

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE CONVERGENCE  
OF HOMER'S *ODYSSEY* AND JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

VOLUME ONE

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BY

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## DEDICATION

Ταῦτα μὲν οὔτω πάντα πεπείρανται, σὺ δ' ἄκουσον,  
ὥς τοι ἐγὼν ἔρέω, μνήσει δέ σε καὶ θεὸς αὐτός.

(*Od.* 12.37-38)

Hence all of these things have found their fulfillment, but you listen,  
just as I will tell you, and even a god himself shall remind you of it.

This thesis is dedicated to David Grene, a founding member of the Committee on Social Thought and my first Greek and Joyce teacher, who taught me *Ulysses* as Joyce would have wanted, by reading the *Odyssey* first “in the original” (*U* 1.79-80).

May he return to us in other guises.

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My husband, Deepak Sarma, because “still there’s destiny in it, falling in love” (*U* 13.973), and because every day I hope that the longest way round for us is still the shortest way home.

My son, Kendahl Ames, πεπνυμένος, wise even as he breathes, because “*Amor matris*: subjective and objective genitive” (*U* 9.842-3) makes the odyssey worth it.

My parents-in-law, Raghupathy and Kasthuri Sarma, who are quite simply the most wonderful in-laws one could ever hope to find, “sincerity itself...the bravest and truest hearts ever made” (*U* 13.278-279).



My brother-in-law, Naveen Sarma, and sister in-law, and Kumiko Suzuki, who have become the siblings by marriage with which I was not blessed by birth, and who exemplify how “Love laughs at locksmiths” (*U* 13.653). To their son, Kai Ajay Sarma, who arrived on the scene just in time to gain his proper immortality (κλεός) here.

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## ABSTRACT

The intertextuality that Joyce cultivates in *Ulysses* with Homer's *Odyssey* incites numerous apparent contradictions, such as the disparity between faithful Penelope and adulterous Molly Bloom. For this reason, Joyce's congruence with Homer has traditionally been dismissed as simply ironic, as a parody, or as a crude structural device without profound meaning. But Joyce justifies his construction of such intertextual oxymorons as emulations of tensions which Homer fostered within his own poem. My close textual analysis, supported by pertinent critical scholarship, proves that an inherently multivalent depiction of heroism and fidelity pervades each text. For Homer and Joyce use similar narrative strategies to portray a kind of heroism which is simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary, and a kind of marital fidelity which is so often subverted by ambivalence and extramarital desire that it constantly borders on infidelity. Joyce's echoes with Homer illustrate how the meaning of heroism and fidelity endures from antiquity to modernity and demonstrate the persistence of a cross-cultural concept of human heroism and fidelity with a common ethical basis. Nonetheless, Joyce's eradication of gender roles and rules exposes certain irreconcilable differences between the two texts. Hence in *Ulysses*, Joyce simultaneously reinforces and revolutionizes the meaning of Homer's *Odyssey*.



## ABBREVIATIONS OF FREQUENTLY CITED TEXTS

- U* +episode and line number. Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Ed. Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior. New York and London: Random House, 1986.
- U* +page number only. Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. New York: Random House, 1934, reset and corrected 1961.
- SH* Joyce, James. *Stephen Hero*. Eds. John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon. New York: New Directions, 1944, 1963.
- FW* Joyce, James. *Finnegans Wake*. New York: Viking Press, 1939.
- P* Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Ed. Chester Anderson. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
- JJI* Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- JJII* Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- SL* Joyce, James. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York: Viking Press, 1975.
- BM* Herring, Phillip F., ed. *Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets in the British Museum*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972.
- BC* Herring, Phillip F., ed. *Joyce's Notes and Early Drafts for Ulysses: Selections From the Buffalo Collection*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977.
- Letters I, II, III* Joyce, James. *Letters of James Joyce*. Vol. I, ed. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Viking Press, 1957; reissued with corrections 1966. Vols. II and III, ed. Richard Ellmann. New York: Viking Press, 1966.
- CW* Joyce, James. *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*. Eds. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann. New York: Viking Press, 1967.
- Od.* +book and line number. From the Greek text of Homer's *Odyssey in Homeri Opera*. Ed. Thomas W. Allen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1908-1917.

II. +book number in Roman numerals and then line number. From the Greek text of Homer's *Iliad* in *Homeri Opera*. Ed. David B. Monro and Thomas W. Allen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1902-1920.

I have relied upon the following translations of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* and identify quotations from them with the translator's name only:

Butler, Samuel. *The Authoress of the Odyssey*. Introduction by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Homer. *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin, 1990.

*The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang. New York: Airmont, 1965.

*The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by William Cowper. London: J. Johnson, 1791.

*The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Richmond Lattimore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

*The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by T. E. Lawrence (a. k. a. T. E. Shaw). New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam, 1991.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by A. T. Murray. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Walter Shewring. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

*The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by Alexander Pope. New York: Heritage Press, 1942.

A NOTE ON MY GREEK TEXT: I aim for my work to be accessible to the non-Greek and Greek reader alike. Individual Greek words are sometimes used without translation or transliteration, but only after they have been discussed and translated previously. I include Greek where I believe that it clarifies my claims substantially and then offer translation. I preserve the Greek or transliteration chosen by other scholars when quoting their work. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

## PREFACE

### TEXTUAL RETURNS

“What softens the heart of a man, shipwrecked in storms dire, Tried, like another Ulysses, Pericles, Prince of Tyre?” (*U* 9.402-404) asks Stephen Dedalus in Joyce’s *Ulysses*. “general Ulysses Grant whoever he was or did supposed to be some great fellow” (*U* 18.682-683) muses Molly Bloom. Along with Joyce’s title, such references invite the present inquiry at hand. *Ulysses* itself incites the question its readers must answer if they are to arrive at any satisfying sense of textual meaning: what could it mean to be tried like another Ulysses? Who was he and what did he do in the first place that makes him “supposed to be some great fellow”? Molly Bloom herself challenges the premises of heroism by wondering if this American warrior was actually so great. His martial heroism, which Molly can only barely recall, is precisely what is at issue in this book with that war hero’s name. Molly reveals the contrast between the heroism of war and the heroism of the ordinary man, “whoever he was”, precisely the contrast which is often thought to distinguish Homer’s two great epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. David Grene explains their relationship thusly: “[the

*Odyssey*] is a domestic epic, consciously distinguishing itself from the great epic of war [the *Iliad*]” (Greene 1969, 61).<sup>1</sup> Another occurrence of the titular name in the book, which once again encourages us to make that very distinction in relation to the name Ulysses itself, comes when John Wyse mentions “Ulysses Brown of Camus that was fieldmarshal to Maria Teresa. But what did we ever get for it?” (*U* 12.1383-1384). In some sense, the *Iliad* forces us to ask that same question, and then the *Odyssey* answers it. By posing the question at all, *Ulysses* draws attention to the difference between the two Homeric poems and compels us to ask why Joyce did not title his novel *Achilles* instead.

What, then, does Joyce make his Ulysses do? “[Shakespeare] puts Bohemia on the seacoast and makes Ulysses quote Aristotle” (*U* 9.995-996) proclaims John Eglinton. Joyce’s Leopold Bloom defines himself as an ordinary guy who fights only with words but doubts his own initiative: “Then that bawler there in Barney Kiernan’s. Got my own back there. Drunken ranters what I said about God made him wince.

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<sup>1</sup> Many have argued that the Homeric poems each present very contrasting world views and archetypes of heroism; see further Jasper Griffin (1980, esp. xvi), Lillian Doherty (1982), Jenny Strauss Clay (1983, 96ff.), Mark Edwards (1985), Pietro Pucci (1987), Simon Goldhill (1991, esp. 50), Thomas Falkner (1995, 35), Stephanie Nelson (1999), and Gregory Nagy (1999, 15ff.). I reject the Analytic proposition of multiple authorship, finding the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition compelling and convincing (see Milman Parry in Adam Parry, ed., 1987; Adam Parry 1972; Albert Lord 1960, 1962). Even though Jasper Griffin has enumerated its many flaws (Griffin 1980, xiii-xv), the Parry-Lord theory lends power to my conviction that one person could have told the entire *Odyssey*, coming at the apex of a rich tradition and applying his unique genius to the storehouse of traditional language and material at his (or her, à la Samuel Butler!) disposal. I am quite convinced that the *Odyssey* could not be a patchwork constructed by many contributors, not only due to its intricacies but even due to its consistencies and inconsistencies. I treat the *Odyssey* as the creation of one mind, the mind of an exceptional and brilliant artist. Even if one disputes this view, my argument gains credence through establishing and exploring the artistic integrity of the poem, however it was created.

Mistake to hit back. Or? No” (*U* 13.1215-1216). How can a man who reconsiders the value of “hitting back” with words because it might be a mistake be a hero anything like Odysseus or Achilles? Joyce’s title provokes readers to wonder if Leopold’s assessment “long day I’ve had” (*U* 13.1214) qualifies as being “shipwrecked in storms dire, Tried, like another Ulysses” (*U* 9.403-404), especially given Joyce’s own statement to Frank Budgen that “my book is a modern Odyssey” (Budgen 20). Thus in the attempt to interpret the meaning of Joyce’s title *Ulysses*, the meaning of heroism becomes an extremely complex and enigmatic problem.

Yet the notion of heroism is not entirely simple and unequivocal within either of Homer’s poems. Seth Schein describes how many internal tensions with tradition govern Homer’s *Iliad* and provoke the reconsideration of the meaning of heroism itself:

Its [the Iliadic] style, mythological content, and other themes and values are traditional, but it generates its distinctive meanings as an ironic meditation on these traditional themes and values. Through parallels, contrasts, and juxtapositions of characters and actions, a dramatic structure is created that forces us to consider critically the traditional heroic world and the contradictions inherent in this kind of heroism.  
(Schein 1984, 1)

Although Schein does not so assert, Homer’s *Odyssey* operates on the same premises: both Homeric poems are self-referential, creating various conceptions while also commenting upon them. Precisely by establishing a conception of heroism and human life fraught with ironies, tensions, and apparent contradictions, both poems demand

the reconsideration and revision of that conception.<sup>2</sup> Both poems critique the very notions that they are depicting, accomplishing the presentation and the revision of those notions simultaneously.

Such a view of the Homeric poems greatly impacts the intertextual study of Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce has often been accused of constructing nothing more than a modern parody of Homer, for his alterations in plot and character may seem to indicate little more than an ironical and satirical commentary on the

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to recognize immediately that any such transformation in the meaning of heroism between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* does not necessarily prove their authorship by two different poets, because a single author may change his conception of heroism in different works. Nicholas Grene calls Shakespeare one example: "One of the main aims of my argument has been to stress that Shakespeare's tragic imagination is not single but (at least) double. The tragedies do not conform to one pattern, do not support one view of the world...in the end, that imagination, so extraordinary in its capacity to tenant apparently antithetical or incompatible ways of seeing, is one and Shakespeare's" (Grene 1996, 286). Perhaps, like Shakespeare's, Homer's imagination was plural as well, and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are its surviving examples. Schein cites the undeniable "complementarity" (Schein 1984, 38) between the two poems, remarking "The *Odyssey* is no more different from the *Iliad* artistically, intellectually, or spiritually than, say, *The Tempest* is from *King Lear*" (Schein 1984, 37). His stance is that the poems are "complementary works of one poet who took at different times a tragic and a romantic/comic view of reality" (Schein 1984, 38). The idea that different works of modern writers reflect different worldviews is not very unusual, but for Homer that proposition has been quite controversial ever since the Analysts began to endorse the theory of multiple authorship. Further, even if we reject the stand of the Unitarians and accept the Separatist position that there were actually two poets who created two different poems, there is still no doubt that the poet of the *Odyssey* knew the content and style of the *Iliad* as thoroughly as anyone ever has, and moreover made a conscious, purposeful, and extensive effort to explore a completely new theme instead of revisiting any of the Iliadic ones (see Schein (1984, 37-38), Monro (1901, 325), Shewan (1913), Redfield (1973), and Nagy (1999)). Whether the poet of the *Odyssey* was the same Homer who wrote the *Iliad* or not, he is distinguished by his complete rejection of the task of retelling the companion poem, regardless of the explanation one accepts as its cause. Like Odysseus, the *Odyssey's* poet now wants to tell what has not yet been told, which makes great sense given Nagy's proposition that "The future for the *Iliad* is a suitable past for the *Odyssey*" (Nagy 1999, 21).

vanishing (or vanished!) status of heroism in modern life. In this light, Joyce's title seems like an intertextual oxymoron in the most basic etymological sense of the word, a truly sharp kind of foolishness impossible to interpret seriously. From this perspective, just as a jumbo shrimp is by no objective standard truly jumbo like Jumbo the Elephant (*U* 12.1496), so Joyce's Leopold Bloom should not and cannot be deemed truly heroic by the standards of Homer.

This stance loses credibility once one recognizes how Joyce's *Ulysses* engages in the same kind of struggle with traditional heroic values and themes found in the Homeric poems. As Homer's poems can be viewed to contradict and comment upon themselves and the values and ideas they portray, so too Joyce's *Ulysses* emulates that posture of self-reflexivity, self-critique, and self-contradiction. I submit that the apparent clashes of meaning between the two texts are actually indicative of various tensions in meaning which exist within each text. Intertextual echoes which appear to be oxymorons between the two texts abound: circumspect and chaste Penelope has become promiscuous and adulterous Molly; much-enduring Odysseus, who makes love with goddesses and blinds the Cyclops, has become ordinary Leopold, running away from his wife's lover Boylan in the street. But the ideas of the ordinary yet extraordinary hero, and the faithful but also unfaithful spouse, emerge from within each text. Careful textual analysis will bear out how such opposite and contrasting actions still manage to reveal the symmetry between the undeniable contradictions in the meaning of heroism and fidelity within each text and between them. The comparison provoked by Joyce's title serves to illustrate an enduring kind of fidelity and heroism that transcends cultural and historical context.

Fritz Senn explains the nature of the task which is thus set out for intertextual readers:

The title *Ulysses* proclaims a role, one Leopold Bloom as Odysseus, or Odysseus as modern man. And once we catch on to this new game of aliases or analogies, there is no holding back. *Ulysses* is Joyce's *Metamorphoses*, a book of roles and guises, a game of identities, of transubstantiations.  
(Senn 1974, 31)

Decoding such transubstantiations and guises is the task of every reader, and the task at hand. For in the single act of naming his book, Joyce invokes an intertext which bestows another name upon every character in *Ulysses*, a silent name shared with one or more Homeric counterparts. Joyce's title serves as his only textual announcement that his book is not meant to stand by itself but to be understood within the context of its inspiration. While keeping in mind the orality of Homer's poem and the textuality of Joyce's novel,<sup>3</sup> readers must seek to ascertain the proper degree to which Joyce's

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<sup>3</sup> The orality of the Homeric poems has been exhaustively explored, and the Parry-Lord theory that Homer's poems are orally dictated texts (Lord 1960) has held sway for some time. See further Gregory Nagy's theories of Homeric performance and the emergence of a written text (Nagy 1996; also see Barry Powell 1991 and Haun Saussy 1996). Saussy offers a remarkable analysis of the importance that writing assumes in the *Odyssey* precisely because of its oral nature, arguing, "If it is immediacy that writing necessarily subverts, the *Odyssey* would seem to have much to lose....the threat to the *Odyssey* and to immediacy is already effectively anticipated by the 'oral' poetics of the work itself, indeed that the story the *Odyssey* tells may be taken as a parable on the relation of oral poetics and writing" (Saussy 1996, 299, 300). For more general studies of orality, poetry, and the written tradition, see G. S. Kirk (1962), Ruth Finnegan (1977, 1988), Walter Ong (1982), Eric Havelock (1986), Rosalind Thomas (1992) and Jack Goody (2000). Rosalind Thomas argues that the Greeks would have experienced Homer as a performance, complete with singing and dancing (Thomas 117). A. P. David's groundbreaking thesis substantiates that notion most persuasively (1998). Homer's poem was never intended to be read silently, as modern literature usually is, although the proliferation of Bloomsday readings displays how aural Joyce's text is and how readers respond to its demand for orality by giving it voice. Still, in contrast to Homer, Joyce meticulously constructed a written text



title encourages an equivalence with Homer's heroes, as John Gordon notes.<sup>4</sup> To what degree can Stephen Dedalus' musing be accurate and literal: "I am another now and yet the same" (*U* 1.311-312)? Any assertion of meaning regarding *Ulysses* is thoroughly dependent upon the presumptions one makes in this regard. Hugh Kenner's proclamation that "We find Ulysses in *Ulysses* because Joyce told us to" (Kenner 1978, 60) sheds no light on how to engage most fruitfully in this procedure. Yet some sort of intertextual reading is precisely what is required if we are ever to endow Joyce's title with any satisfying level of meaning. With this goal in mind, Joyce's

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through an astonishing number of revisions. Nonetheless, Jean Paul Riquelme suggests that significant parallels exist between singing and writing: "Our discovery of the link between reader and teller occurs through the character's mediation when the style asks us to undertake a double task of interior singing as writing.... We experience what Roland Barthes calls 'the grain of the voice,' a kind of singing that is also 'writing aloud'.... our reading is listening in which we hear our own interior speech as writing" (Riquelme 1984, 228). Riquelme supports his claim with references to the work of Mark W. Booth and Victor Zuckerkandl, who "attempt to define a special kind of aesthetic experience [found in singing], one in which self-consciousness disappears" (Riquelme 1984, 261). Riquelme concludes, "For Joyce, song and its implications for singer and listener provide one element in a different but related aesthetic experience that includes writing and self-consciousness as song's counterparts" (Riquelme 1984, 261). See my article on the intrinsic oral nature of Joyce's texts and the striking parallels between the composition goals and methods of ancient bards and Adam Harvey's memorized performance monologue of *Finnegans Wake* (2002). Such works provide grounds upon which to speculate that the experience of Joyce's texts is much more similar to the experience of the Homeric song than one might initially believe possible, given the contrasting mediums of oral song and written text.

<sup>4</sup> "The question of consubstantiality, of determining the nature and the degree of affinity between first Stephen and Bloom and then Bloom and Odysseus, is certainly the central problem posed to the reader" (Gordon 1981, 34-35). He proceeds to identify "two antithetical extremes" which tend to be offered, depending on the resolution one selects for that problem: "the first... corresponds to ironic readings: Bloom is not Odysseus, Molly is no Penelope, Homer's presence, such as it is, is a glum reflection on modern futility.... the opposite [is] that Bloom is indeed Odysseus because he is everybody, or at least an uncountable number of anybodies..." (Gordon 1981, 35).

advice for readers of his own book becomes even more compelling: as he wrote to his aunt, Josephine Murray, “I told you to read the *Odyssey* first” (*Letters I*, 193).<sup>5</sup> The urgency of Homer for Joyce is thus undeniable, for Joyce himself insisted that the best way to appreciate *Ulysses* was to begin by reading the *Odyssey*. Joyce’s own recommendation bears out how relevant and useful he thought Homer was for his readers and how unquestionably he intended for *Ulysses* to be read in conjunction with the *Odyssey*. In fact, his book presupposes the *Odyssey*, and reading Homer’s poem is the only prerequisite Joyce ever announces to be necessary for reading *Ulysses*. My ensuing assessment of the correlation between these two texts will reveal the remarkable extent of their congruence in the realm of meaning, establishing why each text inevitably enriches and deepens the meaning of the other.

The difficulty of this endeavor is of course enhanced by the tremendously intricate variations upon Homer which Joyce engineers. My analysis seeks to expose those variations as guises which conceal the affinity of meaning between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*. To achieve this aim, in Chapter One I will first examine the problems with how the correlation between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* has been traditionally understood. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four, I will argue that Joyce adopts many of

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Ellmann discusses the context of this advice and the fact that Joyce gave it not once, but twice: “In writing to his aunt Josephine Murray, whom he was anxious that the book should please, he urged her (*Letters I*, 174) to read first a prose version of the *Odyssey* before tackling his own book. When she was slow to comply, he repeated (*Letters I*, 193) after publication the same instruction he had given earlier” (Ellmann 1977, 24). Ellmann observes Joyce’s strategy in advising his readers how best to attempt to appreciate the intertextuality of his book: “To those who read his book as an ordinary work of fiction, he wished to make clear its elaborate structure; to those who addressed himself to the structure, he pointed to the novelistic element. This is no more than to say that DNA is based upon the double helix and could not exist without it” (Ellmann 1977, 24). One can surmise how inextricably Joyce believed form and content to be enmeshed in his novel from his advice in this regard.

Homer's narrative strategies despite his unprecedented revolution of narrative style, showing how strikingly similar their narrative methods and goals are. Next, in Chapters Five and Six, I will examine how Joyce eradicates gender roles and rules at the same time as a certain paradoxical depiction of heroism and fidelity pervades each text. For Homer and Joyce both portray a kind of heroism which is simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary, and a kind of marital fidelity which is so often subverted by ambivalence and extramarital desire that it constantly borders on infidelity. Joyce's intertextual echoes with Homer illustrate how the meaning of heroism and fidelity endures from antiquity to modernity and demonstrate the persistence of a cross-cultural concept of human heroism and fidelity with a common ethical basis. Finally, in Chapter Seven, I will examine the intertextual resonance of Homer's and Joyce's naming choices and then discuss the intimations of rebirth in both texts. Ultimately, my comparison seeks to expose an overt and covert textual relationship that serves to bind these two monuments of the Western canon together, so that each text can only be fully appreciated in contrast with the other.

Finally I hope to justify why Joyce's *Ulysses* is a return to the Homeric poem which its name recalls. For, as Constance Tagopoulos remarks, "Intertextuality is itself a return. It is the literary memory of a tale or idea returning in a new form" (Tagopoulos 1992, 184). Haun Saussy suggests that only the capacity for writing permits this appreciation of the various returns exemplified by the *Odyssey*:

If the [Homeric] epics are indeed *sêmata* and not *phêmai* of the master-composer's activity, every reading of the *Odyssey* can repeat the triumphant return it narrates: the double *nostos* of Homer and Odysseus. But the repetition of that return requires writing, and the demand

for writing implies the rejection of oral writing as imperfect, inauthentic repetition.  
(Saussy 1996, 333)<sup>6</sup>

The success of the poet and of the poem is thus fulfilled by the implicit rejection of its own means of composition, the oral tradition itself. Joyce's *Ulysses* enacts the returns to which Saussy alludes. Odysseus, Penelope, Homer, Leopold, Molly, and Joyce all accomplish νόστος (return) simultaneously in the textual homecoming that Joyce constructs in *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* constitutes its own return, a return to the same complexities of human life that Homer illuminated thousands of years earlier. Joyce's form is undeniably new and innovative, yet he inherits and preserves the content of his theme and plot found in Homer's *Odyssey*. For this reason, Constance Tagopoulos explains, "*Ulysses* tells the same story, albeit in a different way" (Tagopoulos 1992, 185). To understand why and how that is the case, a return to both texts in now in order.

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<sup>6</sup> Gregory Nagy makes a similar point about how the genre manages to have transcended itself to some extent with the great length of the written text of the poems, observing that "the composition of the *Odyssey* itself is idealized in such a way that it has become unperformable....The paradox is that the [Homeric] compositions were developed to the point where they came to defy the traditional format of their performance" (Nagy 1999, 18, 20).

## CHAPTER ONE

### A REVIEW OF THE PROBLEM:

#### JOYCE'S ODYSSEY OF THE PEN AND THE CORRELATION BETWEEN HOMER'S *ODYSSEY* AND JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

John Gordon brought my attention to a weird and cryptic yet revealing note in Joyce's notesheets for *Ulysses*: "odys of Pen" (BM 502). Pondering the implications of these words, we almost feel as if we have overheard Joyce reflecting in his own encoded thoughts upon his own creative enterprise in writing *Ulysses*. He sets out on his own odyssey of the pen, and it is the oddest of Penelopes whom he creates, one who can be said to take her own odyssey without ever leaving home. Leopold Bloom, the Odysseus of Joyce's pen, appears no less antithetical to his Homeric counterpart. Thus readers of *Ulysses* are faced with a daunting task: understanding how this Bloomsday is verily Homer's *Odyssey* in a new time and place. To what degree can Joyce's gnomic aphorism (surely inspired by the Upanishads), "This verily is that" (*U* 9.63), be taken seriously in regard to Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses*?

Joyce's title *Ulysses* initially seems to indicate a ridiculous and unfounded equivalence between his hero, Leopold Bloom, and Homer's Odysseus. For Joyce manufactures such a preponderance of variations upon and contradictions to Homer that they most often seem to subsume any meaningful continuities between the two texts. Joyce's countless glaring alterations to the plot of Homer's story tempt readers to notice only the contrasts and contradictions between the two texts. Consequently, Harry Levin states that "The relation of the *Odyssey* to *Ulysses* is that of parallels that never meet....The reader of Joyce who turns back to Homer is more struck by divergences than by analogies" (Levin 71-72).<sup>1</sup> These divergences in action and context certainly create an enormous contrast between the actions and values of Joyce's and Homer's heroes. In fact, the differences in the forms and expressions of heroism seem so vast and so hopelessly at odds that modern readers are not only left wondering what it means to be a hero at all, but wondering whether Homer's and Joyce's texts finally affirm each other or negate each other's meanings entirely. Just what qualifies as heroism in the world of the *Odyssey* and the world of *Ulysses*?

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce criticism has become so vast that, like Homeric scholarship, it becomes daunting if not impossible to survey all of the relevant literature. Nonetheless, my sea of citations betrays my efforts to do so on both fronts. Janet Dunleavy's volume surveying the history of Joyce criticism was particularly helpful as I negotiated secondary literature on Joyce (1991), as were those of Thomas Rice (1982), Thomas Staley (1989), and Michael Patrick and Paula F. Gillespie (2000), in addition to William Brockman's "Current JJ Checklist" in *James Joyce Quarterly*.

TRANSCENDING IRONY, PARODY, AND SATIRE AS THE EXPLANATION  
FOR JOYCE'S INCORPORATION OF HOMER

Joyce's answer, that Leopold, who never hears the Sirens' song and meekly runs away from his wife's lover in the street, is a hero like Odysseus, seems almost preposterous. As Levin continues, "the immediate effect of [Joyce's method in invoking the *Odyssey*] is to reduce his characters to mock-heroic absurdity" (Levin 73). This impression has inspired many scholars before me to take the position that Joyce is only crafting a parody and encouraging an ironic portrayal of Homer, one that only underlines the irreconcilable changes that have been wrought over time. This conviction leads Wolfgang Iser to assert that "the revelation of the irreducible differences" between the modern and the ancient world "is what constitutes the real function of the mythical patterns through which we are to look upon the modern world" (Iser 200). He continues, "the mythic parallel here is more in the nature of an explanatory hypothesis, and is scarcely to be interpreted as the return of the myth" (Iser 200). Iser then concurs with Ezra Pound, who was the first to deem Joyce's Homeric correspondences as simply "a scaffold, a means of construction" (Pound 406).<sup>2</sup> Morton Levitt also denigrates the value of the *Odyssey* for understanding

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Groden quotes Pound's entire comment: "These correspondences are part of Joyce's medievalism and are chiefly his own affair, a scaffold, a means of construction, justified by the result, and justified by it only" (Groden 76, from Pound's Paris letter of June 1922). Groden claims, "Pound greatly underestimated the importance the parallels and correspondences eventually assumed in Joyce's mind...[Joyce] came to believe that life consists of cyclically recurring forms, always repeating themselves despite altered specific settings...[Bloom] re-enacts a pattern set by many epic heroes before him" (Groden 76, 36). Michael Seidel explains why Pound repudiated his position to a certain degree later on, finding the "epic texture of

*Ulysses*, by repeating Pound's precise terminology and stating, "The *Odyssey* is really no more than a scaffolding for *Ulysses*...it makes use of Homer only as an aspect of its parody and social satire, in order to demonstrate the inversion of mythic values in modern times" (Levitt 1999, 32, 53).<sup>3</sup> In the same vein, Richard Madtes avers, "little is to be gained from a study of Homeric references" (Madtes 30). Constance Tagopoluos observes this state of affairs in Joyce studies by summarily stating, "Joyce scholarship has termed the Homeric parallels in *Ulysses* incomplete, idiosyncratic, and noninstrumental to the work" (Tagopoluos 1992, 184).<sup>4</sup>

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*Ulysses* something more crucial to the novel" (Seidel 1976, xv; see footnote 12 for complete bibliography on Pound's various remarks).

<sup>3</sup> Richard M. Kain (1947) and William Tindall (1950) also discuss why parody may be the best description of the intertextual relationship, while Richard Ellmann (1957) and Hugh Kenner (1952) both dispute this notion. Kain concedes that "what has hitherto been regarded as an arbitrary framework...can now be appreciated as an embodiment of Joyce's philosophy: 'years dreams return'", yet he still regards the result to have "mock-heroic effect" (Kain 36). But as L. R. Lind reminds us, "The reason for choosing a Homeric parallel in *Ulysses* was structural, not satirical...Odysseus himself was already satirized by Homer" (Lind 17). Homer's own reliance on parody and satire can justify Joyce's reliance upon both as well, without reducing the entire effect of either text to nothing else. John Rickard poses the question brilliantly: "Do the mythic parallels between *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey* redeem Joyce's characters, rescuing them from the paralysis of Dublin by infusing their lives with an archetypal richness, or do they mock the world of twentieth-century Dublin, ironically undercutting the imperfect modern counterparts of the faithful Penelope and the cunning, bold Odysseus?" (Rickard 1999, 171). He then answers it thusly: "The layering and density of allusion—of intertextual memory—in *Ulysses* works on a deeper level than the simple mockery implied by the ironic technique of placing an older closed plot such as the *Odyssey* on top of the plot of *Ulysses* to emphasize the fragmentation or meaninglessness of life in Ireland in 1904" (Rickard 1999, 178).

<sup>4</sup> Jean François Lyotard summarizes this line of argument: "There is no *Odyssey* perceptible in the various episodes of *Ulysses*...if the *Odyssey* reappears in *Ulysses*, it is by its absence" (Lyotard 195).



The best refutation of this position lies in Richard Ellmann's observation that "Joyce ventured to disagree" with any such stance (Ellmann 1977, 23). Like Tagopoulos' brief article, in which she argues why a close reading of the "Ithaca" chapter "reveals explicit, detailed, and sustained thematic parallels with the *Odyssey*...Homeric analogies remain important elements in the forging of meaning throughout the 'Ithaca' chapter" (Tagopoulos 1992, 184, 197), the present inquiry seeks to repudiate such lines of argument.<sup>5</sup> I seek to establish why *Ulysses* is indeed the return of Homer's myth due to the consistencies of meaning which defy Joyce's alterations of plot and context, while still acknowledging that certain "irreducible differences" are wrought by modernity. More than forty years ago, Richard Ellmann announced the need to find a new approach to studying *Ulysses* that would validate the Homeric intertext and elevate the Homeric correspondences to sources of profound meaning and insight: "What is needed is a way of reading *Ulysses* which will emphasize the vitality of its Homeric parallelism" (Ellmann 1962, 423). While some

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<sup>5</sup> In his seminal study of literary representations of Odysseus, *The Ulysses Theme* (1968), W. B. Stanford assumes the same stance, arguing that Leopold is a genuine successor of Homer's Odysseus rather than his antithesis. He summarizes his position thusly: "Unlike Giono's novel (and its predecessors, the seventeenth century burlesques, the Roman *Priapea*, and the Greek comedies on the Ulysses theme, [Joyce's *Ulysses*] is not mock-heroic or anti-heroic....In the end, Ulysses emerges, as he does from the *Odyssey*, as a man who by prudence and endurance can overcome the dangers and disasters of life....One can see that the differences between Bloom and Homer's Odysseus in manners and ideology are not fundamental, if one allows for the principle of historical assimilation so prominent throughout the tradition. The basic humanistic elements in conduct, motive, and environment are identical for the Prince of Ithaca and for this humble citizen of Dublin (and further, the underlying symbolisms are the same)"(Stanford 1968, 214). Stanford can be fairly criticized for neglecting to provide enough textual evidence to prove such broad claims convincingly. The present inquiry is an attempt to continue where he left off and to provide textual substantiation for his contentions.

comparative work has met that standard, that need has not yet been fully satisfied.<sup>6</sup> My ensuing textual analysis will hopefully satisfy that need while explaining the degree to which Joyce succeeds in the aim that Richard Ellmann ascribes to him: “To some extent, Joyce wished his book to be a sequel to the *Odyssey*, to some extent a reenactment of it” (Ellmann 1977, 30-31). In so doing, I hope to elaborate upon David Norris’ insistence that “what Joyce is doing here is nobly in harmony with the spirit of the *Odyssey*...” (Norris 118).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Richard Ellmann, Hugh Kenner, Declan Kiberd, Margaret Mills Harper, R. L. Lind, George Lord, Stephanie Nelson, Margot Norris, David Norris, John Henry Raleigh, Michael Seidel, Fritz Senn, W. B. Stanford, Constance Tagopoulos, Susan Stanford Friedman, John Rickard, D. Lohmann, and David Wykes. To my knowledge, the present work stands alone as an effort to trace the congruence of the two texts in such large and overriding themes by means of close textual analysis. Joseph Campbell’s *Mythic Worlds, Modern Words* (1993) is one such attempt but it lacks enough clarity and cogency to be definitive. By no means has it resolved the dispute over the Homeric correspondence with *Ulysses*.

<sup>7</sup> George Lord argues for many innate similarities between Homer’s heroes and Joyce’s, while still allowing for various innovations and changes on Joyce’s part. For example, Joyce’s “cultured all-round man” is much like Odysseus, “versatile, experienced, inquisitive, ingenious, disingenuous, adaptable” (Lord 1972, 43). Yet he also states, “One of Joyce’s most original contributions to the Homeric theme lies in his bringing together an Odysseus-like father [Leopold] with an Achillean son [Stephen]. . . . Joyce has also modified Bloom’s Odyssean destiny. Instead of avenging himself on *his* usurpers, Bloom more or less accepts Molly’s brief affair with Blazes Boylan” (Lord 1972, 54, 57). Even so, the theme of reconciliation and the restoration of the home is exemplified in *Ulysses* just as it is in the *Odyssey* (Lord 1972, 57). Such work reveals how even Joyce’s innovations and changes can be viewed as affirmations of elements of Homer’s poem. Joseph Prescott also emphasizes the correspondences between the two poems while also noting the discrepancies (1942). Their methods demonstrate why such obvious inconsistencies do not inevitably negate the meaning of the correspondence. John Henry Raleigh, by emphasizing Leopold’s “perspicacity and perspicuity” (Raleigh 1977a, 597), and deeming him “the true modern Odysseus” (Raleigh 1977a, 595), also strives to reconcile the apparent clashes between the two texts by interpreting them as representations of how Odysseus and Leopold possess the same kind of virtues despite their extremely contrasting circumstances.

The power of Norris' contention is only intensified by the extent to which David Grene's comments regarding the *Odyssey* are equally applicable to *Ulysses*:

There is a tension in this poem between everyday life...and the world of the story....This everyday life is, I think, not very clearly related to divine control and certainly free of intrusion of divine beings from one moment to the next. On the other hand, the stories are full of such accounts. This tension, between what we may call everyday reality and the saga, turned also into a wish to probe under the surface of the fixed attitude and the fixed ethic of the heroic age. This is perhaps the nearest we can get to defining the mood of the poet of the *Odyssey* as he handled his heroic material. He gives a new (and at times grotesque) version of the truth, in which humor and seriousness jostle one another, and the mind must accommodate itself to a new dimension in presentation.  
(Grene 1969, 61-62)<sup>8</sup>

Joyce's title creates "this tension between what we may call everyday reality and the saga" (Grene 1969, 61), in the process also inciting the same sort of challenges to Joyce's inherited and traditional heroic ethic from the Western canon.<sup>9</sup> Joyce's everyday world is not entirely free of his narrative intrusion, which serves to delineate the difference between reality on Bloomsday within the world of the text and our reality as readers of Joyce's novel who rely upon his narrative mediation for access into that world. Joyce's peculiar narrative presence reminds us of the level of saga to

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<sup>8</sup> David Grene was always quite convinced that "Joyce penetrated the principle of universality...so that accidental details [let you] see things as they eternally and completely are" (Joyce Seminar, The Committee on Social Thought, The University of Chicago, 17 January, 1995). His conviction generated many of my initial inquiries, resulting in the present thesis.

<sup>9</sup> Grene continues of Homer, "His originality lies in a move toward the presentation of the truth which is closest to external detail and to ordinary human motivation...But the realist was also a poet, with a vigorous and deep strain of poetry in him" (Grene 1969, 63). Again, he could have been speaking of Joyce and *Ulysses*.

which Grene avers, because we are jolted out of the everyday reality of the text into the recognition of how our narrator is manipulating the truth we perceive as readers. The extent of the affinity between Joyce's and Homer's narrative goals and methods is remarkable, as I will strive to prove in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

Hugh Kenner's opinion regarding Joyce's use of irony does not refute that assertion at all but actually supports it. Thomas Staley argues that "Irony is the guiding principle in *Ulysses* for Kenner..." (Staley 1970b, 12), commenting that S. L. Goldberg counters "Kenner's insistence upon Joyce's use of an all-pervasive irony..." (Staley 1970, 13) with the proposal that Joyce's "irony is a qualifying criticism, which does not imply a total rejection of its object in the least..." (Goldberg 110).<sup>10</sup> Yet Kenner's reliance upon irony most definitely does not necessitate any such rejection of the validity of the Homeric intertext. Staley points out that Kenner's view of irony has frequently been mistaken to be the equivalent of what Staley terms "the dismissal theory" (Staley 1970, 15), in which Joyce is viewed as simply negating the Homeric vision in its entirety. In this view, irony is assumed to nullify the implications of Joyce's title, reducing the Homeric parallels to a rather frivolous and silly status.<sup>11</sup> But the irony Kenner discusses refers to the fact that the characters themselves have no idea what they are reliving: to them, the Homeric situation has no conscious relevance whatsoever. As Kenner writes,

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Staley reviews these two positions in the course of offering his own examination as defense of Stephen Dedalus as "the modern hero who accepts his fate" (Staley 1970, 20).

<sup>11</sup> David Wright explores ironic links between Joyce and Homer and between Joyce and Shakespeare in a manner which avoids this quagmire by operating on the assumption that one of the functions of "intertextual or 'inter-authorial' ironies" is "to enrich the texture of the novel" (Wright 1991, 104).

Joyce's irony goes deep indeed. Not only does Bloom not know he is Ulysses (the meaning of his own actions); he does not know that he is an analogue of Christ inhabiting a sacramental universe (the meaning of his own thoughts).  
(Kenner 1966, 209)

The irony to which Kenner alludes is then the irony that Joyce's Dubliners go through their day in complete ignorance of what they signify. The irony he identifies has nothing to do with the way in which the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* are diametric opposites being superimposed upon each other but results from the fact that the characters do not know who they are as posited by Joyce's title.<sup>12</sup> Kenner clarifies this point indubitably by noting, "Irony is one-sided; it pushes the characters away from the author. Joyce's presentation of Bloom is far more than mere irony..." (Kenner 1965, 23).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wright notes that the characters' ignorance extends even further, because "Joyce has been careful to include in *Ulysses* no hint that Bloom knows the *Odyssey*" (Wright 1991, 123). Buck Mulligan's exclamations "*Thalatta! Thalatta!*" and "*epi oinopa ponton*" (*U* 1.78-80) show only an elementary knowledge of Greek, but he does "invent two post-Homeric epithets, the snotgreen and scrotumtightening sea" (Ellmann 1977, 25) and the narrator offers others during the course of the book, like "bullockbefriending bard" (see Ellmann 1977, 25-26). None of this implies that Buck Mulligan knows that he is a character in *Ulysses*. Molly and Virag may be the exceptions to this rule because they address their creator directly, as I argue in my next chapter.

<sup>13</sup> John Rickard makes a case for Joyce's intertextuality as a strategy of acknowledging modernity and the Western tradition while commenting upon it: "Joyce's intertextuality, then, is a way of coping with modernity—with the modern sense of the absurdity of life and with the modernist writer's sense of being inevitably and already inscribed within a tradition of writing. In Joyce's construction of intertextual memory—exemplified in the way that he weaves the stories contained in older texts such as the *Odyssey* and *The Golden Ass* into the fabric of *Ulysses*—we can read both an awareness of the constant presence and influence of the past in daily life and of the ironic gap between our lives and the traditional stories that supposedly give them form and meaning" (Rickard 1999, 179-180). That gap should be contrasted with the gap David Grene identifies "between the great era of heroes and the time of the epic writer (and his awareness of it)" (Grene 1969, 65, also see 61). Our awareness of that gap mirrors the epic poet's awareness of the gap between his own time and that of the heroes whose tales he tells. Joyce problematizes how and why those older stories

Kenner insists quite unequivocally upon the need to “accustom ourselves to the idea that the Homeric situation—Homer’s world—is *in Joyce’s text*, because Joyce found it in Dublin” (Kenner 1966, 180). Kenner thus acknowledges the importance that Joyce ascribes to his own incorporation of Homer, and the value that the reader can discover therein:

It is when we attempt to hold in one mental act Mr. Blooms’ plain prose Dublin and Butcher and Lang’s high-falutin’ Mediterranean that we find ourselves trying to explain the parallels away: Joyce put them in to amuse himself, they were more useful to him than they can be to the reader, he needed an intricate structure for his chaos. But the schemata which writers draw up for their own convenience they commonly try to hide, and Joyce on the contrary drew from this one the very title of his book. He found it, evidently, easy and natural and helpful to the reader, and if we concentrate on the right Homer we may be on the way to finding it easy and natural too.

(Kenner 1969, 297)

Yet different translations of the *Odyssey* will convey very different impressions of Homer. Kenner describes the different Homers one can encounter depending on whether one subscribes to the theories of the Stoics, Richard Bentley, or Friedrich Wolf, for “every commentator, every translator, invents the Homer of a time and place, closed, self-sufficient” (Kenner 1969, 287). Kenner insists that because *Ulysses* has “a structural principle parallel with the *Odyssey*”, then “If we are going to extract meaning from this information, we should surely ask what Homer he [Joyce] had in mind, which *Odyssey*, which Odysseus” (Kenner 1969, 286). And which Penelope,

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incorporated into *Ulysses* endow our daily and ordinary lives with meaning; his use of intertextual memory then threatens our sense of meaning much more than it encourages or enhances it. As Rickard admits, “The interpretive difficulty lies in judging the significance of the parallels between the text of *Ulysses* and the older texts that it ‘remembers’” (Rickard 1999, 171).

one might add. Kenner reminds us that Joyce's lack of Greek forced him "to be thrown back...on translations and commentaries, each one a delimited Homer, time's cross-section....Had he known Greek, the answers would be shut away in his unrecorded intercourse with the text" (Kenner 1969, 287, 286). Still, the effort at hand is not to detail Joyce's intentions about what he wanted to do by retelling Homer, but to examine how the texts themselves complement each other in a way that I believe probably far surpasses anything Joyce could have intended anyhow. Kenner concludes, "In the details and infrastructures of *Ulysses* we can find whatever Homers we like" (Kenner 1969, 298). The "right Homer" of our focus is the one who chose his narrative strategies with great care, strategies that cannot be concealed by translation alone. I will argue in my ensuing chapters that Joyce set out to become the same kind of narrator. That effort did not operate by means of irony, parody or satire, simply mocking all things Homeric and announcing their annihilation in the modern world, but through Joyce's genuine conviction that he could be another Homer, the kind of Homer to whom modernism could give birth.

THE VALUE OF READING "IN THE ORIGINAL" :  
JOYCE'S ENCOUNTERS WITH HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

"Ah, Dedalus! The Greeks! I must teach you. You must read them in the original" (*U* 1.79-80) declares Buck Mulligan to Stephen. Given the title of Joyce's book, the proclamation that one "must read them [the Greeks] in the original" cannot be taken lightly. The most urgent and obvious question is thus incited by Joyce's book

but never answered. Did Joyce take Buck Mulligan's advice? Did he read the Greeks in the original, and if so, whom?

Given the tremendous significance of Homer's *Odyssey* to what has been voted the best book of the century (Paul Lewis 1998), I expected answering this question to be relatively easy, albeit important. Indeed, it is easy to arrive at a simple answer (which is not Molly Bloom's): no. Like Stephen Dedalus, Joyce is a Greek novice who can make and appreciate Buck's joke about his name being two dactyls (*U* 1.41), but not a great deal more. The shock most feel at learning Joyce's ignorance of Greek triggers an even more urgent question: how then did Joyce know the *Odyssey*, and which translations did he read?

