fleeing Greeks. But, as I have suggested, Odysseus is not Bloom's only Homeric counterpart. Exploiting possibilities for identity formation, the episode accords characters secondary as well as primary representation, allowing Bloom to adopt certain *Kyklopean* characteristics and compelling us as readers to view Polyphemos from a different perspective.

By highlighting Polyphemos's sympathetic traits, the episode displays on the one hand an ingenious loyalty to Homer; on the other hand, it rewrites heroic norms and ethics by forcing the *Kyklops* to undergo a process of dismemberment, with Bloom and the Citizen as beneficiaries. This eruption of a truly radical perspectivism presents a carnival of possibility, a dismemberment that leaves shards of Homer all over the episode for characters to pick up. In Bloom especially Odysseus of many wiles and Polyphemos of many voices compete for representation. Because he is "[a]ssumed by any or known to none," embodying either "Everyman or Noman" (*U* 17.2008), Bloom has the ability to clothe himself with the identity of multiple characters. While he functions predominantly as Odysseus in the mythical realm, he also takes time off to act as *Kyklops*, to bring out Polyphemos's sympathetic traits and to suggest that this Homeric character, like the Jews, may have been radically misinterpreted.

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Notes

¹ I should like to thank my colleagues for their valuable suggestions contributing to my paper, a version of which I delivered at the 2005 North American James Joyce Conference in Ithaca, New York, where my thinking benefited from the ensuing panel discussion. I would also like to extend my especial gratitude to Michael Levenson at the University of Virginia and to Fritz Senn at the Zürich James Joyce Foundation for their specific comments on earlier versions of this article.

² To distinguish between similar names that occur in both Homer and Joyce, I have followed the practice of using Greek spellings in reference to characters and episodes in Homer but Joyce’s Latin spellings in reference to characters and episodes in *Ulysses*. In direct quotations, however, I preserve my source’s spelling.

³ Odysseus is of course identified elsewhere in the schema as Bloom, but the entry for the “Cyclops” episode does not explicitly draw this connection.

⁴ John Garvin also made this identification, arguing in *James Joyce’s Disunited Kingdom* that the narrator is “Simon Dedalus representing John Stanislaus Joyce” (35).

⁵ Frank Budgen also discusses Joyce’s identification of the narrator with “snarling Thersites” in *James Joyce and the Making of “Ulysses”* (164), though, complicating the picture, he quotes Joyce as saying that the narrator “is really a great admirer of Bloom,” just as “Thersities admires Ulysses” (165).

⁶ Joyce’s fanciful etymology linking Odysseus to both Outis and Zeus, nobody and divinity, underscores his own insistence on the fascinating proliferation of multiple, even seemingly contradictory, identifications that arise from the delightful play of words. His references to the “delicious humor of Polyphemus” (qtd. in Potts 70) suggest that he may have seen similar interpretive possibilities for the many-voiced, single-eyed Homeric giant, whose name shares the fluidity and multiplicity of meanings also inherent in “Odysseus.”

⁷ In “Ithaca,” the Citizen is referred to as “a truculent troglodyte” (*U* 17.2050-51), a description which would also aptly characterize Homer’s savage cave-dweller.

⁸ Ironically, despite Polyphemos’s boast that the *Kyklopes* do not heed the gods, his comrades later advise him to pray to Poseidon (*Odyssey* 9.411-12), suggesting that they do acknowledge deities greater than themselves. Nonetheless, while the boast may not accurately represent the *Kyklopes*’ actual religious practices, it is itself a form of irreverence.

⁹ The original Greek divides the clauses of the second interrogatory sentence into two separate questions.

¹⁰ Here, the *Kyklopes*’s companions desert him when he is a *victim* of violence. At the end of Joyce’s “Cyclops” episode, the narrator withdraws from

the Citizen when he acts as a *perpetrator* of violence, just as Homeric sympathies with Polyphemos are suspended when he aims a boulder at Odysseus's ship.

¹¹ The moment may be parodic, but, as the episode's narrator notes, "[T]here's many a true word spoken in jest" (*U* 12.1658).