This question might seem to undermine the value of my present project, which compares Homer in his original Greek with Joyce in his original English, because I do not seek to establish how Joyce *thought* he was incorporating Homer and to what effect. Rather, the texts that Homer and Joyce produced are my focus. The meaning that each conveys independent of any declared authorial intention, and the ways in which those meanings might affirm or negate each other, is the issue to be explored. Still, it seems necessary and desirable to know when and how Joyce encountered the *Odyssey*, and in what form, before embarking on that task, if only to defend against the objections to my use of my own translations of Homer.

The urgency of such a task was announced to me when I received a review of an article that I submitted to the *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* in which the reviewer informed me that I should not be using my own translations of Homer's *Odyssey* to support my comparative efforts with Joyce's *Ulysses*. This anonymous reviewer insisted that "a translation of the Butcher and Lang translation of



the *Odyssey* should be included since this was the only translation that Joyce ever read.”<sup>14</sup> Despite the helpful criticism of this reviewer regarding the rest of my work, I knew that this claim was dead wrong. Nevertheless, it unmasks a very significant misconception about the nature and extent of Joyce’s acquaintance with Homer’s *Odyssey*. Many of you reading this now will immediately recall that Joyce of course read Charles Lamb’s *Adventures of Ulysses*. But that knowledge is hardly sufficient ground upon which to defend an intertextual project comparing Homer’s Greek poem with Joyce’s novel. My determination to justify using my own translations in my comparative work led me to try to ascertain exactly what translations of Homer Joyce read and when he read them. Surely Joyce’s own acquaintance with the *Odyssey* would bear out the value of Homer’s Greek poem for critics of his work.

Surprisingly, establishing Joyce’s encounters with Homer proved much more difficult and perplexing than I initially imagined, despite recent work on classical influences in Joyce.<sup>15</sup> Allow me to trace the available evidence regarding Joyce’s encounters with the *Odyssey* in any form, an endeavor which will also elucidate Joyce’s level of competence in Latin as well as Greek, and I will then draw a few conclusions about what translations of Homer Joyce scholars should rely upon and quote in their comparative efforts.

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<sup>14</sup> Personal correspondence from the *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*. Anonymous review of “Narrative Reticence in Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” 2 April, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> W. B. Stanford, Hugh Kenner and Fritz Senn of course remain pioneers in this realm. Other contributors to scholarship on this topic are Brian Arkins, Joseph Campbell, William Empson, Stanley Feshbach, John Gordon, Margaret Mills Harper, Declan Kiberd, Morton Levitt, George Lord, Margot Norris, David Norris, Joseph Prescott, John Henry Raleigh, John Rickard, and R. J. Schork.

First of all, Joyce did own and read Homer in the original Greek, but his expertise was so minimal that he cannot justly be said to have known Homer in the original. Any typical young classical scholar in the second year of Greek would already possess more facility with Homer than Joyce ever managed to achieve. R. J. Schork addresses the question of Joyce's knowledge of Greek brilliantly, noting that early on Joyce admitted his own inability to read Greek: "'In a Collegiate essay, 'The Study of Languages,' (1898-1899), Joyce wrote, 'he writes humbly acknowledges his ignorance of Greek' (CW 295)" (Schork 1997, 256). At the same time that he establishes that Joyce's Greek was so poor, Schork affirms Joyce's remarkable expertise in Latin, calling it Joyce's "first second language" (Schork 1997, 2, 29) and detailing the history and compass of Joyce's Latin study in an appendix entitled "Joyce's Latin Curriculum" (Schork 1997, 245-7). He writes:

National competition lists show Joyce attaining very high results in the yearly Latin examinations, and throughout his life he was quick to demonstrate that Latin was his first second language. At the same time, Joyce was, and remained, in the fullest sense of the term, an amateur in ancient Greek. He never studied it formally, although he did learn some modern Greek and his command of Latin grammar and syntax certainly enabled him to follow the gist of notes in a commentary on a text. Taking full advantage of the word entries and etymologies in a Greek dictionary, such as the standard Oxford edition of Liddell and Scott, would have caused him no difficulty; throughout *Finnegans Wake* there is ample evidence that he used some sort of lexical compendium.

Joyce read widely in the translations of Greek literature and in works on them and general Greek culture. In the Wake Notebook VI.B.20.33 there is an entry on 'Wolf's Theory of Homer.' At the time, that theory would be familiar only to specialists interested in the possibility that the Homeric epics were the oral productions of an unlettered poet....In general, however,

a fair assessment of Joyce's competence with the *ipsissima verba* of ancient Greek can be illustrated by a glance at his rendition of the Greek alphabet on the back cover of a Wake notebook (VI.B.21); it is incomplete and slightly out of order, the hesitant script of an enthusiastic tyro.  
(Schork 1997, 29-30)

Thus Joyce did dabble around with Greek but never applied himself to its mastery with the vigor that he invested in his Latin. Joyce's expertise in Latin was thus joined with a life-long ignorance of Greek. Given his extensive knowledge of Latin, along with his study of French, Italian, and German, Joyce certainly knew the intricacies of inflected languages and recognized the problems with translations. As a matter of fact, he was so concerned about the flaws inherent in translations that he set out to learn Dano-Norwegian in order to be able to read Ibsen in the original. His letter to Ibsen in that language apologizes so fluently for his language skills that it leaves little doubt that Joyce was a linguist of exceptional talents.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, he made no serious

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<sup>16</sup> Joyce fully acknowledged the value of reading any text in its original language. Ellmann describes the breadth of Joyce's reading thusly, and then observes that Joyce was inspired to learn Ibsen's language in order to read his plays in their original language: "He set himself to master languages and literatures, and read so widely that it is hard to say definitely of any important creative work published in the late nineteenth century that Joyce had not read it... To read Ibsen in the original, Joyce began to study Dano-Norwegian" (*JJII* 75-76). Joyce then wrote to Ibsen in his own language. At least in its English translation, Joyce's letter is so eloquent that his apology to Ibsen for his lack of linguistic competence seems like false modesty: "My own knowledge of your language is not, as you see, great, but I trust you will be able to decipher my meaning" (*JJII* 86). Joyce's German was adequate to translate Hauptmann (*JJII* 87), but Yeats was not overly impressed with his efforts, writing to Joyce that he had given his Hauptmann translations of *Before Dawn* and *Michael Kramer* to "a friend who is a German scholar to read some time ago, and she saw, what indeed you know yourself, that you are not a very good German scholar" (*JJII* 178). Joyce also made some effort to learn Irish, as Budgen recalls: "he soon abandoned Irish in favor of Norwegian, which he studied to such purpose that later he was able to translate James Stephens' poem 'The Wind on Stephen's Green,' into Norwegian (as well as into Latin, Italian, German, and French)" (Budgen 323).

effort whatsoever to learn enough Greek to read Homer with the same degree of expertise with which he had read Dante, Vergil, Ibsen, Hauptmann, and others in their original languages.<sup>17</sup>

Still, Schork concedes that Joyce made some rather feeble attempts to decode Homer's Greek, albeit in a very rough and unscholarly manner. Schork discusses the few lines of the Greek *Odyssey* that appear copied in Joyce's notebooks (*Od.* 2.420-421, 9.366-67),<sup>18</sup> but first explains why Joyce could not be properly said to have ever read Homer in Greek:

There is evidence that he briefly tried to work with the Homeric text. His Trieste library included a school edition of Book 1 of the epic, complete with copious notes of every sort and a line-by-line translation into grotesquely literal Italian. On several pages of the book, Joyce wrote occasional notes, almost all of them involving a mechanical transfer of a vocabulary word from the commentary into the text...His mastery of grammar, syntax, and the apparatus of a scholarly commentary for a Latin text would have aided him in addressing the Greek text of Homer. **This mechanical process, however, does not mean that Joyce could 'read' even a single verse of the original *Odyssey*.** Rather, with the appropriate lexical assistance and syntactical clues, he would have been able to decipher the meaning of individual words and to explain how they functioned in the context. All the evidence from the school text of the *Odyssey* indicates that Joyce was following the process I have just described. Such effort, which can sometimes yield sophisticated results for a single word or phrase, falls short of a claim to be able to

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<sup>17</sup> On Joyce's Italian and French studies, see Ellmann (*JIII* 59-60).

<sup>18</sup> Also see Rodney Wilson Owen (96-104), especially his "Collation of Selected Greek Manuscripts" (Owen 99). As Owen admits, "Joyce's motives for recording these lines remains obscure" (Owen 102). See pp. 320-321 for my interpretation of the importance of these lines for Joyce.

‘read’ the original—and Joyce would be the first to admit that such was the case.  
(Schork 1998, 85, emphasis added; see further 86-90)

Schork provides support for this contention with his reference to a copy of Book I of Homer’s *Odyssey* in Joyce’s Trieste library “with many notes and an interlinear ‘translation’ into Italian; several pages of this work are annotated (mainly vocabulary) in Joyce’s handwriting...” (Schork 1997, 256).<sup>19</sup> Yet Schork neglects to provide a definitive list of the Homeric translations which Joyce consulted.

While Joyce seems to have exerted himself to decipher Homer’s Greek in this rather crude manner, it is astonishing that Joyce never seems to have sought out a Latin translation of the *Odyssey*. The *Odyssey* in a Latin translation never appears anywhere in Joyce’s reading or libraries, although his Latin reading did include Cicero, Ovid, Sallust, Caesar, Horace, Livy, and Lucretius. Oddly, he never sought to become acquainted with Homer in the one classical language at which he was adept.<sup>20</sup> Ellmann assumes that Homer held little interest for Joyce during his early adulthood, and the course of his studies certainly seems to support that contention.<sup>21</sup> Joyce would seem to have preserved a deep aversion to reading any Latin translation of the *Odyssey* in which he would have enjoyed thorough competence. His neglect of Andronicus’

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<sup>19</sup> Schork refers his readers to Michael Gillespie (1986, 120, Item #219).

<sup>20</sup> R. L. Lind notes that “Roman literature begins with Homer, for the first Latin book of any consequence was the translation of the *Odyssey* into saturnian meter by Livius Andronicus...” (Lind 10). No Latin translations of the *Odyssey* are ever mentioned in Joyce’s school curriculum or personal libraries (Connolly 1955, Ellmann 1977, Gillespie 1983, 1986).

<sup>21</sup> Ellmann writes, “At this time [1902] Joyce had no interest in Homer. He told Padraic Colum that the Greek epics were before Europe, and outside of the tradition of European culture. The *Divine Comedy* was Europe’s epic, he said. He distrusted Plato, as Herbert Gorman says, and described Hellenism in an early notebook as ‘European appendicitis’” (*JIII* 103).

*L'Odyssia*, which he could have read easily and thoroughly in his “first second language” (Schork 1997, 2, 29), would seem to indicate a startling focus on Homer rather than on the various forms his poem later assumed.

Indubitably, then, Joyce chose to struggle on his own with Homer’s Greek text, but given his linguistic limitations in Greek, he was mostly compelled to rely upon translations. Joyce himself claims that his interest in Homer, and in Odysseus in particular, emerged early, due to his encounter with Charles Lamb’s *The Adventures of Ulysses* at the age of twelve.<sup>22</sup> Joyce once offered a rather puzzling comment to Herbert Gorman, suggesting why Ulysses was his favorite hero and referring to his first encounter with the hero through Lamb:

I was twelve years old when I studied the Trojan War  
but the story of Ulysses alone remained in my  
recollection. It was the mysticism that pleased me...  
(Stanford 1951, 62)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>On the edition of Lamb Joyce most likely read, see Alastair McCleery (1994). Kenner discusses Lamb and his influence on Joyce (Kenner 1987, 23-24), as does David Wykes, who proposes that “As Joyce discovered when he came to know Homer, Lamb represents a liberalizing of the Greek epic’s structure; Joyce himself liberalizes it even more” (Wykes 304; see 302-305 on Joyce’s use of Lamb). Stanislaus Joyce confirms his brother’s early fascination with Lamb: “...his first interest as a boy in the figure Ulysses was aroused when his class was reading Lamb’s *Adventures of Ulysses*. The boys were asked which of the heroes they admired most. My brother chose Ulysses in reaction against the general admiration for the heftier, muscle-bound dealers of Homeric blows” (Stanislaus Joyce 1958, 43).

<sup>23</sup> Stanford consequently wonders, “What did Joyce mean by ‘mysticism’ in this context, and from what source did he, knowing no Greek, first derive it?” (Stanford 1951, 62). Joyce commented further along these same lines to Georges Borach (Seidel 2002, 100). I refer you to Stanford’s article for his answer, although the question remains an open one. My own answer will come at the end of Chapter Seven. On the influence of the medieval mystical tradition upon all of Joyce’s works, especially concerning how Joyce relies upon the “negative” mystical tradition to connote a certain degree of ineffability, see Colleen Jaurrette (1997).

Joyce's fascination with Lamb is thus incontrovertibly significant. But what other translations might Joyce have used as inspiration for *Ulysses*? W. B. Stanford reports that

Professor Stanislaus Joyce has kindly informed me that his brother had studied the following writers on Ulysses: Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Shakespeare, Racine, Fénelon, Tennyson, Phillips, d'Annunzio and Hauptmann, as well as Samuel Butler's *The Authoress of the Odyssey* and Victor Bérard's *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssee*, and the translations by Butler and Cowper.  
(Stanford 1968, 276)

Hugh Kenner refers to this claim of Stanford's and further comments that

Stannie recalled Jim using only two translations, Cowper's and Butler's (the latter published in 1900, hence the most up-to-date version available when *Ulysses* was being thought out). Stanislaus Joyce's freedom to inspect his brother's working books must be located before the 1914 war broke out, since shortly after that Stannie was interned and Jim subsequently left for Zurich. So it seems probable that his testimony chiefly pertains to the nascent stages of Joyce's book. Frank Budgen's recollection of Joyce using Butcher and Lang comes from later years, when Joyce was studying Victorian-Homeric diction in order to parody it in 'Cyclops'...  
(Kenner 1978, 110-111; see further Kenner 1971, 44-50)

The prevailing assumption, which my anonymous *PMLA* reviewer also made, that the Butcher and Lang translation was Joyce's only source for *The Odyssey*, surely derives from Frank Budgen's recollection: "As a work of reference for his *Ulysses* he used the Butcher-Lang translation of the *Odyssey*" (Budgen 323). Budgen does not, however, state that it was the only translation Joyce used, and it is difficult to determine at what date Budgen remembers this occurring, although it seems likely that it was in Paris.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Read Budgen (318-324) and make your own attempt to fix the date of his recollections. The construction of his narrative obscures the exact timing of his

Regardless of the dating of Budgen's memory of Joyce's use of Butcher and Lang, the assertion that Butcher and Lang was the only translation Joyce used is definitively revealed to be a misconception. For my own part, I cannot imagine Joyce admiring Butler's book while utterly ignoring his fine translation, and Stanislaus assures us that was not the case. It would make no sense for Joyce to have esteemed *The Authoress of the Odyssey* so highly, as is universally agreed, while neglecting Butler's translation entirely.

Surprisingly enough, Ellmann's biography, which retains its status as something of a Bible for Joyce scholars despite recent insistence upon the need for new approaches to Joyce biography, never establishes when and where Joyce read *The Odyssey* and whose translations he read.<sup>25</sup> Ellmann only establishes Joyce's early

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memories, but his mention of finding Joyce different in Paris than he had been in Zürich appears on 318; later on 323 he discusses Joyce in Zürich again.

<sup>25</sup> Morris Beja, Ira B. Nadel, and William S. Brockman concur on the value of Ellmann's work while also proclaiming the need for new biographical work on Joyce. Brockman contends, "Ellmann's scholarship has dominated Joyce studies for decades for good reason" (Levitt 2002, 68), and Beja insists, "No Joyce scholar or critic can fail to be in Ellmann's debt" (Levitt 2002, 15). Beja discusses how "Ellmann's work looms over any attempt to write a biography of Joyce" (Levitt 2002, 16), including his own biography on Joyce (1992). Ira B. Nadel concurs with him on the need for a new approach to Joyce's life with the complaint that "Joyce biography has for too long erased Joyce's contradictions....A new life of Joyce should not reinforce Joyce the revered artist but reveal Joyce the individual, with his foibles, masks, misunderstandings, resentments, and obsessions" (Levitt 2002, 31). Ellmann's failure to establish the translations of Homer which Joyce read is not redeemed by Schork, substantiating the need for more biographical work. The autobiographical nature of Joyce's fiction only makes this task all the more urgent. Ellmann thinks that Joyce found some substantiation for the autobiographical basis for his fiction in Samuel Butler, who "insisted, as Bérard denied, that the *Odyssey* was just like other fictional works in being covertly autobiographical....Joyce concurred, so far as his own book was concerned" (Ellmann 1977, 28; see his full exposition on the influences of Butler, Victor Bérard and Francis Bacon, 26-31). Beja's comment "Of course with Joyce, even more than with most writers, there is a complex and intricate connection between the life and the art" (Beja 2002, 15) explains why any decent biography on Joyce



encounter with Lamb and his choice of Ulysses as the topic for his school essay “My Favourite Hero” (*JJI* 46). The same ease with which he documented the enormous breadth of Joyce’s other reading is thoroughly absent in respect to Joyce’s acquaintance with Homer. Most recently, Brian Arkins has clarified matters in the most sensible and most convincing way, by listing the classical books Joyce owned:

Joyce owned both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in the original Greek. He also owned translations into English of the *Iliad* by Edward Earl of Derby, and by A. Long, W. Leaf and E. Myers, as well as a study of the *Iliad* by W. L. Collins. For the *Odyssey* Joyce possessed a bilingual version in Greek and Italian of Book 1; an Italian edition of Book 14; translations of the whole work by W. Cowper and by T. E. Shaw; and a German commentary on the words and phrase of the *Odyssey* by O. Henke.  
(Arkins 1999, 22)

He refers readers to Ellmann’s list of Joyce’s 1920 library (Ellmann 1977, 98-134).<sup>26</sup>

Arkins never mentions Butcher and Lang.<sup>27</sup> Two Greek texts with Italian commentary, one of Book 1 of the *Odyssey*, and the other of Book 14, seem to have been owned by

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almost inevitably expands our understanding of his work. Brenda Maddox’s work is a testimony to the power and talent of the biographer who is also literary critic, exposing the connections between life and text (1988).

<sup>26</sup> In his list of books consulted while writing *Ulysses*, Michael Patrick Gillespie includes the Earl of Derby’s translation of the *Iliad*, and Cowper’s translation of the *Odyssey* (Gillespie 1983, 99). Gillespie’s catalogue of the Trieste library also lists the Earl of Derby’s *Iliad* (Gillespie 1986, 119, #217), and Cowper’s *Odyssey* (Gillespie 1986, 120, #218). Connolly includes the *Iliad* by Lang, Leaf, and Myers (Connolly 1955, 19, #144), and T. E. Shaw’s *Odyssey* (Connolly 1955, 19, #145). I cite T. E. Shaw by the name T. E. Lawrence hereafter, which is used in his reprinted translation (1991).

<sup>27</sup> Butcher and Lang’s translation does not appear in Connolly (1955), Gillespie (1986), or Ellmann (1977), nor is it mentioned in Gillespie’s lists of books Joyce owned in Zürich, nor in his list of books Joyce consulted while writing *Ulysses* (Gillespie 1983).

Joyce as well.<sup>28</sup> Arkins also points out the revealing fact that Joyce wrote on Pope's translation of the *Odyssey* while at Belvedere for his English teacher George Dempsey (Arkins 1999, 14).

This assortment of possibilities have contributed to the persistent uncertainty surrounding Joyce's various encounters with Homer, but as a whole they finally serve to assure us that Joyce supplemented his untrained forays into Homer's Greek by reading numerous translations of Homer at different times in his life, including those of Lamb, Cowper, Shaw (Lawrence), Pope, and Butler, in addition to that of Butcher and Lang. It would make sense for Joyce to have cherished Lamb in adolescence, to have studied it for his Intermediate Examination in 1894,<sup>29</sup> to have turned to Butler, Shaw (Lawrence), and Cowper in his Trieste years during the early stages of writing *Ulysses*, and then to have returned to the Butcher and Lang translation during the writing and revision of "Cyclops" in order to incorporate its style and tone into his novel. It is surely fair to claim that Joyce was less than systematic in his Homeric studies and approached them with none of the intellectual rigor with which he had been trained in Latin. His admission that he encountered Victor Bérard's work only after he was already halfway through his book only strengthens that contention further (Ellmann 1977, 34). He seems to have exposed himself to an amalgam of Homeric translations, with the great exception of any Latin one. The doubt about precisely

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<sup>28</sup> Homer, *Il Libro XIV dell'Odissea* appears on Gillespie's list of books Joyce owned in Zürich (Gillespie 1983, 95), as well as in Gillespie's catalogue of his Trieste library (Gillespie 1986, 120). Homer's *L'Odissea, Libro I* is included in Gillespie's list of books Joyce consulted while writing *Ulysses* (Gillespie 1983, 198), a copy which had an interlinear Italian translation (Gillespie 1986, 120).

<sup>29</sup> Arkins lists the questions on Lamb in that exam (Arkins 1999, 14-15).

which translations he used at what points in time at the very least indicates that he never devoted himself to one certain version at the expense of all the others.

Consequently, preserving the version of the *Odyssey* to which Joyce was responding in critical work, which was the well-intentioned advice of my anonymous *PMLA* reviewer, is an impossible goal. There is no decisive and definitive translation of Homer's *Odyssey* that must be quoted in intertextual studies of Homer and Joyce, unless any particular study is an attempt limited to the influences of Joyce's own knowledge of the *Odyssey* upon *Ulysses*. To convey the implications of the many translations by which Joyce would have been influenced, one would have to quote from each translation listed above. For textual analysis of a brief passage, comparing the many versions Joyce read might indeed be fruitful, but in a book length study, quoting every Homeric translation that Joyce read for every piece of evidence would prove cumbersome and confusing for the reader, not to mention daunting and arduous for the scholar and horrifying for the publisher, who would be faced with extremely lengthy manuscripts filled with quotations from Joyce's variety of Homeric sources.

But intertextual studies do not require the fulfillment of such a demand. Why not? The reason is that intertextuality does not depend upon the influences upon the artist, nor upon his or her intentions.<sup>30</sup> Arkins notes that Julia Kristeva, who, after all, invented the notion of intertextuality,<sup>31</sup> claims that "any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva 1980, 66; quoted by Arkins 1999, 57). This

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<sup>30</sup> To borrow the words of John Gordon: "A word about theory. This essay has none" (Gordon 2002, 155). Only the discussion in this section belies the truth of that claim. I hope my focus on textual exegesis supersedes theory without denigrating it.

<sup>31</sup> See Julia Kristeva (1969, 255). Also see the special issue *Poétique 27* (1976), and Michael Riffaterre (1983, 115-150). On Joyce specifically, see Susan Stanford Friedman (1991).

statement applies to Homer's poems as well, especially if one accepts Lord's premise that

a song has no 'author' but a multiplicity of authors, each singing being a creation...the song has a specific though flexible content....All singers use traditional material in a traditional way, but no two singers use exactly the same material in exactly the same way.  
(Lord 1960, 102, 95, 63)

Homer's poem can be considered his own version of his inherited traditional themes and episodes expressed with traditional epithets and formulae. All of the oral forms of the song which came before him inevitably comprised his intertext, which would be "transformed and absorbed" in his own effort. Homer's oral creation of his song therefore emerged in a similar manner as Joyce's written text: both are re-creations of the forms of the story which they inherited.<sup>32</sup> While writing *Ulysses*, Joyce absorbed and transformed many variations upon Homer's *Odyssey*, proven by his dependence on a broad array of translations. One can imagine Homer listening to other bards' versions of his song for the same sort of reliance and inspiration, following the Parry-Lord theory.

So, if one is strictly examining influences in Joyce, one must solely rely upon those texts which we can prove Joyce read. Admittedly, the line between influence and intertextuality is difficult to demarcate, because as Eric Clayton and Jay Rothstein admit, "the shape of intertextuality in turn depends upon the shape of influence"

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<sup>32</sup> Contrasting Rickard's notion of "intertextual memory" (Rickard 1999, 167 ff.) with Ellmann's idea that "while Homer's use of traditional phrases and archaic forms could not be precisely duplicated, Joyce achieved something of the same effect by having his characters quote well known phrases from past authors" (Ellmann 1977, 26) raises the prospect that to some extent, Joyce's cultivation of such intense intertextuality reflects the method of oral composers like Homer.

(Clayton and Rothstein 1991, 3).<sup>33</sup> Hence studies on the influence of Homer upon Joyce must include only those translations and classical sources that Joyce actually used. Yet Clayton and Rothstein's observation that Barthes "advances a theory of intertextuality that depends entirely upon the reader as the organizing center of interpretation..." (Clayton and Rothstein 21; Barthes 142-148) enables us to expand that scope in intertextual studies. If the reader is indeed the location of the intertextual process, then any and all translations of Homer (as well as the original poem) known to readers are relevant and valid for comparison with *Ulysses*. Hence, to consider the intertextuality of *Ulysses*, one need not be limited to any single translation of Homer, nor to the Greek poem itself.

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<sup>33</sup> On influence, see Harold Bloom (1973). Mary Reynolds offers a superb study of the influence of Dante on Joyce and describes her aims thusly: "My own attention to theme, style, and form represents an effort to move beyond the merely inferential and implicit, in order to show that Joyce's relation to Dante was not merely appreciative but purposeful...Dante's art takes on a fresh perspective as and instrument in Joyce's work" (Reynolds 8). Most recently, Jennifer Fraser identifies what Zack Bowen calls "a new category of intertextuality, one that she terms *initiator*" (Fraser, foreword 2002). Fraser argues, "Joyce seems to battle against an anxiety of origin rather than an anxiety of influence; rather than expressing distress about powerful literary ancestors, Joyce strives to create out of the void an intertextual self that integrates and celebrates influence....Dante was one of a crucial group of guides who led Joyce around the spiritual journey of self-inscription....Dante does not influence Joyce; he teaches Joyce how to harness and yet circumvent authority" (Fraser 2002, 2, 8). The line between influence and intertextuality is very tenuous indeed. On how authorial motives and intentions bear upon interpretation, see Quentin Skinner (1972). I seek to explore how *Ulysses* might actually serve as a sequel to the *Odyssey* (as Ellmann proposes, 1977, 30-31), so that read in conjunction, each text assumes much more meaning than either could alone. In this sense, I take Jennifer Fraser's epigraph from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* quite literally: "For books continue each other, in spite of our habit of judging them separately" (Fraser 2002). My intertextual reading of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* treats them as a diptych and seeks to justify that integrity as integral to their appreciation, to borrow Jennifer Fraser's incisive description for her own exploration of Joyce and Dante (Fraser 2002, 1-2).

In fact, the intertextuality that Joyce encouraged with the title *Ulysses* far surpasses the bounds of his own intentions. Michael Riffaterre explains why the intertext transcends authorial intention:

Intertextuality is a modality of perception, the deciphering of the text by the reader in such a way that he identifies the structures to which the text owes its quality of a work of art....The intertext proper is the corpus of texts the reader may legitimately connect with the one before his eyes, that is, the texts brought to mind by what he is reading. This corpus has loose and flexible limits. Theoretically it can go on developing forever, in accordance with the reader's cultural level...  
(Riffaterre 1980, 625, 627)

Joyce's own reading, and his own purposive allusions to other texts, should therefore not limit our consideration of the intertext at all. The *Ulysses* intertext would properly include Homer's Greek poem and any and all translations of Homer, in addition to any other texts called to mind by the reading of *Ulysses*, whether Joyce knew them or not.

One example of how intertextual studies of *Ulysses* can rely upon the Greek text of the *Odyssey*, as well as various translations which Joyce read, can be found in the work of Fritz Senn. Senn examines the role of Nausikaa and Gerty MacDowell, asserting that Gerty MacDowell's blushes find their inspiration in Nausikaa's hidden desire and secret shame:

After her dream the princess Nausicaa gives her father a number of plausible reasons for granting her the use of wagon and mules for the laundrying excursion, all except the main one that Pallas Athene in her dream had pointedly insinuated. Homer comments on what Nausikaa left out: '*aideto gar thaleron gamon exomenai*' (*Od.* 6:66) (She was ashamed [*aideto*] to speak of her marriage [*gamon*]). Similar shame motivates Gerty MacDowell at times. Much of what moves her is not mentioned (*exomenai*). Pope freely elaborates on the Odyssean line with a gratuitous 'but

blushes ill-restrained betray/Her thoughts intensive on the bridal day.' [Pope, *Od.* 6.79-81] The translation also illustrates the father's simple understanding ('*noei*'): 'The conscious Sire the dawning blush survey'd.' Gerty MacDowell displays many telltale flushes; they betray thoughts, and so do omissions. The reader understands as well as Nausikaa's father does, though perhaps not everything: *panta noei*. Structured elisions or disclosive blushes are ways of conveying what words do not say. (Senn 1987, 46-47)

Senn quite rightly presumes that Gerty's blushes do not emerge directly from Homer's Greek but from Pope's interpolation of the shame Nausikaa displays when she neglects to mention to her father that Athena had predicted that her marriage is imminent: "For your marriage is close...and you well know that you will not be a virgin much longer" (*Od.* 6.27). Nausikaa's shame over her possible sexual awakening, betrayed in Homer's Greek poem by her omission of any reference to it in her narration to her father (*Od.* 6. 57-65), finds a new form in the blushes that Pope ascribes to her. So, Senn concludes, "...Joyce need not have derived Gerty's blushes from Pope's embroidering...An epic technique has been reused, the potency of absence, interdynamically" (Senn 1987, 47). Homer, Pope, and Joyce employ the technique of omission differently, but its impact for conveying Nausikaa's situation remains unchanged.

Senn makes no comment about the breakthrough in methodology that he has accomplished, but here we should pause to assess the implications of his work for future intertextual studies.<sup>34</sup> In Senn's exploration of Nausikaa's portrayal, Joyce's

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<sup>34</sup> His only stated desire in his article is to begin to examine the Greek and Roman influences in Joyce's work which he believed had been neglected up to that point: "the multifarious samples that follow are fragmentary, random, arbitrary, a garner of possibilities. No claim is made that the relationships suggested are necessarily conscious adaptations, nor even that they exist. They are merely constructible by intertextual synergism or coactive readers' assiduity....One aim is to

knowledge of Pope from Belvedere would support a claim that Gerty's blush was indeed influenced by Homer's Nausikaa's shame and narrative omission and in Pope's Nausikaa's blush. But whether Joyce was influenced by Pope or not, the intertextual relationship that Senn has exposed is still valid. The dynamic Senn has explored functions on the basis of the intertextuality of three texts: Homer's Greek poem, with which Pope was grappling in the hope of expressing it most accurately and effectively in English and which Joyce summarily read in fragments; Pope's translation, which Joyce studied at Belvedere, and finally *Ulysses* itself. As a result, Senn's work begins to redeem the fallacy pervading intertextual Homer and Joyce studies of which Kenner complains: "That the fundamental correspondence is not between incident and incident but between situation and situation, has never gotten into the critical tradition" (Kenner 1965, 181). Senn's work has opened the door to an exploration of the interdynamic intertextuality of Joyce's texts with each other and with their classical inspirations, and it is the task of future scholars to follow in his footsteps. Had Senn limited his inquiries to the Butcher and Lang translation, scholarship would be much poorer for the restriction.

Budgen recalls that when he bemoaned his own lack of Greek, Joyce

thereupon regretted his insufficient knowledge of that language but, as if to underline the difference in our two cases (or so I interpreted it) he said with sudden vehemence: 'But just think: isn't that a world I am peculiarly fitted to enter?'  
(Budgen 322-323)

Budgen does not explicitly clarify when this conversation took place, but *Ulysses* demonstrates Joyce's entrance into that world despite his lack of the proper Greek

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discern, provisionally, the diversified modulations in which older texts, techniques, or insights are transposed" (Senn 1987, 31).



credentials. The intricacy of the intertextual echoes in *Ulysses* with the *Odyssey* becomes nothing short of amazing when one knows how little Greek Joyce actually knew. He was indeed peculiarly fitted for his task, qualified by no linguistic proficiency but by some insight that seems to have defied the problems inherent to reading translations.

The lack of a single, authoritative translation of the *Odyssey* in guiding Joyce's creative exploits justifies the use of any translation of Homer's *Odyssey* in intertextual inquiry. Further, the intertextual echoes that Joyce fostered are not circumscribed to those that he intended to create, and so scholars and critics need not limit themselves to those texts that Joyce encountered unless they are focusing only upon direct influences. If we were actually to limit our intertextual inquiries according to Joyce's knowledge, no classical scholar, nor anyone who could read ancient Greek with any degree of technical skill, would be able to apply any of their knowledge of Greek in relation to their interpretation of *Ulysses*. The absurdity of eliminating Greek scholars from valuable investigations regarding *Ulysses* highlights the absurdity of limiting intertextual studies to any single Homeric translator. As scholars of *Ulysses* we should strive to be as greedy as Joyce was in his voracious reading. As Joyce is one of the most accretive writers in the history of western civilization, so we should strive to be accretive intertextual scholars. The intertextual enterprise lends itself to inclusion rather than exclusion, and one finds good cause to suppose that Joyce, who subscribed at least in part to Yeats' theory of universal mind and memory, would not have objected to this intertextual line of inquiry.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Bugden writes, "It is sometimes forgotten that in his early years in Dublin Joyce lived among the believers and adepts in magic gathered round the poet Yeats. Yeats held that the borders of our minds are always shifting, tending to become part of

*Ulysses* and classical texts are interwoven in ways yet to be discovered and in ways that Joyce may never have imagined, despite the fact that it seems much in vogue now to suggest that Joyce criticism has exhausted itself.<sup>36</sup> The present examination of the translations of Homer which influenced Joyce proves that there is still a brave new world demanding to be explored further in Joyce criticism. That world is the world of intertextuality. Intertextual Joyce scholars must seek to expose how *Ulysses* returns to the texts that came before it and reaffirms their conceptions and values, as well as how it transcends them and redefines them. That return cannot be restricted to any single Homeric translation and should in fact include a return to Homer's original poem in Greek.

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the universal mind, and that the borders of memory also shift and form part of the universal memory. The universal mind and memory could be evoked by symbols. When telling me this Joyce added that in his own work he never used the recognized symbols, preferring instead to use trivial and quadrivial words and local geographical allusions. The intention of magical evocation, however, remained the same" (Budgen 325). Lord claims that "the peculiar purpose of oral epic song...was magical and ritual before it became heroic.....the poet was sorcerer and seer before he became 'artist.' ....The roots of traditional oral narrative are not artistic but religious in the broadest sense" (Lord 1960, 66-67). Joyce may even have revitalized that aspect of the oral tradition through his writing.

<sup>36</sup> Recent work by Constance Tagopoulos, Margaret Mills Harper, and Margot Norris work provides fine examples of recent discoveries of new classical themes and intertexts in Joyce's work. Nonetheless, Sean Latham declared that "Most of Joyce criticism is a crime that has already been committed" (18<sup>th</sup> International Joyce Symposium, Trieste, Italy, 20 June, 2002). I daresay that there are many more intertextual Joycean crimes of criticism yet to be committed, especially when they focus on textual analysis and exegesis.

## A METHOD FOR RESOLVING INTERTEXTUAL CONTRADICTIONS IN PLOT AND ACTION

John Gordon reminds us not to become too carried away in our intertextual comparisons, because even though the affinity of *Ulysses* with the *Odyssey* is quite critical, any and every text and hero we might consider is not equally pertinent for *Ulysses*.<sup>37</sup> It is perhaps so easy to be swept away by any and every obscure comparison of *Ulysses* with any other text because Joyce's countless glaring alterations to the plot of Homer's story tempt readers to notice only the contrasts and contradictions between them. The many basic structural clashes between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* seem to create a hopeless chaos of interpretation. For this reason, most readers object that the two texts are not even telling the same story. After all, Odysseus blinds the Cyclops while Leopold has his lunch! Substantively, the two texts at hand differ greatly: the poem of return to faithful Penelope has become a book of return to unfaithful Molly. In the *Odyssey*, Penelope waits faithfully for nineteen years for Odysseus to come home; in *Ulysses*, Molly rearranges her furniture before her lover Boylan arrives (Kenner 1974). Leopold is obviously not a warrior hero of Greek epic who has visited Hades, returned to the world of the living, and received advice from Athena beneath the olive tree, but just a modern husband whose wife is cheating on him. Such obvious contradictions make it extremely difficult to establish why

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<sup>37</sup> Gordon continues, "Bloom may suggest parallels to Moses, Christ, Shakespeare, Odysseus, and Charlie Chaplin, but for all practical purposes he had nothing in common with Nebuchadnezzar, St. Paul, Titus Oates, Ajax, or Mickey Mouse; if *Ulysses* in some ways re-enacts the *Odyssey*, *Hamlet*, or *Don Giovanni*, its affinities with *Gilgamesh*, the *Duchess of Malfi*, or *Lucia di Lammermoor* are slight" (Gordon 1981, 35). Every intertextual echo is not and should not be taken as pivotal for *Ulysses*; see further David Wright (1991, 104ff.).

Joyce is telling the same story as Homer. Joyce seems to be telling an entirely new and different story, one that has entirely new characters, a new context, and a new plot.

Joyce's retelling is therefore so original that one wonders whether it qualifies as a retelling at all. Readers therefore protest against Joyce's title. How can *Ulysses* be the same story as the *Odyssey*, when Leopold runs away from his wife's lover in the street ("Safe!" (*U* 8.1193) he breathes once he has escaped confronting Blazes Boylan), while Odysseus makes love to goddesses? How can such opposite actions possibly comprise the same story, let alone convey any of the same meaning?

Let me first address the latter question. Homer and James Joyce are telling the same story (μῦθος), even though they are telling it in very different ways. To understand why this is true, let us examine Aristotle's observation in the *Poetics* that Homer's *Odyssey* is the imitation of a single action. Aristotle writes:

A plot-structure does not possess unity (as some believe) by virtue of centering on an individual. For just as a particular thing may have many random properties, some of which do not combine to make a single entity, so a particular character may perform many actions which do not yield a single 'action'. Consequently, all those poets who have written a *Heracleid* or a *Theseid*, or the like are evidently at fault: they believe that because Heracles was a single individual, a plot-structure about him ought thereby to have unity. As in other respects, Homer is exceptional by the fineness of his insight into this point, whether we regard this as an acquired ability or a natural endowment of his: although composing an *Odyssey*, he did not include everything that happened to the hero (such as his wounding on Parnassus or his pretence of madness at the levy—events which involved no necessary or probable connection with one another). Instead, he constructed the *Odyssey* around a single action of the kind I mean, and likewise with the *Iliad*.

(Aristotle 1451a, Halliwell 40)<sup>38</sup>

That single action (πρᾶξις) that the *Odyssey* imitates is Odysseus' homecoming. Many other actions contribute to the eventual attainment of that homecoming, but all serve to explain how and why this main action occurred. According to Aristotle, epic owes its length to the number of episodes it includes (1455b17-23). The selection of episodes is very important, because each episode should illustrate the main action being imitated. For this reason, Aristotle praises Homer for excising events in Odysseus' life, such as his feigning of madness, that do not complement the theme at hand and help to portray the action of homecoming. Odysseus' madness may be an omitted episode because it is an action so secondary to the main action that Homer judged it useless. Yet the episodes which Homer chose to include consist of what I shall refer to as subordinate actions, actions taken by characters which do not constitute the main action itself but that contribute to it. For example, I will argue that the comrades' devouring of the oxen of the sun against Odysseus' advice is crucial to homecoming. Therefore, by Aristotle's dictates, it deserves to be included as a critical subordinate action that forms an integral part of the whole story, without which the story would not be the same (1451a). Aristotle makes no such delineation between the main action and subordinate ones, but for the comparison at hand, creating clarity between the main action and the subordinate ones that comprise it will be very fruitful.

The main action (πρᾶξις) that Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses* enact is very simple. The nature of this action can be captured in a single sentence: "The husband and the wife returned home to each other." How the spouses return home to each other and what they have done while apart is very different indeed. But that they

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<sup>38</sup> For other references to Homer in Aristotle's *Poetics*, see Albert Cook's edition of *Homer's Odyssey*, 279-280.

do return home to each other is the μῦθος that both Homer and Joyce have adopted. Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses* imitate the same action by Aristotle's standards: the action of homecoming. The episodes and the subordinate actions are undeniably different, but the main action (πρᾶξις) of homecoming (νόστος) categorizes them as the same story (μῦθος).

Therefore the same main action is being depicted in the *Odyssey* and in *Ulysses*, but the means by which it occurs is entirely different. Joyce even follows Aristotle's dictates that it is best for the entire action to occur in a single day. Yet Joyce changes the way that the main action is accomplished in order to incorporate his new explanation for how and why the action occurs. In Homer's story, Penelope's fidelity enables Odysseus to return to her, while in Joyce's story, Leopold returns to Molly in spite of her infidelity. Joyce thus insists upon showing how the reasons and circumstances of that single action are generated by an amalgam of other, thoroughly different, subordinate actions. Joyce's ingenious twisting of the causes of the main action makes him as wily as Homer's hero Odysseus and as tenacious and persevering as his own hero Leopold. With Odyssean cunning, Joyce manages to reduce fidelity and infidelity to subordinate actions of the main action, homecoming. Homer's and Joyce's audiences are receiving the same story: the story of how to return home, no matter what one has done during one's absence. Their plots, by virtue of the way that the action of homecoming is accomplished, only seem to be diametrically opposed.

So our texts are indeed parallels, just as Harry Levin observes, but only in the realm of culture, place, and time. In the realm of meaning, such divergences intersect in a very curious way. What has been so very difficult for most readers to grasp throughout the history of the reception of *Ulysses* is the consistency of meaning that

Joyce elicits between antiquity and modernity in his retelling of the *Odyssey*. Despite its opacity, much of Joyce's genius lies in the way he crafted this intersection between Homer's story and his.

Masses of critical literature have been devoted to resolving the apparent and undeniable clashes provoked by the contrasting subordinate actions of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*. Typically, most critics strive to explain Joyce's structural changes in plot by establishing direct correspondences between the two texts, often along the lines of Stuart Gilbert, who assigns each Ulyssean episode a color and an organ of the body, in addition to a Homeric precedent.<sup>39</sup> Such equivalences are sometimes useful, but they can also be extremely limiting. Kenner blames the dullness of this approach for stunting fruitful inquiries, claiming that "the *Odyssey* got discarded as a point of entry [into the text of *Ulysses*], in part because Gilbert had managed to make it so uninteresting" (Kenner 1966, xv). Even though Joyce himself considered the *Odyssey* to be the best point of entry and the prerequisite of his own text (*Letters I*, 174, 193), Joyce himself was confused and torn about how best to announce the *Odyssey* as the best means of access to *Ulysses* within the text of *Ulysses* itself. Richard Ellmann comments that initially Joyce wanted his own assessment of Homeric parallels to be embedded in the text of *Ulysses* as chapter headings: "When he began to serialize *Ulysses* in *The Little Review*, he insisted that Homeric titles be prefixed to the episodes" (Ellmann 1977, 569). But later on, Joyce himself intentionally tried to

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<sup>39</sup> Stuart Gilbert's "faith that everything in *Ulysses* could be explained" (McCarthy 1991, 29) has been challenged by almost every critic following him, including me. Yet, as Patrick McCarthy comments, "it would be difficult to imagine a Joyce critic and scholar who played a greater variety of significant role, at crucial times, than Stuart Gilbert" (McCarthy 1991, 23; see his essay for his assessment of Gilbert's contributions to the field).

squelch this path of inquiry by removing all direct Homeric references from his text other than the title.<sup>40</sup> Such revision reveals Joyce's own consternation about how best to inspire readers to interpret his book as a retelling. The revisions to his own schemas, and his desire to keep so much private until the publication of Stuart Gilbert's book, demonstrate Joyce's confusion about how to gesture toward the meaning of his retelling without unduly confusing or misleading its readers. His declared regret to Vladimir Nabokov over helping Gilbert should not be construed as evidence of his own disillusionment with the intertextuality he has nurtured but as proof of his complete disgust and dissatisfaction with how his novel's relationship with Homer's *Odyssey* had been received and interpreted by the public.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Hugh Kenner describes Joyce's conscious choice to eliminate any direct Homeric references from his book: "In the *Ulysses* manuscripts Homeric indications were confined to the title. The eighteen chapter-headings—catch-words to identify the dominant correspondence of the moment—turn up only in letters, schemata and reports of Joyce's conversation. The book readers were to see would hint at a hidden plan only on its title page: a neat instance of Joyce's trust in synecdoche. Restored to currency by Gilbert in 1930, the episode-titles have since become so familiar that we sometimes forget that they are not part of the text" (Kenner 1987, 24). Harry Levin proposes that Joyce's decision to excise the Homeric episode titles reflects how his use of Homer was solely structural: "The myth may have served as a scaffolding while Joyce constructed his work. Before it was printed, he tacitly removed the Homeric chapter headings that appear in the manuscript" (Levin 76). For Levin, the titles are removed because they are almost irrelevant in the end. Yet for Kenner, the titles have become a part of *Ulysses* despite their absence on the printed page because readers are so enamored with them despite the opacity of their meaning.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Ellmann describes the circumstances of Joyce's admission of remorse: "Joyce's attitude toward [Gilbert's book] gradually altered. Vladimir Nabokov recalled a conversation with him at dinner in the Léons' flat in about 1937. Joyce said something disparaging about the use of mythology in modern literature. Nabokov replied in amazement, 'But you employed Homer!' 'A whim,' was Joyce's comment. 'But you collaborated with Gilbert,' Nabokov persisted. 'A terrible mistake,' said Joyce, 'an advertisement for the book. I regret it very much'" (*JJII* 616).



Joyce may have realized that including direct Homeric references of his own would blind his readers to other meanings in his text besides those of direct correspondence. His compunctions over contributing to Gilbert's project were most likely inspired by the very narrow interpretations that such a search for exact equivalences allowed. Consequently, I will allow any part of the *Odyssey* to reflect any other part of *Ulysses*, and vice versa, because simply asserting that one thing in the *Odyssey* "equals" one thing in *Ulysses* does not satisfy our demand for meaning but rather stifles it. I will seek out the relation between "situation and situation," without becoming distracted by the contradictions between "incident and incident," as Kenner urges (Kenner 1966, 181). Even the most brilliant correspondences between incidents, such as J. M. Coetzee's equation of Leopold's potato and Hermes' moly,<sup>42</sup> often leave us just as confused as before we made them about the implications of such a relationship. The absence of any precise and undeniable declarations of correspondences between situation and situation in *Ulysses* itself, such as the excised chapter headings might have achieved, gives readers the freedom to find their own interpretation of Joyce's retelling. I will use that freedom to try to escape from the contradictions that the differences create, seeking to attain what Joyce's schemas suggest that he himself was striving to do: find identity in difference. The difference of the circumstances and of the subordinate actions themselves should not be allowed to hide the identity of the meaning behind such actions.

To find the identity of meaning amidst the sea of differences in which Joyce's new circumstances entrap the main action of homecoming, the clash between action

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<sup>42</sup> J. M. Coetzee, Joyce Seminar, The Committee on Social Thought, The University of Chicago, 5 December, 1996.

and meaning must somehow be reconciled. Entirely different subordinate actions, such as Molly's adultery and Penelope's chastity, must be proven to confer the same meaning to the main action if the story is to be established as the same story of "real love...between married folk" (*U* 16.1385-1386). Turning to traditional folklore classification systems does not provide adequate grounds to equate the sexually faithful Penelope with the sexually unfaithful Molly. Alan Dundes criticizes the Aarne-Thompson classification system because it makes its classifications by dramatic personae rather than by plot structure (see Dundes 1989, 203ff.; 1988, 16-51). Yet in the present case, that choice would be an advantage rather than a flaw, because when *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey* are compared by subordinate actions instead of by character, they seem not to be related in the slightest. For example, Molly and Penelope cannot both qualify as faithful wives, although as the wife in the story of homecoming both could be deemed equivalent characters. In this way, Joyce defeats the usual classification systems and elevates every dilemma presented by comparing such retellings to an utter crisis. Joyce is so deft in changing not only his characters' names, but also their subordinate actions which contribute to the completion of the main action, that the radical differences wrought by culture and time seem to obscure any possible similarities with Homer. For this reason, showing how Joyce's retelling affirms the meaning of its Homeric predecessor, when that meaning emerges from completely new and different circumstances and subordinate actions in the plot, presents an obstacle of some import.

Vladimir Propp provides a way to understand why and how such divergences in subordinate action can be interpreted to be echoes that create intersections of meaning, rather than simply hopeless contradictions. He suggests that the content of a

character's action in and of itself is not the crucial determinant of meaning. Rather, the function of a subordinate action within the larger action of the story endows it with meaning. The function that a character fulfills is what endows his or her subordinate actions with meaning. Thus, if two entirely different actions in different stories serve the same function, the same story is still being told. The story can then retain the same meaning, despite the alterations in the nature of the subordinate action. Propp explains how an identical action in different stories can impose very different meanings in different contexts, while dissimilar actions in different stories may allow a character to perform the same function and therefore convey the same meaning regardless of the difference in the actions taken.

...the functions of the *dramatis personae* are basic components of the tale, and we must first of all extract them. In order to extract the functions we must define them. Definition must proceed from two points of view. First of all, definition should in no case depend on the personage who carries out the function. Definition of a function will most often be given in the form of a noun expressing an action (interdiction, interrogation, flight, etc.). Secondly, an action cannot be defined apart from its place in the course of narration. *The meaning which a given function has in the course of action must be considered.* For example, if Ivan marries a tsar's daughter, this is something entirely different than the marriage of a father to a widow with two daughters. A second example: if, in one instance, a hero receives money from his father in the form of 100 rubles and subsequently buys a wise cat with this money, whereas in a second case, the hero is rewarded with a sum of money for an accomplished act of bravery (at which point the tale ends), we have before us two morphologically different elements—in spite of the identical action (the transference of money) in both cases. Thus, identical acts can have different meanings, and vice versa. *Function is understood as an act of*

*character, defined from the point of view of its  
significance for the course of the action.*  
(Propp 21)

Propp offers us a way to negotiate the havoc Joyce creates for the meaning of Homer's story in *Ulysses* by changing the subordinate actions of the story. If one can determine how such different deeds perform the same function for the story, two astonishingly different actions can be interpreted as displays of the same kind of heroism, conferring the same meaning within the context of each story.<sup>43</sup> Even though Joyce's characters are entirely different people with new names in a new culture performing new acts, according to Propp's analysis, their actions can accomplish the same function within the story and thus affirm rather than contradict Homer's meaning.

Retelling an old story thus depends upon protecting the function of the subordinate actions, not the form of the action. Retellings can change subordinate action without erasing or revising meaning. The content of the subordinate action, whether cleansing the house with sulfur or brushing crumbs out of bed without a word, does not convey meaning on its own. The context of that content is what creates meaning. How such different subordinate actions can depict the same kind of meaning will be addressed throughout this project, for it is critical to demonstrate why conflicting subordinate actions do not disqualify Joyce's retelling from being exactly that, a retelling of the same story Homer has already told.

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<sup>43</sup> For instance, Leopold brushes potted meat left over from Molly's affair out of his bed, while Odysseus kills the suitors and cleanses the house with sulfur (*U* 17.2124-5; *Od.* 22.492-3). Both are subordinate actions that enable the main action, homecoming, to be fulfilled. How these very different subordinate actions may serve the same function for the meaning of the story will be resolved in Chapter Five.

The myth of Ulysses and what it means to go home has been explored throughout the centuries by countless artists.<sup>44</sup> Most recently, Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, and the films "Ulee's Gold" and "O Brother Where Art Thou?" corroborate the claim that going home like Odysseus is a song that keeps on selling. W. B. Stanford explains why the attempt of different artists to convey the same story is such a fruitful enterprise:

Accident, ignorance, misunderstanding, or carelessness—fatal faults in a work of scholarship—may lead a creative author to find valid new conceptions of the traditional myths.  
(Stanford 1968, 3)

Unfortunately, Stanford's discussion of the intertextuality of Joyce and Homer leaves much to be desired. Stanford maintains that Leopold Bloom is the same kind of hero in *Ulysses* that Odysseus is in the *Odyssey*. But Stanford neglects to explain through the citation and discussion of textual evidence why Joyce's *Ulysses* represents the same kind of heroism, the heroism of endurance and prudence, that is portrayed in Homer's *Odyssey* (Stanford 1968, 214ff.). I will seek to prove through textual analysis why the heroism of *Ulysses* can still confer the same meaning as the heroism of the *Odyssey*. In my view, Joyce's retelling derives its power from the way that he takes advantage of the tension between action and meaning. The idea that opposite actions can confer the same meaning for the story as a whole is the premise upon which his retelling depends and triumphs.

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<sup>44</sup> Beaty Rubens and Oliver Taplin set out to determine why the myth of Odysseus has had such power over time: "Our aim from the start was to explore the manifold character of Odysseus and try to explain his enduring popularity" (Rubens and Taplin 1989, 7). They explore many versions of the myth and offer various interesting observations, but they fail to achieve much insight into the impact of such versions upon the meaning of the myth.

Thus *Ulysses* provides a frame in which to ask what meanings of heroism and fidelity are culturally and historically bound, and if there is a kind of heroism or fidelity that can utterly defy time and place. Have Homer and Joyce captured some truth about the nature of the human condition in the heroism of endurance, a truth that remains unchanged by the ravages of time, place, and culture? The striking clashes and puzzling contradictions in and between our texts encourage no simple resolution. Yet might apparently irreconcilable clashes between the two texts actually not be contradictory at all? The exploration of such conflicting actions will expose their shared meaning, establishing why there can be identity within difference. Herein lies the fundamental paradox of the intertextuality between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*: the retelling of the same story confers the same meaning, while also revolutionizing that meaning. Joyce's title *Ulysses* is an oxymoron demanding to be explored, because even the transformation of the name betrays how Homer's hero is the same one but still somehow new and different.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE RETURN OF THE MUSE IN JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh sweets of sin  
(*U* 18.1128-9)

τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, Θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν.

From somewhere among these things, goddess, daughter  
of Zeus, even tell us...  
(*Od.* 1.10)

Homer's *Odyssey* starts in a rather surprising way, with the poet confessing his own incompetence. Homer, by asking the Muse to begin “τῶν ἀμόθεν γε,” “from somewhere” (*Od.* 1.10),<sup>1</sup> is insisting that he needs divine help to ascertain where and

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<sup>1</sup> W.W. Merry notes, “Of these things (from some point of them at least), tell us too.’...ἀμόθεν γε...adds a qualification: the poet only asks to know some portion of the story” (Merry 19). Jenny Strauss Clay examines “why the Muse, thus invoked, chooses this particular moment to begin the story” (Clay 1976, 313-326). Her conclusion that “the poet plays down the degree to which Odysseus is implicated in Athena’s wrath” (Clay 1976, 326) is complemented by John Scott’s observation that from the moment when Athena receives Zeus’ permission to act, “...she dominates the action of the poem” (Scott 1936, 5). My current analysis does not address Athena and her aims and motivations, but Homer’s aims in constructing his poem.

how to begin his story. Homer asserts that these first ten lines are strictly his human creation, an invocation crafted for the purpose of ensuring the goddess' assistance with the rest. As Jenny Strauss Clay remarks, "The poet attributes all of his poem except the prologue (*Od.* 1.1-10) to the Muse" (Clay 1983, 9). Homer thus begins his poem by denying full responsibility for its construction. In his invocation of the Muse in his proem (*Od.* 1.1-10),<sup>2</sup> Homer asks for divine help in singing his song. The Muse is to sing through him and with him and by means of him, so that Homer is himself the instrument by which the Muse sings the song.<sup>3</sup>

In characterizing his task thusly, Homer credits himself with no extraordinary abilities or talents.<sup>4</sup> With his admission of such utter dependence upon the Muse, Homer places himself within the poem's audience. The Muse is telling *us* Odysseus' story: Homer is hearing his song along with us even as he sings it.<sup>5</sup> For this reason,

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<sup>2</sup> Excellent work done on the nature and function of the Odyssean proem includes Samuel Bassett (1923), George Dimock (1962), Wolfgang Schadewaldt (1958), W. W. Minton (1960), John Scott (1976), Jenny Strauss Clay (1976, 1983), Pietro Pucci (1982), Stephanie West (1988), Michael Nagler (1990), Simon Goldhill (1991, 1-5), Ahuvia Kahane (1992), Victoria Pedrick (1992), A. Rijksbaron (1993), Elizabeth Storz (1993), Elizabeth Minchin (1995), and Thomas Walsh (1995; see 385-386 for extensive bibliography; further, see Rüter 1969, 28-51). On the proem of the *Iliad*, see Samuel Bassett (1923), van Groningen (1946), James Redfield (1979), and Robert Rabel (1988).

<sup>3</sup> Homer use of  $\mu\omicron\iota$  (*Od.* 1.1) is best parsed as a dative of instrument. See Smyth: "The Greek dative, as the representative of the lost instrumental case, denotes that *by which* or *with which* an action is done or accompanied" (Smyth 346).

<sup>4</sup> Scott Richardson explains why: "Without the Muses the narrator is no better off than the rest of us. With them he can be present and know all things—he can see so that we can hear" (Richardson 1990, 179).

<sup>5</sup> Richardson comments on how the poem is somehow almost a gift to the poet: "Just as the narratee has access to the story only through the narrator, so the narrator is admitted into the world of the story only through the intervention of the goddesses of narrative" (Richardson 1990, 181). The poem is granted only through the good will



Jenny Strauss Clay calls these “the only lines which, strictly speaking, can be ascribed to the poet” (Clay 1976, 315), while “the rest of the poem belongs properly to the Muse—or at least, the poet transformed by the inspiration of the Muse. These introductory lines are the only ones that can be ascribed to the poet *in propria persona*” (Clay 1983, 34). The narrative of the *Odyssey* should thus properly be viewed as the product of a complex interdependence between Homer and the Muse.<sup>6</sup> What is often deemed the epic narrator is the result of the alliance between Homer and the Muse, leading Scott Richardson to claim that “the narrator too is a fictional construct whose excellence both depends upon and is signaled by divine patronage...Homer relies on his own abilities and at the same time depends on the Muses” (Richardson 1990, 181-182). Richardson’s use of the plural is misleading, for Homer appeals to only one Muse, and it is therefore safe to assume that only one Muse then comes to his aid. Homer has asked to be inspired and possessed, and his wish is granted when the Muse chooses the starting point at *Od.* 1.11, just as he requested. Thereafter the undeniable presence of the Muse pervades the rest of the poem.

Where then is the Muse in *Ulysses*? Has the Muse vanished entirely, or has she assumed a new form but the same function in *Ulysses*?

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and intervention of the Muse. He notes further that Homer denies autonomy and “draws attention to himself most explicitly just when he is making the point that he is incapable of narrating except through divine aid” (Richardson 1990, 181).

<sup>6</sup> Victoria Pedrick views the invocation as a warning about the nature of the artistic process the audience is witnessing, arguing that Homer “addresses the Muse as a character at his own level of discourse so that he can enact the process of inspiration between them” (Pedrick 42).

## THE PURPOSE OF THE PROEM IN HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

Before we can address such questions in *Ulysses*, we must understand how Homer tells his poem and invites the Muse to contribute to its production. During the first ten lines in which Homer requests the Muse's help, he begins his story quite admirably all by himself. What artistic impact does Homer's humanly constructed prologue have? Why did Homer undertake the telling of ten lines of his own before he allowed the Muse to come to his aid?

Despite his immediate acknowledgement of his human insufficiency for the task at hand, Homer did indeed have his own conception of what he wanted his story to mean. His proem provides him with his only chance to convey it on his own and all at once. With his invocation, Homer refuses to take credit for his whole poem. He invites the Muse to make the man into a story, and to tell that story to and through him. “Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα...” “Tell for me the man, muse...” (*Od.* 1.1). Only in line ten does he appeal to the Muse to tell all of us the story, both singer and listeners (“εἰπέτε καὶ ἡμῖν,” *Od.* 1.10). Just who the Muse is, we are never told. All we know is that Homer is asking for help from one. When Homer asks, “Tell the man, Muse,” it's almost as if we could point some person out and say, “hey Muse, that one over there, tell us that guy.” With this entreaty, Homer's theme emerges: the endurance of one man. Of course he was a hero, but in Homer's estimation so were many men who are subjects of song. Leaving the word hero out of the prologue entirely accentuates the fact that in Homer's opinion, Odysseus deserves to be the subject of this song not solely because he is a hero, but because he is a special kind of man.

Homer crafts the prologue of the *Odyssey* to illustrate the heroic task of every single human being through the story of this one man. Because Homer's goal is to explain why any man is ever heroic at all, not just why Odysseus is, he does not name him here. His hero's challenges are like those of an ordinary man, in fact, like those of every single mortal. Homer underscores the ordinary nature of this kind of heroism by omitting the customary Greek title "Odysseus, son of Laertes" from his prologue, instead focusing his audience's full attention upon "ἄνδρα πολύτροπον" "the man of many turns and returns"<sup>7</sup> (*Od.* 1.1). The first information Homer offers about this man is not that he comes home but that he is versatile under force, able to change in order to adapt and survive. Homer wants his prologue to depict how our hero is the man who preserves himself through the power of his mind and refuses to destroy himself, and his first adjective is very effective to that end.

The first verb of the poem to describe him, πλάγχθη, is an aorist passive form of πλάζω, meaning in the literal sense, to beat upon, drive, force. After the glory of combat and victory, this man finds himself being forced to wander around helplessly at the mercy of forces much stronger than he is before he can return home to celebrate his conquest. "ὄς μάλα πολλά πλάγχθη ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν." "And very far he wandered, after he sacked the sacred citadel of Troy" (*Od.* 1.1-2). After being the sacker, this man most literally becomes the

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<sup>7</sup> Merry translates, "the man of many wanderings," and notes, "others render the word, 'clever,' 'of many devices and shifts,' cp. 9.19, 20" (Merry 19). Stanford writes, "πολύτροπος (τρέπω) is ambiguous, either 'much traveled' or 'of many wiles, versatile'....Translate 'the man of many moves' to preserve the ambiguity" (Stanford 1959, 206).

sacked, the compelled, the victim.<sup>8</sup> The *Odyssey* tells how the man who was once a superb warrior remained heroic and excellent even when he became a sufferer after the war. In the proem of the *Odyssey*, Homer takes advantage of his opportunity to display the new kind of heroism that the return from the Trojan War provoked.

Just the themes and vocabulary of the proems of the two Homeric poems themselves prove how Homer is creating two different meanings of heroism. Homer begins the *Iliad* by asking a goddess to sing an anger song, the story of the anger of the son of Peleus, Achilles. He introduces his hero with the proper heroic title, and explains that heroes' ψυχαί (souls) go to Hades when they die, while their bodies (signified by αὐτούς) are eaten by the birds or the dogs (*Il.* I.3-5). The word hero (ἥρωας) takes an important and emphatic position as the first place of the fourth line. These heroes of the *Iliad* are heroes more than men; their story is the story of an age of heroism defined by martial valor and courage. Many Iliadic heroes sacrificed their return home for the sake of the war, winning glory (κλέος), but not return (νόστος).

The *Odyssey* begins very differently. Homer's focus has changed drastically, from the time of heroes to the space of men. Homer is no longer concerned with the will of Zeus (*Il.* I.5), whom he mentions in the Odyssean proem only as the father of the goddess (*Od.* 1.10). Now, what does concern him is man (ἄνθρωπος).

We cannot ascribe Homer's choice of the word man to begin his poem solely to metrical expedience. Homer could have told this story about a hero by using the word hero (ἥρωας), as the first word of his poem instead of man (ἄνθρωπος), and he

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<sup>8</sup> As Stanford writes, "The word [πλάζω] (cp. *Od.* 1.75) implies unwilling wandering from one's chosen course" (Stanford 1959, 207). Odysseus has entered the realm of necessity and compulsion, where he is the one who is forced, not the one doing the forcing.

purposely chooses not to do so. How can we be certain that is the case? The Greek word hero (ἥρωας) must be in the accusative here, just like man (ἄνηρ). True, one form of the accusative of hero (ἥρωα) does not fit in this metrical position at the beginning of the line, forming a long and a short syllable of the first dactyl. The form of the accusative found in Herodotus (ἥρων) will not fit the meter either, since the last vowel of the word would be followed by two consonants and would have to be long. But either of these forms would fit as a first foot as a spondee if the word μοι meaning “by means of me” was simply eliminated. If the point that the poem is being told to, by, and with Homer, conveyed here by that dative, is so important that the poet did not want to excise it, then the accusative form ἥρω could have been used.<sup>9</sup> In this case, the final omega would have to be shortened. But that seems a minor obstacle since Homer does shorten this vowel with the genitive form ἥρωος (*Od.* 6.303), where the word begins the line with a dactyl. Even this genitive could have been selected as the poem’s first word; telling of the man actually seems to make a little more sense to the non-Greek reader.<sup>10</sup> Hence with hardly any difficulty Homer could

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<sup>9</sup> Liddell and Scott offer three forms of the accusative: ἥρωα, ἥρω, and ἥρων. The first is too many syllables to fit in *Od.* 1.1 as it stands, but the second is not if the final vowel is shortened. Cunliffe offers no Homeric uses of the accusative form of the word, and I have not found any in the *Odyssey* either. It is fascinating indeed that Homer excised the use of the word hero as an accusative altogether in the poem, so that his heroes are never described in the grammatical sense as objects, only as agents.

<sup>10</sup> Smyth would seem to suggest that a genitive with a verb of telling would not be out of the ordinary; “The genitive is used with verbs signifying *to remember, remind, forget, care for, and neglect.*” But many such verbs take both the accusative and the genitive with slightly varying implications: “#1358. Many of these verbs also take the accusative. With the accus. μὲνῆσθαι means *to remember something as a whole*, with the gen. *to remember something about a thing, bethink oneself.* The accus. is usually found with verbs of *remembering and forgetting* when they mean *to hold or not to hold* in memory, and when the object is a thing” (Smyth 321-324). The verb

have crafted his first line as ἥρων ἔννεπε, μοῦσα or as ἥρω μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα. Homer, as an oral poet, constantly juggled enormous numbers of syllables in his head, substituting and choosing from scads of formulae. Here, with a very simple substitution, Homer could have asked the Muse to tell about a hero, not a man. But because Homer's theme is now man, not anger, he chooses the word man (ἄνηρ), over the word hero (ἥρωσ).<sup>11</sup>

In the *Iliad*, Homer asks the goddess (θεά) to sing (ἄειδε) about the anger of Achilles, son of Peleus, and what it did to the souls (ψυχά) of heroes. In the *Odyssey*, he asks the Muse to tell (ἔννεπε) him about a man who is of many twists and turns and guises (πολύτροπος). This is the ineluctable man, as James Joyce well knew (*U* 3.1), the one who can't be wrestled down. Simon Goldhill remarks, "*Polutropon*, in other words, both marks Odysseus' capability to manipulate language's power to conceal and reveal, and at the same time enacts such a revealing and concealing" (Goldhill 1991, 4). How alike Homer and his man are! For the entire proem demonstrates Homer's ability to do the same thing: Homer has such power over

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ἐννέπω is not quite a verb of remembering or forgetting but in the present example it functions very closely as such. Therefore, we might expect the accusative here because Homer is certainly asking the muse to hold this man both in her memory and his, in order that he may tell the story aloud and make it known. But by using the word man in the accusative, Homer is treating his man like a thing, showing even with the grace of his inflected language how force affects men and turns them into things rather than agents. Homer wants the first word of the poem to be in the accusative case, the case of the object, to show how his man is an object. Using the genitive form of hero as his first dactyl as in *Od.* 6.303 would not convey his theme of the man under force, and so he rejects it for the accusative case of man.

<sup>11</sup> For Ahuvia Kahane, "The first word of the *Odyssey* thus ends our search for a name and begins a deeper quest for identity and meaning" (Kahane 1992, 129), confirming Simon Goldhill's position that the word comprises "an announcement that the narrative will come to explore the terms in which an adult male's place is to be determined" (Goldhill 1991, 2).

language that his proems both reveal and conceal their intertextuality. Homer did not accidentally forget to name Odysseus son of Laertes, nor did he forget to make any mention of heroes.<sup>12</sup> Homer omits the name of Odysseus and the word hero (ἥρωες) in his proem in order to make an unequivocal announcement that the heroism of this poem is very different from that in the *Iliad*.

One could assume that because this man is neither named nor called a hero in the proem, he is not heroic or even that he is anti-heroic. The alternative is to presume that Odysseus is of course a hero, and even *the* hero, of this epic poem, but at the same time is a hero of a new and different kind. Of course I am arguing for the latter, because I cannot believe that Homer set out to tell the story of an anti-hero when the prefix “anti” derives directly from Greek but such a word has no basis in Greek thought and no Homeric uses whatsoever. Odysseus is not an anti-hero but a special kind of hero, very different from Achilles. After all, Odysseus, as Joyce so famously and ironically noted, is a draft-dodger; he never wanted to leave home to go to war:

He was subjected to many trials, but with wisdom and courage came through them all. Don't forget that he was a war-dodger who tried to evade military service by simulating madness....But once at war, the conscientious objector became a jusqu'aboutist. While the others wanted to abandon the siege he insisted on staying til Troy should fall.

(Budgen 16)

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<sup>12</sup> Wilamowitz, as Goldhill notes, inspired the Analytic tradition of assessing this particular omission as an accident, a rash and thoughtless oversight of the poet. “Wilamowitz in a fine example of Analytic rhetoric regards it as a ‘carelessness’ (*Unbedachtsamkeit*) that the poet forgets to name the man of many turns’ (*den ἄνηρ πολύτροπος zu nennen vergisst*)” (Goldhill 1991, 4). See further Dimock (1962), Rüter (1969, 34-52), Austin (1972), and Clay (1976, 1983, 10-34).

While Homer is not the source of the tale of Odysseus' attempt to feign insanity, he definitively presents Odysseus as a war survivor—the only survivor, the leader who lost his men.<sup>13</sup> Still, after the battlefield heroism of the *Iliad*, such accomplishments on Odysseus' part hardly seem heroic at all. Just what kind of heroism is exemplified in the *Odyssey*? How can it be heroic for a man to save himself and let his buddies die?

Everyone in the ancient audience, and even most people today, knows that Odysseus is the hero who comes home. Homer's failure to divulge that fact right away is a function of his desire to emphasize his contention that Odysseus' homecoming (νόστος) is not by any means his only aim or his only triumph.<sup>14</sup> According to line 5 of Homer's proem, Odysseus is not seeking homecoming (νόστος) for himself at all, but something very different: ψυχή.

Finding accurate translations of Homer's language in general, and of this word ψυχή in particular, which come anywhere near to capturing the original meaning of Homer's poetry is to my mind as difficult a task as translators, philologists, and linguists ever face. Anyone reading Homer in Greek soon collides with the problem that certain critical words have no single, equivalent word in English. The images and ideas implied by such words, which endow the poetry with much of its meaning and beauty, are often entirely lost by simplistic translations. Nowhere is this problem more obvious or more perturbing than in these ten lines invoking the Muse. To understand

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<sup>13</sup> Aristotle mentions Homer's omission of Odysseus' false madness; see p. 32-33.

<sup>14</sup> Most literally, the aim, goal or end of every hero is death itself, expressed in Homer's phrase, "the end of death, "τέλος θανάτου" (*Od.* 5.326). Teiresias confirms that Odysseus is certainly seeking return (νόστος, *Od.* 11.100), but that is not Homer's chosen focus here.



this man, just in the poem's first five lines we must discern the differences between the Greek words ψυχή, νόος, and θυμός, translated roughly for the moment as soul, mind, and spirit.<sup>15</sup> Homer creates an antithesis between ψυχή, νόος, and θυμός in his prologue that is absolutely critical to any understanding of our man.<sup>16</sup> Such words denote concepts rather than objects, so that their meaning is inextricably bound up with the Homeric conception of personhood and of the order of the cosmos. I propose that Homer's prologue presents the idea that a specific kind of human interaction with ψυχή, νόος, and θυμός constitutes the special kind of heroism portrayed in the *Odyssey*.

To recognize why this might be the case, we must examine the meanings of these perplexing words ψυχή, νόος, and θυμός. The proem informs us that νόος is a quality that can be known in others (*Od.* 1.3), a quality of the intellect that drives cunning, δόλος and μῆτις, while θυμός is the seat of suffering, the place that pain

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<sup>15</sup> D. J. Furley discusses the problem of capturing the proper meaning of these words. "Ψυχή, θυμός, and νόος are sometimes said in the Homeric poems to reside in the body, usually in the chest, but they are not parts of the body, made of tissues like the heart....[they] never had much connection with the parts of the body, and did not acquire any, except as the result of philosophical speculation" (Furley 1956, 3). Bruno Snell explains that each of the three "are separate organs, each having its own particular function" (Snell 14).

<sup>16</sup> K. von Fritz claims that the rational quality of the νόος is entirely separate from the desires of the θυμός: "Boehme states that νόος in Homer always means something purely intellectual or rather purely mental (*rein intellektuell*); he adds by way of explanation that νοεῖν can in no case be identified with sense perception and that the νόος is always put in contrast with emotion" (von Fritz 80). Homer focuses our attention upon exactly this contrast. Snell supports this notion: "*Thymos* in Homer is the generator of motion or agitation, while *noos* is the cause of ideas and images" (Snell 9).

attacks.<sup>17</sup> “Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose minds and ways of thinking [νόος] he knew, and many were the pains he suffered upon the sea, deep in his heart [θυμός]” (*Od.* 1.3-4). Θυμός refers to the source of the human passions, desires and appetites, what gives us our capacity for pleasure and pain, anger and initiative.<sup>18</sup> Homer’s juxtaposition of these two terms suggests that our man is the hero who depends upon his intelligence to survive, even when his heart is suffering. He uses the force of his mind (νόος) to overcome the forces of his body that emanate from the θυμός. Our hero adjusts himself beneath external forces while controlling the forces that emerge from within, the agonies of the θυμός, among them pain and hunger and anger.

In the fifth line of the prologue, the crisis of meaning inspired by these words has already reached a crescendo. We learn that in our special man, the suffering θυμός and the learning νόος work together to accomplish a particular task: “ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων” (*Od.* 1.5). To translate very literally, the phrase appears to mean, “winning his soul and the return of his companions.” Initially, this

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<sup>17</sup> See Christine Caswell on how “θυμός is mentioned as being the source of the feeling” (Caswell 1990, 35, see further 35-45). Snell states: “This organ of (e)motion is, among other things, the seat of pain” (Snell 18). On the valuation of cunning in ancient Greek society, see Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1978).

<sup>18</sup> When Odysseus is homesick on Kalypso’s shores, his suffering eats away at him in his θυμός. The English sense is that he is eating his heart out, with heart meaning something like spirit, not a physical organ: “δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων” “eating out his heart with tears and moans and pains” (*Od.* 5.157) Gods have θυμός also, even though they have nothing like a mortal body with a heart in it (e.g. *Od.* 5.191). See Christine Caswell for an exhaustive analysis of the word and its uses and connotations (1990).

meaning seems straightforward, but upon careful consideration it becomes more and more disturbing.<sup>19</sup> For what does it possibly contribute to Homer's theme?

One would expect Homer to tell us that Odysseus saved his own life and his own return, and that expectation is fulfilled until the last word of the line, "ἐταίρων" "of his companions." The simple addition of this single word at the line's end throws the meaning of the entire line into chaos. Instead of the expected declaration that Odysseus wins life (βίος), and homecoming (νόστος), we receive the extremely problematic statement that our man won ψυχή for himself and homecoming (νόστος) for his comrades.

Of course Odysseus did win homecoming (νόστος), but that is unequivocally not what Homer's language stresses here. The proem does not verify that Odysseus won homecoming (νόστος). No praise is lavished upon this task. Instead, quite oddly, Homer's first mention of return (νόστος) in this poem where our hero is the only one who is fated to come home, is to describe a homecoming (νόστος) of his companions that cannot occur due to their folly! If all Homer meant to indicate was how Odysseus tried to save his own life and his comrades' return, he could have done so much less opaquely by using a metrical equivalent he uses later on, "λιλαϊόμενος βιότιο" "seeking to save his life." There is no ambiguity whatsoever regarding the meaning of

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<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Storz notices the peculiar enigma here: "The two words 'life' (ψυχή) and 'return' (νόστος), framed by their possessive words, are grammatically inclusive of one another. The phrase is read as one unit, as, in fact, it comprises a most fundamental thematic argument of the *Odyssey*. The various manifestations of 'life' ('soul,' 'life,' and 'spirit' all translate ψυχή) are often conjoined in some way with the idea of return or homecoming (νόστος)" (Storz 382). Storz makes no attempt to characterize the nature of this "fundamental thematic argument," nor to interpret the meaning of the relation between ψυχή and νόστος. The current inquiry is my effort to clarify what she neglects to investigate.

this phrase when Athena tells the Ithacans to refrain from war, and they drop their weapons and turn toward the city, “λιλαιόμενοι βιότσιο” “seeking to save their lives” (*Od.* 24.536). Likewise, Odysseus’ use of the phrase regarding his comrades confirms its meaning even more definitively. Odysseus states that on Thrinacia, “As long as my men had grain and red wine, they kept away from the oxen, seeking to save their lives” (*Od.* 12.326-327). His comrades desire to live, and so they eat the food at hand and even go fishing in hope of satisfying their hunger. But hunger, combined with Eurylochus’ reminder that starvation is the most pitiful death, convinces the men to sacrifice to the gods and eat the oxen of the sun (*Od.* 12.340-365). Eventually, the men die during the storm Zeus sends (*Od.* 12.397-419). Odysseus explains why: “So the god stole their return [νόστος]” (*Od.* 12.419). The loss of their homecoming and their lives happens because they do not continue seeking sustenance to preserve life (βιότος), but rather want to satisfy appetite (θυμός). In the case at hand in the poem, Homer wanted to convey more than the fact that Odysseus wished to save his life and his return. For this reason, Homer very cunningly relies upon another metrical equivalent for λιλαιόμενος βιότσιο to gesture toward a much more complex idea.

The strangeness of the phrase “ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν” warns us that this man is no typical hero. Whatever this double task means, it is such a wonderful accomplishment that Homer exalts it against all other heroic acts.<sup>20</sup> Nowhere else in Homer (or in extant Greek literature) does anyone else win ψυχὴ and νόστος (ἀρνύμαι ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον). Most especially, his comrades do not. In this struggle

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<sup>20</sup> Pietro Pucci offers a provocative idea about the intertextuality of the phrase: “the oddity of the expression [in 1.5]...depends upon the intention to employ a variation of the construction in *Iliad* IX.322” (Pucci 1982, 42).

for ψυχή, this man is exceptional. What does this line (*Od.* 1.5) expose about Homer's hero and his theme? How is it best translated?

The word ψυχή is a puzzle that Homer weaves into the fabric of his language. The problem with this line (*Od.* 1.5) consists of the simple fact that it seems to be flatly wrong. The line seems to make the untrue claim that the comrades come home while Odysseus does not. To resolve this apparent contradiction, most scholars denote the participle ἀρνύμενος as conative, so that the meaning of the participle involves an attempt or endeavor, translated as “trying to...”<sup>21</sup> Without the conative sense of an attempt, the Greek seems to claim that he won something he did not, his companions' return. As a resolution, Stanford offers, “while striving [conative present] to win his own life and the homecoming of his companions” (Stanford 1959, s.v. *Od.* 1.5). A. T. Murray's translation is very similar: “seeking to win his own life and the return of his companions...” and so is Samuel Butler's: “trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home...” These translations allow for the possibility of Odysseus' failure while resisting any inconsistency in the Greek, because our man only *tried* to win return for his companions. Homer establishes the extent of his endeavor in the next

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<sup>21</sup> See Smyth's explanation of why the conative present “may express an action begun, attempted, or intended” (Smyth 421). Merry and Stanford concur with its use here, with Merry offering the translation “trying to win.” Most translators adopt some version of this translation, including Allen Mandelbaum: “on the sea, his spirit suffered every adversity—to keep his life intact, to bring his comrades back” and Richmond Lattimore: “many the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea, struggling for his own life and the homecoming of his companions” and Samuel Butler: “moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save his life and bring his men safely home.” T. E. Lawrence's translation seems particularly bold and brave if not altogether outrageous: “WHILE HIS HEART /THROUGH ALL THE SEAFARING/ACHED IN AN AGONY TO REDEEM HIMSELF/AND BRING HIS COMPANY SAFE HOME...” Joyce's acquaintance with this translation might be reflected in his Leopold Bloom, who could fairly be judged to “ache in an agony to redeem himself” on Bloomsday.

line, telling us that Odysseus failed to win their return (“ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὧς ἐρρύσατο”) “in spite of how hard he tried to do so [ἰέμενός περ]”<sup>22</sup> (*Od.* 1.6). The conative translation repeats the sense of his striving that is rather carefully elucidated in the next line, consequently adding more importance to effort than to accomplishment.<sup>23</sup> Resorting to the conative translation reconciles the perceived clash between the ψυχή that Odysseus wins and his companion’s return that is lost.

The difficulty of interpreting the meaning of this line is compounded by the fact that the meaning of ψυχή in Homer is quite an enigma.<sup>24</sup> Yet the first clue to the meaning and implications of the use of the word in the proem lies in the verb ἄρνύμαι, meaning to win, get, acquire, accomplish. Surprisingly, this common verb is only used three other times in the *Odyssey*. Telemachus uses it first to insist that “καὶ κεν τοῦτ’ ἐθέλοιμι Διὸς γε διδόντος ἀρέσθαι” “even this [the kingship of Ithaca] I would wish to win by the gift of Zeus” (*Od.* 1.390). Next Athena uses it to justify her decision to send Telemachus on his trip: “αὐτὴ μιν πόμπευον, ἵνα κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἄροιτο κεῖσ’ ἐλθῶν” “I myself guided him, so that he might win κλέος, worthy report, fame, and glory, by going there” (*Od.* 13.422). Earlier, voicing this intention to her father at *Od.* 1.95, she used the verb ἔχω to express the same notion,

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<sup>22</sup> Allen Mandelbaum’s translation affirms this interpretation: “In that last task, his will was firm and fast, and yet he failed: he could not save his comrades.”

<sup>23</sup> Such an emphasis might be viewed as not at all Homeric. We know our heroes in Homer much more by what they do than by how they feel. As Stanford notes, “[This is] a poem which is primarily interested in a man as revealed in his deeds, like all the finest Greek literature” (Stanford 1959, 208).

<sup>24</sup> Greek theories of the nature of the ψυχή abound. A fine one-volume work examining ancient authors’ conceptions of ψυχή is edited by Stephen Everson (1991). The present inquiry attempts to repudiate Bruno Snell’s position that “It is impossible to find out from [Homer’s] words what he considers to be the function of the *psyche* during a man’s lifetime” (Snell 8).

suggesting that the two verbs imply the same basic sense of possession and should be translated as to get or have.<sup>25</sup> Further, Agelaus declares, “ἀλλ’ ἄγεθ’ οἱ ἕξ πρῶτον ἄκοντίσασθ’, αἶ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς/ δῶν Ὀδυσσοῖα βλησθαι καὶ κῦδος ἀρέσθαι” “So come and hurl six spears first, that Zeus may grant Odysseus to be beaten and us to win glory” (*Od.* 22.252-3). Thus ἄρνημαι, at least in this poem, seems to apply to something granted in accordance with divine will. Typical heroes win the prize of glory (κλέος), for “κλέος is something to be won...” (Segal 1996, 204). But in what way can one win one’s own ψυχή as a prize like glory and fame?

For the audience familiar with the *Iliad*, ἄρνημαι carries a different connotation, for it is commonly used to describe getting a wound. Uses of the verb ἄρνημαι abound in the *Iliad*.<sup>26</sup> The usual things won by Iliadic heroes are not just fame and glory, but wounds. “μή ποῦ τις ἐφ’ ἔλκει ἔλκος ἄρηται.” “Lest somehow someone may win wound upon wound” (*Il.* XIV.130). The drastic change between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is betrayed here even by the vocabulary. For Odysseus is not described as having won his wound in the proem of the *Odyssey*, although of course we know he did win one, the οὐλή which became an absolute sign of his identity. Not until Book 19 under the Muse’s guidance do we hear the story of Odysseus’ wound, but even then the Iliadic formula for winning wounds is not used, and the word for wound itself has changed. Odysseus’ wound is never referred to as ἔλκος in the *Odyssey*. Instead, Homer uses the word ὤτειλή (*Od.* 19.456). Once the wound heals, it becomes an οὐλή (*Od.* 19.464, 507), a scar, a mark of vulnerability, endurance, and

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<sup>25</sup> “ἵνα μιν κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔχησιν” (*Od.* 1.95). Literally, “so that worthy report may hold him among men.”

<sup>26</sup> Richard Cunliffe lists over 30 uses.

survival. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus does not win his wound, and the word for his wound is new and different from the wounds won in the *Iliad*, symbolizing how his challenge has changed. The use of the word ἄρνυμαι reveals the new heroic task through its usage in the *Odyssey*'s proem. The Iliadic warrior-hero who once upon a time won wounds, ἔλκοι, must now, after the war, win a different prize than wounds. That prize is ψυχή.

Homer has taken an Iliadic verb and given it a new twist, a twist that announces the novelty of what this Odyssean heroism comprises. Odysseus won wounds, of course, but that was before as a sacker of Troy's citadel (*Od.* 1.2) and as a hunter (*Od.* 19.456). Now, as a different kind of hero, he wins something very different. The ψυχή that he wins is what in the *Iliad* usually vanishes out of a wound (*Il.* XIV.518), or out of the limbs (*Il.* XVI.856, XXII.362), the mouth (*Il.* IX.409), or the chest (*Il.* XVI.505). These examples account for the usual translations of ψυχή as life, breath, and blood. Yet Homer's judicious use of his vocabulary should alert us to the inadequacy of such translations due to the double meaning of ψυχή. For example, in the *Iliad*, Diomedes was perhaps blowing on his wound, trying to soothe it: “ἔλκος ἀναψύχοντα” (*Il.* V.795), while Hyperenor's ψυχή hurries out of his wound, (ὠτειλή) when he dies (*Il.* XIV.518). In contrast, in the *Odyssey*, the word ἔλκος is never used, and ψυχή never has anything to do with wounds. Instead, βρότος, blood, is washed out of wounds: “οἱ κ' ἀπονίψαντες μέλανα βρότον ἐξ ὠτειλέων,” “who might wash the dark blood out of our wounds” (*Od.* 24.189) Only here in the *Odyssey* does βρότος mean blood or gore, a common meaning in the *Iliad* (*Il.*



VII.427, XIV.7, XVIII.345, XXIII.41). Homer's word choices in the *Odyssey* demonstrate why ψυχή means much more than just blood or breath or life.<sup>27</sup>

Life is the first definition Liddell and Scott offer for the word ψυχή; the second is departed spirit or ghost in Homer. The third definition is the immaterial and immortal soul, while the fourth is conscious self or personality. The third and fourth definitions have no place in Homer. Homer's use of the word ψυχή removes the likelihood that he wanted to specify how Odysseus is seeking to win his own self on some pilgrimage toward identity, confirmed by Jan Bremmer's observation that "When we look at Homer's epics we find the word ψυχή has no psychological connotations whatsoever" (Bremmer 1983, 3). Nor does Homer seem to be engaged in a philosophical discourse about the immortal soul as Plato does. We are left trying to understand how one word can possess two meanings that are apparently polar opposites: life, and all that is left in death, a ghost.

Some instances of the verbal form of the word tend to reinforce the idea of ψυχή as nothing more than the breath of life, the life-force. Ψύχω means to breathe or blow (*Il.* XX.440, "breathing out very easily"), while ἀναψύχω means to cool, refresh, dry. At *Od.* 4.568, the verb describes the West Wind blowing to cool men off, while at *Il.* XI.621 and XXI.561, it describes drying off sweat in the breeze. At *Il.* V.795, it means to soothe a wound, while at *Il.* X.575 and XIII.84 it means "their hearts were refreshed." In these examples, ψυχή has everything to do with living and breathing. These uses, in combination with the way that death robs men of both θυμός

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<sup>27</sup> As D. J. Furley observes, "The ψυχή may leave the body by the mouth or through a wound; when it has left the body the man is dead" (Furley 1956, 4). John Warden refers to *Il.* XIV.518 and XVII.8, suggesting, "It is a natural extension of thought from "his blood gushed forth" to "his life gushed forth" (Warden 1972, 98). It may be a natural extension, but at *Od.* 1.5 it is the wrong one.

and ψυχή (*Od.* 21.154, 171, *Il.* XI.334), and the way that Nestor and Polyphemus use the word ψυχή to describe the way pirates risk their lives (*Od.* 3.74, 9.255), all lend credence to John Warden's assertion, "ψυχή means nothing more than life" (Warden 95). This line of argument has inclined most scholars toward the translation of *Od.* 1.5 offered by A. T. Murray, "seeking to win his own life."

But closer examination of Homer's use of ψυχή bears out how deceptively simple and misleading this translation is. In Hades in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, ψυχή is unequivocally not just life at all, but what is left after life is over, the shade, ghost, and shadow of the dead (*Od.* 11.37, 51, 65, 84, 90, 141, 150, 205, 222, 385, 387, 467, 538, 543, 564, 567). Θυμός disappears after death, as if it never was.<sup>28</sup> There can be no question that the ψυχαί populate Hades. Hades is where ψυχή goes when man dies (*Od.* 10.560, 24.9, VII.330, XIV.517, XVI.505, 856). The ghosts (ψυχαί) do not drink ψυχή but αἷμα, blood (*Od.* 11.90, 96, 165, 420). In Book 11, we learn that the ψυχή is the immortal part of the human personality that dwells in Hades after death as a drifting wraith, a remnant of the living person.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> In death θυμός simply vanishes, evaporating as it journeys toward some unknown end, while ψυχή is preserved even in death. As Furley writes, "ψυχή is what survives the death of a man" (Furley 1956, 4). Indubitably, when the θυμός leaves the bones, death ensues. See *Il.* XII.386, *Od.* 11.201, 221; 12.414, 19.454. Laertes recovers from his faint by re-gathering his θυμός in his chest and not allowing it to escape him (*Od.* 24.343-344), as does Odysseus (*Od.* 5.458ff.). One must keep θυμός grounded in the body in order to live. For a brilliant analysis of Homer's language in fainting episodes, see Alfons Nehring (1947). For general but exhaustive studies of the Greek view of death, see Erwin Rohde (1925), John Warden (1972), Jasper Griffin (1980), Robert Garland (1985), Jean-Pierre Vernant (1991, 1996), and Christiane Sorvinou-Inwood (1995).

<sup>29</sup> Listen to Jean-Pierre Vernant's description: "The ψυχή is like a body...it is the double of the living body, a replica that can be taken for the body itself that has the same appearance, clothing, gestures, and voice. But this absolute likeness is also a

Ψυχή then traverses the strange borderland between life and death for human beings. The way that Homer uses its verbal form enhances the duality of its meaning. The verb ἀποψύχω means to stop breathing, to faint or to swoon, and in the *Odyssey*, Homer uses it only once to characterize Laertes upon his recognition of Odysseus: “εἶλεν ἀποψύχοντα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς” “Then the much-enduring, goodly Odysseus caught him as he lost his breath, fainting” (*Od.* 24.347-8). In the *Iliad*, Sarpedon and Hecabe lose their ψυχαί in faints but then revive (*Il.* V.696-698, XXII.467, 475). With these fainting episodes, Homer illustrates the journey that ψυχή takes in a human being’s life, a journey from the body to Hades that literally means the difference between life and death.<sup>30</sup>

How one affects one’s ψυχή determines one’s very survival. Ψυχή is the object to which men must cling in order to stay alive beneath the light of the sun.<sup>31</sup> Odysseus’ wish that he could rob Polyphemos of ψυχή and αἰών and send him to the house of Hades (*Od.* 9.523), along with Hera’s description of Sarpedon’s death to Zeus as the time when ψυχή and αἰών have left him (*Il.* XVI.453), make it evident

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total insubstantiality. The ψυχή is a nothing, an empty thing, an ungraspable evanescence, a shade: it is like an airy and winged being, a bird in flight” (Vernant 1991, 189).

<sup>30</sup> Christine Caswell confirms this point: “in general, then, ψυχή departs at syncope and the θυμός returns....ψυχή survives death and goes to Hades...it is the loss of ψυχή which determines a man’s death, the θυμός which experiences woe at the possibility.....When death is described, only ψυχή goes to Hades” (Caswell 1990, 12, 14, 15).

<sup>31</sup> Shirley Darcus enumerates the examples that justify the meaning of ψυχή as a prize to be sought: “These instances [*Iliad* 22.161, 235, 338, 11.334, and *Odyssey* 9.243, 10. 492, 565, 11.165, 22.245, 23.323, 21.154, 171,] show that ψυχή was seen as an object, something within man that could be fought for, removed, destroyed, or lost” (Darcus 31).

that possessing ψυχή allows one to live.<sup>32</sup> When one has no ψυχή, one can no longer exist in the world of time. Ψυχή is the force behind the very breath and blood that keeps a man alive, and yet also the way that his existence persists during death. The ψυχή gives the body life. When it departs, it gives the body death. Consequently, if ψυχή were only life itself, it would vanish altogether at the moment of death. How absurd it seems to choose a translation of ψυχή in *Od.* 1.5 that suggests that at death we become “ψυχή, life” and then that “ψυχή, life” goes to Hades!

Yet that is precisely the action the ψυχή takes, and the interpretation we seem to subscribe to by accepting the translation of ψυχή as “life” in *Od.* 1.5. Odysseus ultimately gains not eternal life but his death as a ψυχή, ghost. With the meaning of ψυχή as the form of death in mind, one might even be tempted to translate *Od.* 1.5 as “winning death,” or “winning his own ghost.” Winning ψυχή means finally ensuring one’s place in Hades. What Odysseus wins in the poem is his ψυχή, the badge and proof of his human mortality.

What characterizes this critical relation between ψυχή and the living person? The dispute Homer raises in the line at issue (*Od.* 1.5) is the nature of the Odysseus’ interaction with his own ψυχή. He must exert as much effort as he can muster to keep his ψυχή in his body. A man endures only so long as he manages to keep his ψυχή as a possession, exemplified by the way that the living suitors are fighting for their ψυχαι (*Od.* 22.245).<sup>33</sup> This struggle for and with ψυχή is the very foundation of

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<sup>32</sup> Caswell suggests that at the moment of death “θυμός converges semantically with ψυχή...and αἰών” (Caswell 1990, 12).

<sup>33</sup> Darcus agrees that a person’s efforts can have a tremendous impact upon his own ψυχή. “In further instances of the accusative in Homer a person affects his own ψυχή with the following verbs: singular: ἀποκαπύω, ἄρνημαι, δίδωμι,

human life and heroism. Once Telemachus snatches the suitors' ψυχή away from them (*Od.* 22.444), so they will die and become nothing more than ψυχή. Thus affecting the ψυχή through human effort is the very meaning of endurance itself. Our wounded and wounding man is the one who clings to his ψυχή and refuses to give it up, either through wounds or offers of immortality.

Immortality, then, is precisely the problem we must address regarding ψυχή. What exactly does Odysseus win? The prize is nothing as simple as life or death alone. As Stephanie Nelson explains, “Odysseus is ‘striving to save his own life,’ [ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχήν, *Od.* 1.5] but it is a life that cannot be saved by immortality” (Nelson 68). To win life most literally would be to win immortality by eliminating death, precisely the offer of Kalypso that Odysseus rejects. “I told him I would make him without death and old age [ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀγήραον] for all his days” (*Od.* 5.136), Kalypso tells Hermes.<sup>34</sup> Odysseus decides to give up his chance for eternal life, choosing to suffer his own death at home, gently, out of the sea (as Teiresias foretells, *Od.* 11.134-137).<sup>35</sup> Odysseus wins life in the sense that he survives

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παραβάλλω, [*Il.* 22.467, *Od.* 1.5, *Il.* 5.654, *Il.* 11.445, *Il.* 16.625, *Il.* 9.322]; plural: ὄλλυμι, παρατίθημι [*Il.* 13.763, *Il.* 24.168, *Od.* 3.74, *Od.* 9.255]. These passages reveal that a person has some control over ψυχή: he can ‘breathe forth’ (in a swoon), ‘win, give up,’ ‘risk,’ ‘lose,’ ‘hazard’ ψυχή. Once again ψυχή seems very much an object to be influenced. A person and his ψυχή are distinct but he can affect the breath-soul within him” (Darcus 1979, 33). Thus a person has a very active relationship with ψυχή that requires intervention and effort, not passivity.

<sup>34</sup> On the meaning of the formula “immortal and ageless” see Jenny Strauss Clay (1981) and R. Janko (1981).

<sup>35</sup> This death turns out to be in the world of the *Odyssey* as good and fine a death as one can have. The most pitiable deaths are Agamemnon’s (*Od.* 11.412, 24.34) and dying of hunger (*Od.* 12.342).

and comes home, but nothing can prevent him from winning his eventual death as well. In fact, he is dead while the poem is told. All of the aorist tenses in the prologue firmly place these narrated events in the past as completed actions. While Homer tells the story, Odysseus is a shade among the dead, a hero in Hades. His ψυχή is now all that is left of him, except this κλέος to which we listen. Thus in the story of the *Odyssey*, life alone cannot be Odysseus' goal. Neither can death. To translate ψυχή as life in *Od.* 1.5 is almost to contradict that fact by implying that he won life without death, which is exactly what Homer's kind of hero cannot do.

Therefore this ψυχή with which human beings must contend is double in nature. It signifies life, but it also signifies death. The context of the word ψυχή constantly impacts its meaning. Because most scholars recognize that the meaning of ψυχή depends upon its location in the poem, no one dares to translate *Od.* 1.5 as “winning his own ghost,” although that is a crucial implication of the word's double meaning and its uses in the rest of the poem. To arrive at an adequate translation, everyone properly takes into account the way that the word is being used.<sup>36</sup>

Such ambiguity of meaning is not unusual, but rather one of the hallmarks of this poem, inspiring Jenny Strauss Clay to comment, “The doubleness of Odysseus pervades the poem. It can be found in his name, in his characteristic epithets, but, above all, it informs his words and deeds” (Clay 1983, 71). His heroic task “ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν” has precisely such a double nature. Our hero must win both the right kind of life and the right kind of death. During his life, he has ψυχή in the sense of having breath, and he must fight to keep it. When he dies as a hero, he

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<sup>36</sup> As Shirley Darcus explains, “The ψυχή itself is not life or death, but depending upon its presence in the body or in Hades, it can refer to either state” (Darcus 30-31). Only context can expose its proper meaning.

will become nothing but his ψυχή in Hades. In life, ψυχή is a possession, but in death it is a state of being. In life we *have* ψυχή, but in death we *are* it, and in fact it is all we are.<sup>37</sup> Odysseus' excellence is based upon the way that he manages to cope with this journey of his ψυχή, the journey that makes all human life possible.

The way that Odysseus himself uses the word ψυχή proves beyond a shadow of a doubt the inherent duality of meaning in the word. “πάντας δὲ δόλος καὶ μῆτιν ὕφαινον/ ὥς τε περὶ ψυχῆς” “I wove all kinds of tricks and guile, just as one does regarding ψυχή, matters of life and death” (*Od.* 9.422-3). To escape death, θάνατος, at the hands of the Cyclops, Odysseus must resort to δόλος and μῆτις (*Od.* 9.421).<sup>38</sup> Tricks and cunning are the means by which he can use the power of his mind (νόος and μῆτις) to keep his own ψυχή as his possession and prevent his premature departure to Hades. He realizes that ψυχή is exactly what he is struggling with, and that ψυχή does not represent only his own survival or his death, but both simultaneously. Odysseus seeks not to transcend time, suffering, and death altogether but to live, suffer, and die as a hero.

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<sup>37</sup> My argument directly contradicts Jean-Pierre Vernant: “A living man is never said to possess a ψυχή except in those rare cases where, in a temporary loss of consciousness, his ψυχή momentarily deserts him as though he were dead. Men, therefore, do not have a ψυχή; once they are dead, they become, flitting shades, ψυχάι, who lead an impoverished existence in the darkness of the underworld. ‘The ψυχή,’ James Redfield justly observes, ‘is not a soul but a phantom’” (Vernant 1991, 186). In *Od.* 1.5, Homer does intend to say that Odysseus possesses ψυχή until he dies. Furley agrees that in later Greek men certainly do have ψυχή when alive: “To have ψυχή is to be alive, and does not necessarily imply danger” (Furley 1956, 3).

<sup>38</sup> For excellent commentary on the Cyclops episode, see Calvin Brown (1966), Edward Bradley (1968), Seth Schein (1970), Norman Austin (1983), and Rainer Friedrich (1987a).

Thus Homer's prologue proclaims what the rest of his poem affirms: Odysseus is not only seeking his homecoming (νόστος) but ψυχή for himself. Ψυχή is the heroic goal, not just νόστος. In fact, ψυχή itself allows a man to become a hero. One can be a hero without a homecoming, but one cannot be a hero without ψυχή. (Remember, Achilles is the hero who achieved renown (κλέος), but not return (νόστος).<sup>39</sup>) Only once the Muse has joined in eight lines after Homer's first claim about winning ψυχή do we hear of the man himself yearning for his own return, the fated one that does occur (*Od.* 1.13). (Odysseus' name is not mentioned until line 21, when the Muse corrects Homer's omission.) The Muse says that homecoming is his alone: "οἶον νόστου," "alone, of return" (*Od.* 1.13). Unlike the Muse, Homer is far more concerned with Odysseus' relation to his ψυχή than with his νόστος. Homer accentuates Odysseus' ψυχή over his homecoming (νόστος) in his proem because he intends the *Odyssey* to enact why ψυχή is the only kind of immortality that men can properly win besides glory (κλέος).

Once we acknowledge that possessing ψυχή in the *Odyssey* means being alive for a hero, while becoming ψυχή means assuming the form of death, we arrive at a more satisfying interpretation of line *Od.* 1.5. Following this analysis, the line means that Odysseus was "winning his own heroic life and death, and two kinds of return for his companions, the return from Hades and the return to Hades." Homer introduces our hero Odysseus by indicating both his hero's amazing and admirable success and his worst disappointment and failure. For Odysseus does win his ψυχή, and with it, his comrades' return. But in the same way that he wins for himself a life which

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<sup>39</sup> Gregory Nagy explains: "Unlike Achilles, who won **kléos** but lost **nóstos** (*Il.* IX.413), Odysseus is a double winner. He has won both **kléos** and **nóstos**" (Nagy 1999, 39).



includes death, he wins a return for his comrades that includes death as well. If we recognize this irony in the word νόστος at *Od.* 1.5, we can and should discard the traditional conative translation.

Homer's irony consists of the fact that Odysseus' companions' return is not a return home but directly to Hades: their breath becomes a ghost before they can come home! The only returns that the comrades achieve are their return from Hades and their return to Hades. Kirke appreciates how Odysseus and his comrades are all heroes of return by naming them all “δισθανέες” “twice died” (*Od.* 12.22).<sup>40</sup> Odysseus and his comrades have won two strange kinds of return (νόστος): the kind from Hades, after fulfilling Kirke's mission, and the kind to Hades, when they die. Odysseus and his comrades are exceedingly unusual heroes, because for them, death is a return to a place where they have been before.

But the reason that the comrades lose their return home, while Odysseus wins his, is Homer's most important point in his proem.<sup>41</sup> Homer's proem condemns how the comrades eat the oxen of the sun because it provides the most stunning example of the destruction that results from failures in self-control. In Homer's view, the

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<sup>40</sup> Cunliffe suggests, “with a second death to face.”

<sup>41</sup> I dispute Victoria Pedrick's assessment of the proem as Homer's mistaken characterization of his theme that must be remedied by the Muse's participation. She writes, “The proem is thus incomplete as an introduction and skewed in its focus: the loss of Odysseus' crew due to its recklessness in eating the cattle of the Sun hardly seems the cardinal thematic episode in the epic” (Pedrick 39). I defend Homer's proem as his effective expression of his own theme, accomplished precisely through his dependence upon this episode. See Thomas Walsh's case for the significance of the oxen of the sun episode (1995), as well as Bernard Fenik (1970, 209ff.), Michael Nagler (1980), Stephanie West (1981, 169ff.), Rainer Friedrich (1987b), and A. Rijksbaron (1993). See Douglas Frame (1978) on the importance of the sun for Homer's theme of return.

comrades destroy themselves by satisfying their hunger with the oxen of the sun (“αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο” *Od.* 1.7).<sup>42</sup> Their recklessness is inspired by the suffering θυμός, the impulsivity that Odysseus can control but his comrades cannot.<sup>43</sup> For Homer, the θυμός is an internal force that the hero must control and overcome. Otherwise, the sheer destruction of the comrades ensues. How the power of their minds has failed is further insinuated by Homer’s insult “νήπιοι!” “Idiots!” (*Od.* 1.8) Homer’s contempt for their weakness reminds us that they could have returned home if only they had listened to Odysseus and ignored their growling bellies. What they eat literally determines what kind of human excellence they are able to attain.<sup>44</sup> Their failure in contrast to Odysseus’ successful self-restraint is further emphasized by Homer’s choice of words to depict their situation when he relies upon the metrical equivalent of ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν (“λιλαιόμενοι βιότοιο” *Od.* 12.327) to expose why his hero Odysseus is distinguished from his comrades. Michael

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<sup>42</sup> W. B. Stanford translates: “‘by their very own’, to emphasize the voluntariness of their sin” (Stanford 1959, 208). I reject the concept of sin in Homer as too Christian to be truly accurate for Homer’s cultural and historical context, but I concur with their responsibility for their error.

<sup>43</sup> As Rainer Friedrich emphasizes, “there is a choice” to heed Teiresias’ and Kirke’s warnings not to eat the oxen of the sun, and “the emphasis the poet places on it supports the interpretation of the crew’s subsequent sacrilege as *atasthalia*” (Friedrich 1987b, 396).

<sup>44</sup> For Leon Kass, eating assumes a meaning that extends far beyond satisfying hunger. Deciding what to eat is actually a pivotal moral decision. “Like the Cyclops, we too still eat when hungry but no longer know what it means.... Understanding more clearly what it means to nourish the hungry soul, we might be better able to satisfy it” (Kass 231). Our modern dilemma is then the same as that facing Homer’s heroes. To become excellent, we must seek to understand the meaning of eating and control our hunger accordingly. Odysseus realizes that eating expresses one’s respect for the proper order of the cosmos, whereas his comrades do not. For that reason, Odysseus achieves the human excellence that escapes them and becomes the kind of hero that they cannot become, the kind who both returns from Hades and returns home.

Nagler translates the phrase “thirsting for life”, commenting, “As the pressure of want increases, however, they [Odysseus’ crew] quickly succumb to the desire, losing that very life by desiring it wrongly or too much” (Nagler 1980, 96). They win the wrong kind of life and death by surrendering to the wrong desire in the wrong way.<sup>45</sup>

Homer’s language in the proem clarifies the consequences of this error by announcing what kind of return the comrades win as a result. The comrades yield to the power of θυμός by eating the oxen of the sun, and so “ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ” “he stole the day of their return” (*Od.* 1.9). Again the caution with which Homer chooses his words cannot be denied. As *Od.* 1.5 asserts, the comrades do not lose their νόστος entirely. They win two kinds of νόστος, both to and from Hades (*Od.* 1.5), but they lose their day of return home beneath the light of the sun (*Od.* 1.9). They also lose their ψυχάι, in contrast to Odysseus, who wins his on this occasion. Having failed to control θυμός, they become ψυχάι. The kind of return they win is the direct result of this failure: they become heroes who return from and to Hades, not heroes who return home. Homer includes this incident in his proem to exemplify how the kind of return which men win depends upon how well they can command their passions using their intelligence. Zeus complains that Aegisthus knew full well (εἰδώς) what Hermes had told him, yet he ignored it and followed his heart, his lust,

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<sup>45</sup> Rainer Friedrich claims Odysseus’ “survival represents the triumph of *temosyne*, his physical and mental endurance” (Friedrich 1987b, 393). Bernard Fenik disputes this notion and does not connect *Od.* 1.7 to the Thrinakia event, arguing that the comrades engage in a “desperate act of self-preservation” and cites the mitigating circumstances of necessity which excuse their deed (Fenik 213ff.). But as Friedrich notes, the men are “fully warned and therefore fully aware of what they are doing” (Friedrich 1987b, 393). By simply yielding to the “desire for a richer and tastier diet” (Friedrich 1987b, 391), they commit an act of utter folly which stands in direct contrast to Odysseus’ restraint. For a summary of the scholarly debate on this topic, see Friedrich (1987b, 375ff.).

his desires (*Od.* 1.32-42). Just like him, the foolish comrades have destroyed themselves through their own actions, in accordance with the fate that Odysseus is to return home alone (*Od.* 5.286-290).<sup>46</sup> The comrades die because the force of their minds failed to overcome the forces of the belly. Homer gives them such prominence in his prologue in order to create a dramatic contrast with his hero, who did what they could not. Odysseus goes to Hades to learn the cost of their mistake, and to learn from Teiresias how to avoid it.<sup>47</sup> Human excellence and homecoming are earned through the hero's struggle to control θυμός. The proem of *Odyssey* establishes how self-restraint allows a man to display his excellence, to endure, and to return home before returning to Hades, the home of the dead.

How does Odysseus manage to exemplify the value of self-restraint in the rest of the poem? When Odysseus narrates his own story to the Phaeacians in Books 9-12, it becomes obvious that such self-restraint on Odysseus' part is not one of his permanent characteristics but a trait which he acquired only after lacking it and suffering as a result. Edward Bradley argues for precisely such a progression and

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<sup>46</sup> As Stanford writes, “καὶ implies that Zeus does accept some responsibility for the amount of suffering apportioned to each man by destiny. But for all sufferings *hyper moron* mortals have only their own excesses to blame” (Stanford 1959, 211). Rainer Friedrich makes a similar point, arguing that “If the pointed use of *atasthalia*” at *Od.* 1.7, 1.33, and 24.416 “suggests...the killing of the sun-god's cattle by Odysseus' crew is on a par with the hybris of Aegisthus and the suitors, then Odysseus' comrades can be said to bear responsibility for their suffering: they brought ruin on themselves, just as Aegisthus and the suitors did; and the fate of Odysseus' comrades serves as a third illustration of the new ethos enunciated by Zeus” (Friedrich 1987b, 376). Michael Nagler observes how Penelope echoes the language of the proem in her refusal to believe Eurykleia's report that Odysseus has killed the suitors (*Od.* 23.62-68), only strengthening the connection of these themes (Nagler 1990, 347).

<sup>47</sup> For my discussion of how Odysseus returns home through the power of his restraint, see Chapter Five.

development of his character due to suffering (1968).<sup>48</sup> Yet how does Odysseus assess the cause of his suffering, and does his assessment match Homer's? First we must determine how and why Odysseus managed to get in such a situation inside the Cyclops' cave, and then understand why he gave away his name, enabling Poseidon to punish him afterwards. Let us explore why Odysseus chose this course of action, according to his own narration, and then determine whether Homer validates his reasoning. Does Odysseus' tale validate the tremendous value of restraining θυμός, while also complementing Homer's own view of that task in his poem?

To begin with, his first exploit after leaving Troy is to make an unprovoked attack on Ismarus (*Od.* 9.39-61). A storm from Zeus batters them until they finally arrive at the land of the Lotus-eaters and then flee because of the danger of eating the lotus and forgetting about νόστος (*Od.* 9.67-104). Next he and his comrades land on goat island, where they successfully hunt goats and then feast while drinking wine stolen from the Cicones (*Od.* 9.116-167).<sup>49</sup> Given this course of events, it is fair to claim that Odysseus is motivated not by the necessity of hunger or any kind of physical deprivation, but by greed and curiosity. They have plenty of meat from the

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<sup>48</sup> The case for Odysseus' personal growth and development during the action of the poem has been made by many critics. See K. Reinhardt (1948, 52-162, especially 79ff.). He divides Odysseus' adventures into those that he seeks (Book 9), those imposed upon him by others (Books 10 and 11), and those that he fears and that torture him (Book 12). Reinhardt's basic premise is that Odysseus' experiences and sufferings change him and the choices he makes in the future. Also see George Lord (1963, 36ff.) and Bradley (1976, 37ff.).

<sup>49</sup> Jenny Strauss Clay makes a fascinating suggestion, based upon the *hapax* χηρεύει at *Od.* 9.124, that goat island is the former home of the Phaeacians and hence that the Cyclops and the Phaeacians share a genealogical lineage despite their drastically different ways of life (Clay 1980). Accepting her suggestion means that the audience of Odysseus' story, the Phaeacians, are listening to Odysseus' conflict with one of their ancient kinsmen.

goat hunt, and he even brags that they had abundant stores of wine left over from plundering the Cicones (*Od.* 9.161-165). Odysseus can hear the voices of men, sheep, and goats as they feast, and he sees the smoke rising from their fires.<sup>50</sup> Odysseus wants to find out what sort of men live in the land of the Cyclops, whether they love strangers and fear the gods (*Od.* 9.172-176). He cannot resist finding out about their ways; as Homer mentions in his proem, this man is the curious and inquisitive one who seeks to see the cities of men and to know their minds (*Od.* 1.3). Odysseus thus wants knowledge and treasure. By putting himself in a situation that forces the Cyclops to participate in hospitality, Odysseus will learn Cyclops' ways as they partake in the proper guest-host rituals.

Odysseus, however, violated the rules of hospitality by entering the cave uninvited and eating cheese before the Cyclops returns (*Od.* 9.231ff.).<sup>51</sup> He even admits that if he had taken his comrades' advice the entire situation could have been avoided (*Od.* 9.224-229). For the comrades wanted to eat the cheese and run, while Odysseus wanted to find out if the man who lived there would welcome them. Odysseus' desire to learn about these people and their customs dooms them in two

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<sup>50</sup> Clay suggests, "Odysseus is impelled to discover the source of the smoke out of curiosity (*Od.* 9.173-175) and a desire for guest-gifts (*Od.* 9.229)" (Clay 1980, 261). Friedrich concurs that his motive is greed in seeking out the Cyclops (Friedrich 1991, 22).

<sup>51</sup> Austin suggests that eating food uninvited is a violation of the proper guest-host etiquette (Austin 1983, 12), while Newton states that by slaughtering one of the Cyclops' sheep Odysseus committed "a breach of the *xenia* ritual" (Newton 1983, 139ff). Some then believe that the Cyclops' anger at his guests is somewhat justified, even though he violates the rules of hospitality in the most despicable way by turning his guests into his own food rather than offering them food.

ways: first, to the initial adventure seeking out the Cyclops, and second, to being trapped in the cave waiting for their host's return.

Once he arrives to find his cave invaded, Polyphemus tells Odysseus and his men in no uncertain terms that he feels no obligation to observe the proper rules of hospitality. He announces, "Nor would I, in order to avoid the wrath of Zeus, spare either you [Odysseus] or your comrades, unless the desire [θυμός] should command me" (*Od* 9.276-277). The Cyclops is ruled by θυμός, not by fear of the gods or even respect for Zeus. He acts solely to satisfy his own θυμός. After he asks where they moored their ship and cunning Odysseus lies to him, he demonstrates what θυμός drives him to do. As Odysseus states, "He gave me no answer on account of his pitiless heart [νηλεί θυμῶ]" (*Od* 9.287) and instead devoured two of his men, smashing their brains against the floor and cutting them up for dinner (*Od* 9.289-298). Polyphemus evidences the bestial and unjust acts that result from yielding to θυμός with no regard for justice, law, or the gods.

After the first two of his men have been eaten, Odysseus begins to plot ways to punish Polyphemus, so that he can win great glory from Athena in so doing: "If somehow I might exact vengeance, and Athena grant me exultation in victory [εὐχος]" (*Od.* 9.316-317). Odysseus prays for the triumph of gloating over his defeated enemy. Here, then, are Odysseus' motives: first, the greed to gain more bounty and loot from those observing proper rules of hospitality, and then second, when that fails, to gain the glory of εὐχος by the grace of Athena. Consequently, Odysseus' choices to seek out the Cyclops, to enter the cave, and to tell the Cyclops

his name are made through his own volition, compelled by no one.<sup>52</sup> No one forced Odysseus into this mess with the Cyclops and Poseidon. In his own words to the Cyclops, “no one” is responsible, and “no one” is Odysseus. No necessity and no god obliges him to seek out the Cyclops. As a result, Odysseus is culpable for the deaths of his crew in the Cyclops episode. His greed is responsible for their return to Hades, not their return home. The men become ghosts (ψυχαί), while Odysseus wins his life.

Yet Odysseus, while telling his own story, consistently attributes divine intervention to what seems to be wholly his own agency. First of all, he claims that “τις θεός” “some god” guided their ships into the harbor at goat island through the misty night (*Od.* 9.142-143). He attributes their luck in hunting goats to the nymphs, daughters of Zeus, who rouse the goats (*Od.* 9.154-155). But then he only refers to the god (θεός) who gives them game to satisfy their hunger; presumably that god is Zeus, but he is not specific. He tells Polyphemus that Zeus has willed it that they are wandering and suffering on their way home (*Od.* 9.259-262). Further, once Polyphemus has eaten four of his men and then returns, he sends his entire flock into the cave, because, Odysseus surmises, he was “either feeling some suspicion, or even god [θεός] so bade him” (*Od.* 9.339). Mandelbaum translates, “he felt some slight suspicion, or else some god was inclined to favor us,” emphasizing Odysseus’ sense of divine favor and his certainty that a god is affecting the unfolding events. Odysseus presumes that “some god” must have interfered in the course of events surrounding the

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<sup>52</sup> The critics are virtually unanimous that Odysseus alone is responsible for his acts during the Cyclops episode. Jenny Strauss Clay claims, “Neither divine protection nor divine enmity influence the action” (Clay 1980, 112). Norman Austin agrees that “Odysseus himself chooses to adventure among the Cyclops” (Austin 1983, 15), and Rainier Friedrich proclaims that “certainly no external necessity” led him into the cave (Friedrich 1991, 21).



Cyclops encounter, although he gives no evidence at all about why he believes that to be the case (*Od.* 9.142-143, 261-262, 339, 381). He mentions no definitive omens and no possible divine manifestations, only his own conviction that “some god” must have been helping them. Odysseus unequivocally depicts their situation being affected by divine intervention. In so doing, he also excuses himself from the accusation of being the murderer of his crew, an inadvertent murderer, perhaps, but a murderer nonetheless.<sup>53</sup>

On the basis of this belief of divine intrusion, Odysseus proceeds to credit the gods with aiding him in the blinding and consequent escape. When he and his comrades grab the stake to drive it into Polyphemus’ eye, Odysseus claims that “into us a god [δαίμων] breathed great courage” (*Od.* 9.381). Some δαίμων altered events and made their success possible in Odysseus’ mind. He is not hubristic and arrogant enough to believe that he triumphed on his own, and he praises the divine intervention that fueled his efforts. Further, once they are a shouting distance away from the cave, Odysseus tells Polyphemus that because he ate his own guests, “Zeus has taken vengeance upon you, along with the other gods” (*Od.* 9.475-479). Odysseus then in some sense defines himself as the instrument of the gods’ will. Even though Odysseus honors the δαίμων who helped them, he now puts himself in the position of being the avenging δαίμων for the gods.<sup>54</sup> Odysseus narrates his experience in such a way as to make himself appear like the hero who exacts vengeance that is endorsed by Zeus and

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<sup>53</sup> John Gordon proposes that Leopold Boom’s father Virag is subject to the same accusation; see footnote on p. 232.

<sup>54</sup> He and Penelope address each other with this term when they reunite, accentuating their sense of being victims of divine forces beyond their control (*Od.* 23.166, 174).

the other gods.<sup>55</sup> He seems not even to consider taking sole responsibility for his own choice to undertake this adventure.

As a result, Odysseus exemplifies the way that mortals blame the gods that so irritates Zeus, the grievance that prefaces the action of the poem. Odysseus offends Zeus by blaming the gods for his own folly, exactly the crime which Zeus complains to Athena at the inception of the poem that mortals commit when they fail to recognize why they deserve their own suffering:.

Horrors, how quick mortals are to blame the gods. From us, so they say, evils come, but they, even of themselves, through their own recklessness [ἀτασθαλίῃσιν], have pain beyond [μόρος] what is destined...  
(*Od.* 1.32-34)

Odysseus is a hero who proves Zeus' point. In Zeus' view, Odysseus has brought the curse of Poseidon upon himself, and however much he may blame Zeus or the other gods, only suffering will teach him the humility and the self-restraint that will make him an enduring hero who displays human excellence through his self-control and sagacity. Homer endorses Zeus' position by offering Odysseus' interpretation of events but never confirming their veracity. For nowhere in the entire poem does Homer corroborate the idea that some god interfered in the Cyclops disaster in any way. Throughout the rest of the poem, Homer never refers to any god, malicious or beneficent, who partakes in these events in any way. Homer confides a great deal to his audience about the gods' whims and actions, yet none of them have anything to do

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<sup>55</sup> Rainier Friedrich argues on this basis that Odysseus' hybris in the episode presents "a motive for Zeus' anger at Odysseus" because Odysseus "passes off his revenge as a victory of the Olympian order" even though he actually violated the laws of hospitality due to his own greed (Friedrich 1991, 27, 26).

with aiding the landing at goat island, the goat hunt, or blinding Polyphemus. Hence it is justified to suspect that Homer quotes his hero blaming a god who does not exist. No god ever takes credit for luring Odysseus into the Cyclops' cave, nor for blinding him and sneaking out by way of the ram's belly. Certainly Athena was not involved, nor was Poseidon! These feats seem to belong to Odysseus alone, due to his greed for goods and for glory.

Yet Odysseus consistently blames the gods for his own folly in seeking out the Cyclops and losing his men. For example, after they flee and again reach goat island, Odysseus sacrifices one of Polyphemus' stolen rams to Zeus, but he tells his audience, "Zeus did not pay any attention to that sacrifice. Instead he was plotting how to destroy all of my well-benched ships and my faithful comrades" (*Od.* 9.553-555).<sup>56</sup> Here Odysseus condemns Zeus for abandoning him and his comrades. In his view, Zeus refuses to be pacified by a sacrifice and unfairly plans to let Odysseus' men and ships be destroyed without returning home.

Zeus despises precisely this kind of blame. Odysseus got himself into this mess, and Zeus had no choice but to allow Poseidon to work his curse as just revenge for his son. Homer depicts how Odysseus earns Polyphemus' curse and Poseidon's wrath through his own recklessness, yet without compelling Odysseus to confess to that fact in his narrative to the Phaeacians. Homer, despite having given the microphone to his hero, so to speak, portrays how Odysseus' failure to control himself then causes both the blinding and the curse. The suffering *θυμός* which Homer introduces in his proem is shown to affect whether one wins life or death (*Od.* 1.4).

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<sup>56</sup> Friedrich takes the need to explain this statement as his point of departure (1991).

Rainer Friedrich describes the situation thusly: “Twice in the adventure Odysseus gives in to the urging of his *megeletor thumos* and twice he comes to grief because of it” (Friedrich 1987a, 131, *Od.* 9.475ff., and 9.500ff.). His θυμός controls him: it runs away from him and then it runs away with him. He yields to θυμός instead of taming and mastering it, and only afterwards can he understand the terrible consequences of so doing. Odysseus begins his adventure by taking with him a special wine given by Maron in honor of hospitality laws, because, Odysseus states, “θυμός ἀγήνωρ” “his proud heart” (*Od.* 9.213) suspects that those he will meet will know nothing of law or justice (*Od.* 9.214-215). When he and his comrades are forced to watch Polyphemus devour their friends, “ἀμηχανίη δ’ ἔχε θυμόν” “paralysis seized their hearts” (*Od.* 9.295). They are victimized and frozen in helplessness, and θυμός cannot spur them into immediate action. Yet four lines later, after Polyphemus has finished his meal, Odysseus is already forming a plan deep in his great heart, “κατὰ μεγαλήτορα θυμόν” (*Od.* 9.299), to stab the Cyclops in the breast and kill him. But his θυμός prevents him from acting upon this idea: “Another θυμός restrained me” (*Od.* 9.302). Here his θυμός holds him back; θυμός is in control of Odysseus and seems to be the agent of his actions.

After a night of plotting vengeance in the hope Athena will grant him εὖχος, Odysseus comes up with the idea of blinding the Cyclops. “Now this seemed to me deep in my heart [κατὰ θυμόν] to be the best plan” (*Od.* 9.318). This line is repeated at *Od.* 9.424 when the best plan seems to be to bind the sheep together in order to sneak away by hiding under their bellies. Odysseus resorts to a scheme of great excellence and wisdom, “ἀρίστη βουλή”, by controlling his θυμός rather than allowing it to rule him. He escapes the cave by hanging on to the sheep’s belly “with

an enduring heart [τετληότι θυμός]" (*Od.* 9.435). He manages to rein in the power of his θυμός to help him endure with strength and patience while preventing θυμός from dictating his actions or making him act suddenly and recklessly. This evolution, from having θυμός drive and then restrain him (*Od.* 9.302) to figuring out how to combine the powers of his intelligence and his θυμός in order to survive, represents Odysseus' transition from the warrior's heroic code to the survivor's heroic code. In Book 9, Odysseus proves himself to be an excellent hero, one who learns how to harness the power of his mind to control his passions for the sake of saving his own life and the lives of others.

Yet while this lesson is the result of his encounter with the Cyclops, he nevertheless does not behave like the hero who has perfect mastery over his θυμός by the end of the confrontation. After Polyphemus throws a mountain peak at them as they try to sail away, his comrades urge restraint, reminding Odysseus that Polyphemus will smash them with rocks even at a distance if Odysseus continues to provoke him (*Od.* 9.480-499). But Odysseus cannot refrain: he confesses that they could not persuade his θυμός (*Od.* 9.500), and then he tells Polyphemus who has blinded him, throwing off the cloak of being no one and again becoming Odysseus, son of Laertes, his true heroic title. By naming himself as the doer of the deed of blinding, Odysseus rises to heroic glory, even as he wounds himself at the same time by consequently making himself vulnerable to Polyphemus' curse. Divulging his name here both curses and blesses him: he gains both Poseidon's curse and the κλεός of his deed.<sup>57</sup> Odysseus thus is both cursed and blessed by his own impulsivity. His name is

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<sup>57</sup> Friedrich comments that with "His *megaletor thymos* out of control, Odysseus is carried away to reveal his name proudly" (Friedrich 1987a, 131), bringing the curse of the Cyclops and the wrath of Poseidon upon him. Calvin S. Brown argues

the carrier of his κλέος; without a name, κλέος is impossible. In choosing κλέος and suffering, Odysseus chooses to become a hero rather than a private and ordinary man. He could have escaped without a curse, but he would also have lost his glory.<sup>58</sup> Odysseus feels compelled to redeem that erasure of self and glory: he prefers to suffer in full possession of κλέος than to slip away unknown. He declines anonymity and safety for the sake of glory, even though the cost is ten years' agony as Poseidon fulfills his son's curse. Odysseus makes himself known as the one who inflicts pain, and hence becomes one who suffers it. By virtue of the fact that he makes his name known at all, he asserts himself as the one who wounds and who is then wounded. Had Odysseus not named himself, he would not have been worthy of his name.

With the disclosure of his name, Odysseus demonstrates the same kind of recklessness that destroyed the suitors and those who eat the oxen of the sun.<sup>59</sup> Only by becoming known as the hero who could not control his θυμός can he eventually become known as the hero who learned how to do so. For in Book 9, Odysseus

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that “the rest of the *Odyssey* is devoted to the working out of this curse,” meaning the curse that the Cyclops utters asking his father Poseidon that Odysseus never reach home, or reach home at long last in another's ship after much suffering, only to find trouble in his own house (*Od.* 9.528-535). Brown contends that Odysseus “reveals his name, and thus makes it possible for Polyphemus to lay a curse on him...the name makes possible the curse” (Brown 1966, 195). Brown concludes that by uttering his name, Odysseus brought troubles upon himself beyond what was destined, just as Zeus describes.

<sup>58</sup> Friedrich observes that Odysseus excluded himself from glory and heroism by calling himself nobody: “...by calling himself nobody, Heroic Man inflicts upon himself the ultimate outrage: self-abnegation. For the sake of self-preservation he has to sacrifice his heroic self” (Friedrich 1987a, 130).

<sup>59</sup> The recklessness of the suitors is denounced quite unequivocally by Leoides, Odysseus, Penelope, and Halitherses (ἄτασθαλίη, *Od.* 21.146, 22.317, 416, 23.67, 24.458).

initially shows none of the prudence and self-restraint that generally distinguishes him among heroes. Farron accurately claims that “one of his most distinguishing characteristics is his self-control,”<sup>60</sup> but in the encounter with Polyphemus he has not yet established such control over himself. Stanford observes that Odysseus here displays a “general lack of prudence and self-control...quite uncharacteristic of his usual conduct” (Stanford 1968, 77). His prudence and self-control are not innate in him, nor are they a legacy of his war experiences. He learns the power and importance of both while he is struggling to return home.

Learning to control θυμός is a change from the heroic code of the world of the *Iliad*, yet another example of how Homer is depicting a new kind of ordinary heroism in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus’ boasts and the declaration of his name are reminiscent of the Iliadic warriors’ taunts. What is heroic now in the world of the *Odyssey* is very different from what was heroic in the *Iliad*.<sup>61</sup> The goal now is not only glory, but survival, and to survive, the *megeletor thumos* must be resisted rather than followed. Achilles was the hero who won κλέος at the cost of νόστος; Odysseus wants to win both. To do so, he must adjust to a new kind of heroic code entirely, one that operates

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<sup>60</sup> Farron notes further that “As Horace pointed out in *Epistle* I, 2, 23-31, Odysseus’ self-control makes him the opposite of his crew, the suitors, and the Phaeacians” (Farron 87).

<sup>61</sup> Friedrich compares *Od.* 9.475ff., 502ff., 523ff., with the boasts of Hector at *Il.* XVI.830ff., and Achilles at XXII.221ff, noting that this kind of εὔχος is what heroes like to use “to seal their victories” (Friedrich 1987a, 130). As Friedrich comments, “Heroic Man, as we know him from the *Iliad*, usually does as it pleases his *megeletor thumos*; he follows, as is his wont, the impulses arising from his proud heroic temper” (Friedrich 1987a, 124).

by restraining θυμός for the sake of survival. Friedrich explains why this is the case.<sup>62</sup> Stephanie Nelson concurs that Odysseus' triumph in the *Odyssey* requires “abandoning the heroic code that informed his past” (Nelson 63). Suddenly, in this entirely new situation, Odysseus is confronted with the failure of the usual heroic code in determining the best course of action. He must invent a new heroic code, the heroic code of endurance, whose goal is not εὐχος, but νόστος.

In other words, Odysseus learns what it means to be a hero who endures from his experience with the Cyclops. Until this point, he is the bold and daring warrior who risks all. Now, after the Trojan War is finished, he learns that the daring that helped him win the war can destroy him after the war. To survive and to return home, he learns that he will have to develop a new kind of resourcefulness and self-control and that he must not continue to make the same mistakes due to impetuosity.<sup>63</sup> So, while Stanford calls Odysseus a man “fully able to control conflicting passions and motives” (Stanford 1968, 78), Friedrich counters him by claiming that “it is the

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<sup>62</sup> Friedrich writes, “Finding himself thrown into a world quite incongruous with his own, a world of primal savagery in which the heroic code has not validity, Odysseus painfully learns the limitations of the heroic. To give in to the impulses of his *megeletor thymos*, as the traditional hero is wont to do, would not only be ruinous, but also self-defeating even in terms of the heroic code: for a slow death in the obscurity of the Cyclops' cave would be no more compatible with the heroic code than being eaten alive by an ogre” (Friedrich 1987a, 129). He elaborates on this point: “Odysseus represents throughout Book 9 a variation of traditional heroism... For the *Cyclopeia* is as much the tale of the humiliation of the heroic self and its subsequent restoration as it is the tale of Odysseus' resourcefulness (*polymechanie*) and cunning mind (*metis*) triumphing over the Cyclops' brute force and mindless savagery... the humiliation of his heroic ego is the price Odysseus has to pay for the triumph of his *polymechanie*; the restoration of his heroic self, in turn, threatens to undo what his *metis* has achieved” (Friedrich 1987a, 126).

<sup>63</sup> Friedrich comments that “Only in union with Odysseus' *tlemosyne*, his exemplary endurance and steadfastness, will his *metis* be able to sustain its control over his *megeletor thymos*” (Friedrich 1987a, 129).



Odysseus of Book 22, forgoing the customary *euchos* and triumph over the slain enemy (*Od.* 22.413-16), who represents Stanford's well-integrated man" (Friedrich 1987b, 133). The εὐχος Odysseus hoped to gain with Athena's help is now a privilege he denies himself; this kind of boasting and gloating now seems to him more perilous and risky than it ever did before.<sup>64</sup> This change in Odysseus, from the brash and brazen hero seeking glory and booty, ignoring the shrewd advice of his comrades, to the sagacious and restrained hero who is careful to listen to his comrades' advice and not to offend anyone in triumph, has been the result of his long and arduous sufferings. Odysseus has come to value a new kind of humility unimaginable to him immediately after the Trojan War.

Odysseus is thus an example of how mortals learn through suffering, reminding us of Aeschylus' words in the *Oresteia*: "Τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοῦς ὀδῶσαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν" "[Zeus], who sent mortals on the journey toward wisdom, established the way of learning through suffering" (*Agamemnon*, lines 176-178). Enduring heroes learn through suffering, rather than being destroyed by it. Odysseus learns from his suffering to master the demands of his θυμός rather than allowing his θυμός to rule him. This process of development does not make him unheroic or anti-heroic at all; rather, it is the defining aspect of his heroism.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Bradley finds this change in attitude to exemplify how Odysseus learns from his error with the Cyclops, by virtue of the fact that he now condemns to both Eurykleia and to Amphimedon the very mocking exultation in which he indulged after his victory over the Cyclops, thus "specifically renew[ing] and categorically condemn[ing] the conditions of Odysseus' own moral guilt earlier in the poem" (Bradley 44, see 42ff.).

<sup>65</sup> Friedrich observes that Odysseus is certainly very different from traditional Iliadic heroes but that alone does not make him inferior. "His intellectual curiosity

Therefore Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops demonstrates how little self-control he had as a warrior, and how much suffering he had to undergo to learn how to master his θυμός. Odysseus is not immune from the folly of recklessness that Homer introduced in his proem. His folly was to lead his men into the Cyclops' cave. But what distinguishes him from Aegisthus, from the suitors, and from the men who eat the oxen of the sun is that he is able to survive his folly; he learns to control his θυμός before yielding to θυμός can destroy him. His inability to control θυμός in this instance contributes to his growth and actually enables him to earn a kind of excellence that would otherwise have been impossible for him. Watching Polyphemus give in to his θυμός, while he himself also yields to its dictates with disastrous results, Odysseus recognizes that human excellence lies in controlling θυμός with νόος and μῆτις, the power of the mind. Decisive action on its own does not make a hero worthy of admiration. The ability to resist action and then to incite it at the proper moments makes endurance possible, and that kind of judgment and self-control characterizes the heroism that Homer is praising in the *Odyssey*. Afterwards, suffering Poseidon's wrath, Odysseus continues to learn how critical it is to restrain θυμός in order to save his own life and return home.

Thus Homer's proem allows him to announce directly to his audience his motivation for telling the story of Odysseus: his extraordinary ability to endure through the proper combination of restraint and action. Homer, in his attempt to frame his story without the Muse, endorses a new kind of hero, the enduring man. Homer's proem serves to reveal the nature of his theme and to define his new conception of heroism in

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does distinguish Odysseus from the traditional heroes as the *Iliad* presents them: Odysseus *is* different. But this, by itself, does not render him less heroic" (Friedrich 1987a, 123).

the *Odyssey*. Homer's most innovative twist upon the traditional story of Odysseus and the traditional heroic code emerging from the world of the *Iliad* is his stress upon the value of endurance at any cost. Homer chooses to make such balance, prudence, and self-mastery as one usually associates with σοφροσύνη utterly heroic in the *Odyssey*.<sup>66</sup> Odysseus aspires to this state of balance and self-control because that state of mind and way of thinking and acting will best fuel his endurance. The heroes of the *Odyssey*, whose goal is νόστος as much as κλέος, must use the power of their minds to control their passions, desires, and appetites. The Cyclops reminds us of the lawless, uncivilized, and inhuman existence that otherwise results. Odysseus in the poem is only a man, a man struggling to win his *psyche* by harnessing his νόος to control the demands of the suffering θυμός. By exercising self-restraint, he earns a kind of excellence that is particularly human and that distinguishes him among heroes. His lack of restraint with the Cyclops is the experience that convinces him that self-restraint is a desirable virtue. Odysseus learns the perils and the glory of his name: through wounding and being wounded, he has come to appreciate the excellence of sagacity and self-control, and the dangers of impulsivity and pride.

One can now hardly fail to appreciate how consistently Homer reinforces the themes of his poem throughout the rest of his poem. Homer seizes his poem as his opportunity to expose the most fundamental heroic task of men, the human struggle to

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<sup>66</sup> Helen North contradicts this assertion, arguing that “*sophrosyne* is not a ‘heroic’ virtue” because both Achilles and Odysseus lack it (North 1966, 2). Still, she notes Homer’s definitive emphasis upon endurance: “The *Odyssey*, a story of romance and adventure rather than of warfare and tragic enlightenment, reflects a concept of *arete* comprising a different balance of qualities and demands of its hero, not the success in battle which is necessary for Achilles, but a combination of shrewdness and endurance with special emphasis upon the latter” (North 1966, 8). Penelope thinks Eurykleia has lost her *sophrosyne* when she reports the unbelievable truth that Odysseus has slain the suitors (*Od.* 23.13ff.).

win ψυχή, life and death, by using the power of mind, νόος, to control the suffering θυμός rather than becoming its victim. Without any interference from the Muse, Homer is determined to put forth his idea that men win different kinds of νόστος depending upon the way that each one uses the power of mind, νόος, to master desire, θυμός. Human excellence requires the control of the suffering θυμός in order to live and to die in the right and fated way. Homer deems Odysseus worthy of being the subject of his poem because of the admirable way that he harnesses the force of his mind in order to control the forces of his body. Odysseus excels at this rather ordinary task, the daily necessity of controlling all of the urges, lusts and passions that come from the θυμός. Homer designs his proem to explain to his audience why this ability qualifies Odysseus as the most excellent man in the *Odyssey*, even as he also proves to be one of the most fallible.

Finally, the ambiguity of *Od.* 1.5 bears out how inconsistent Odysseus actually is, precisely because the only homecoming he actually achieves is his own. His men are lost despite his efforts to save them, and some of them are lost at least in part because of Odysseus' folly with Polyphemus. Homer thus foreshadows both Odysseus' perseverance and cunning in accomplishing his own survival, and his unreliability in the same regard for his comrades, in the proem. Ψυχή is finally revealed in the poem as the form in which human beings journey through life and death. Odysseus' excellence is founded upon how he controls his θυμός so that he can win the right kind of both. In this struggle between possessing and becoming ψυχή, a struggle that defines the meaning of endurance, Odysseus is the quintessential hero.

## MOLLY'S INVOCATION OF JAMESY

Homer thus turns his invocation into an opportunity to express his own goals and purposes for his poem alone, without the Muse's aid. Can any parallel be found in any invocations in *Ulysses*? To search for the presence of any possible Muse in *Ulysses*, let us consider Molly's invocation with which I began. As early as 1970, Alfred Appel asserted that Molly had addressed her creator (Nabokov 1991, xxvi).<sup>67</sup> James Van Dyck Card concurs with the notion of Molly's apostrophe to Joyce:

‘O let me up out of this’ was the text until the fourth galley. Joseph Prescott believes quite rightly that this single added word is a good instance of Molly's colloquial speech. I think it is also funny, a call for relief to the slyboots who put her in old Cohen's bed in the first place, Jamesy Joyce.  
(Card 24)

Brook Thomas comments that the careful reader “catches the author in the act of being addressed by one of the characters in his book, just as Joyce had once dreamed of Molly talking to him” (Thomas 1977, 39). Thomas acknowledges Molly's apostrophe while mentioning that Vivian Mercier has told him that “‘Jamesy’ is a euphemism for ‘Jaysus’” (Thomas 1977, 41), which endows Molly's exclamation with a naturalistic explanation.<sup>68</sup> Hugh Kenner does not interpret Molly's exclamation to be an intentional address to anyone, characterizing her plea from upon the chamberpot as one made “as if inadvertently calling on her maker” (Kenner 1987, 69). Kenner does

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<sup>67</sup> Card erroneously attributes this claim to Nabokov himself, which Brook Thomas corrects (Thomas 1982, 64).

<sup>68</sup> Thomas affirms his own point later: “How this comment works on the naturalistic level is explained by the Irish use of ‘Jamesy’ for ‘Jaysus’” (Thomas 1982, 64).

not ascribe to Molly enough conscious knowledge of her own plight as literary character to address her creator. Yet Molly calls out “O Jesus” (*U* 18.1104) and “O Lord” (*U* 18.110, 584, 588, 595, 915, 1142, 1148) before and after “O Jamesy”, making “Jamesy” seem unique and remarkable. For the reader, the association of the names Jesus, Jamesy, and James Joyce may underscore Joyce’s assumption of the divine role in his text. Yet if Molly is only calling upon Jesus in colloquial terms, she would have no knowledge of her own role in the book. Does Molly possess the self-consciousness to comprehend her role in *Ulysses*? Who is the Jamesy that Molly addresses?

The likelihood that Molly is indeed addressing her own author is enhanced by the power and significance of the signature in Joyce’s works, as argued by Tony Thwaites.<sup>69</sup> Make no mistake: Molly Bloom, like Homer, invokes her song’s creator: “O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh” (*U* 18.1128-9). While Homer supplicates the Muse who makes his song possible, Molly Bloom pleads with the man that makes her existence possible. This apostrophe constitutes a moment of clarity which introduces an equivalence between author and character normally presumed to be impossible. As Jonathan Culler explains, “Apostrophe is not the representation of an event; if it works

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<sup>69</sup> A brief summary of his argument must suffice here: “Joyce’s entire oeuvre is an immense and complex implementation of the signature and its promissory effects....Signature is the boundlessness of connection. It marks the text on the outside, as it were, certifying it as commodity, property, literary object...at the same time, the signature necessarily marks the text with an internal seriality....It is at work in all the plays on his name and person which Joyce scatters through his texts: from the ‘J.J.’ by which the narrator calls O’Molloy in Barney Kiernan’s pub, or Molly’s invocation, “O Jamesy let me up out of this” (*U* 18.1128-1129), or a multitude of wordplays on *joy* throughout *Ulysses* and the *Wake*....In order for it even to be signature, the signature necessarily and incessantly crosses that apparent boundary between text and world which is all too easy to model on the closure of the covers of a book” (Thwaites 3, 7).

it produces a fictive, discursive event” (Culler 68). Molly’s apostrophe is precisely such a fictive, discursive event, one whose meaning remains unappreciated given the undeniable intertextual echoes with Homer which it evokes.<sup>70</sup> Christine van Boheemen avers to “the idea of the author as source of the language that constitutes the novel would seem a sacrosanct convention in literature—but not to Joyce” (van Boheemen 1987, 155). Yet the singer in oral poetry like Homer’s is not presumed to be the sole source of his song, perhaps inspiring Joyce to violate the convention van Boheemen mentions.<sup>71</sup> In Homer, Muse and singer conspire to produce the song. In *Ulysses*, it would seem that, at least with Molly at this one moment, narration emerges from how Joyce conspires with his own character. Instead of invoking a goddess, Joyce enables his heroine to invoke him.

For the modern reader, the Homeric intertext has already been proclaimed with Joyce’s title, and the “O” recalls echoes of the use of the vocative in ancient texts. Interestingly, the Butcher and Lang translation begins only “Tell me, Muse” and Richmond Lattimore, Walter Shewring and Allen Mandelbaum follow suit. A. T. Murray and Samuel Butler both begin, “Tell me, O Muse” and T. E. Lawrence (Shaw)

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<sup>70</sup> Shari Benstock examines apostrophe in the *Wake* and notices how it creates an event which challenges the nature of the very structure from which it emerges: “Apostrophe insists on a ‘now’ that is impossible, apostrophe calling out to and also exposing this impossibility. The action of apostrophe should exist outside writing, it makes claims to existing outside writing, but its effects put into question the status of the voice *within* writing. Apostrophe turns aside to insist on calling attention to itself, to its effects.... apostrophe calls the question of genre into account” (Benstock 1987, 118). The line between oral poetry and the written text is blurred once again.

<sup>71</sup> Joyce was likely interested in the Greek notion of poetic inspiration, evidenced by the fact that a book of five Platonic dialogues including the *Ion*, the *Symposium*, the *Meno*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Phaedrus* is mentioned in Michael Gillespie’s list of books referred to in *Ulysses* (Gillespie 1983, 102; also see Gillespie 1986, 185).

translates the entire poem in all capital letters, beginning “O DIVINE POESY”. Pope translates “O Muse! Resound!” while William Cowper offers, “ Muse, make the man thy theme...” Joyce would have encountered the use of “O” in the translations of Butler, Lawrence (Shaw), and Pope, and the intertextual echo he was thus inciting is not likely to have been completely accidental. Admittedly, Molly uses “O” as an emphatic kind of exclamation frequently and habitually.<sup>72</sup> Despite the ancient tone the exclamation might seem to connote, Scott Richardson observes that this use of “O” with the vocative never appears in Homer: “when addressing a character Homer never uses the vocative with ὦ, which is used only under circumstances of informality or anger; see Scott (1903, 192-96)” (Richardson 1990, 239). Thus the intertextual allusion created by Molly’s “O Jamesy” echoes the invocation to the Muse and further recalls Homer’s occasional use of apostrophe to address his characters. Samuel Bassett explores the use of the vocative in Homeric speeches, noting that “the vocative is omitted at the beginning of about one-fifth of the speeches of the Homeric poems” (Bassett 1934, 140) and concluding that “the vocative is often omitted, partly at least,

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<sup>72</sup> *U* 18. 24, 62, 66, 110, 222, 229, 243, 276, 306, 366, 368, 402, 410, 458, 476, 552, 584, 588, 595, 660, 718, 732, 809, 915, 986, 1148, 1174, 1180, 1187, 1189, 1195, 1210, 1215, 1297, 1366, 1378, 1426, 1450, 1466, 1467, 1517, 1528, 1533, 1597, 1598. Leopold uses the same exclamation, especially during his orgasm on the beach: *U* 13.736-740; also see *U* 13.771, 792, 824, 849, 851, 866, 867, 872, 1038, 1044, 1085, 1253, 1279. Vincent Sherry finds such instances of “O” to signal “more than the wonder it expresses so persistently, unsentimentally, splendidly. It punctures the militant continuum of print. A symbol shaped like the mouth that produces it, ‘O’ encloses a vocal moment on the page, drives a hole in the time-woven fabric of written words... ‘O’ puts the tale in the mouth, enclosing a time driven print in the no-time Joyce assigns to this episode [‘Penelope’] in the schema” (Sherry 64-65). Sherry takes no stand on any particular use of the exclamation “O” and does not address whether Molly addresses her creator through its use but still avows, “Epic wholeness emerges in *Ulysses* locally, gratuitously, in a language wholly idiosyncratic and genuine to Joyce, in moments of feeling like Molly’s ‘O’” (Sherry 74).



because of the urgency of the situation” (Bassett 1934, 144).<sup>73</sup> Homer may then omit the vocative in his proem and in other instances of apostrophe because of the exigency he perceives his characters to have at those specific points.

Homer’s use of apostrophe has traditionally been construed to illustrate some degree of passionate attachment to his characters. Beginning with the scholiasts and Eustathius, Naoko Yamagata notes that Homer’s “sympathy, pity, or affection” for characters was viewed as the cause of apostrophe.<sup>74</sup> Yet others, such as Campbell Bonner, suggest all of the uses of apostrophe regarding Eumaeus are due to metrical expedience. Bonner does concede that while metrical demands do often explain Homer’s use of apostrophe, sometimes “metrical and rhetorical reasons cooperate”

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<sup>73</sup> Whether the “O” is omitted or not in Homeric poetry may actually be less important because of its status as oral poem. The poet’s voice can hardly be forgotten in the Homeric context, while in the realm of written fiction the “O” is the only means by which the action of the voice can be indicated, as discussed by Shari Benstock: “To hear Joyce (or anyone else) read the text—and Joyce reads from the Anna Livia Plurabelle section, which is itself an apostrophe—is to hear the effects of apostrophe undone. The *O* of the apostrophe, the voice’s image, can exist only in writing; the *O* on the page gives evidence of the impossibility of apostrophe’s own invoked effect. The *O* attests to the nonexistence of the voice that the apostrophe would call into sound: there remains only the *O*, only the sign, only the marker” (Benstock 1987, 119; further, see Benstock 1989). This sign or marker is particularly crucial in *Ulysses*, much more than it could have been for oral poets.

<sup>74</sup> Yamagata divides the positions of various scholars into three groups: those who subscribe to the idea that apostrophe expresses narrative emotion, those who subscribe to its use solely for metrical expedience, and those who believe the Iliadic examples are sympathetic while the Eumaeus examples in the *Odyssey* are only metrically significant (Yamagata 91). On apostrophe in Homer, see John Scott (1903), Campbell Bonner (1905), R. M. Henry (1905), Adam Parry (1972), V. J. Matthews (1980), Elizabeth Block (1982), Ann Bergren (1982), Robin Hankey (1985), Jasper Griffin (1976, 1980, 103-143, 1986), Mark Edwards (1987, 37-40), Irene de Jong (1987, 13-14, 60, 250), Scott Richardson (1990), and Ahuvia Kahane (1994, 153-155). On apostrophe in general (especially occurring in modern poetry ranging from Blake to Whitman to Shelley to Keats), see Jonathan Culler (1977); on apostrophe in Dante, see Erich Auerbach (1973).

(Bonner 386).<sup>75</sup> Unquestionably Homer does pique our curiosity about Eumaeus because he is the only one singled out thusly in the *Odyssey*. Naoko Yamagata recognizes

some signs of the poet's attitude towards his characters. He never uses the interjection O or patronymic-name combinations when addressing them. That reflects his reserved attitude. Therefore, it is hard to think that he is (or shows himself to be) in an emotional condition or that he treats his characters as if they are real beings standing in front of him....Being in a position to consult the music-deities and without talking to his characters as real persons, the poet retains his identity as a poet and his renowned impersonality.  
(Yamagata 103)

The fact that Homer never addresses the audience directly in the *Odyssey*, while he does so five times in the *Iliad* (*Il.* IV.223, 429; V.85; XV.697; XVII.366) further emphasizes Homer's degree of detachment and objectivity from his audience in the *Odyssey*. Elizabeth Block argues that "Apostrophe, overtly verbalizing emotion toward either a real or imagined object, thus asks the audience to respond, ideally, as the narrator responds to the situations or evaluations that he introduces" (Block 1982, 9). What that ideal response would consist of in relation to Eumaeus is very difficult to gauge. Certainly he gains a dignity that seems at odds with his station in life because of the respect Homer seems to display by means of apostrophe. But the imputation of respect due to the simple existence of apostrophe is itself subject to interpretation and dispute. Apostrophe indubitably captures our attention and imagination, but how it

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<sup>75</sup> He admits that "it is probably significant...that several instances of the apostrophe occur at critical moments in the narrative, when some character is in peril. In such passages it is natural enough that the poet should heighten the interest by addressing the endangered hero directly" (Bonner 385).

guides the audience's response is quite a point of contention.<sup>76</sup> Robin Hankey makes "the inherently obvious deduction that Homer may in fact have had particular affection and admiration for Eumaeus" (Hankey 32).<sup>77</sup> Despite Eumaeus' rather minor status in the poem, Hankey contends that "he is carefully integrated into the moral design or pattern of the whole *Odyssey*....he may well reveal something of the author's own emotional and moral sympathies" (Hankey 33). Whatever stance one assumes, Homer endows Eumaeus with an unusual significance simply by virtue of the surprise that Homer's use of apostrophe inspires.

Joyce's knowledge of ancient Greek certainly did not extend to such details, but nevertheless his Molly uses the "O" in precisely the correct context for the Greek rules. She is colloquially addressing her creator, whom she seems to know very well indeed; it seems to be Molly who has given Joyce this nickname as the omniscient,

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<sup>76</sup> Block discusses the most indisputable effect of apostrophe, an effect that is equally relevant for both Homer's apostrophe to Eumaeus and Molly's apostrophe to Jamesy: "This 'turning' from one stance to another, from objective to subjective narration, or from one audience to another, which the ancient rhetoricians straightforwardly labeled apostrophe, brings about a complementary change in the stance of the audience...Its purpose, then, is both to move and to teach, and to do so by shifting the attention of the audience, establishing a diversion by which the speaker guides the response of the listener" (Block 1982, 8, 9).

<sup>77</sup> Homer may show a preference for other characters in other ways. Jenny Strauss Clay makes a strong case for the "poet's bias", arguing that the poem demonstrates "the partisanship of the poet for his hero" (Clay 1976, 326). She continues, "The poet defends and proclaims the innocence of his hero...From the very outset, then, Homer shows a proOdyssean bias, a desire to show Odysseus is a favorable light...As he absolves Odysseus of blame for the destruction of his companions, as he passes over in silence the cause of Poseidon's anger, so too, the poet plays down the degree to which Odysseus is implicated in Athena's wrath" (Clay 1976, 317, 326). Mark Edwards claims "Homer does, however, often present his own opinions in the form of explicit comments of the action..." (Edwards 1987, 35; see Chatman 228). Charles Fuqua (1991, 57) and Mary Ebbot (1999, 20) dispute this notion of authorial intervention and commentary; see further Elizabeth Block (1986).

divinely insightful, eminently irritating narrator. Molly seems then to hear the unity of Joyce's narrative voice, a unity which has defied the comprehension of so many readers because of the appearance of what Joyce calls in the *Wake* "my multiple Mes" (*FW* 410.12). Molly's apostrophe invites us to listen to the narrative voice whose unison may have eluded us up to this point in *Ulysses*, exposing Joyce's narrative voice in a way in which Shari Benstock thinks would otherwise be impossible: "In its genre, apostrophe invokes *through* writing an image of the voice that is possible only in writing" (Benstock 1987, 119). Moreover, Molly is angry, annoyed, and frustrated with Jamesy, who listens to her and yet captures her and compels her full disclosure on the page. She wants to stop this invasion of her privacy and the disclosure of all of her disturbing meditations. In some sense, she is asking her Muse to leave her alone, to let the story end. The context of her invocation clarifies this point: right before appealing to Jamesy, she appealed for patience:

have we too much blood in us or what O patience above  
its pouring out of me like the sea anyhow he didn't  
make me pregnant as big as he is I don't want to ruin the  
clean sheets I juts put on I suppose the clean linen I  
wore brought it on too damn it damn it and they always  
want to see stain on the bed to know youre a virgin for  
them all that's troubling them theyre such fools too you  
could be a widow or divorced 40 times over a daub of  
red ink would do or blackberry juice no that's too purply  
O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh sweets of sin  
whoever suggested that business for women  
(*U* 18.1125-1128)

She asks Jamesy to let her up out of this book which explores her "sweets of sin" in such detail.<sup>78</sup> Her disgust as the foolishness of men wanting virgins, and at the

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<sup>78</sup> Boone writes, "the epitome of Joyce's effort to asset control over Molly by having her admit her subjection to his whims ('O let me up') simultaneously ends up unmasking the anxieties that motor Joyce's desire for authorial mastery. For Joyce's

subterfuge and tricks to which women resort for the sake of convincing men of their fidelity, reflects the theme of the entire book in which Leopold has been tormented by her infidelity. Molly's address to Jamesy seems to be incited by profound frustration: frustration with her own menstruation,<sup>79</sup> her desires, and the difficulties of fidelity and marriage with which she is grappling, all of the complexities of "that business for women", many of the same complexities Homer explored in the *Odyssey*. After all, most of *Ulysses* has been focusing upon the vagaries of fidelity, and Molly's address to Jamesy seems to express her wish to be done with that task once and for all. If indeed she does recognize the nature of the narrative task which Jamesy has imposed upon her, her complaint that "I don't like books with a Molly in them" (*U* 18.657-658) can be construed as another barely concealed jibe at Jamesy, another criticism of the book in which she is participating against her will.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, her appeal "can you

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name, his self-conscious signature, is left irretrievably stranded among references to Molly's menstrual blood (sign of Molly's own creative fiat), thoughts about women's capacities to simulate virginity (and hence rob fatherhood of its certitude) and signs of domestic rebellion.... 'Jamesy' is fairly outnumbered, his authorial intrusion overwhelmed by those 'countersigns' of incipient female authority most calculated to whet his own masculine anxieties" (Boone 1992, 80; see further Boone 1993).

<sup>79</sup> Derek Attridge argues that "Joyce allows us to read the event of menstruation as a literalizing and demystifying of myth...through Molly's thoughts, Joyce both alerts us to the myth ('like the sea') and reduces it to a messy and inconvenient reality, for the introduction of which the author himself seems to accept some blame ('O Jamesy let me up out of this')" (Attridge 1989, 561). The idea that Joyce himself is responsible for the narrative morass he creates is perhaps intimated by the peculiar words: "I you he they. Come, mess" (*U* 9.891-2). With the confusion of pronouns and narrative voices Joyce crafts, he has forced upon both his characters and his readers quite a serious mess!

<sup>80</sup> Jonathan Culler writes, "To read apostrophe as a sign of a fiction which knows its own fictive nature is to stress its optative character, its impossible imperatives: commands which in their explicit impossibility figure events in and of fiction" (Culler 65). Molly's apostrophe is so perturbing precisely because it indicates her awareness of herself as a character at Jamesy's mercy.

feel him trying to make a whore of me” (*U* 18.96) seems another dual form of apostrophe, addressing the reader and Jamesy simultaneously. Jean Paul Riquelme observes a parallel kind of apostrophe in *Finnegans Wake*: “Anna Livia addresses both her husband *and* the reader when she claims: ‘You’re changing from me’ (*FW* 626.36)” (Riquelme 1984, 9). Molly seems to feel that her husband, her creator Jamesy, or even her lover Boylan are all “trying to make a whore of” her (*U* 18.96). She may be pleading to the readers to appreciate these three men’s trespasses upon her, or she may be pleading with Jamesy to recognize the same of the mortal men in her life. This ambiguity of multivalent meanings results from what Dorrit Cohn calls “the profusion and referential instability of [her] pronouns” (Cohn 229; further, see Hayman 1970, 100). Moreover, Molly’s accusation creates yet another moment of surprise and embarrassment,<sup>81</sup> compelling the reader to pause to reassess who is speaking about whom. If Molly knows what is happening to her as a character, it would be entirely within Jamesy’s power to let her up and away from such pondering. Molly wants Jamesy to grant her escape from the whole mess, the “pooh” that has come to characterize her life in attempting to meet the demands of the gender rules and roles of her society.<sup>82</sup> Her apostrophe invites us to view her situation through her

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<sup>81</sup> See Culler, who writes that apostrophes “are embarrassing...both to the author and his readers...This minor embarrassment which apostrophe provokes may be taken as a sign of a larger and more interesting embarrassment which leads literary critics to turn aside from the apostrophes they encounter in poetry: to repress them or rather to transform apostrophe into description” (Culler 1977, 59). This repression or oversimplification is perhaps also fostered by the tremendous difficulty of understanding how apostrophe functions.

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Boone argues that Molly has already accomplished her own liberation to some extent: “Having dismissed her creator, she is free to exist beyond his text in a realm to which his representational powers can only gesture. On some profound level that is not merely a critic’s dream, Molly has indeed escaped the

eyes, much as Robert Martin suggests Achilles' apostrophe to Patroclus would have done (Martin 1989, 235). Whereas Block states "in Homer apostrophe synchronizes the relation between narrator and audience and affirms the mutuality of subjective emotion" (Block 1986, 163), in Joyce, Molly's apostrophe establishes a bond between character and audience. By appealing for mercy from her creator, her audience is inspired to pity her even as they are stunned and impressed by her prescience and her self-once they are alerted to a previously concealed struggle between narrator and character.

Another veiled reference to Jamesy can be found in Molly's words at another point when Molly imagines Stephen writing a book about her:

I can teach him the other part Ill make him feel all over him  
till he half faints under me then hell write about me lover  
and mistress publicly too with our 2 photographs in all the  
papers when he becomes famous O but then what am I  
going to do about him though  
(U 18.1363-1367)

The absence of apostrophes as punctuation illustrates her sudden disposal of all caution and vigilance: "hell write about me lover". Her sudden "O" clarifies her remembrance that she is already in a book and that it's actually sort of a hell she would like to escape. "O but what I am I going to do about him then" refers to the problem of Jamesy and how to get rid of him as much as it may refer to her husband. Being "lover and mistress publicly too" seems to inspire no recriminations or worries,

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bedfastness of *Ulysses*, living beyond its pages as an independent agent with the uncanny ability of returning without notice to haunt her creator's subconscious" (Boone 1992, 82). Boone makes this claim after establishing "That Joyce senses Molly's power to escape his text is stunningly captured in a dream he had of Molly" (Boone 1992, 82). Even so, Molly never displays any indisputable understanding of her role as Joycean counterpart to Homer's Penelope.

but what to do about the real Jamesy who is actually going to become famous is a crisis worthy of another “O” of appeal.

In knowing her narrator, Molly seems to have been visited with divine insight, just like Homer was. Molly recognizes the violation that Jamesy is making upon her privacy, while no other characters except perhaps Virag ever seem to know that Jamesy reports their every emotion and thought as he pleases.<sup>83</sup> In this perspective, Joyce is the Muse while Molly has now taken the role of Homer: she understands that she is the instrument through which Joyce tells his story.<sup>84</sup> In Joyce’s retelling of Homer’s *Odyssey*, the heroine becomes the means of telling the story, rather than the author, and she knows it. Molly is the means by which the story is conveyed, much as Homer described his own position as an instrument of the Muse in his proem. Given her protest and her desire to escape “the pooh” of her own words, Molly would seem to have assumed Homer’s role only under compulsion and against her will. Her protest

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<sup>83</sup> As Alfred Appel avers, Virag shows the same recognition of his status as character and of Joyce as creator when he says in Nighttown, “‘That suits your book, eh?’ When in acknowledgement his throat is made to twitch, Virag says, “Slapbang! There he goes again.’ Virag is quite right to speak directly to Joyce, because the phantasmagoria of Night-town are the artist’s. Virag accepts the truth that he is another’s creation, and does so far more gracefully than Alice [from Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*] or poor Krug in Nabokov’s *Bend Sinister*, who is instantaneously rendered insane by the realization” (Nabokov 191, xxvi). Virag only accepts that truth as a ghost who has already committed suicide, though, which Appel does not mention. In contrast, Alice bursts into tears and insists upon her own reality when confronted with her existential status as character (see Nabokov xxiv-xxv).

<sup>84</sup> In this vein, Jean Paul Riquelme suggests, “At that limit teller’s voice fuses with character’s. In the apparently unmediated style of Molly Bloom’s soliloquy, the teller, like his favorite hero, cohabits with Penelope in a climactic homecoming.... Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Joyce as Ulysses, is a Homeric *correspondance* from author to reader and between teller and character” (Riquelme 1983, 134). Riquelme asserts that the teller remains unnamed and unnamable, never mentioning Jamesy (Riquelme 1983, 133).



to him is the only direct evidence of his presence, just as the interaction between Homer and the Muse in the proem is the only explicit demonstration of their collaboration, the only warning of the subtle and implicit interaction in which they engage throughout rest of the poem.<sup>85</sup> Molly breaks through Jamesy's mask to assert his existence and to beg for her own freedom from the confines of his story. In a symmetrical violation of the narrative mask, Homer announces his own ideas about the poem in his proem before the Muse joins him.

Jamesy becomes like God for Molly, defining her reality, her freedom, her purpose: like Homeric heroes praying to the gods, she waits and prays to be freed from her sufferings. Elsewhere, the divine power and role of the narrator is firmly declared: "I, Bous Stephanoumenos, bullockbefriending bard, am lord and giver of their life" (*U* 14.1115-6). The transformation of Stephen's name into a Greek participle in the middle voice further exposes the combination of activity and passivity which characterizes the narrative task. Joyce himself has assumed the position of Muse, "lord and giver of their life," but under the new name Jamesy. By allowing Molly to address her creator "O Jamesy", Joyce is naming himself, albeit in another recognizable yet permuted name, as his own Muse. Molly is only able to address her creator because he permits her to do so; Joyce allows her to pull him into the text. The remarkable narrative power and skill he has demonstrated surely would extend to censoring her

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<sup>85</sup> Margalit Finkelberg argues that "the Muses were seen as active participants in the oral poet's improvisation in performance....In the Greek tradition, the idea of the poet's inspiration by the Muse offers and excellent alibi for creative intervention. Thanks to this idea, each of the poet's innovations automatically gains the status of divine truth in virtue of its origin in divine inspiration....Thus, paradoxically, the Greek poet's dependence on the Muse both allows for a greater freedom on his part and gives legitimation to this creative freedom" (Finkelberg 296). Further, on Homer as an innovator, see Combellack (1976).

appeal if he should so desire. Joyce is thus proclaiming his own presence to his audience through Molly's devices by creating a moment in which Molly's voice supercedes his own entirely even as he endows her with that voice. Joseph Boone's comment that "Literally, of course, Molly, like any fictional character, cannot exist alone. It takes a Joyce to write a Molly into being, just as it takes a reader to give her textual life" (Boone 1992) reveals how the tasks of reader, author, and character are inextricably bound together and in their trinity create textual meaning. Molly's apostrophe to Jamesy functions as an illustration and enactment of that necessary collusion and cooperation.

If we take Joyce's title as a literal announcement that the *Odyssey* is being retold, that Leopold really is "like another Ulysses," (*U* 9.403), then Joyce, as another Homer, must rely upon the Muse as well. But what can that mean? Does Joyce himself simply assume the Muse's powers and behave as if he were divine or divinely inspired? Sheldon Brivic offers support for the contention that Joyce aspired to becoming his own Muse and assuming the divine powers of narration to which Homer had access. Brivic argues that Joyce takes it upon himself to write

as a self-conscious god....Joyce continually played the role of a god in the world he created...No artist represented himself through images of godhead more systematically or intrusively.  
(Brivic 9, 8)

In this view, Joyce strove to be like God as a writer, his artistic aspirations matching those of the Homeric heroes to be godlike, rather than becoming fully divine.

Providing credence for this claim, Brivic claims that Joyce's

thinking remained theistic....As Hugh Kenner points out, 'Joyce never doubted the existence of God...'  
[Kenner 1948, 166]. Kenner observes, however, that

Joyce came to look on god as a threatening figure; and I am arguing that a major factor in Joyce's relation to God was competition.  
(Brivic 13)

In some sense, then, Joyce is competing with God by recreating the world in his texts as he sees fit. Despite this desire to become like god in his own work, Joyce did not actually think that he could ever render God superfluous.<sup>86</sup> Brivic concedes that Joyce “never recants the desire to be god” (Brivic 1985, 20). The diversity of his narrative styles bear out how he makes every effort to satisfy that desire in his role as author by transcending all typical authorial roles, rules, and limitations. Hence we share the frustration and the fascination which drove Richard Ellmann to state somewhat sarcastically and yet utterly truthfully: “neither God nor Homer could compete with Joyce in self-consciousness” (Ellmann 1977, 25). In becoming his own Muse, Joyce escapes his own mortality, achieving immortality on the page. Hence Joyce, as Jamesy, seems to attain some union with the divine by virtue of his startling variations in narrative style. In “playing the role of god” as Brivic describes, Joyce engineers the return of the Muse in the guise of Jamesy. The interplay between Homer and the Muse is echoed in the interplay of Joyce's many narrative voices. In Molly's apostrophe we find the clue that confirms our suspicion that Jamesy is the inspired Joyce, the single narrator of as many guises as Homer's gods. As Hugh Kenner insists so vehemently, “Joyce, let us make no mistake, is always present in *Ulysses*, and no talk of that dyad of technicians, the self-effacing narrator and the mischievous Arranger, should permit us wholly to forget that fact” (Kenner 1987, 68-69).

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<sup>86</sup> In Brivic's view, “Joyce had difficulty accepting one consequence of Stephen's view of the artist as deity—that Joyce's characters lived in a world in which God exists. He was amply skeptical and diffident about his divinity; but he realized that he had to assume that power insofar as he wanted to give his world life and coherence” (Brivic 9).

## IN SEARCH OF JAMESY: ONE NARRATOR OF MANY TURNS

So J. J. puts in a word...

(*U* 12.1192)

Literally, O'Molloy as J. J. is just making a statement, describing the action for his audience. But the dual meaning of the initials provokes another interpretation: that our author is the narrator behind every word in *Ulysses*, always putting in a word whether we recognize it as his or not. Brook Thomas asserts that "The entire Odyssean structure is a means by which Joyce brings the teller back into the tale" (Thomas 38), noticing how the realistic story and the story of the narrator's contortions and tricks exist side by side: "Attentive readers find that the words of *Ulysses* sustain 'two tales' simultaneously: the naturalistic 'story' and a self-reflexive 'tale of the telling' which acknowledges the techniques Joyce uses..." (Thomas 1977, 37). In the naturalistic story, O'Molloy is speaking, but in the tale of the telling, Joyce is inserting a reminder of his own omniscience and omnipresence.

But is there only one narrator identical with our author in *Ulysses*? This question has been the focus of much dispute and controversy. Christine van Boheemen describes the various considerations that have inspired the need to seek some clarity concerning the identity of the narrator or narrators in *Ulysses*:

Did Joyce want to present an image of language as no longer tied to human consciousness, language as autonomous? It is true that styles and discourses seemingly lead their own independent lives in *Ulysses*, turning up when and where and as they list. It is a peculiarity that presents a problem of interpretation at the macrolevel of the text. What is the central point of

view of the novel itself? How can we circumscribe, identify, personify the implied author as source of his text? The classic humanistic personification of the author as a single being with a single, unified point of view, is questioned by the practice of *Ulysses*. Who narrates the novel? Or should we ask, 'Who narrates the novel?' or perhaps, 'What narrates *Ulysses*?' The polylogued nature of the text has driven one critic to conclude that *Ulysses* 'deconstructs any possible author'; another postulates a single author who plays different roles, one of which is 'the arranger'; and a third sees the progression of stylistic experiments as an odyssey in itself.

(Boheemen 1987, 156-7)<sup>87</sup>

I submit that what van Boheemen calls "the polylogued nature of the text" is the result of Joyce's collaboration with Jamesy, just as the *Odyssey* is the result of Homer's collaboration with the Muse. Homer lets us know that the Muse is telling the story with and through him, just as Molly lets us know that Jamesy is the one telling the story with and through her.<sup>88</sup> The Muse and Jamesy are the ones with the power to

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<sup>87</sup> She refers to Colin MacCabe (1978), David Hayman (1970), and Karen Lawrence (1981). Steinberg finds Lawrence's position to coincide the Uncle Charles Principle, despite no declaration of that fact on her part, because she admits to "an 'intersubjectivity' between narrator and character" (Lawrence 1981, 65), and avers to "sympathy" between Bloom and the author (Lawrence 1981, 50; see Steinberg for full discussion (Steinberg 1985, 425, note 15)).

<sup>88</sup> Riquelme comments upon the way in which the narrative rationale reflects Homer: "The narrator's presence is of a structural sort, and that is an odd kind of presence indeed. It reveals itself through difference: through the difference between the character's interior voice and the surrounding narration, and through the differences in styles as he narration proceeds from episode to episode. Through these differences, these shifts of language, in the interstices between the different styles, the narrator's structural presence emerges as the rationale for the book's arrangement, as the pattern in the carpet, the spectrum of a coat with many colors... That rationale is polytropic and Odyssean. Like the hero of the *Odyssey* in Homer's opening invocation to the Muse, the teller is not named. We know him only by his actions and by the figure left behind as the linguistic trace of his act of telling" (Riquelme 1983, 133). I suggest that the name Jamesy is yet another linguistic trace which serves to identify its maker. Jamesy as narrator remains invisible while enabling us to name him and recognize him through Molly Bloom's perspective. The Muse is the one to name

enter the minds of characters and to manipulate time in order to capture their thoughts and unfolding events with language.

On the basis of the intertextual echoes created between Molly's and Homer's invocations, *Ulysses* can be viewed as having a single narrator named Jamesy, the divinely inspired Joyce whom the divinely inspired Molly recognizes. With this interpretation of the narration, there is no need to seek the Arranger, or to cite the Uncle Charles Principle or the Benstock Principle.<sup>89</sup> There is never then any "new"

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Odysseus first at *Od* 1.20, while Homer's name never enters his own poem. But Homer did not remain anonymous, and neither does Joyce.

<sup>89</sup> David Hayman posited the existence of the Arranger who inserts various asides into the narrative "generated by a single impulse if not a single persona, a resourceful clown of many masks, a figure apparently poles apart from the self-effacing narrator. The figure may be thought of as an arranger, a nameless and whimsical-seeming authorial projection...." (Hayman 1974, 265). Elsewhere, he states, "Ultimately, we may attribute to him the very chapter shifts, inexplicable naturalistically and only partly related to the *Odyssey* parallels" (Hayman 1974, 266; see further Hayman 1970, repr. 1982, 88-104, 122-125, and John Somer). As Somer notes, "Kenner demonstrates the presence of the Arranger in the first half of the novel... Even though Kenner sees the arranger as responsible for the quirks in the text, he insists Joyce is the governing consciousness behind it" (Somer 76-77; see Kenner 1987, 61-71). Kenner proposed a different solution to the narrative perplexities: "So let us designate the Uncle Charles Principle: *the narrative idiom need not be the narrator's*" (Kenner 1978, 18). Kenner contends that Joyce then "referred stylistic decisions to the taste of the person he was playing" (Kenner 1978, 22), meaning that he made the stylistic decision that would illustrate the character whose role he had assumed for narrative purposes. The Benstocks complain of the inadequacy of both solutions, explaining "No matter by what name we call the narrator, he is still always functioning according to terms delineated by the term 'narrator' itself" (Benstock 1982, 18). While they admit that "certainly characters influence the direction of the narrative", they present the Benstock Principle: "Fictional texts that exploit free speech (the narrational mode most common to *Ulysses*) establish the contextual supremacy of subject matter, which influences the direction, tone, pace, point of view, and method of narration" (Benstock 1982, 18). Erwin Steinberg alludes to "an even simpler explanation... We have with us in *Ulysses* our old friend 'the intrusive narrator,' familiar to all readers of nineteenth century fiction..." (Steinberg 1985, 421-422). Steinberg provides a very useful and insightful summary of the various

narrator in *Ulysses* at all, despite the proliferation of stylistic changes; every seemingly new narrator is only Jamesy in another guise.<sup>90</sup> Joyce is emulating the same perturbing complicity between the poet and divinity that one finds in the *Odyssey*. Jamesy is simply πολύτροπος, like Odysseus.<sup>91</sup> Like Athena, who changes form at will, Jamesy assumes different forms in each chapter, yet he is always himself.<sup>92</sup> The

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principles and hypotheses which have been offered to explain the narration of *Ulysses* (Steinberg 1993), as does Michael Seidel (Seidel 2002, 80-98).

<sup>90</sup> I am countering Michael Gillespie's view that in *Ulysses*, Joyce creates "a palpable paradigmatic tension between a narrative voice training for conformity within a particular context and discourse and the reader's sense of a consistent narrative consciousness....In planning *Ulysses*, Joyce determined upon a radical departure, featuring a range of figures acting independently and in polyvocal competition with the narrative voice" (Gillespie 1989, 14). To the contrary, I am suggesting that the apparent multiplicity of narrative voices, and the tensions between them, is a reflection of the union of Joyce and Jamesy as a single narrative voice behind *Ulysses*. Gillespie, however, presents a thorough and provocative analysis of Joyce's narrative evolution throughout his various works. Despite our differences in viewing the narrative voice of *Ulysses* as singular rather than plural, both of our readings confirm the fact that "*Ulysses* denies the existence of a hegemonic reading and affirms the obligation of the reader to continue to create and recreate meaning from what is presented" (Gillespie 1989, 16), especially since the narrative styles and strategies of *Ulysses* "leave to the reader the task of forming a coherent sense of the action" (Gillespie 1989, 16). Gillespie offers a much different assessment of how to fulfill that task than I do, as does Bernard Benstock in examining "the ways in which narrative functions in *Ulysses* in relation to the changing contextual situations in the narrative" (Benstock 1991, 1).

<sup>91</sup> On the combined active and passive senses of the word, see W. B. Stanford (1950), Rüter (1969, 35-7), Jenny Strauss Clay (1983, 25-34), Pietro Pucci (1987, 24-5), John Peradotto (1990, 115-117), and Irene de Jong (2001, 7). Riquelme endows Joyce as teller with this quality: "The styles of *Ulysses* are the styles of its teller as *Ulysses*, as *polytropos*" (Riquelme 1982, 24).

<sup>92</sup> Thomas elaborates upon this idea: "The crime our author has committed is one of forgery. Masquerading as the God of creation he forges a counterfeit world of Dublin and sends a counterfeit image of himself—Stephen—to walk its pages...Joyce...scatters evidence of his forgery throughout *Ulysses*" (Thomas 1977, 36-37). Yet Joyce is not only Stephen; he assumes the identities of countless characters. Still, where Thomas' argument intersects and confirms mine is in his

problem then becomes trying to distinguish Jamesy from Joyce, just as the problem in the *Odyssey* is to distinguish Homer from the Muse.<sup>93</sup> All too often that task simply proves impossible, so that Homer and the Muse are simply considered to be one narrator, just as Joyce and Jamesy can be. In this way, the author of each text both is and is not the narrator telling the story. This paradox of narration must be confronted in both texts, because Homer both is and is not his own narrator, just like Joyce. Joyce as author is both undeniably present and disturbingly absent in every word he writes; as Brivic comments, “Like God, [Joyce] is a complex mystery deep within everything at the same time that he is high above and far beyond it” (Brivic 25). The Muse achieves precisely that status after she accepts the invitation of Homer’s poem.

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insistence over Joyce’s constant narrative presence: “Rather than remaining distant and aloof, Joyce actively returns as a voice within his own text” (Thomas 1977, 37). Riquelme agrees: “For Joyce’s all-powerful narrator, the choice of invisibility and the acts of withdrawing mark his presence....Joyce’s narrator in *Ulysses* is a bit like gravity. We don’t see gravity but we do perceive its manifestations. It would be as silly to deny a narrator’s presence as to deny gravity” (Riquelme 1982, 23). He argues further: “Does no one besides Molly Bloom narrate ‘Penelope’? Even the stream of consciousness needs banks, in this case provided implicitly by the chameleonic narrator of the preceding seventeen episodes. His change of state reveals him. The paradox here may make us uncomfortable, but it seems unavoidable and indisputable: the author’s persona makes itself felt through its apparent invisibility” (Riquelme 1983, 132). Like the gods in Homer, whose presence is easiest to distinguish when they change forms, so is Joyce as narrator.

<sup>93</sup> As Somer describes Hayman’s arranger: “the narrator (the mimetic agent) and the arranger (the self-reflexive agent) share equal billing as sources of narrative...” (Somer 76). Homer as narrator and Muse as arranger share a similar complicity and responsibility for the poem as a whole. Elliott Gose takes a slightly different stance but one which still assumes that Joyce’s creative efforts result from some union with divinity: “As a male himself, he recognized a submerged, complementary nature, the female as his soul and muse, the consubstantial goddess of generation who can be discerned behind the revealing-concealing words of *Ulysses* as the divine principle of creativity in Joyce’s world” (Gose 168). This consubstantiality provides a remarkable point of intersection between Homer and Joyce.



Karen Lawrence comments upon how the tremendous versatility of Joyce's narrative styles in *Ulysses* allows him to don various narrative marks which serve the peculiar dual purpose of concealing the author while proclaiming him undeniably present and active.<sup>94</sup> The assumption of such masks may not be an invention of modernism or postmodernism but a resumption of the ancient mode of storytelling in which Homer engages. For Homer too assumes a mask which confuses the extent of his agency by attributing his poem to the Muse's interference. Nancy Felson helps us to understand and explore this identification between the named creator of the text and the instrument of its conveyance. She draws a distinction between the source of the *Odyssey* and the singer, by differentiating between the author and the performer:

The creator 'HOMER' and the performer 'Homer' cannot readily be separated. In the audience's experience, the  $\mu\omicron\iota$  in the opening line of the *Odyssey* must refer to both, taken together. For that ancient audience, the two identities collapse into one, HOMER/Homer, who then takes on the role of narrator....HOMER/Homer rarely breaks through the mask of narrator which he dons from the start.  
(Felson 1997, 11)

Thus the complexities of different performers of Homer's poem to which Felson draws our attention only confuse the situation further. But no matter who is singing the song, the collusion between Homer and the Muse remains the central problem for the interpretation of the narrative mask. If we suppose that the narrator Jamesy pervades

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<sup>94</sup> She writes, "One of Joyce's distinctions among modern writers is that he created and then abandoned what we normally think of as a personal or authentic style, and *Ulysses* itself records that process....Probably the most significant change in the style of narration is the abandonment, roughly halfway through the book, of the third-person narrative style with which *Ulysses* begins...This is the style whose absence we feel when it is replaced by a series of rhetorical masks. These masks in the second half of *Ulysses* both reveal and disguise the author" (Lawrence 1981, 8-9).

every word in the same way that the Muse pervades every word of the *Odyssey* from Book 1, line 11 onward, then James Joyce and Homer both tell their stories by cultivating a narrative mask which allows them to obscure their own contributions to the narrative which they are credited with creating. The effort to disguise the source of the narration unites the narrative strategies of *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey*.

One very striking effect of this strategy of narrative disguise is the ways in which it condemns the narrator to a great multiplicity of roles and identities. The narrator is himself and yet more than himself, because his own identity intersects with his characters themselves. Karen Lawrence characterizes the nature of this enigma by explaining, “The rhetorical masks that Joyce created in *Ulysses* allowed the writing to be both the ‘me’ and the ‘not me’ of the writer” (Lawrence 1981, 9). This duality is the same one that Homer accomplishes with his invocation to the Muse. Homer is always both himself and not himself, both Homer and more than Homer, as the Homer inspired by the Muse. Further, both creators both are and are not their characters as well, because they assume their perspectives and convey their thoughts and emotions, capturing what goes on in their most private thoughts in public language. As Paula Froula puts it, “We can imagine Joyce saying, ‘Molly Bloom, c’est moi,’ or better yet, ‘I am and am not Molly Bloom.’” (Froula 2). Joyce himself becomes his heroes at the same time as he is the detached creator, imitating Homer’s assumption of the same ability.

Despite the tremendous documentation of Joyce’s life, there is no evidence anywhere that anyone ever called him Jamesy in real life. The narrator of *Ulysses* is not the “Jim” with whom Nora lived. The exact source of the name Jamesy, and his identity, remain shrouded in uncertainty. In the same way, the identity of Homer’s

Muse remains unknown as well. We learn that there are nine Muses (*Od.* 24.60), but we never learn which one came to Homer's aid, nor if he had any particular one in mind. The Muse and Jamesy fulfill very similar roles in each text, while protecting the ambiguity of their identities and functions. Homer and Joyce both are and are not their own narrators; even the nickname Molly chooses for Joyce expresses that fact by separating him from the historical James Joyce.

Others, of course, have ascribed to the theory of a single narrator of *Ulysses*, including Brook Thomas, who resolves the conundrum presented by the variety of Joyce's narrative styles by tracing how "the hidden hand is again at its old game" (*U* 464).<sup>95</sup> He finds a single hidden hand, that of Joyce, controlling the entire narrative:

Joyce...returns to participate in his creation, not only as a voice unveiling itself from its hiding place within the naturalistic surface, but also as a name hidden within the text....Finally *Ulysses*' forger virtually confesses his crime by inserting his own initials within the text....O'Molloy speaks as 'J. J.', the creator who Stephen says 'is doubtless all in all in all of us' (*U* 9.1049-50).  
(Thomas 1977, 39, 40)<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Erwin Steinberg cites an address to the reader in *Ulysses*: "Did heart leap to heart? Nay, fair reader. In a breath, 'twas done, but—hold! Back! It must not be!" and concludes that Joyce "must intrude [upon his own narrative] to mock. Who else could possibly be carrying on between the covers of *Ulysses* but James Joyce, the man who by continually changing styles keeps reminding us he is there, the twentieth century artist, who, having declared himself God's equal, gleefully cavorts within his handiwork, visible, larger than life, immodest, demanding attention?" (Steinberg 1985, 424). He suggests elsewhere: "Joyce has given up his avowal in *Portrait* that the author should be invisible" (Steinberg 1993, 119). His contention of Joyce as intrusive author (Steinberg 1993, 119; 1985, 421-22) is easily reconciled with my notion that Jamesy is the name that intrusive narrator gives himself.

<sup>96</sup> Joyce quite plausibly conceals his own name within *Finnegans Wake* as well, as Jean Paul Riquelme mentions: "The author signs his texts not only by affixing a name to a title page but by the mere act of writing. Like Gutenberg as

One reason, then, that “one thinks of Homer” (*U* 9.1165) as a reader of *Ulysses* is because Joyce has become the same kind of narrator as Homer. Steinberg supports Brook Thomas’ idea that one Joyce is constantly present:

Joyce himself traces an odyssey of a disappearing and returning artist...It is Joyce, the master ventriloquist, who gives voice to all the characters of *Ulysses*....Joyce intrudes a new ‘voice’ into the world of *Ulysses*—his own.  
(Steinberg 1982, 36, 151)

Homer too became a ventriloquist with the help of the Muse, and even assumes Odysseus’ voice for almost a quarter of his poem so that Odysseus can tell his own story from Books 9-12. With the emergence of Jamesy, Joyce is able to become his characters and then step outside of them to comment upon the narrative they have constructed together, just like Homer does with his use of apostrophe. As Felson explains,

HOMER/Homer narrates the story inspired by the Muse (*andra moi ennepe Mousa*), only occasionally breaking the frame between himself, as the instrument of the Muse, and himself as a member of the audience’s culture. Now and then, when he pretends to enter the narrative worlds of his characters through apostrophe, those at the performance would have recognized the ploy....When Homer uses apostrophe...instead of being outside the story he narrates, he poses as an insider, as one who is on the same narrative level as his characters.  
(Felson 1997, 11, 149)

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‘Gutenmorg,’ the maker emerges from the book as wodpress by merging with it. Squirting out from the pressings comes the screen that is the author’s image. If ‘jas jos” abbreviates the real author’s name, the combinations of vowels here and in some other parts of the *Wake* abbreviate the abbreviation” (Riquelme 1984, 24-25). The cunning tricks and games that Joyce plays with his own identity call attention to his role while making that role all the more enigmatic.

With this in mind, all of the credit that Joyce has received from his revolutionary narrative technique of interior monologue seems somewhat misplaced.<sup>97</sup> Jamesy is Joyce's insider, the Muse who can enter the same narrative level of his characters.

Thus we can only guess whether the Muse or Homer feels compelled to address Eumaeus directly. Molly turns to her Muse and begs him to let her go; she does not want to be an instrument trapped in his "pooh." In the *Odyssey*, the opposite kind of address is found: on thirteen occasions, Homer and the Muse turn to Eumaeus (*Od.* 14.55, 165, 360, 442, 507; 16.60, 135, 464; 17.272, 311, 380, 512, 579; two other

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<sup>97</sup> Irene de Jong submits that certain digressions in Homer which occur during the course of the narrative should be construed as occurring within the mind of a character and expressing that character's particular attitudes through narrative techniques and specific details. She offers the example of *Od.* 19.393-466, the story of Eurykleia washing Odysseus' feet, recognizing the scar, and remembering the context of his naming. The repeated ἔγνων, (*Od.* 19.392, 468) "suggests that we interpret it as *her* recollection triggered off by the recognition of the scar...we are dealing with one of the rare long passages where the point of view of a character is represented in the narrative instead of being expressed directly by the character in the form of a speech" (de Jong 1985, 517). This narrative digression, which actually enables the narrator to enter the mind of the character and tell the story from their perspective, seems like a mirror image of Joyce's interior monologues. Homer enters the characters' minds and conveys information in their own words as it goes through their minds. The form of Eurykleia's recollection, if one accepts de Jong's premises, seems shockingly like a Homeric interior monologue. Gillespie seems to discover in the narrator of *Ulysses* the same ability that de Jong observes in the narrator of the *Odyssey*: "Aspects of the nature of a particular character continue to blend with the persona of the narrator, but the pattern appears sporadically" (Gillespie 1989, 174). Benstock also observes how certain passages meld the internal perspective of characters with the narrator's external perspective, so that "it delineates what is 'in his mind' but is neither objective narration nor directly verbalized thought process—more particularly, a temporary bridge between...." (Benstock 1991, 34). Such moments of intersection between narrator and character manage "to undermine the authority of external narration, subverting it actively for the subjective" (Benstock 1991, 34; see 19-38). What Joyce does with Leopold and Stephen, among others, Homer would seem to have done with Eurykleia.

variants also occur: *Od.* 15.325, 22.194).<sup>98</sup> The proliferation of these addresses confers an unusual status upon Eumaeus, and seems to indicate some special affinity for him. Kahane argues that the narrator's apostrophes toward Eumaeus prove "the narrator's sympathetic attitude toward particular characters....[apostrophe] is at least in part a device for expressing sympathy" (Kahane 1994, 113, 112), while Griffin comments that "the openly laudatory comment [about Eumaeus, *Od.* 15.556-557] departs widely from the normal reticence of the epic narrator" (Griffin 1986, 47).<sup>99</sup> (His term "epic narrator" is of course referring to the joint efforts of the Muse and Homer after the proem.) Richardson disputes this claim; while admitting that "the scholiasts claimed that the apostrophe was designed to arouse greater sympathy with the character addressed" (Richardson 1990, 171), he asserts that "the effect is indeed a bond of sorts between reader and character, but the narrator elicits sympathy without showing any

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<sup>98</sup> Bruce Louden remarks that Eumaeus "is singled out by the principal narrator as the sole recipient of apostrophe, a consequence of his function as an internal audience" (Louden 65). Richardson also discusses the five addresses to the narratee in the *Iliad*, and the occasions in the *Iliad* when the narrator speaks in the first person, "proudly thrusting his 'I' upon us in association with the goddesses of narrative" (Richardson 1990, 181, also see 174-182). In the *Odyssey*, the narrator never adopts the first person stance, nor speaks directly to the audience. Richardson notes the persistence of the position that metrical necessity justifies the reliance upon apostrophe, citing Edwards (1987, 38), Parry (1972, 9), Matthews (1980), and Bonner (1905). I add Yamagata (1989) to that list.

<sup>99</sup> Very rarely, the narrator of *Ulysses* comments on the content of what is being related: "...the would be assailant came to grief and (alas to relate!) the coveted castle too" (*U* 13.48). The "alas" expresses the emotions of assailant and narrator simultaneously, demonstrating some degree of narrative sympathy, however sarcastic or ironic it may be.

sympathy of his own” (Richardson 1990, 171).<sup>100</sup> In his view, the sympathy for the addressee is aroused in the audience, not declared by the narrator:

The sympathy for the apostrophized characters in Homer comes not from the attitude expressed by the narrator but from the intimacy effected by the metalepsis....the narrator engages the narratee’s sympathy by establishing a close alliance between the narrator and the character who inspires the transgression... Through the narrator, the narratee becomes an intimate of Patroklos, Menelaus, and Eumaios.  
(Richardson 1990, 173-174)

Molly’s address to Jamesy functions to create the same sort of intimacy between character and audience. Her address to Jamesy is also an appeal to the reader. Molly invites her audience to pity her, and to rebel against how the narrator has kidnapped and exposed her “sweets of sin”. Molly is confiding in her audience about her true plight as she protests against her captivity by Jamesy.

This sort of poignant appeal to the audience would mirror the effect of such apostrophe in epic. Louden elucidates why that might be the case:

For an oral, listening audience, the apostrophes would have a considerably greater impact than for our reading audience. The bard would appear to address his listeners, individually. I suggest that the bard’s direct address to Eumaios embodies direct address to the external audience in performance.  
(Louden 63)

Joyce’s address to the “dear reader” has already been established by Steinberg (Steinberg 1985. 424). Dante and Samuel Butler both used some form of direct

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<sup>100</sup> He does concede the point to some extent: “Yet the sympathetic response evoked by the apostrophes to Patroklos, Menelaus and Eumaios, as Block (1982) and Parry (1972) ably demonstrate, is unmistakable” (Richardson 1990, 172). Richardson lists the nineteen times in the *Iliad* that a character is addressed (Richardson 1990, 237, note 5), and the five times the Muses are invoked in the *Iliad* outside of the poem (Richardson 1990, 240, note 32).

address to their readers, two authors who influenced Joyce substantially.<sup>101</sup> With such addresses, the audience is able to enter the narrative world. Richardson notes how such addresses initiate the intercession of the narrator into the textual world: “With the apostrophe to a character, the narrator transcends the world of the discourse and crosses into the world of the story” (Richardson 1990, 181). *Ulysses* parodies the direct address of Eumaeus much to the same effect: “Then did you, chivalrous Terence, hand forth, as to the manner born, that nectarous beverage...” (*U* 12.287). As with Eumaeus, a somewhat minor character gains in stature and appeal. As with Molly’s address to Jamesy, the narrator suddenly becomes an undeniable presence in his own story. As Louden proposes that Homer’s address to Eumaeus actually indicates a simultaneous direct address to the audience, so Molly’s address to Jamesy expresses a warning to Joyce’s audience about their wily narrator at the same time as she puts her creator on the spot by naming him. By means of such apostrophe, Homer and Joyce remind their audiences of their own presence. Yet Homer and Joyce employ apostrophe in such a way as to emphasize the very ambiguity of their narrative presence and agency, because the Muse’s presence is subsumed in Homer’s presence, like Jamesy’s presence is subsumed in Joyce’s. Their undeniable, sudden, and abrupt turns of address hence provide even further ground to deem them πολύτροπος, of many turns, tropes, and guises, just like their heroes. Their narrative turns perplex and perturb us. By suddenly and undeniably making the narrator a character in his own narrative, apostrophe inspires us to consider the source of the narrative and the power of the narrator, even if its purposes and effects remain somewhat elusive.

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<sup>101</sup> See Edmund Epstein (1969), Mary Reynolds (1981), and Jennifer Fraser (2002).



## NARRATIVE COLLABORATION AND ITS VIOLATIONS

Both the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* can then be considered to be the result of a complex kind of narrative collaboration between the Muse and Homer and between “Jamesy” and James Joyce, respectively. Karen Lawrence avoids attributing any of the narrative in *Ulysses* to one particular agent, referring instead to “the consciousness of the book...with the recognition that all descriptions of the narrative are metaphoric attempts to capture its elusive quality” (Lawrence 1981, 14). John Gordon’s assumption of the centripetal intelligence that guides the book seems like a similar strategy, but it has the further advantage of permitting that intelligence to be viewed as the product of the unified efforts of Jamesy and Joyce, as the *Odyssey* is the product of the unified efforts of Homer and the Muse. John Gordon quotes the following passage:

...those who are done to death in sleep cannot know the manner of their quell unless their Creator endow their souls with that knowledge in the life to come. Their poisoning and the beast with to backs that urged it King Hamlet’s ghost could not know of were he not endowed with knowledge by his Creator. That is why his speech (his lean unlovely English) is always turned elsewhere, backward.  
(*U* 196-197)

Then Gordon comments, “This is the (quite impressive) product of a centripetal intelligence working hard to make everything fit” (Gordon 1987, 32). Joyce’s voice is behind every word in *Ulysses*, whoever the word itself is attributable to during the course of the action. The effort of that voice “to make everything fit” is the effort which justifies my method of comparing the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*. Any word in either text can somehow portray that centripetal intelligence at work in each text.

One example of how the narrative voice of Joyce and Jamesy functions in the same way as that of Homer and the Muse can be found in the final sentences of the previous quote: "...Were he not endowed with knowledge from his Creator. That is why his speech (his lean unlovely English) is always turned elsewhere, backward" (*U* 196-197). This sentence gives credence to Gordon's claim that "*Ulysses* stops to analyze itself in Skylla and Charybdis" (Gordon 1981, 30). But who is analyzing whom? Here Jamesy's voice seems to supercede Joyce's entirely in order to analyze what Joyce the author is doing. Joyce implies here that he is being visited; like Homer, he is endowed with knowledge only because of divine grace. Jamesy is the Creator, which Molly alone recognizes and reveals to us, and Joyce himself is endowed with knowledge by that Creator. Creation is not the sole product of a human individual, but the result of divine visitation and interference. In this light, Jamesy seems to be like the inspired Homer, much more than simply the historical and human author of the text, James Joyce.

In the *Odyssey*, various complexities emerge from this method of creation, in which the divine and human agents join forces. For example, Homer's revelations about Odysseus' scar, and the way that the scar is structured into the story, betray how the centripetal intelligence strives to make sense of the action while meeting the aim of exemplifying Odysseus' heroism. Seth Benardete remarks,

Eustathius raises the question of how Odysseus managed to conceal his scar when he exposed his legs and thighs prior to his match with Irus (*Od.* 18.3755-56). The answer, no doubt, is that he did expose it, but no one was present who knew anything about it. A more pertinent question is how Odysseus himself failed to notice it and so prevent Eurykleia from washing his feet. Odysseus' and Athena's joint oversight of this sign, without which, it seems, Odysseus could not have

convinced Eumaeus and Philoitus that he was Odysseus (*Od.* 21.221-22), is as puzzling as the context in which Homer tells the story....

Odysseus threatens to kill Eurykleia after he succeeds in killing the suitors if anyone overhears her (*Od.* 19.487-90). Odysseus does not admit that he simply made a mistake and had forgotten about the scar; he tells Eurykleia that a god arranged for her discovery of it (*Od.* 19.485). Odysseus, then, does not remember the one piece of evidence he needs to convince the skeptical.

(Benardete 1997, 128-129)

Benardete suggests that Odysseus and Athena have both forgotten about Odysseus' scar. But more significantly, it seems as if Homer himself has forgotten about it. Telling about the match of Irus, the possibility that a very likely glimpse of the scar would have given away Odysseus' identity seems not to have crossed his mind. Like Odysseus, when he realizes his error, he cannot admit his mistake. By telling Eurykleia that a god arranged for her discovery of it, he is not altogether lying. The Muse allowed Homer to forget about the scar; like Athena, she seems to have forgotten about the effect of the scar, too. Homer fixes the problem by explaining to Eurykleia that a god planned it that way, and surely Homer and the Muse together can be thought of as constructing this solution to the slight flaw in the plausibility of their tale. The scar shows Odysseus' vulnerability and his resilience. Likewise, the neglect to anticipate for the likelihood of the scar being recognized during the course of the action shows the vulnerability of the centripetal intelligence that guides the *Odyssey*, the result of the joint efforts of Homer and the Muse.

Weirdly enough, Jamesy even seems to refer to how the agents of the narrative pose as a single entity, giving his narrative its idiosyncratic quality:

The eternal question of the life connubial, needless to say, cropped up. Can real love, supposing there happens

to be another chap in the case, exist between married folk? Poser.  
(*U* 16.1384-6)

This indeed is the eternal question that transcends place and time, galvanizing the plots of both *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey*. The trustworthiness of women is the central problem in both texts, and the suspicion of their infidelity is the hinge of the action. Yet who is the poser? Is it Leopold, who is pretending to himself that the question is one of detached intellectual interest? Is it James Joyce, who is posing the question in the context of his story, when it was one of the central questions that tormented him throughout his own life in his marriage to Nora Barnacle? Or is it Jamesy himself? Jamesy seems to step outside of the narrative in order to criticize himself and Joyce. Or perhaps Joyce steps in to interrupt Jamesy with his own sarcastic and wry commentary on the job that Jamesy is doing. The problem with the pose, and with distinguishing between the person *doing* the posing and the one observing the pose, is thus highlighted by the text itself. We can only guess who is calling who a poser.

This musing, ending with “poser”, was inspired by Leopold’s conversation with Skin-the-Goat about “that English whore...she put the first nail in his coffin” (*U* 16.1352-1353). Just before that, Leopold has endorsed the cautious course Agamemnon advised to Odysseus in Hades, precisely to avoid that coffin: “A more prudent course, as Bloom said...would have been to sound the lie of the land first” (*U* 16.1349-1351; *Od.* 11.444 ff.). Leopold’s consequent thoughts are haunting because of the ways in which they can apply to the Blooms, to Jim and Nora Joyce, to Odysseus and Penelope, and even to Agamemnon and Clytemnestra:

Whereas the simple fact of the case was it was simply a case of the husband not being up to the scratch, with nothing in common between them beyond the name, and then a real man arriving on the scene, strong to the verge

of weakness, falling victim to her siren charms and forgetting home ties, the usual sequel, to bask in the loved one's smiles.  
(*U* 16.1379-1385)

The siren charms of women create the crises, due to their effect: "sirens, enemies of man's reason" (*U* 16.1889-1890). But "the usual sequel" is not nearly as usual as we might suppose, given the diversity of outcomes we find in these relationships. The "eternal question" follows, and then: "Though it was no concern of theirs absolutely if he regarded her with affection, carried away by a wave of folly" (*U* 16.1386-1388). Jamesy seems to anticipate the criticism his cuckold Leopold may receive and defends against it. James Joyce's own jealous nature and his self-imposed exile from Ireland with Nora could be subject to the same exposure and censure. "...she of course, woman...very effectively cooked his matrimonial goose, thereby heaping coals of fire on his head much in the same way as a fabled ass's kick" (*U* 16.1393-1399). The goose recalls the meaning of Penelope's name at the same time as it recalls that of Nora Barnacle, creating another intense intertextual echo with Joyce's real life as well as with Homer.<sup>102</sup> Even the next realization could apply to Jim and Nora, Leopold, or Agamemnon: "And then coming back was the worst thing you ever did because it went without saying you would feel out of place as things always moved with the times" (*U* 16.1402-3).

Such examples expose why the attempt to separate the Muse from Homer and the narrator Joyce from Jamesy is ultimately hopeless and futile, and further defeats the purpose of both narrators. The mystery of who is doing the telling and of the role divinity assumes in human life and in art is highlighted by the impenetrability of the

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<sup>102</sup> See pp. 328-329 on the meaning of Nora Barnacle's name and its connection to the meaning of Penelope's name.

narrative mask. *Ulysses* includes one commentary on how enigmatic the source of narrative is: “Speech, speech. But act. Act speech. They mock to try you. Act. Be acted on” (*U* 9.978-9). To “act speech,” to tell a story, seems to require both effort and passivity. The speech acts of Joyce’s book and of Homer’s poem seem both a conscious endeavor and a gift received. The attempt to unravel that combination of human endeavor and inspired gift is feeble not because our human analysis is flawed or lacking but because both texts are constructed so as to ensure that the mystery will endure.

*Ulysses* calls attention to that mystery by insisting upon the complexity of the intermingled historical Joyce, authorial Joyce, and narrator Jamesy. At particular moments, Jamesy seems unsatisfied to remain behind the veil that has been so carefully and cunningly created, and consequently he emerges temporarily to assert his existence, much to the audience’s consternation and astonishment. James Joyce may occasionally assert himself apart from Jamesy, just as Homer may occasionally set himself apart from the Muse. Can any such points be identified? A few peculiarities deserve careful examination in an attempt to penetrate the unified narrative masks of Homer and the Muse and Joyce and Jamesy.

Jamesy perhaps once can be heard to address Stephen directly in order to criticize his rhetoric about “the mystical estate” of fatherhood (*U* 9.838ff.). Stephen concludes his speech and the next lines follow:

What the hell are you driving at?  
I know. Shut up. Blast you. I have reasons.  
*Amplius. Adhuc. Iterum. Postea.*  
Are you condemned to do this?  
(*U* 9.846-849)

It seems possible that Jamesy asks Stephen what the hell his point is, and Stephen then curses him and tries to shut him up. Yet the final question is most perplexing and intriguing, for who is condemned by whom to do what? Is Stephen condemned by Jamesy to continue his diatribe, reasons and motives intact? Or is Stephen asking Jamesy if he is condemned to continue imprisoning his characters and revealing their thoughts? These lines seem suspect because they do not seem to simply emerge as Stephen's stream of consciousness thoughts, like "I believe, O Lord, help my unbelief" or "life is many days. This will end" (*U* 9.1078, *U* 9.1097). "He laughed to free his mind from his mind's bondage" (*U* 9.1016) seems to be Jamesy's commentary on Stephen's plight. "Walk like Hanes now" (*U* 9.1112) seems decisively Stephen's thought, yet the question which preceded it "What have I learned? Of them? Of me?" (*U* 9.1113) would seem to apply to Stephen's own ennui or to Jamesy pondering the nature of his own enterprise. Jamesy's and Stephen's thoughts certainly seem to intersect in certain statements, and the possibility that Stephen, like Molly, engages in a debate with his creator should not be summarily discounted. "Who to unbelieve? Other chap" (*U* 9.1079-1080). The themes of doubt and condemnation and the declared need to be liberated from some sort of bondage links Stephen's possible dispute with Jamesy to the one Molly incites with him later on.

At various points Jamesy the narrator even seems to speak alone to the author James Joyce, as if striking up conversation with himself:

What domestic problem as much as, if not more than,  
any other frequently engaged his mind?

What to do with our wives.  
(*U* 17.657-9)

The key here is the pronoun “our.” Leopold is worried about what to do with his wife, just as Joyce is worried about what to do with his wife, Nora.<sup>103</sup> Jamesy seems to detach himself here and make his own commentary on marital life. But Joyce also seems to address Jamesy at one point, almost in astonishment declaring his gratitude for what is happening to him during the course of the book: “I declare I was never so touched in all my life. God, I thank thee, as the Author of my days!” (*U* 14.762-3). This call seems as close as Joyce comes to appealing to any higher power for artistic aid. God is named the author, not Joyce, and rather than asking for help, like Homer does in the proem, Joyce offers gratitude for the help he has received. Jamesy’s fear of being recognized may be betrayed by the words, “Stand by. Hide my blushes someone. All in if he spots me” (*U* 14.1521).<sup>104</sup> Yet only a brief time later he inserts his own name into the text, almost daring anyone to see through his guises: “Bovril, by James” (*U* 14.1548).<sup>105</sup>

Joyce’s last use of the word hero in *Ulysses* confirms his own entry into the text as a historical personage: the author becomes his own character.

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<sup>103</sup> Joyce’s jealousy and worries about Nora often dominated his life and thoughts, as his letters demonstrate; further, see Brenda Maddox (1988) and Morris Beja (1984).

<sup>104</sup> Sebastian Knowles identifies another point where Jamesy might assert his presence: “Aside from its surface application to the conclusions of Blooms fart and Emmet’s speech, the word can be read as both Bloom’s registering the consummation of his wife’s adultery and as the narrator’s final flourish, rejoicing in the successful completion of an immensely complicated and closely structured web: “*Done*”” (Knowles 102, *U* 11.1294). Jamesy would pierce his mask at this point even while disguising his own voice due to the other possible interpretations of the word’s meaning and application.

<sup>105</sup> Brook Thomas declares, “Joyce claims authorship of the whole soupy mess of parodies” with this phrase (Thomas 1982, 64).



Did he see only a second coincidence in the second scene narrated to him, described by the narrator as *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine* or *The Parable of the Plums*?

It, with the preceding scene and with others unnarrated but existent by implication, to which add essays on various subjects or moral apothegms (e.g. *My Favourite Hero* or *Procrastination is the Thief of Time*) composed during schooldays, seemed to him to contain in itself and in conjunction with the personal equation certain possibilities of financial, social, personal and sexual success, whether specially collected and selected as model pedagogic themes (of cent per cent merit) for the use of preparatory and junior grade students or contributed in printed form, following the precedent of Philip Beaufoy or Doctor Dick or Heblon's *Study in Blue...*

(*U* 17. 639-650, emphasis added)

Here the historical James Joyce is undeniably called to mind, for he had already written on his own favourite hero, Odysseus of course, during his own schooldays (*JIII* 46). Jamesy here seems to be gesturing toward Joyce's own presence in his text, a presence that Joyce himself ultimately establishes. For the historical James Joyce gets the book's last word; "Yes" is only Molly's last word. What follows Molly's yes is "Trieste-Zurich-Paris 1914-1921" (*U* 18.1610-11). These are Joyce's last words, the moment when he breaks free of the narrative mask and establishes his independence once more. The independence that Homer displays in his proem is what Joyce insists upon in this final inscription denoting the time and place of the book's creation. The rest of the time, Homer and the Muse and Joyce and Jamesy remain entangled: the narrator and the instrument of narration become one and the same.

Leopold's last word is "Where?" (*U* 17.2331). That is really the fundamental, existential question provoked by this kind of narration. Where is the historical author

James Joyce in his own text, and where is Jamesy? With some cuts to the preceding quote, the text of *Ulysses* itself announces

the preceding scene and with others unnarrated but existent by implication, to which add....*My Favourite Hero*....seemed to him to contain in itself and in conjunction with the personal equation certain possibilities of financial, social, personal and sexual success...  
(*U* 17.642-647)

It is Jamesy, and the tremendous complexity of his narrative mask, who demands some reconciliation “with the personal equation” (*U* 17.666). That problem of ascertaining the power and impact of the personal equation upon the narrative is not unique to modernism, but it haunts the study of Homer as well, with the suspicions of his blindness, his femininity, his non-existence, and his knowledge of Egyptian technology.<sup>106</sup> Attempting to unravel the personal equation, even when we fail to do so, helps us to understand the human and divine partnership by which the narrative is constructed.

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<sup>106</sup> Suspicions of Homer’s blindness need no explanation, nor does Joyce’s appreciation of Samuel Butler’s theory that Homer was a woman in *The Authoress of the Odyssey* (Butler 1967). Most supporters of the multiple authorship of the poem deny the existence of one historical Homer, interpreting the name as one applying to a group of bards compiling the poem. Yet knowledge of Egyptian technology betrayed by Homer’s description of how Odysseus constructs his raft on Ogygia offers some hint of Homer’s own practical knowledge. As Frank Brewster asserts: “The passage contains all the elements we see in the building of an Egyptian boat, and to hearers familiar with the process it must have been perfectly intelligible” (Brewster 1926, 52). Brewster then concludes, “There seem, therefore, reasonable grounds for the opinion that the poet really meant that Odysseus built what we would call a boat, and that we actually have a brief description of how boats were actually put together in Homer’s time” (Brewster 1926, 53). The possibility that Odysseus’ boat construction documents an autobiographical experience of Homer’s watching boat being made thusly conveys how difficult it is to discern the line between fiction and history, myth and autobiography, a difficulty again reflected by the many ways in which Joyce constantly blurred the line between his life and his art.

## THE MUSE'S EPIPHANY

All of Homer's *Odyssey* is then in some sense an epiphany, the epiphany of the unnamed and unnamable Muse who joins with Homer to sing his song. For the reader, Joyce's *Ulysses* may then serve as the divine epiphany. The reader should not suspect that God is dead at all. For when we sit down with *Ulysses*, we sit down beneath the olive tree with Athena, because the manifestation of Jamesy replaces the manifestations of Homer's gods. Through the wiles of Jamesy, *Ulysses* can become a source of faith, knowledge, and meaning, not a miasmic chaos that undermines all sources of meaning and order. Reading *Ulysses* may have the power to give us faith, faith in the divine will that we can find nowhere else. Richard Ellmann suggests that Joyce selected his title in order to define his book as a source of authority and one means of granting accessibility to God: "To name it *Ulysses* was like calling one's book the Bible" (Ellmann 1977, 575). To name it *Ulysses* is also to name it an expression of the Muse, because artistic creation itself is sacred for the Greeks: God speaks through the poet. Listening to Homer and reading *Ulysses* may have the same effect upon their audiences, just as reading the Bible affects those with faith, because they all represent some engagement with the expression of divine will. Homer's words themselves were in some sense proof of divinity, because without the Muse they could never have been spoken. Even readers of Homer without any knowledge of Greek religion or civilization must acknowledge the divine role in the narration, because it is embedded into the content and structure of the poem itself.

*Ulysses* may spur its readers to a similar appreciation of the divine role in art simply because the fact that a book of such complexity and beauty can be written at all

encourages belief in divine purpose and order. Sheldon Brivic explains why this may be the case. “For [Joyce], art was a sacrament, an action of spirit” (Brivic 13). Joyce’s art was an action of the spirit which worships divinity solely by virtue of its existence. *Ulysses* serves to remind us that art is the realm in which the human and the divine must unavoidably interact. George Steiner argues that artistic meaning depends upon the tension of such an interaction, as art itself confers the very possibility of divinity:

...any coherent account of the capacity of human speech to communicate meaning and feeling, is, in the final analysis, underwritten by the assumption of God's presence....the experience of aesthetic meaning in particular, that of literature, of the arts, of musical form, infers the necessary possibility of this 'real presence.' The seeming paradox of a 'necessary possibility' is, very precisely, that which the poem, the painting, the musical composition are at liberty to explore and to enact.  
(Steiner 3-4)

The address of our Homeric poet to the Muse, contrasted with Molly's address to Joyce, is exactly such an exploration and enactment. The resounding echoes between our two texts accentuate the complex nature of the divine role in art and in human existence. In *Ulysses*, the Muse has returned, with the new name of Jamesy but with the same purpose: to illustrate the inscrutability of the divine presence in human life and art.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RETELLING AND ITS REVOLUTIONS

In her book *The Implied Spider*, Wendy Doniger identifies a complex interaction between the context of a story and its meaning, explaining that even the very same story can connote vastly different meanings depending upon who tells it, how it is told, and why it is told:

Texts have contexts, are determined by their contexts; the context in which 'the same' story is told may totally transform its meaning. Whenever possible it is important to note the context: who is telling the story and why.  
(Doniger 1998, 44)

Joyce's title *Ulysses* comprises his only assertion that his book is the retelling of Homer's *Odyssey*, despite his shocking alterations in time, place, and culture. One wonders why Joyce chose to retell a story already told at all and if he aims to alter its meaning or affirm it. For by assuming the task of retelling in *Ulysses*, Joyce indulges in precisely the task for which Odysseus expresses his enormous contempt in the *Odyssey* when he concludes his tale to the Phaeacians:

Why then should I tell you this story? For just yesterday I told this story to you and your noble wife in your home, and it seems to me quite disgusting, to tell a story [μυθολογεύειν] again which was already clearly told.  
(*Od.* 12.450-453)

Odysseus has just told the Phaeacians the story of how he arrived on their shores for a very specific purpose: to convince them to help him return home. He now protests retelling the story he has already told, the story of how he rejected Kalypso's offer to escape death and old age and survived being beaten by the waves (*Od.* 7.241-297). He tells the Phaeacians this story so that he may be worthy of their hospitality and they will decide to help him return home. His story is told for a very specific purpose, that of gaining their confidence and aid.<sup>1</sup> His story of Kalypso has already gained him a promise of marriage to Nausicaa or conveyance home from Alcinoo (*Od.* 7.311-328). He tells the rest of his story in response to Alcinoo's rampant curiosity about his identity (*Od.* 7.536-586), inspired by his tears at Demodocus' song of the Trojan Horse (*Od.* 7.500-520). He refuses to engage in retelling any story in the same way again simply for his audience's amusement.

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn Most notes that Odysseus' *apologoi* "are described as true while the Ithacan tales are called lies" (Most 1989b, 19). His lies after the *apologoi* conform to a pattern Most calls "the stranger's stratagem" (Most 1989a), in which Odysseus tries to meet with his listeners' approval and gain their aid; his lies thus serve very practical purposes and "are all aimed at the securing of practical ends" (Most 1989a, 132). Most's contention that "Odysseus' *apologoi* are designed to define the proper duties of hospitality—negatively" (Most 1989b, 25) only reinforces my claim that Odysseus tells this story only for the sake of his homecoming. The Kalypso story is evidently not sufficient in that regard, and so the *apologoi* are intended to contribute to that end. On Odysseus' veracity, or rather, his frequent lack of it, and his authority and reliability as a narrator, see further C. R. Trahman (1952), Peter Walcott (1977), Adele Haft (1984), George Walsh (1984, 3-21), Glenn Most (1989a, 1989b), Simon Goldhill (1991, 36-56), S. D. Olson (1992), Hugh Parry (1994), Charles Segal (1994, 164-183), Scott Richardson (1996), Chris Emlin-Jones (1998), Ruth Scodel (1999), and Miriam Carlisle (1999).

Odysseus thus calls into question the value of the entire enterprise which has granted him the immortality of fame (κλέος), in the process raising an intertextual and unintentional objection to Joyce's endeavor in *Ulysses*. Given Homeric epic poetry's evident delight in repetition, not only in the repetition of stories about the same heroes but in the repetition of traditional formulae and epithets, Odysseus' condemnation of retelling is quite puzzling. Odysseus seems to be criticizing Homer himself, for the songs of all of epic bards would be relegated to the realm of useless and futile silliness if we accept at face value Odysseus' statement that telling a story is something best done only once! What kind of trick is Homer playing on his listeners by having his poet-hero refuse to retell the story they have already heard? Why does Odysseus object to retelling so strongly? Would he object to Joyce's aims in *Ulysses* for the same reasons?

#### ODYSSEUS' REFUSAL TO RETELL A STORY ALREADY WELL TOLD

One reason for Odysseus' refusal can be deduced from his statement to Agamemnon in Hades: "I do not know if [your son Orestes] is alive or dead. Bad it is to speak idly, like the vain blowing of the wind" (*Od.* 11.463-4). Odysseus tells many stories many times in his quest to go home, but he never retells a story exactly as he has told it before. Odysseus embroiders each story with new details, weaving lies together with the truth in order to accomplish his goal of gaining his listeners' sympathy and aid.<sup>2</sup> Odysseus claims that one must always speak with full knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> Odysseus is the hero who speaks lies like the truth (*Od.* 19.203). James Redfield notes that Odysseus is a master reteller precisely because his retellings

and with a specific intent. Vainly imagining is futile and inexcusable. Odysseus hints that he is not a poet of wildly imaginary and fictional tales, but a poet whose sources come from historical fact uses history. He crafts a story (μῦθος) based upon his own history. The μῦθος that emerges is a complex web of truth and lies. But truth and falsity are melded for a specific purpose, since the task of retelling should only be properly adopted in order to accomplish some aim. As Odysseus declares, “There is a time for stories [μῦθος] and a time for sleep” (*Od.* 11.379). Knowing the difference between the right time to speak and act and the right time to rest and wait patiently enables him to endure humiliation at the hands of the suitors before he identifies himself.<sup>3</sup> He is exercising the same kind of judgment about the right moment to seize the initiative when he derides the value of telling the same story again. Odysseus insists to the Phaeacians that his season of storytelling is over and the time has come to rest. Μυθολογεύειν must be done uniquely in every instance, never to be repeated in precisely the same way for the same audience for their gratuitous pleasure.

What then does telling a story (μυθολογεύειν) involve? It means more than just conveying facts: it means to spin a μῦθος, to create a web of truth and lies that manipulates time. This spin gives the story its aim. Odysseus maintains that no story should be the rote repetition of a memorized text. A poet should approach his story in a new way every single time, with a new theme and purpose in mind. Odysseus believes that poets must rise to the challenge that the word μυθολογεύειν contains: they must give a new λόγος to the μῦθος every single time they retell it.

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incorporate lies and truth together. “[His lies] are like the truth because they are a retelling of the truth under color of lying” (Redfield 1973,149).

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Five on this topic.



The μῦθος is the action and events of the story, while the λόγος is the plot of the story, the way that the poet's rational artistic choices allow the action to unfold and endow the story with meaning. E.M. Forster provides an example of this distinction between plot (λόγος) and story (μῦθος): "'The king died and the queen died,' is a story. 'The king died and then the queen died of grief,' is a plot'" (Forster 130). Every epic poet must tell his chosen story (μῦθος). In this example, that story is about the deaths of the king and queen. He displays his talent as a storyteller by taking advantage of the opportunity that retelling presents, the opportunity to endow that story's meaning with his own unique twist. The λόγος is the new plot that every retelling should impose. In Forster's example, the new λόγος arises from the details and causes of the queen's emotion at the king's death, and how this emotion contributed to her own demise. Herein lies not only Joyce's and Homer's brilliance, but Odysseus' as well. Their retellings give their stories a new dimension of meaning through the way that their plot (λόγος), changes the meaning of the (μῦθος), story.

Albert Lord observes how the singer Avdo Mededovic engages in just this process in his own version of a story. Lord marvels at how closely Avdo echoes the version he has heard while simultaneously thoroughly appropriating the story in order to reflect his own personal idea of heroism.

...how well Avdo followed his original and yet how superbly he was able to expand it and make it his own...Avdo has not only lengthened the theme from 176 lines to 558, but *he has put on it the stamp of his own understanding of the heroic mind.*  
(Lord 1960, 78-79)

Lord observes how Mededovic exploits his traditional language and themes to make a traditional story an original creation of his own.<sup>4</sup> Homer, like Mededovic and James Joyce, molds his material to his own ends and leaves behind traces of himself in the new meaning he endows upon the traditional story and language. Every storyteller leaves their own mark upon their stories.<sup>5</sup> They twist the story (μῦθος), into a plot (λόγος), which may or may not retain the same meaning. These twists reveal the teller's own idea of the meaning of heroism. This creative mark constitutes a very personal yet subtle comment by the storyteller on what it means to be a hero at all.

When Joseph Campbell proclaims that a hero can be just about anything and everything all at once because heroes have a thousand faces, he is cataloguing the power of every teller to endow heroism with a new face.<sup>6</sup> In the *Odyssey* and in

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<sup>4</sup> Notably, another singer offers an objection to this characterization of the oral poet's efforts: "it isn't good to change or add" (Lord 1960, 27). To reconcile Lord's observations of his poem with this judgment, one must appreciate how strong a duty oral poets feel to remain true to the essence of the song. Their task is to recreate the song, not to modify it according to their whims and fancies. They are motivated by the responsibility they feel upon having assumed what Lord calls "the role of the conserver of the tradition, the role of the defender of the historic truth of what is being sung; for if the singer changes what he has heard in its essence, he falsifies truth....He aimed at historical truth as he saw it" (Lord 1960, 28, 136). Changing the wording does not alter or threaten truth, because the traditional language and episodes are still being portrayed.

<sup>5</sup> Wendy Doniger discusses how that occurs: "A myth is a story; but each retelling, each text is a plot....[a myth] is a narrative that makes possible any number of ideas but does not commit itself to any single one. A myth is like a gun for hire, a mercenary soldier: it can be made to fight for anyone" (Doniger 1998, 80-81). Every storyteller always leaves fingerprints on the gun that he hires. Storytellers take full advantage of the privilege that retelling offers by adding their own plot twists to their story: they decide which gun to hire, where to point it, and when to fire and at whom.

<sup>6</sup> Do not bother to read Joseph Campbell (1949). He provides an alarming jumble of themes and meanings of heroism which seem to transcend context and leave the reader thoroughly confused about what heroism is, except that it can be just about anything at all.

*Ulysses*, Homer and Joyce are both most concerned with unveiling a specific type of heroism, one that Achilles does not represent. With this goal in mind, they each give heroism a new incarnation, just as every poet does.<sup>7</sup> The impact of Odysseus' story upon Homer and Joyce inspires them each to try to make the story their own, just as the *Ramayana* inspires other poets to retell it. Such retellers possess incredible power, because every telling creates a new opportunity to define heroism and a vision of human life that informs it. In giving the myth a plot, the teller gives heroism a new incarnation, one that details his own conception of heroism.

What emerges is a text that commits itself to a single vision of human reality and the order of the cosmos. The meaning of that vision depends upon the teller's choices of how to treat the myth: what to eliminate, what to echo, what to add. As tellers unravel and reweave the myth (μῦθος), at hand, thus crafting their own plot (λόγος) the story becomes their own. Every teller asks "Why?" of the story (μῦθος), and every plot (λόγος) offers an answer.

Odysseus is rather unique in his opinion about the perils of retelling and might justly be called one of the first literary critics. Myth and folktale as far back as we can trace rely upon retelling for vitality and consistency; retelling is the vehicle by which myth survives the tests of time. Thompson's Motif-Index even has a tale type for tellers who keep on retelling as they have throughout history: "Z.17. Rounds. Stories

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<sup>7</sup> As R. K. Narayan observes, "The impact of the *Ramayana* on a poet, however, goes beyond mere personal edification; it inspires him to compose the epic again in his own language, with the stamp of his own personality on it" (Narayan xii). N. K. Sidhanta argues that ancient poets faced the same task of retelling, engaging in the same struggle to use the inherited material but to shape it according to their own creative goals. Poets of many ages and places seem to use old and traditional stories to exhibit new meanings of heroism. "The old heroic tales they could not omit; but they varnished and re-varnished them to suit their own ideals" (Sidhanta 23-24).

which begin over and over again and repeat. Z.49.4 There once was a woman; the woman had a son; the son had red breeches; etc.—At last” “Shall I tell it again?”” (Thompson 541). For Odysseus, the definitive answer is “No!” He does not offer to retell his story and he refuses to do so upon request. Remarkably enough, Odysseus shares this dedication to tell a story only once and not over and over in the same way with his own creator, Homer.

### HOMER’S REFUSAL TO RETELL AN ALREADY TOLD STORY

Homer concurs with Odysseus about the right way to retell a story (μυθολογεύειν). Homer follows Odysseus’ advice by retelling every story only under the guise of a new λόγος. Comparing the events of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* proves that Odysseus shares his distaste for retelling a story in exactly the same way with Homer himself. Homer sticks to his refusal to tell the same story over again in the same way just as Odysseus does, a source of amazement to scholars as long as scholars have existed. Observation of this absence of identical retellings has led to what is known among Homerists as Monro’s law: “The *Odyssey* never repeats or refers to any incident related in the *Iliad*” (Monro 325).<sup>8</sup>

Monro ventures no guesses about why Homer isolated his topics so completely in the two poems. One logical conclusion that we might draw from his law is the possibility that Odysseus, in refusing to retell the Kalypso story again in the same way as he did yesterday (*Od.* 12.450-453), is like Homer refusing to retell the *Iliad* in the

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Lord notes that the same practice is customary in Yugoslavian oral poetry: “In the Yugoslav tradition, stories are kept separate, and to the best of my knowledge, singers never refer in one song to the events of another” (Lord 1960, 159).

*Odyssey*. I contend that the *Odyssey*'s silence on the events of the *Iliad* can and should be viewed as the result of Homer's refusal to retell an already well-told story in the same way, demonstrating his agreement with Odysseus' standards for retelling.

One example of Homer's deft avoidance of retelling stories in the same way, and of his insistence upon the novelty of retelling, is the story of Odysseus' triumph with the bait of the Trojan Horse. Quite remarkably, the Trojan Horse, the means by which the war is won, is never mentioned during the course of the *Iliad*! One not acquainted with Homer might expect that the *Iliad* first addresses this topic, while the *Odyssey* retells it with a new spin from a new perspective. But this critical event was not included in the *Iliad*, since it has nothing to do with the wrath of Achilles.

In contrast, Homer lets us encounter the story of the Trojan Horse twice in the *Odyssey*. First, Menelaus tells the story to Telemachus, declaring that he has never known another hero-man such as Odysseus, who restrains the men from bursting out of the horse too soon at the sound of Helen's voice, disguised to sound like their wives (*Od.* 4.264-289). Later, Demodocus details the story at Odysseus' request (*Od.* 8.487-520), but what the audience hears is not a story out of his own mouth but indirect discourse.<sup>9</sup> Menelaus' story praises Odysseus for his sagacity in recognizing the need

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<sup>9</sup> Simon Goldhill suggests that despite the indirect discourse, "There is...what appears to be direct authorial commentary in the song" (Goldhill 1991, 53), referring to the final lines (*Od.* 8-509-511) which state the city was destined to be destroyed. "It is unclear whether this comment is to be taken as part of the reported song, a perhaps more vivid representation of Demodocus, or whether it is a comment like 'he sang'...which should not be attributed to Demodocus" (Goldhill 1991, 53). Thus Homer's and Demodocus' voices become indistinguishable at this point precisely through the effect of indirect discourse. Charles Fuqua disagrees, arguing that in general, the characters themselves, not the narrator, "shape the ideals and standards of the epic" (Fuqua 1991, 57). Further on narrative judgments, see Elizabeth Block (1986).

for self-restraint (*Od.* 4.277-284). Demodocus' story as reported by Homer mentions nothing about Odysseus' advice to his comrades, emphasizing instead how the Trojans failed to take any action to save themselves from their fate (*Od.* 8.505-513). Homer does then revisit the same topic, but the tale is recounted with different details and for different purposes.

Homer thus respects Odysseus' distaste for retelling in his own poem. Still, it must be admitted that there is one critical event within the action of the *Odyssey* that our poet deems to be worth retelling. Homer does on one occasion revisit the same topic and tell the same story, although he does drastically revise it. Dorothea Wender notices how unusual it is for Homer to decide to retell one of Odysseus' stories, the visit to Hades, in the second Nekyia.<sup>10</sup> From this fact, she concludes, "The poet of the *Odyssey* apparently did not mind telling a good story twice, any more than he minded repeating a good turn of phrase" (Wender 129). Homer most certainly did mind telling a good story twice, but the suitors' death illustrates what Homer wants to impart about heroism so powerfully that he could not afford to say it only once and leave it alone. Retelling the suitors' deaths emphasizes the specific kind of Odyssean heroism that he introduces in his proem (*Od.* 1.1-10), countering the heroism depicted in the *Iliad*. Homer's retelling of the Nekyia in Book 24 serves to accentuate the way that Odysseus' patience and perseverance have not only kept him alive but constitute his special kind of heroism. Homer allows himself the privilege of retelling the visit to Hades because the retelling best achieves his goal in telling the *Odyssey*, the goal of

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<sup>10</sup> Wender argues, "It is Homer who bears witness to Hades. It is the only one of Odysseus' tales that Homer retells: the souls of the suitors go to Hades....In Book 23, twenty-one suitors are killed; twenty-one separate deaths are described. Not one is characterized by the formula 'his soul went down to Hades' house,' or by any words which describe what happened to the suitor's shade after death" (Wender 114).

revealing a kind of enduring heroism. The audience of the *Odyssey* is allowed to witness how Homer lives up to Odysseus' requirements for retelling. Odysseus and Homer both demonstrate their epic method: only with a very important goal in mind, and only with serious alterations, can any story properly be retold.

Hence, no matter how important the episode, Homer and Odysseus tell each story in the same way only once. Robert Woolsey's analysis of the way in which Homer repeats stories bears out this fact:

Homer has not repeated stories which have no purpose or aim. The stories which he does repeat have a purpose, and those which he might well have told more than once for their own inherent interest are not related a second time.  
(Woolsey 181)

Homer agrees with Odysseus: any episode is worth retelling only with a new goal in mind, and only to accentuate a different theme.

#### HOMER'S RELIANCE ON ELIOT'S MYTHICAL METHOD

T. S. Eliot praises Joyce's use of the "mythical method" in *Ulysses*, regarding it as a call to action for other writers. "In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him" (Kermode 177). Eliot views Joyce as a visionary and a pioneer because of how he designs his book as an echo of a classical myth. In Eliot's opinion, Joyce is the originator of the artistic strategy of consciously creating a new story within the intertextual echoes of an old one. Eliot thus credits Joyce for ushering in a new era of literary history, in which retelling old stories in new ways can

create new meanings by purposely relying upon their echoes with past myths of the same kind.

Yet it is quite inaccurate to suggest that Joyce was the first to operate according to this method. Joyce did not invent what Eliot deems “the mythical method.” Rather, he learned this method from Homer. Homer’s *Odyssey*, with which Joyce created his own echo, is the product of this same strategy on the part of Homer. Thus this mythical method is actually not so innovative as Eliot would have us believe. Neither is it quite a “mythical” method at all. The dependence of poets upon stories that have been told before, and the effort to make those stories new and original in the retelling, characterizes all of epic poetry as a genre. Epic poetry, with its traditional, formulaic language, has always been created within the echoes of preceding traditional songs. As a result, Homer depended upon familiar myths already well-known to his audience to enhance the meaning of his current one. For this reason, what Eliot calls “the mythical method” might be more aptly named the epic method.

Epic poetry functions through retelling. The Parry-Lord theory of oral composition inspires the important insight that in oral composition, telling a story is always to some extent a retelling, even though every story becomes to some extent a new story entirely (Parry 1987, Lord 1960). In the Parry-Lord perspective, an oral story is a carefully crafted fabrication of conventional episodes and traditional vocabulary, combined with the storyteller's own particular flair. C. R. Trahman summarizes the Parry-Lord perspective of the poet’s method: “Oral poetry makes constant use not only of traditional formulae such as epithets and transition lines but of



traditional episodes....” (Trahman 33).<sup>11</sup> In some sense, then, the same story is repeated by the oral poet: the characters, the action, and the formulaic language of past versions are renewed in each retelling, although not in exactly the same order.<sup>12</sup>

Trahman describes the effect of this method: “The composition is completely fluid, the same song never being sung in the same way even by the same bard....the same song is never sung twice” (Trahman 33). Therefore each song is unique and original, never to be sung in exactly the same way again. After all, Lord emphasizes that “Bards never repeat a song exactly....There is nothing in the poet’s experience...to give him the idea that theme can be expressed in only one set of words” (Lord 1960, 125, 169). Every telling of the *Odyssey* was therefore its own story, and so in a sense it can be sung only once. Yet each song always retells what has been told before with traditional language, episodes, and heroes.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> As Lord comments, “It is most significant that there is no line or part of a line that does not fit into some formulaic pattern...The formulas in oral narrative style are not limited to a comparatively few epic ‘tags,’ but are in reality all pervasive. There is nothing in the poem that is not formulaic” (Lord 1960, 47).

<sup>12</sup> Repeating a tale word for word is never the goal of the oral poet, as Lord explains: “He never thought of his song as being fixed either as to content or wording. He was the author of each singing...The songs were ever in flux and were crystallized by each singer only when he sat before an audience and told them the tale” (Lord 1960, 151).

<sup>13</sup> Lord discusses why the modern audience is more perturbed by changes in wording than a traditional audience and its singers would have been: “We are more aware of a change than the singer is, because we have a concept of the fixity of a performance or of its recording on wire or tape or plastic or in writing. We think of change in content and wording; for, to us, at some moment both wording and content have been established. To the singer the song, which cannot be changed (since to change it would, in his mind, be to tell and untrue story or to falsify history), is the essence of the story itself. His idea of stability, to which he is deeply devoted, does not include the wording, which to him has never been fixed, nor the unessential parts of the story. He builds his performance, or song in our sense, on the stable skeleton of the narrative, which is the song in his sense” (Lord 1960, 99). For an analysis of how the

In contrast, Joyce's text is always the same as a text, but surely no more enigmatic or cryptic book has ever been written. The impossibility of absorbing the story in one reading assures the reader that the experience of the story will alter slightly with each reading, as one puts together all the assorted bits of scattered information to produce new insights. Each reading of Joyce becomes a unique artistic experience, just as each song was once upon a time. As Hugh Kenner characterizes the experience of reading *Ulysses*, "As he [Joyce] did not write it straight through but revised and elaborated, so we cannot read it straight through save with intent to reread" (Kenner 1979, 33). An infinite number of re-readings and re-sings assures the newness of the text with each encounter.

Every oral epic poet is then a reteller by Parry and Lord's analysis of the oral composition, because the poet imposes his own innovations upon traditional stories that have already been told. For this reason, James Redfield argues, "...the oral poet is also a creator. He handles his materials freely, and therefore meaningfully" (Redfield 1979, 95).<sup>14</sup> Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* should be viewed as retellings, because in all likelihood, neither were purely original creations emerging solely from Homer's own imagination. Rather, he molded and shaped the traditional stories he had inherited

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Parry-Lord theory of oral composition is exemplified in actor Adam Harvey's memorized monologue of *Finnegans Wake*, see my 2002 article.

<sup>14</sup> Laura Slatkin argues that "the Homeric poems...constitute acts of interpretation as well as acts of creation...the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* interpret the mythological material they inherit" (Slatkin 1991, 1, 2). The oral nature of the Homeric poems should not be taken to negate their creativity and originality, despite their formulaic and traditional nature, for, as Albert Lord declares, "The singer of tales is at once the tradition and an individual creator...He is not a conscious iconoclast, but a traditional creative artist" (Lord 1960, 4-5). See further Combellack (1976), Lord (1960), Nagy (1996, 1999), and Parry (1987).

from his oral tradition.<sup>15</sup> Thus Homer, like Joyce, chose a myth already at his disposal, telling a story that he already knew in his own way. Stephanie West realizes that because Homer “clearly knew more than one way of telling almost every part of his story” (West 1981, 175), his telling results from conscious choices involving the rejection and selection of various elements from tradition.

Homer, Odysseus, and Joyce then share this epic method of exclusion and inclusion. All three decide to excise certain elements of previously told stories and to add others in order to achieve their present purposes. They never return to a story that has already been told without dramatically altering its purpose, content, and theme. Yet the general concurrence that what is Odyssean is different from the Iliadic does not assess the impact that this lack of repetition should have upon our interpretation of these texts. “Perhaps it was part of the Odyssean tradition to veer away from the Iliadic,” Gregory Nagy suggests (Nagy 1999, 21). Indeed it was and is Odyssean to insist upon telling a definitively separate story from the *Iliad*. The imperative question is, why is that the case?

Homer utilizes the epic method in the *Odyssey* to contrast a new kind of heroism with the old heroism of the Iliadic warrior. Homer’s *Odyssey* illustrates how this new kind of heroism found in the Trojan War’s survivors confers its own excellence, while invoking the same parallel between past and present that Eliot finds the most fruitful consequence of the “mythical” method. Thus Homer creates the same interplay between past and present for which Eliot applauds Joyce. Through this

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<sup>15</sup> W. B. Stanford explains, “As far as extant literature goes the story of Ulysses begins in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Earlier records have not revealed any definite references to it, as yet. But Ulysses was apparently not Homer’s own invention, and Homer never suggests it. On the contrary he makes it clear by implication that Ulysses was already a familiar figure when he began to write about him” (Stanford 1968, 8).

interplay between old stories and the one currently being told, epic poets endow the same old story with new meaning, making retelling an act of invention and creativity.

Homer seized his telling of the *Odyssey* as his chance to create a new meaning of heroism. The *Odyssey* insists immediately upon being a new story, the story of what happened on the way home, after the *Iliad* and after Troy: “after he [Odysseus] sacked the sacred citadel of Troy” (*Od.* 1.2). For Homer, the end of the Trojan War heralds the end of the *Iliad*, and the birth of a new kind of heroism. Pietro Pucci describes the evolution of Odysseus as he leaves the heroic world of the *Iliad* behind and reemerges in the *Odyssey*.<sup>16</sup> From this perspective, Odysseus in the *Odyssey* is a revolutionary hero, one who no longer lives by the same heroic code as before. The heroism of the Trojan War is not the same as the heroism of its survivors.

The idea that the two Homeric poems portray two very different conceptions of heroism with contrasting heroic values and ideals is now a fairly standard view, so standard in fact that I can find no one to cite who opposes it with any venom or substance. Yet the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition for the heroic age makes the surprising and bold claim that the meaning of heroism underwent a radical change due to the Trojan War. The heroic age or time is defined as “that during which the **ancient heroes** existed; the period of Grecian history preceding the return from Troy.”<sup>17</sup> At first glance it seems a goofy and circular definition: of course the heroic age is when there were heroes! But the key word here is *ancient*; ancient heroes lived during the

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<sup>16</sup> Pucci asserts, “As *tlemon* Odysseus changes into *talpentes*, he would step out of the Iliadic text and its related traditions and, while seemingly remaining his prior self, would enter into the *Odyssey*. He must indeed be himself, the same Odysseus with his heroic pedigree, his formulaic epithetic traditions, and his thematic consistency, yet he must also be a new hero” (Pucci 1987, 49).

<sup>17</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. heroic, emphasis added.

heroic age. The definition continues by clarifying this point: the heroic age was the time of ancient heroes before the return from Troy. According to the OED, the return from Troy inaugurated a new stage in time, a time during which what it had previously meant to be a hero was revolutionized. The heroes who returned from Troy and those who died there are thus of two very different kinds, according to the OED. What would the Greeks themselves have thought of this idea? I suspect that Homer would have supported it wholeheartedly, because he exposed this change in the meaning of heroism with his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Two eminent scholars from very different times and places, with equally different premises and methodologies, both ponder the problem of the contrasting natures of heroism in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and come to a very similar conclusion about the relationship between the two Homeric poems. Longinus contends in *On the Sublime* that Homer wrote the *Iliad* first and the *Odyssey* much later: “The love of stories is the special mark of old age...For it is clear for many reasons that the *Odyssey* was his second subject...In fact, the *Odyssey* is nothing but an epilogue to the *Iliad*...” (Longinus 67). Simone Weil concurs with his assessment of the *Odyssey* as somehow second-rate and inferior to the *Iliad*, writing,

In any case, this poem [the *Iliad*] is a miracle. Its bitterness is the only justifiable bitterness, for it springs from the subjections of the human spirit to force, that is, in the last analysis, to matter. This subjection is the common lot, although each spirit will bear it differently, in proportion to its own virtue. No one in the *Iliad* is spared by it, as no one on earth is. No one who succumbs to it is by virtue of this fact regarded with contempt. Whoever, within his own soul and in human relations, escapes the dominion of force is loved but loved sorrowfully because of the threat of destruction that constantly hangs over him.

Such is the spirit of the only true epic the  
Occident possesses. The *Odyssey* seems merely a good  
imitation, now of the *Iliad*, now of Oriental poems...  
(Weil 33)

The Homeric epic spirit that Weil describes is bitterly resigned to the necessity of force, for the truth of that necessity permeates all else. Yet the necessity of matter, of living as an embodied hero, is the force that can turn a living person into a thing. Weil exposes the Homeric human task, the absolute need of the human being to retain agency by struggling against becoming an object, and thus to assert itself by loving and being loved.

Despite her incisive insights into the deepest meaning of the *Iliad*, Weil, like Longinus, entirely misses the importance of the companion epic, the *Odyssey*. One must wonder what it really means in Weil's view for the *Odyssey* to be a good imitation, or in Longinus' view, a mere epilogue. The *Odyssey* seems to me, and certainly seemed to James Joyce, to be much more than that. It is in fact the *Iliad's* counterpart, the poem that balances its vision by illustrating how the human spirit endures the humiliations and agonies of force. If, as Weil claims, the *Iliad* is the poem of force, the *Odyssey* is perhaps the poem of the value of the endurance of force, of the human way to cope and survive. Such endurance does not imply passivity and resignation but rather requires resourcefulness and patience combined with a readiness to action, without which survival would be impossible. For the spirit must somehow adjust itself to the unavoidable human subjection to the forces of matter and time. The human spirit's virtue is measured by the action that spirit initiates in order to endure. Thus the triumph of the human spirit in enduring the ravages of force through its own actions is the focus of the *Odyssey*, while exposing the weakness, vulnerability, and

fragility of that spirit is the focus of the *Iliad*. In this way the two poems are inextricably bound up together, each contributing to the depth of the other's meaning.

Homer calls attention to this development of a new kind of heroism in the *Odyssey* by having the dead Achilles inform Odysseus from his place in Hades how precious human life is (*Od.* 11.488-503). Achilles regrets the old values he held during the war and the *Iliad*. Nagy explains that from Achilles' perspective in Hades, he feels like he made the wrong choice: "From the retrospective vantage point of the *Odyssey*, Achilles would trade his *kleos* for a *nostos*" (Nagy 1999, 35).<sup>18</sup> Now, knowing the grim reality of death, he would prefer to live as a serf, bound to the land that he works (ἐπάρουρος, 11.489), rather than rule among the dead. Achilles, the exemplar of the old sort of wartime heroism, explains that according to the new heroic code, heroes value human life above all else and regard human endurance as the highest virtue. This contrast highlights the ethical choice that every hero must make regarding the value of human life. The heroism of Achilles in the *Iliad*, characterized by the aspiration of the half-divine hero to the utter autonomy of the gods, is replaced in the *Odyssey* by the conception of Odysseus as the hero who values his humanity as his most precious possession.

Thus Achilles in the *Iliad* and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* represent two critical archetypes of the hero, the half-divine hero who aspires to the utter autonomy and

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<sup>18</sup> Mark Edwards disputes this assumption, contending that Achilles' opinion here "ought to be seen more as a continuation of his position in the *Iliad* than a reversal of it.... Achilles' words constitute a retrospective comment upon the *Iliad's* heroic value system, a comment made by the *Iliad's* own hero. The *Odyssey* exploits this facet of the Iliadic Achilles to assert the superiority of νόστος and survival to the *Iliad's* values of the hero's death and κλέος" (Edwards 1985, 51, 52). On the significance of Achilles' role in the *Odyssey*, see Edwards' full exposition (1985).

freedom of the gods, and the Zeus-sprung hero who values his own humanity as his most precious possession. Homer's use of the phrase "out of the sea" ("ἐξ ἄλός") and his use of the word semi-divine (ἡμίθεος) together function to delineate the contrasting kinds of heroism that are exemplified by the Odyssean Odysseus and the Iliadic Achilles. The contexts in which Homer uses these words express his desire to tell a new story about a new, ordinary, mortal hero.

Two critical uses of the phrase "out of the sea" ("ἐξ ἄλός") taken together show us how the nature of Achilles' heroism differs from Odysseus' sort. In one example from the *Odyssey*, Teiresias proclaims in Hades that Odysseus' death will come to him out of the sea, but only at long last, at home, and in great prosperity: "And death will come to you out of the sea, one so very gentle, that it shall kill you when you are overwhelmed by prosperous old age, and all around you, your people will be lucky" (*Od.* 11.134-137).<sup>19</sup> The truth that comes out of the sea for Odysseus is that his mother dwells forever in Hades, and his heroic fate is to join her there. Odysseus embraces the very human vulnerability of a heroic life in time and the suffering it incurs. His mother has lived that life, and it is the life that he freely chooses. Perhaps Odysseus can embrace his own humanity and the necessity of Hades because his own mother has already done so.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For a fine discussion of this use of "out of the sea", see Michael Nagler (1990, 90-95).

<sup>20</sup> Embracing humanity also means losing the embraces of loved ones. Odysseus and his mother will never be able to hug each other again in death, yet they will dwell together as ghosts (ψυχαι) in the only possible human heroic end.



Achilles, on the other hand, has enormous difficulty reconciling himself to his own humanity.<sup>21</sup> Another instance of this phrase emphasizes the fact that Achilles is a hero whose mother is divine, and that consequently the impossibility of achieving his own immortality is what defines his heroism. As an immortal mother she has no choice but to witness the death of her own child, and so she is described as coming out of the sea after hearing that her son has died: “and his mother came out of the sea together with her immortal sea-nymphs” (*Il.* XXIV.47). For Achilles, death means the loss of his mother forever, in stark contrast with Odysseus, for whom death is a reunion of sorts with his mother. Thus Achilles’ heroic striving has an entirely different goal than Odysseus’. Achilles wants to escape death: as Brian Satterfield writes in regard to Achilles’ choice in Book IX, “Presented with the choice to return

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<sup>21</sup> Brian Satterfield makes this case most cogently and effectively. He suggests that Achilles aspires to divine right, specifically the divine right of  $\mu\eta\nu\iota\varsigma$ , a right his immortal mother retains as a goddess but to which he as a mortal hero can never properly lay claim. “The embassy thus makes plain that at bottom Achilles’ *menis* is a claim for god-like self-sufficiency....Achilles does not want the life of the human being nor is he willing to acknowledge his own insufficiency” (Satterfield 17). The insight in this essay which has the greatest impact upon the present issue is the argument that the root of Achilles’  $\mu\eta\nu\iota\varsigma$  is grounded in the heroic desire to transcend his own humanity, to become something more than just human. The two phases of Achilles’ anger which Satterfield delineates are connected because they result from “the frustration of the desire for autonomy embedded in the desire always to be best and preeminent above others. For the culmination of such a desire would be to be a law unto oneself, to be a god” (Satterfield 19). Achilles is thus struggling against his very humanity, while the Odyssean Odysseus embraces his own humanity and indeed does everything he can to preserve it. Satterfield comments on the very curious and critical implications of this idea for the special nature of Achilles’ Iliadic heroism: “My argument, which the whole of this essay makes up, is that the *Iliad* does not simply vindicate heroism. Rather, I would say, it addresses the perennial human desires which find their expression in epic heroism and laments their impossibility. Rather, the fate is a comment on the aspiration” (Satterfield 4). Achilles’ and Odysseus’ heroic fates may thus be viewed as the consequences of their very different heroic desires.

home or return to the fight, Achilles does neither; presented with the choice of deaths, he declines both” (Satterfield 17). Achilles, we suspect, would choose immortality if he could: he would accept Kalypso's offer if he were in Odysseus' place. Yet our hero Odysseus rejects immortality as a negation of his very heroism. Just through the use of the phrase “out of the sea,” Homer depicts how the very meaning of heroism has undergone a drastic transformation between the worlds of these two poems. The phrase in the *Iliad* that describes the return of Achilles' immortal mother while emphasizing the fact that he can never transcend death signifies for Odysseus in the *Odyssey* the right death for a hero, one that he can and must embrace when it comes.

Homer resorts to using a *hapax legomenon* in order to clarify the difference between gods and hero-men like Odysseus, Achilles, and Heracles. Homer only uses the word half-divine (ἡμίθεος), once in the *Iliad* and never in the *Odyssey*. No one in the *Odyssey* is half-divine; Heracles is not labeled a god-hero of this sort. We can look to Homer's vocabulary itself to see that he did not intend to imply that being semi-divine is the only or the best path of heroism that the *Odyssey* depicts. Homer suggests to his audience that there is one kind of hero who is only of the past, and the old heroes are not like the new ones. Homer gestures toward a very new kind of heroism by having Apollo and Poseidon sweep away the wall with the rivers: “ὅθι πολλὰ βοάγρια καὶ τρυφάλεια/κάππεσον ἐν κονίησι καὶ ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν.” “where many cow-hide shields and helmets fell into the dust, along with the race of half-god-men” (*Il.* XII.22-24) The word for half-god and for cow-hide are both *hapaxes*. But the definitive import is that this family of half-divine men perished in a time after the *Iliad*, after Troy has been sacked. These half-divine men perish in the era before the *Odyssey*, as the proem clarifies; the story of man of many turns takes

place after the sacred citadel of Troy has been sacked (*Od.* 1.2). So, this family of men who were half of a god, to be most literal, is gone, ashes to ashes and dust to dust! Those heroes who may have been partly divine are no longer around and most certainly are not the subject of the song at hand.

Hesiod, as Nagy notes, has already described the divine race of hero-men, ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος; as Nagy writes, “In the entire *Works and Days*, the word **heros/heroes** is in fact restricted to the Fourth generation (W&D 159, 172)” (Nagy 1979, 159). Homer’s use of the word half-divine is echoed by Hesiod’s at 160 in the *Works and Days* in such a way as to make a very strong claim about the stage of heroism in his poem.<sup>22</sup> The only other use of ἡμίθεος by Hesiod is, by Nagy’s observation, in the context that Zeus is using the Trojan War to divide and distance men from the gods, again implying that henceforward heroes became mortal and not half divine at all.<sup>23</sup> Homer’s familiar epithets διογενής, sprung from the gods or Zeus-sprung, and θεοειδής and θεοείκελος, godlike, further enhance this idea.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> We must not forget the influence of earlier poetry and earlier visions of heroism upon Homer. Nagy writes, “I have taken all this time in elaborating on the single use of **hemitheoi** in order to show how closely the diction of archaic hexameter poetry responds to variant traditional perspectives on heroes. Whereas heroes is the appropriate word in epic, **hemitheoi** is more appropriate to a style that looks beyond epic” (Nagy 1999, 160). Nagy thus concurs with the idea that Homer’s language shows the ways in which he is struggling to break with earlier traditions. With his use of the word hero Homer is not seeking to transcend epic at all but rather to define it with his heroes once and for all.

<sup>23</sup> Nagy lends further support to this position: “Besides W&D 160, the word **hemitheoi** occurs also at Hesiod fr.204100MW; the context (lines 95-103) is that Zeus plans the Trojan War in order than mortals may die and thus be separated from the immortal gods” (Nagy 1999, 160).

<sup>24</sup> As Cunliffe notes, διογενής is always used in reference to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, while θεοειδής and θεοείκελος apply to many kinds of persons. In the *Iliad*

Odysseus himself knows that he cannot compete with the ancient heroes and accepts that he is of a different caliber than they were. As he tells the Phaeacians after his mighty throw during the discus contest,

Philoctetes alone defeated me with the bow in the land of the Trojans, when we Achaeans took aim. But of all the rest I declare myself to be the very best, of all mortals who live upon the earth by eating bread. Yet with men of earlier times I would not wish to compete, not Heracles nor Eurytus of Oechalia, who always used to compete with the immortals in archery.  
(*Od.* 8.219-225)

Odysseus himself recognizes that he is the best only in the present place and time. These former heroes dared to challenge the gods with their prowess; Odysseus knows that he is a mortal who can live by bread alone and that he has no business with any divine aspirations. As he declares to Alcinoos, "For I am not like the immortals, who hold wide heaven, not in shape nor in form, but like mortal men who are liable to death" (*Od.* 7.208-210). Upon reuniting with Telemachus, his son mistakes him for a god, and he replies forcefully: "οὐ τίς τοι θεός εἶμι..." "I am certainly no god, you must realize!" (*Od.* 16.187). The emphatic *toi* here commands that Telemachus recognize what his father has already come to terms with, his mortality. Odysseus accepts his humanity as including both life and death and knows that such an existence allows for the achievement of a particular kind of human excellence not available to immortals. He makes no apologies for the fact that he is a hero who hopes to die of old age; he does not want the fate of Eurytus. As he continues,

For that very reason, you know, quite quickly great Eurytus died, nor he reach old age in his halls. For

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many heroes are Zeus-sprung, but in the *Odyssey* only Odysseus is. See *Il.* I.337, 489, II.173, IV.489, IX.106, XI.810, *Od.* 2.352, 5.203, 8.3, 10.443, etc.

Apollo, seized by a great wrath, killed him because he had dared him to have a contest in archery.  
(*Od.* 8.226-228)

Odysseus, who values human life more than anything else, does not want to die quickly (αἶψα); he wants old age to come upon him at home the way that Teiresias foretells. Odysseus realizes he is not the old kind of hero who dares to challenge the gods and aspires to be better than they are. He is the new kind of enduring hero who adjusts himself to his human limitations. He loves life and tries to extend it into a long old age with every bit of energy, effort, and resourcefulness that he possesses. The man of man turns (πολύτροπος, *Od.* 1.1, 10.330) thus turns all of his energies toward the task of living a mortal, human life as long as he possibly can.

These uses of ἡμίθεος by Hesiod and by Homer, along with Odysseus' own words, support the view that the Trojan War created a huge change in the nature of heroism, the same kind of change that Homer reflects with the very different meanings of heroism for the Iliadic Achilles and the Odyssean Odysseus. Achilles and Odysseus, Homer tells us most definitively, are not of that half-divine stock. Of course, Achilles is half-divine because of his mother, and that influences the nature of his heroism. But neither he nor Odysseus or any of the Homeric heroes are ἡμίθεοι, half-divine, at least not in the sense that Hesiod intends. Evidently the fourth Age of Heroes is over, and Homer chooses his words very carefully so as to underline that fact.

With this shift, the *Odyssey* revolutionizes the meaning of heroism from the *Iliad* before it, symbolized by Homer's refusal to retell any part of the *Iliad* without alteration. This refusal enables Homer to revise the meaning of heroism between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* radically. Homeric heroism is not a monolithic, static, and

unchanging entity. Rather, the two Homeric poems illuminate starkly contrasting conceptions of heroism. The originality of Homer's retelling in the *Odyssey* accentuates that fact.

Thus Joyce's *Ulysses* is an intentional retelling of the *Odyssey*, while Homer's *Odyssey* may be the intentional refusal to retell the *Iliad*. Homer's insistence upon a new story only reinforces the idea that the *Odyssey* was presenting an entirely new kind of heroism from the *Iliad* before it, a new trope of the endurance of the human spirit in bending and adapting beneath force. What Joyce and Homer share is their refusal to retell the *Iliad*, and their desire to depict a new kind of heroism that is both ordinary and extraordinary. If Joyce's *Ulysses* is an intentional retelling of the *Odyssey*, while Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses* both result from the intentional refusal to retell the *Iliad*, it then makes sense for the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* to intersect in the realm of meaning. Joyce's retelling of the *Odyssey* betrays his dedication to emphasizing the specific sort of heroism that it depicts. Joyce's title can be interpreted as an implicit rejection of the Iliadic type of heroism that leads to the attempt to transcend the limitations of human life. At the same time, Joyce's title constitutes an explicit endorsement of the spirit of Odyssean heroism. Joyce affirms the kind of Homeric heroism represented in the *Odyssey*, while denying the kind depicted in the *Iliad*. His title announces that choice.

Longinus' chronology for the creation of the Homeric poems lends credence to the possibility that Odysseus' refusal to retell may be a veil for Homer's parallel refusal to repeat himself. Odysseus, in refusing to retell his Kalypso story, is much like Homer refusing to retell the *Iliad* in the *Odyssey*. Of course the *Iliad* echoes and reverberates in Homer's mind as he tells the *Odyssey*, just as the Kalypso story might

float around in the back of Odysseus' mind when he refuses to retell it. But that is not enough of reason to revisit the story again.

#### THE NOVELTY OF RETELLING AND DEMODOCUS' CHANGE OF THEME

Since Homer and Odysseus are in full agreement about the danger of repeating stories, Homer must justify his telling of the *Odyssey* by giving his story (μῦθος) an entirely new plot (λόγος). The change of theme that Homer makes between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* for the sake of avoiding fruitless and bad repetition is the same kind of change that Odysseus requests of the poet Demodocus. “μετάβηθι...” “So come, change your footing,” Odysseus invites the poet Demodocus, “Go a different way” (*Od.* 8.492). It seems an odd invitation indeed. Odysseus is in the land of the Phaeacians, at the court of Alcinoo, rescued from the beach after twenty days at sea after leaving Kalypso's island on his raft. Demodocus has already sung two songs, the first about the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles (*Od.* 8.73-82), the second about the love of Ares and Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.266-266).<sup>25</sup> Odysseus gives the herald an especially good piece of meat for the poet, saying,

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<sup>25</sup> S. D. Olson argues that “There are profound moral and social ambiguities within all of Demodocus' songs. The implications of these ambiguities for the interpretation of the *Odyssey* are immense. Demodocus' songs, and the story of Ares and Aphrodite in particular, emerge as a deliberate poetic control on the moral and literary pretensions of the epic at large. All of this builds on the surface issue in both the love-song and the epic, which is sex and proper sexual behavior...The stories told within [the *Odyssey*] build on the audience's need to reassure itself hypocritically about its own rectitude and responsibility, or, perhaps, conversely, to condemn and vicariously punish its own failures” (Olson 1989a, 140, 143; see further Olson 1995).

For among men upon the earth singers are imbued with  
with honor and awe, because the Muse taught them the  
paths of song, and loves the tribe of singers.  
(*Od.* 8.479-481)

And when they have eaten, Odysseus declares,

Demodocus, outstanding indeed beyond all mortal men I  
admire you, whether it was really the muse who taught  
you, the daughter of Zeus, or actually Apollo. For  
remarkably well, according to the right order of things,  
you sing of the fate of the Achaeans, of all that they  
accomplished and all that they suffered and endured, just  
as though somehow you yourself were there or had  
heard about it from another. But come, change your  
footing, go another way and pick a new theme, and sing  
of the occasion of the wooden horse, which Epeius made  
together with Athena, the horse that once upon a time  
shining Odysseus led into the acropolis as bait, after he  
had filled it with men who sacked Ilios. If you really tell  
this to me the right way, according to fate and the right  
way of things, then I will tell all men that most certainly  
in your case, with an open heart the god has granted you  
the gift of divine song.  
(*Od.* 8.486-498)

Μετάβηθι, Odysseus requests of Demodocus; go another way, take a different path.  
Βαίνω means most literally, to go, make one's way, proceed. With μέτα, it usually  
means "crossing an indicated line" (Cunliffe, s.v. βαίνω; see *Od.* 12.312, 14.483).  
Homer uses the verb to describe how during the men's third watch, the stars have hit  
their zenith and begun to move down again: "ἤμος δὲ τρίχα νυκτὸς ἔην, μετὰ δ'  
ἄστρα βεβήκει" "When it was the third watch of the night, and the stars had turned  
in their course" (*Od.* 12.312, 14.483). Nowhere else in either Homeric poem is this  
verb μεταβαίνω used. Its use connotes its meaning: most literally it means to take a  
new and different motion, to start a descent after an ascent. Like Homer, perhaps,  
Demodocus has already ascended to many climaxes of storytelling, and now, like the  
stars, at this point it is time to go a new way. Homer may have reached a zenith in the



*Iliad* and then he turned around and started an entirely new story of what happened next with the *Odyssey*.<sup>26</sup> If the *Iliad* was the ascent, the *Odyssey* is the descent; Homer reached a turning point and made his change of theme. Odysseus asks the poet Demodocus to do the same, by adopting a new and different story.

Cunliffe describes the use of the verb μεταβαίνω as figurative in the present case, meaning “to choose a fresh theme.” But to take the verb literally, we need only to examine another use of the verb, where it is not μεταβαίνω separated by tmesis but βαίνω with the preposition μέτα: “μετ’ ἵχνια βαῖνε θεοῖο” “He went after the footsteps of the goddess”<sup>27</sup> (*Od.* 3.30). Here *meta* with the accusative conveys a sense of purpose, quest and motion, a going across and a moving ahead.<sup>28</sup> Literally,

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<sup>26</sup> Curiously enough, Longinus uses a similar metaphor by saying that Homer is in his sunset during the *Odyssey*, without ever noticing the use and meaning of this verb. “In the *Odyssey* Homer may be likened to a sinking sun, whose grandeur remains without its intensity” (Longinus 67).

<sup>27</sup> Whether *Od.* 3.30 is a case of tmesis and thus is a use of the verb μεταβαίνω is a matter of dispute. Smyth’s position is that here μέτα is obviously functioning as a preposition with the accusative and that tmesis is not Homeric: “Tmesis (τμησις, *cutting*) denotes the separation of a preposition from its verb, and is a term of late origin, properly descriptive only of the post-epic language, in which preposition and verb normally formed an indissoluble compound. The term ‘tmesis’ is incorrectly applied to Homer, since in the Epic the prep.-adv. was still in process of joining with the verb” (Smyth 367). Yet he seems to contradict this position by stating that Herodotus “uses tmesis frequently in imitation of the Epic...” (Smyth 367). Stanford, for his part, has no problem attributing tmesis to Homer, e.g. *Od.* 1.150. Whether *Od.* 3.30 is an example of tmesis or not, the *meta* is what indicates Homer’s meaning most precisely.

<sup>28</sup> Listen to Smyth: “*meta* with the accusative [implies] an idea of purpose, *to go after* (in quest of) (*Od.* 10.73). *Od.* 3.30 is derived from prose use: *after* (of time or rank) as *meta ta Troika*, after the Trojan war...*meta* in composition [means] *after, in quest of*...it may be said to *come after* another, to succeed or alternate with it; hence of succession...alteration or change” (Smyth 381). Homer’s change of theme is literally a change to after the Trojan war; he most literally then follows Odysseus command

Telemachus follows the goddess Athena. The poet is also following the goddess, the Muse, as he sings. The poet is most literally going after, just as Telemachus does. Μεταβαίνω means not only to follow what has gone before but to go across and past it. Athena carves out the path and Telemachus walks in her footsteps; the path is new to him, different than any he has taken before. The poet attempts the same task, to go forward and beyond what has been sung before, as he follows the Muse in the “paths of song” (*Od.* 8.481).

Here Odysseus uses this verb μεταβαίνω to ask Demodocus to take his song in a new direction. Like Homer himself, Demodocus has already told an earlier version of the events that led up to the war. Homer himself in the *Odyssey* is taking a new path: he is changing step by choosing a new theme. He has already told the story of Achilles, the war hero who died. Now he is telling the story of Odysseus, the war hero who lived to come home.

Demodocus accomplishes Homer’s task, the task of telling a new story. At the same time, he comes the closer than anyone else to telling the story of the *Iliad* in the *Odyssey* and thus violating Homer’s and Odysseus’ injunctions against repetition. Demodocus does not tell of the wrath of Achilles and the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon that outline Homer’s theme in the *Iliad*’s proem (*Il.* I.1-7). But he does at least relate a tale about an earlier time before the Trojan War when Odysseus and Achilles quarreled, “at the time when the very beginning of destruction was rolling upon the Trojans and the Danaans through the will of great Zeus” (*Od.* 8.81-82). Demodocus introduces the theme of his song.

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“Μετάβηθι,” in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* is what goes before, and the *Odyssey* is what goes afterwards; Homer’s use of μέτα emphasizes that sequence.

the Muse stirred the divine singer to sing the glories of men [κλέα ἀνδρῶν], from that poem whose glory [κλεός], had already reached broad heaven, the quarrel of Odysseus and son of Peleus Achilles, who once upon a time competed at a luxurious feast of the gods with fierce words...  
(*Od.* 8.73-77)

It almost sounds like Demodocus sings the *Iliad* to Odysseus! Not to exaggerate, Demodocus does not revisit the events of the *Iliad* at all, yet he does choose a topic that occurred before the war, at a point when the entire crisis was only beginning to unravel. And he does choose a topic relating to strife and the effects of such arguments, a similar topic to the starting point described in the proem of the *Iliad*, the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles (*Il.* I.6-9).<sup>29</sup>

In response, Odysseus covers his head with his purple cape and cries, pouring libations only when the song ceases. W. B. Stanford observes that Odysseus' tears are specific to his presence in this particular poem: "Odysseus never cries in the *Iliad*, but he cries a lot in the *Odyssey*" (Stanford 1968, xvii). Odysseus' tears are yet another example of the new kind of hero that Odysseus has become. Odysseus here learns that his glory had already spread so far. He is a hero with the privilege of encountering his own reputation (κλεός) during the events of his own life. He learns that his history has already become the subject of song and entered the realm of myth. He sobs with his own memories of the time being described that he lived, and with the knowledge that while still suffering a mortal life, he has already earned the kind of immortality that only song can give.

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<sup>29</sup> Mark Edwards interprets the obvious intertextual allusions elicited by the song to have a particular poetic purpose: "the contrast between Achilles and Odysseus in terms of βίη and μῆτις is made explicit" (Edwards 1985, 40; see 39-41).

Odysseus then invites Demodocus to tell him another story about his own experience, to make a story of a time and place and event in which Odysseus himself participated. Odysseus requests that Demodocus make him into a song. “Make me a myth,” he asks the poet with this verb μεταβάλλω. What the poet and audience do not know is that this stranger is Odysseus and that therefore he is really asking Demodocus to make him into a myth! What the Phaeacian audience and Demodocus hear is Odysseus asking, “Make a myth for me,” whereas Homer’s audience knows and Odysseus knows that the veiled request is “Make a myth out of me, of me: make me into a myth.” In some sense Odysseus is doing exactly what Homer did by asking the Muse to make Odysseus into a song, except that Odysseus is asking that he himself be the topic, not another man.<sup>30</sup>

Odysseus can thus listen to Demodocus making history into myth; Odysseus can hear how his own history becomes a myth. He asks Demodocus to tell it like it was, as if he had been there, when Odysseus, as both his audience and his hero, knows exactly how it was. He wants to hear how Demodocus will give shape and meaning to his own experiences. Odysseus wants to hear how Demodocus will give λόγος to Odysseus’ μῦθος, a story which in this case is inspired by historical events.

Odysseus then makes his own history into a myth when he tells his own stories; the hero becomes the historian and makes a myth of his own experience. When he sings his own κλέος and tells his own story, he gives himself his full heroic title, Odysseus son of Laertes (*Od.* 9.19). He sings his story in response to Alcinoos’ request, who suspects that Odysseus may have had friends who died in the war (*Od.*

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<sup>30</sup> As Simon Goldhill puts it, “Odysseus requests and receives a tale which represents himself as hero, and then proceeds to tell the next episode of the story himself, self-representing himself as hero” (Goldhill 1991, 52).

8.581-586). But as previously discussed, he ends his story by refusing to retell a part of it, the story with which he began about declining to stay with Kalypso (*Od.* 8.241-297). Thus in his role as poet, Odysseus emulates what Homer does in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: Homer and Odysseus each tell their stories once and refuse to retell them in exactly the same way ever again.

Homer's epic method, then, operates in the identical manner as Joyce's: through the refusal to retell the same story in an identical way. Joyce's declared intention of retelling warns his audience of his intention to change the previously told story of Odysseus. The title *Ulysses* transforms the name Odysseus, signaling the transformation that this retelling must undergo to make it worthwhile according to Odysseus' own dictates. Joyce's retelling achieves what Odysseus insists every worthy retelling should, because, as Daniel Schwarz explains, "*Ulysses* is an effort to redefine the concept of the hero" (Schwarz 16).<sup>31</sup> Homer's *Odyssey* is an example of the same effort on Homer's part. Every retelling must redefine the concept of heroism to avoid becoming the kind of hateful story that Odysseus condemns.

The entire point of epic poetry is to tell an old story in a new way every single time. Hence all of epic poetry, from Homer to Vergil to Milton, aspires to retell what has already been told. The paradox of retelling is that such poetry should be both entirely derivative and entirely original simultaneously. Lord explains how that paradox might operate in oral poetry, insinuating that apparently new forms of songs are not nearly as revolutionary as they may first appear: "The significant idea has been

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<sup>31</sup> Vergil may have been engaged in precisely the same effort in the *Aeneid*, as Carol Andreini argues using identical terms: "Does Vergil redefine the epic hero? Yes, he does. He does this by juxtaposing with his new hero the traditional Homeric one" (Andreini 1991, 87).

kept, and only the form of it has changed...[finally] we are...struck by the conservativeness of the tradition” (Lord 1960, 118, 123). Joyce joins the tradition of epic poets by retelling an old story in a surprisingly new way, establishing himself as a modernist fiction writer relying upon many of the methods of the epic storyteller. Joyce’s change of form often obscures his affirmation of the traditional meaning of his chosen song.

### THE GOALS OF RETELLING AND RE-EMBODIMENT

Odysseus’ and Homer’s attitude toward retelling has curious implications for *Ulysses*. Joyce approaches his task of retelling with zest and delight. He is devoted to treating the story of Odysseus in a totally innovative way by placing him in a modern context. Like the poet of the *Odyssey*, Joyce wants to retell what has already been told, but he wants to tell it in an entirely new way, a way in which the story has never been told before. He expresses this desire with his title. Despite all of the irony and sarcasm for which Joyce is both renowned and adored, his title is not an ironic one. The title is not a joke to him; as the Linati schema alone should prove to anyone, Joyce took his task of retelling very seriously indeed (Ellmann 1972). Joyce was unquestionably wrestling with the idea of heroism ever since his first version of *Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man* was entitled *Stephen Hero*. Joyce gives voice to the task he undertakes himself as an artist:

...the artist who could disentangle the subtle soul of the image from its mesh of defining circumstances most exactly and ‘re-embody’ it in artistic circumstances chosen as the most exact for it in its new office, he was the supreme artist.

(SH 78)

In *Ulysses* Joyce is trying to accomplish that very task of “re-embodiment” by removing Homer’s heroism of endurance from its web of cultural and historical specificity and then replanting that kind of heroism in a new time and place. Joyce wants to be the supreme artist who creates an enduring image of heroism that reinforces Homer’s vision of heroism at the same time as he revolutionizes the forms and expressions that kind of heroism may have. The new office of Dublin, Ireland, on June 16, 1904, can then incite readers to explore just how the same spirit of heroism might inform such actions as Odysseus’ rejection of Kalypso’s offer of immortality and Leopold’s decision not to commit suicide like his father.

Thus Joyce and Homer apply Eliot’s “mythical method,” more accurately named the epic method, with great cunning in order to glorify the heroism of endurance personified by Odysseus. Homer and Joyce refuse to retell the *Iliad* in order to illustrate a new kind of heroism exemplified by Odysseus but lacking in Achilles. Homer, Joyce, and Odysseus share the same storytelling code: they refuse to retell a story in exactly the same way as it has been told before. Albert Lord’s reflection upon the task of oral poets gives further credence to the idea that despite the written nature of Joyce’s text, Joyce has assumed most of the responsibilities and goals of the oral poet as a modern novelist:

the picture that emerges is not really one of conflict between preserver of tradition and creative artist; it is rather one of the preservation of tradition by the constant re-creation of it. The ideal is a true story well and truly retold.

(Lord 1960, 29)

By means of Homer, we have witnessed exactly that: Odysseus’ *apologoi* is the true story of his own endurance, well and truly retold by Homer. In general, oral poetry

completely conceals the moment of any particular song's inception, as Lord explains: "it is impossible to retrace the work of generations of singers to that moment when some singer first sang a particular song...we must cease trying to find an original of any traditional song" (Lord 1960, 100). Homer seems to have offered his audience a glimpse of the first version of a portion of his own song by quoting Odysseus' own original and true *apologoi*. Odysseus himself then may not be objecting to the act of retelling itself by denying his own need to indulge in it. Like Helen in the *Iliad*, who perceives her own future as a subject of song with Paris: "so even for generations still unborn we will live in song" (*Il.* 6.357-358; Robert Fagles' translation), perhaps Odysseus is alluding to his same future status. If his recognition of his own potential immortality through the κλέος of song is betrayed by his refusal to retell his own story, then his refusal to retell would then be balanced by his expectation that bards like Homer will retell his story for him from now on. Like Molly Bloom with her address to Jamesy, he indicates only covertly and subtly his own comprehension of his status as a character. Odysseus watched himself become a character for Demodocus and assumes that his story will be told continue again and again. Odysseus seems to invite that activity by asking why he should retell his own story when others will do so for him, whereas Molly Bloom protests against the "pooh" of being only a fictional construct.

As Lord finds oral poets able to reconcile the urge to creativity and the duty to preserve tradition, Joyce negotiates the same balance. Creative innovation and loyalty to tradition need not clash irreconcilably, for even in the realm of oral poetry, truly



retelling a story well requires creativity; it is by no means a simple mnemonic feat.<sup>32</sup> Joyce's ideal and the ideal sought by oral composers is then much closer than one might ever have initially suspected. For the task of retelling is not hateful. Rather, it is the motives of retelling which can make it suspect. As Glenn Most reminds us, the purpose of Odysseus' story in the first place was to gain conveyance home, and he has no shame nor shows any hesitation in telling his story to that end:

whatever other meanings they may have, Odysseus' *apologoi* function rhetorically, within their immediate dramatic context, as a *diegesis* furnishing examples to support an argument whose message, if it were put bluntly, would be 'Let me go home now.'  
(Most 1989b, 30)

Odysseus' objection to retelling betrays why retelling should never be undertaken frivolously but only with a specific goal in mind. According to Odysseus, the aesthetic pleasure of the audience is not a good enough reason to justify retelling, but "the preservation of tradition by the constant re-creation of it" (Lord 1960, 29) certainly is. Odysseus would approve of Joyce's aim, if not his accomplishment.

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<sup>32</sup> See further my 2002 article on memorization and its implications for oral poetry and for performances of Joyce's texts.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### NARRATIVE DUPLICITY AND THE INEFFABILITY OF LOVE

In at least one regard, mortals may be kinder, gentler, and altogether superior to the gods. In Homer's *Iliad*, Hera is so determined to affect the course of the Trojan War that she sets out to seduce her husband in order to distract him from his command of human events. Her scheme succeeds admirably once Zeus asks her to go to bed with him with the compliment that "Never yet in this way did desire for goddess nor woman wrap around my heart and conquer me, not even when I was seized with lust for the wife of Ixion..." (*Il.* XIV. 315-317). He continues with a list of six of his lovers and the children they bore him, none of whom, he vehemently assures his wife, aroused him as she does now.<sup>1</sup> This sort of divine love seems utterly ineffable from the

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Gaertner comments, "What ought to be a confession is ironically presented here as a flattering remark. The irony of the inversion is rendered even more poignant through the catalogue [of lovers], since Zeus—apparently entirely insensible to the faux pas that he is about to make—not only stresses the frequency of his infidelities but also elaborates the individual items of the catalogue as he put them in review" (Gaertner 305). Zeus is entirely lacking in remorse, as if the supremacy of his

mortal perspective. For Zeus' insensitivity to Hera's feelings, his ignorance of her motives, and his brutality in reminding her of the diversity and the fruits of his profligate infidelities, seems quite contrary to our usual understanding of what love comprises. Hence, discovering its diametric opposite in the marriages of Odysseus and Penelope and the Blooms depicted in Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses* is rather reassuring. Even the controversial list of Molly's possible lovers (*U* 17.2125-2142), surrounded as it is by suspicion and uncertainty, both on Leopold's part and among critics, comes nowhere near to approaching the candid and casual cruelty of Zeus.<sup>2</sup> In no case can that list be interpreted as Molly's confession to Leopold disclosing her affairs to her spouse as Zeus does so bluntly, without any consideration for how wounding it might be. Quite to the contrary, the Blooms and Odysseus and Penelope all exert great efforts to avoid making either Zeus' or Hera's mistakes. They acknowledge infidelity in their own marriages only tacitly, never attempting to

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desire for Hera should erase all jealousy and resentment on her part. Indeed, Hera offers no remonstrations, most likely for the sake of succeeding in her plan.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Herring describes the problem presented by this list: "The principal problem with respect to Molly's infidelity is that of separating her imaginary lovers from her real ones" (Herring 1972, 67). Bernard Benstock resolves the issue definitively: "A sexually promiscuous Molly Bloom has been a commonplace of *Ulysses* criticism but...the myth has been so totally discredited as to become an embarrassment to anyone who still has it in his possession" (Benstock 1982, 48). He cites the consensus on this point reached by Stanley Sultan (Sultan 431-33), David Hayman (Hayman 1970, 112-115), and Robert Adams (Adams 35-40). Hugh Kenner also dismisses the view that the list is an accurate accounting of Molly's lovers: "...what looks like a list of Molly's bedfellows compiled by the Recording Angel (*U* 17.2132-2142) proves to be chiefly a litany of Bloom's suspicions... Boylan, once we come to think about it, must surely be Molly's first affair" (Kenner 1974, 23). Morris Beja concurs that this is Molly's first encounter with Boylan (Beja 1984, 112-114). John Gordon, however, provides a compelling argument for why Molly's affair may have been going on for some time previous to Bloomsday (Gordon 1979, 335-339). Also see Hugh Kenner's and Frederick Wellington's responses to his case (Wellington 340-342, Kenner 1979, 342-344).

deceive each other, yet also seeking to spare themselves from any open discussion of the matter which might inflict further pain. My question thus emerges: does love between mortals in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* turn out to be just as ineffable as the love between Zeus and Hera, and if so, how and why?

THE DUBIOUS CONVERSATION  
AND THE MISSING CONFESSION

he said Im dining out and going to the Gaiety  
(*U* 18.81-82)

He's coming in the afternoon....Afternoon she  
said....Not yet. At four, she said....Not yet. At four, she.  
Who said four?...Be near. At four. Has he forgotten?  
(*U* 6.190; 8.1187; 11.188; 11.352; 11.392).

Many critics have already offered various resolutions to the textual complexities such evidence presents. Nevertheless, the status of the infamous “missing conversation” still presents a line of cleavage among Joyce scholars. What remains perturbing about this dispute is the strength of the evidence on all sides. Whether one believes that the “at four” conversation is missing, as Hugh Kenner and Frederick Wellington argue,<sup>3</sup> or repressed, as Margaret McBride argues,<sup>4</sup> or not missing at all, as

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<sup>3</sup> Hugh Kenner asserts that that readers must extrapolate from the text in order to acknowledge the existence of an excised scene during which these matters are discussed: “What do you say to let your wife know that you know why Boylan is coming? Though she knows it, and knows you know she knows it? No answer. And no scene” (Kenner 1977, 387). Fred Wellington contends that Joyce intended to force readers to adduce the content of such a discussion for themselves: “Like so many important incidents in *Ulysses*, Joyce chose not to narrate directly Bloom’s discovery; rather than presenting it during Molly and Bloom’s initial conversations in “Calypso,” he preferred to make his readers reconstruct a later conversation from the recollections of the characters involved” (Wellington 1977, 477).

John Gordon argues,<sup>5</sup> we should all agree, at least, that Joyce intended to create this enigma by declining to narrate explicitly how the Blooms arrive at their agreement that Molly will cheat on Leopold on Bloomsday. The multiplicity of plausible explanations for this circumstance which can be supported with textual evidence illustrates Christine van Boheemen's claim that "*Ulysses* is the one novel I know which manages to create this double image of simultaneously weaving and unweaving a fiction, showing us plot in deconstruction" (Boheemen 1987, 162). Joyce seems to encourage his plot to deconstruct itself with the proliferation of evidence supporting two contradictory states of affairs: the dubious "at four" conversation which may or may not exist, and Molly's affair, which has either just been initiated on Bloomsday or has been in progress for some time.

For my present purposes, what matters most is the undeniable uncertainty that Joyce fostered about if, when, and how Molly and Leopold verbally negotiated their arrangement, thus promoting doubts about how often Molly's adultery has occurred

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<sup>4</sup> According to McBride, Molly states in "Calypso" that Boylan is "bringing the programme *at four*" and Leopold responds "Eleven, I think. I didn't see the paper. *I'm dining out and going to the Gaiety*" (McBride 1979, 25), although the italicized words do not appear in the text. McBride regards their absence as evidence of Joyce's revolutionary narrative technique, advocating the possibility that "in a radical departure from narrative convention, the words are deleted from the text to underscore the repression and denial with which Bloom himself confronts the time of the adultery....Suppression is the key to the curious conundrum of the missing 'at four.' Paradoxically, the words draw attention to themselves through their denial and deletion. Their power derives not from their presence in a missing scene but rather from their startling absence in a recorded one" (McBride 1979, 21, 37).

<sup>5</sup> John Gordon contends that there is no missing conversation to be interpolated, asserting that Leopold knows that the meeting time is four o'clock because it has happened before: "He knows from the past that the regular meeting time is four p.m....*Ulysses* is full of indications that the affair is an acknowledged *fait accompli*" (Gordon 1979, 338).

and how the Blooms have agreed to handle it. The ensuing controversy reveals the impact of the narrative gap that Joyce created surrounding the Blooms' negotiation of infidelity. What is definitively missing is any evident confession of adultery on Molly's part. Yet such a confession would seem almost superfluous, for there is no need to confess what Leopold already knows. Whenever and however he found out "at four", there is never any doubt that he knows what events that time indicates.

One might expect such guileful gaps in narration, what *Ulysses* itself acknowledges and names "a blank period of time" (*U* 17.2050-1), to be one of Joyce's astonishingly original and new innovations of the Homeric myth, yet another drastic change to the fabric of the plot that is one of the privileges that he assumes in retelling Homer's poem. But Joyce's creation of this gap actually affirms and imitates the very method of Homer's telling of the *Odyssey*. For the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* each cultivate an insistent ambiguity regarding the confrontation of adultery by the partners involved. Both Homer and Joyce construct and exploit impenetrable narrative gaps concerning how their couples cope with adultery. Hence, how Molly and Penelope manage to reconcile with their respective husbands about infidelity is a blank spot in both texts, one of those gaps and cracks that Clive Hart observes that Joyce relishes.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Clive Hart argues that the reader's task is defined by the proliferation of narrative gaps: "*Ulysses* pretends to offer a complete account of Bloomsday, but of course it is full of gaps—huge gaps....we are powerfully reminded that *Ulysses* omits most things, that the observable part of the book is only a tiny fragment, and that most of it is, in fact, one huge gap to be filled by the reader" (Hart 1993, 434,436). Philip Herring proposes that Kenner "probably invented this technique of discovery in Joyce studies" (xii, see Kenner 1977), while Benstock calls Kenner "the man in the gap" and deems his enterprise "gnomonic criticism" (Benstock 1976, 434, 428). Herring argues that this technique is required by what he deems "Joyce's Uncertainty Principle," because "In Joyce's case we normally find that an essential piece of evidence is missing that would allow us a measure of security in interpretation; readers are invited to fill in the gap by speculating about what is missing...uncertainty is to a great extent

The reader is obliged to interpolate the action which has been concealed through narrative ingenuity.<sup>7</sup>

This task, it turns out, is not limited to readers of Joyce. The audience of the *Odyssey* must undertake a similar enterprise due to its chronological and narrative convolutions, because, as Laura Slatkin explains, the *Odyssey*

insists upon the complexity of its own narrative structure....The narrative of the *Odyssey*...embodies, in its many weavings, its reversals, its twisting of time, a *metis* [cunning] of its own.  
(Slatkin 1996, 228, 237)

The intricacy of Homer's narrative compels the audience to reconstruct the chronological order of events (Slatkin 1996, 224), whereas *Ulysses* demands that readers reconstruct how and when certain events occurred for themselves.<sup>8</sup> Strikingly,

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true of all literary texts, but it is untrue that authors before Joyce generally had uncertainty principles....What I describe is not a feature of all language or of all literary texts" (Herring 1987, xii).

<sup>7</sup> In this vein, Marilyn French argues that Joyce's reliance upon ellipsis creates a sense of incertitude for the reader: "Ellipsis is a pointed omission, a gap or silence to which our attention is directed.... readers will go to great lengths to fill in a gap. Joyce had already discovered his method [in *Dubliners*]: he would seduce readers to participate in affirming...something...in the face of omission, in the face of a void" (French 41, 43). For Joyce, gaps are provocations, a demand that the reader must engage in some sort of synthesis and interpretation in order to arrive at any satisfying sense of textual meaning.

<sup>8</sup> Jenny Strauss Clay confirms this point: "The complexity of the *Odyssey* is due in large part to the shattering of a simple chronological and spatial framework" (Clay 1983, 326). On the basis of this idea, Ann Bergren views "the temporality of the epic [to be] polytropic, made up of many *tropoi* or *nostoi* of time...many (re)turns from the past and the future to the present" (Bergren 1983, 41). P. V. Jones even ventures that "Homer's decision to invert the epic (i.e., begin at the end)" is his own invention, evidence of his uniqueness and ingenuity as a poet (Jones 74ff.). Homer's narrative structure requires the audience to reorder textual events in order to make sense of them. John Gordon notes that Joyce's narrative method also requires such a reconstruction of events: "Starting well before 'Kirke', over half of *Ulysses* is to a

both the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* present the same demand for interpolation and extrapolation regarding the disclosure and discussion of infidelity by married spouses.<sup>9</sup> Herein lies my problem: how do Homer and Joyce narrate this kind of confrontation concerning infidelity, and what can be deduced from their treatments of this crucial moment in any marriage?

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large extent engaged in recalling what has earlier been experienced or imagined or recalled, drawing on a realm which begins largely within the frame of the earlier narrative and ends largely outside it. The wish to create just such effects accounts for a much discussed feature of *Ulysses*, the narrative gaps between and within the episodes. They make a long story even longer, virtually unending, in fact, and see to it that reading *Ulysses* means reading beyond it, through the lines instead of between them” (Gordon 1981, 45-46). Understanding the causes and order of events in the *Odyssey* demands the same kind of conjecture that one must perform in reading *Ulysses*.

<sup>9</sup> This urgent need to interpret and resolve the problems embedded in the narrative design of the text is illustrated by Joyce’s own delight that he had “put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries, arguing over what I meant” (Ellmann 1982, 521). As Tony Thwaites observes of Joyce’s many signatures in his texts, “It is a hint, encouraging and authorizing: *Look for the enigmas and puzzles: they are there, I put them there*” (Thwaites 2001, 1). Sebastian Knowles thus asserts, “The puzzles in *Ulysses* are the place to begin” (Knowles 5), demonstrating in his remarkable textual investigation and explication the same “insistence on fitting the pieces together, connecting the dots, deciphering the text” (Knowles 7) which he attributes to T. S. Eliot and Joyce himself. Homer may have shared that same inclination, for Simon Goldhill suggests that the poet’s omission of Odysseus’ name in the proem is precisely such a puzzle, one which promises and perturbs: “the withholding of the name invests the proem with the structure of a *griphos*, a riddle, an enigma, where a series of expression (of which *polutropon* is the first) successively qualifies the term *andra* as the name ‘Odysseus’ is approached” (Goldhill 1991, 4). Scott Klein discusses how reading *Ulysses* “is inevitably a grappling with confusion...a subtle and extended exercise in disorientation” while acknowledging the need to avoid “redu[cing] *Ulysses* to a sterile puzzle or a monument to indeterminacy” (Klein 1993, 111). The puzzle at hand concerns the indeterminacy surrounding how these spouses acknowledge infidelity and preserve their marriages.



## THE INTERTEXTUAL EMBRACE OF THE STRATEGY OF AVOIDANCE

The elusive status of the allegedly missing conversation and its topics may emerge from a particular narrative strategy on Joyce's part, which involves the alternation of shockingly graphic sexual content with complete silence on Molly's sexual exploits on Bloomsday.<sup>10</sup> As lewd as *Ulysses* is at some points, the only details about Molly's and Boylan's lovemaking provided by our narrator are offered through Molly's memories and comments. Thus Joyce's graphic style, which first led his novel to be labeled pornographic, is not nearly as straightforward as it seems, for it serves to veil a pervasive kind of narrative reticence concerning sexual affairs that Joyce shared with Homer.

For Homer, this reticence extends to most sexual matters; as Froma Zeitlin observes, "The *Odyssey* is noticeably reticent about addressing acts of adultery" (Zeitlin 128). Zeitlin explains how Homer manages to maintain such reticence in his narration: "Avoidance is one strategy. Euphemism is another" (Zeitlin 128). Zeitlin points out that only once, in Demodocus' song about Ares and Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.266-366), does Homer "not hesitate to speak plainly" (Zeitlin 128). Joyce copies Homer's

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<sup>10</sup> As Richard Brown discusses, "The textual history of *Ulysses* is also one of repeated rewriting and accretion. Yet the additions do nothing to 'fill in the gap' caused by the refracted narration of the encounter between Molly and Boylan. Notwithstanding its deeper, more extensive and more learned 'explicitness', or even obscenity, in writing about sex, *Ulysses* has a kind of tact or restraint, and a more profound tolerance of this kind of gap" (Brown 1989, 107). *Ulysses* not only tolerates this gap, Joyce actually cultivates it. Stanley Sultan explains why: "The manipulation of form in *Exiles* and *Ulysses* ensures that adultery is perceived as a kind of gap in the consciousness of a central character and as an absent or displaced center in the awareness of the audience...Gabriel and the audience will never know the truth [in *The Dead*]. There is a gap, a bottomless residue of doubt in the record" (Sultan 103, see further Brown 1989, 110).

strategy of avoidance, but he throws euphemisms to the wind. Instead of referring to adultery discreetly as Homer does, naming adultery an ἔργον ἀεικές, shameful deed,<sup>11</sup> Joyce's language is as lusty, as crude, and as illicit as the act itself. Joyce inserts a flood of minute details depicting adultery's effects, its thrills, and its agonies, leading most to object that Joyce lacks any kind of discretion at all as a narrator. But that abundance of licentious thoughts and images only functions to mask Joyce's narrative reticence. His startling bluntness distracts readers not only from his overt refusal to narrate the sexual encounter with Boylan, but from his reluctance to disclose the communication between Leopold and Molly openly, without equivocation. What initially appears to be his astonishing candor as a narrator turns out to be a guise that conceals his narrative obstructions.

Rather surprisingly, then, Joyce's *Ulysses* demonstrates the same sort of narrative obstruction and reticence as Homer's *Odyssey*, due to the same refusal to narrate the marital discussion about infidelity. In so doing, their narration functions to shroud the textual events they are portraying in uncertainty, by suppressing the precise words with which infidelity is surmounted.<sup>12</sup> Thus the narrative gaps that Joyce inserts in *Ulysses* regarding infidelity are an intertextual echo with Homer, a technique of Homer's narration that Joyce preserves in his retelling. Not only do spouses engage in taciturn collusion to avoid any agonizing confrontation of infidelity, both Homer and Joyce aid them in their conspiracy. Homer and Joyce both rely upon narrative

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<sup>11</sup> Froma Zeitlin cites the use of this term at *Od.* 3.265, 11.429, 23.222.

<sup>12</sup> This choice has significant consequences, because, as Scott Richardson asserts, "When the narrator informs us of spoken words without availing himself of direct speech, he is manipulating the story and leaving his mark on the text" (Richardson 1990, 71).

techniques that enable them to conceal the precise terms by which their characters resolve infidelity within their own marriages.<sup>13</sup> Their methods of narration serve to obscure the exact nature of the most confidential marital negotiations. The golden cloud with which Zeus surrounds himself and Hera to protect them from the shame of being seen in the act of love (*Il.* XIV 350-51) becomes in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* a shroud of occlusions and omissions woven by our narrators to protect their characters from the shameful act of being witnessed while coping with infidelity. Both Homer and Joyce resort to reporting what was said on the topic, rather than including direct dialogue.

Such an aversion to dialogue is unusual, for Homer, like Joyce, normally depends on extensive direct speech.<sup>14</sup> Homer displays his affinity for dialogue when he quotes Odysseus in his rage over Penelope's bed test and quotes her response (*Od.*

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<sup>13</sup> The present inquiry is not an exhaustive analysis of narrative strategies but limited to how narrative techniques affect the textual presentation of marital discussions of adultery. On Joyce's narrative strategies and techniques, see Erwin Steinberg (1958, 1973, 1985, 1993), Robert Adams (1962), Hugh Kenner (1974, 1977, 1987), Clive Hart (1966, 1993), Frederick Wellington (1977, 1979), Brook Thomas (1977, 1982), Dorrit Cohn (1978, 217-265), Margaret McBride (1977, 1981), John Gordon (1981), Karen Lawrence (1981), Jean-Michel Rabaté (1982, 1991), Jean Paul Riquelme (1982, 1983), Richard Brown (1985, 1989), Zack Bowen (1987), Michael Gillespie (1989), Dermot Kelly (1990), Bernard Benstock (1982, 1991), Marilyn French (1976, 1992), John Rickard (1999), Sebastian Knowles (2001), Tony Thwaites (2001), and John Gordon (2002). On Homer's methods of narration, see Paolo Vivante (1970), Jenny Strauss Clay (1983), Ann Bergren (1983), George Walsh (1984, 3-21), Mark Edwards (1987, 29-41), Glenn Most (1989), John Peradotto (1990), Ahuvia Kahane (1990), Scott Richardson (1990, 1996), Simon Goldhill (1991, 1-68), Lillian Doherty (1991, 1995), Oliver Taplin (1992), Charles Segal (1994), S. D. Olson (1995), Laura Slatkin (1991, 1996), Bruce Loudon (1999), Elizabeth Minchin (1999), and Irene de Jong (1987, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Scott Richardson comments: "Three-fifths of the Homeric poems are in direct speech, a higher proportion than any other epic poems and much higher than most novels" (Richardson 1990, 70). Homer and Joyce both avail themselves of direct dialogue to a surprising extent.

23.174-230). But when Odysseus finally tells her the story of his toils and travels, Homer reverts to indirect discourse (*Od.* 23.310-343). After Penelope and Odysseus make love as they used to once upon a time (*Od.* 23.296), they tell each other the tales of their adventures apart:

But when the two were satisfied by the joy of love, they took joy in stories, speaking to one another. She, beautiful lady, told of all she had endured in their halls, watching the destructive horde of suitors who slaughtered many beasts for her sake, cattle and fine sheep, and lots of wine was drawn from the jars. Then Zeus-born Odysseus told his whole story, about all of the pains he put upon men, and all of the sorrow that he himself had suffered, and she was delighted to listen, nor did sleep fall upon her eyelids before he told the whole story. He began with how he first overcame the Cicones, and then came to the fertile land of the Lotus-eaters, and how much the Cyclops had accomplished, and how he made him pay the penalty for his worthy comrades, whom the Cyclops devoured without any pity. Then how he came to Aeolus, who welcomed him with an open heart and was sending him on his way, but it was not yet his fate to reach his dear homeland, since the stormwinds snatched him again and bore him across the teeming sea with great groaning. Then how he reached Telepylus of the Laestrygonians, who destroyed his ships and his well-greaved comrades, all of them, and Odysseus alone escaped in a black ship. And then he told of Kirke, about her wiles and tricks, and how he went to the house of Hades in his well-benched ship in order to consult the ghost of Theban Teiresias and had seen all of his comrades and his mother, she who gave birth to him and cared for him when he was a child. And how he listened to the unceasing voice of the Sirens, and how he came to the Wandering Rocks and to dread Charybdis, and to Scylla, from whom no one yet has ever escaped unscathed. Then how his comrades killed the oxen of the sun, and how Zeus who thunders from on high struck his swift ship with a blazing thunderbolt and his worthy comrades died all together, while only he escaped the evil fates. And how he came to the isle

Ogygia and to nymph Calypso, who restrained him there in her hollow caves, desiring him to be her husband, and took care of him and kept telling him that she would make him immune to death and old age for all of his days, but she never persuaded the heart in his breast. Then how he came to the Phaeacians after so much suffering, who from the bottom of their hearts honored him like a god and sent him in a ship to his dear homeland, after giving him bronze and gold and clothing in abundance.  
(*Od.* 23.310-341)<sup>15</sup>

First, how genuine is their “joy in stories”? Earlier, when Odysseus conceded to Penelope’s wish to hear the future sufferings that will still be theirs (*Od.* 23. 248-262),

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<sup>15</sup> Some modern and ancient critics, including Aristophanes, Aristarchus and the modern Analysts, believe that the original and authentic text of the *Odyssey* ended with line 296, so everything onward was the interpolation of a later poet. Irene de Jong suggests this ending would be “anachronistic...premature...and too abrupt” (de Jong 2001, 562). In W. B. Stanford’s comprehensive discussion of various positions on this point (Stanford 1996, 404-407), he notes that both Plato and Aristotle accept the full text as Homer’s, and pronounces “every line is worthy of Homer’s plainer style” (Stanford 1996, 406). He also observes, “The passage comprises the longest piece of continuous indirect speech in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*” (Stanford 1996, 406). Also see Alfred Heubeck, who provides a complete bibliography on the debate and acknowledges “weighty arguments to be advanced in favour of accepting the lines as genuine. Most important is the fact that retrospection is a thoroughly Homeric technique...” (Russo 1996, 346-347). It is also a thoroughly Joycean technique, as John Gordon first established (Gordon 1981, especially chapter 3), and as John Rickard proves overwhelmingly by “reading *Ulysses* as an ‘odyssey of memory’...the book creates an environment that allows us to observe the workings of memory” (Rickard 1999, 181, 195). Dorothea Wender argues for the integrity of Homer’s poem as a whole, viewing the retelling of Nekuia as evidence of a single Homeric author throughout the poem: “[The second visit to Hades in Book 24] might, of course, be coincidence. But it also might be quite deliberate; it certainly looks as if the author of the Slaughter of the Suitors (who surely has as much right as anyone to the name Homer) was already planning the Nekuia, and wanted to keep all twenty-one souls in reserve for their journey together in Book 24” (Wender 114). James Armstrong also argues that *Od.* 23.296-24.548 “is an integral and organic part of the story” (Armstrong 38; see 38, n. 1 and 2, 39, n. 3 and 4, and 41, n. 9 for extensive bibliographical references). Oddly, Stanford even proclaims that “Joyce accepted the theory of the Alexandrian critics that the *Odyssey* originally ended at line 296 of Book XXIII with the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus” (Stanford 1953, 131), but offers no substantiation of his claim whatsoever.

he warns her that she will take no joy in the story, nor will he (*Od.* 23. 265-267). In Charles Segal's words, it is "a tale received without the 'pleasure' that aesthetic distance makes possible" (Segal 1993, 368). If we take Homer seriously here, then there is no joy to be found in describing future sufferings, while joy can be found in telling stories about the past. Anticipating future sufferings cannot give any pleasure, but relating how one managed to endure past ones can. The pleasure of retrospective storytelling about suffering is thus countered by the pain of telling about anticipated sufferings.

Moreover, the very topic itself would seem to include certain painful disclosures, such as Odysseus' adultery with goddesses and Penelope's ambivalence about the suitors. Yet if and how those disclosures are made remains a mystery by virtue of Homer's narrative design. Homer does not grant his listeners the privilege of hearing the story that either Penelope or Odysseus tells. Even Penelope may not tell the truth unequivocally; she tells "how much" she has endured ("ὅσα" *Od.* 23.302), but the details Homer tells us that she conveys concern only the feasting and pillaging of the house and its stores.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Homer not only announces that Odysseus also told "how much" ("ὅσα" *Od.* 23.302) suffering he has endured and inflicted, but Homer specifies twice that he told all: first, "πάντ' ἔλεγ'" "he told all" (*Od.* 23.308), and then again when he clarifies that Penelope did not fall asleep "πάρος

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<sup>16</sup> Penelope's exact admission to her husband remains enshrouded in doubt, for Homer's reference to "what she endured" does not specify whether she admits to her ambivalence about remarriage and her flirtations with the suitors. She alluded to her ambivalence previously (*Od.* 19.524), and Telemachus confided in his father about it (*Od.* 16.73). Still, there can be no question whatsoever that the subject of both spousal tales was the endurance of all of the different kinds of grief to which they were subjected before they could return to each other.

καταλέξει ἅπαντα” “before he recounted everything” (*Od.* 23.309).<sup>17</sup> Only Penelope hears “the whole story” (*Od.* 23.308, 309). The audience is unavoidably alienated from the actual content of Odysseus’ disclosure by Homer’s chosen narrative method.

Odysseus’ decision to relate “everything” might not be expected to invoke such delight in his wife, especially if he reported his infidelities honestly. Homer’s emphasis on their joy leads one to suspect that the confession of infidelity probably does not occur at all in the *Odyssey*, just as it does not occur in *Ulysses*. It is very likely that Odysseus simply allows Penelope’s assumptions about the details of his time with the goddesses to stand without comment, refraining from confession and confrontation just as the Blooms do. But we are deprived of the comfort and rigor of unequivocal textual evidence. Herein lies an example of Homer applying what Philip Herring deemed Joyce’s Uncertainty Principle (Herring 1987), because Odysseus’ actual tale of his adventures to Penelope lies unavoidably beyond the realm of textual scrutiny, much like ALP’s letter in *Finnegans Wake*, “which exists, if at all, outside the text, where its absence generates seemingly endless speculation and reference” (Herring 1987, xiv).

As a result, Homer’s audience is provoked to wonder what interpretation of events Penelope heard from her husband, just as Joyce’s readers speculate over the peculiar communication between the Blooms and the content of the possibly missing conversation. For the audience has participated vicariously in Odysseus’ sufferings

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<sup>17</sup> Allen Mandelbaum assumes that Odysseus relayed every detail with the translation: “Odysseus, born of Zeus, in turn rehearsed the sorrows he’d inflicted and endured; he spared her nothing”.

while witnessing his adultery and the effectiveness of his lies.<sup>18</sup> The audience has shared Odysseus' pleasures and in an odd way has become complicit in his adultery. Yet the audience now hears none of Odysseus' own words, only Homer's catalogue of his topics. Instead of a Catalogue of Ships, Homer offers a catalogue of facts! Homer's listing of Odysseus' topics divulges nothing about how Odysseus interpreted the meaning of those events for his wife.<sup>19</sup> The meaning that Odysseus bestows upon each event in his telling is obscured by Homer's eleven uses of the word "how" as he reports the subjects of Odysseus' tale (*Od.* 23.310, 312, 314, 318, 322, 326, 327, 329, 333, 338, 339). The audience is thus removed from the specific terms of Odysseus' disclosure. However desperately the audience wants to know *how* Odysseus tells "the whole story" to Penelope, Homer's method of narration stymies that desire. Homer's reliance on indirect discourse disguises the precise content of Odysseus' conversation with his wife in the same way that Joyce disguises the interaction between Molly and

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<sup>18</sup> Upon returning to Ithaca, Odysseus tells three different sets of lies to Athena, Eumaeus, and Penelope, usually referred to as the Cretan Lies (*Od.* 13.256-86; 14.191-359; 19.165-202, 221-248, 262-307, 336-342). So, before Homer narrates in indirect discourse Odysseus' tale to Penelope, we have already heard Odysseus lie with ease and flair about his history and identity and witnessed how his story always changes depending on who is listening, leading C. R. Trahman to remark, "Once again the character of the listener determines the character of the lie" (Trahman 41). The character of "the whole story" that he tells his wife must also be informed by his intuition about how she will react. Lillian Doherty proposes that the duration of his all-night tale would indicate that he inserted largely the same details as the audience has already heard in his recounting to the Phaeacians (Doherty 1995, 79). Yet Odysseus has never told the same story twice and explicitly objects to doing so (*Od.* 12.450-453), making it seem implausible that he tells precisely same story to the Phaeacians as he tells to his wife.

<sup>19</sup> Homer narrates the singer Demodocus' story about the Trojan Horse through indirect discourse as well, presenting the same enigma about what meaning Demodocus gave to the events he recounted (*Od.* 8.499-520).



Leopold with the dubious conversation. This kind of narration limits the audience's knowledge of textual events, rather than augmenting it.

Still, Homer's text provides good grounds to deduce that Odysseus did not reveal everything to his wife but rather added, excised, and equivocated at will. The most stunning evidence in this regard is the starting point that Odysseus chooses for his tale. He has not seen his wife since he left for the Trojan War, yet he begins his story to her with what happened *after* the war. Odysseus chooses the same starting point as Homer does in his poem; his focus is on what happened "after he sacked the sacred citadel of Troy" (*Od.* 1.2), not on how he managed to do so. Odysseus recounts to Penelope only the events that occur in the *Odyssey*; nothing from the *Iliad* is mentioned. Odysseus tells how he came home, not how the war was won. Weirdly enough, then, unless Homer is lying about where Odysseus began his story to Penelope, Odysseus obeys what is known as Monro's Law, the notion that nothing already narrated in the *Iliad* is repeated in the *Odyssey*.<sup>20</sup> Either Odysseus omitted every detail about the war, or Homer chose not to let his audience know about those topics. There are no other possible explanations; either Homer or Odysseus is duplicitous. One of them suppressed the story of how Odysseus helped to win the war and chose to tell the story of how he won his return home.

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<sup>20</sup> This term was coined from David Monro's observation that "The *Odyssey* never repeats or refers to any incident related in the *Iliad*" (Monro 325). James Redfield characterizes the relation of the two poems slightly differently: "No story told in the *Iliad* is told again in the *Odyssey*; at the same time the *Odyssey* completes the *Iliad* by bringing to a conclusion the stories of all the major heroes, living and dead" (Redfield 1973, 145). Seth Schein observes one exception to Monro's rule whose motivation might be exactly what Redfield proposes: "the death and burial of Patroklos are narrated in the *Iliad* and referred to at *Od.* 24.77, 79" (Schein 1984, 44).

Moreover, the topics which Homer affirms that Odysseus did cover betray signs of various equivocations and evasions on his part, even if nothing qualifies as an outright lie. For example, Alfred Heubeck comments that “Odysseus tells of the Ciconian episode (*Od.* 9.39-66), omitting any mention of defeat” (Heubeck 1992, 347). Further, Odysseus tells of how Aeolus welcomed him with an open heart (*Od.* 23.314), never referring to his comrades’ error in opening the bag of winds, nor the fact that Aeolus insults them afterwards when they return to his shores again by calling Odysseus the vilest man of all those living and hated by the gods (*Od.* 10.1-79). Homer’s report seems to catch Odysseus in at least one lie, because Odysseus seems to claim that he passed the Wandering Rocks and hence deserves the same fame and status as Jason. But Kirke actually warned him that no ship except Jason’s *Argo* had ever passed the Wandering Rocks, and so Odysseus selected the other passage between *Skylla* and *Charybdis* (*Od.* 12.61-73).<sup>21</sup> Yet Homer uses the same verb (“ἴκετο” arrived, reached, *Od.* 23.314, 327, 333) to express how Odysseus related how he reached Aeolus, the Wandering Rocks, and Calypso’s isle. Thus even Homer’s

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<sup>21</sup> Jenny Strauss Clay’s work establishes the importance of such a lie. Given her argument that the very name the *Planktai* may reflect Homer’s suppression of its human name (the *Symplegades*), Kirke’s account to Odysseus “sufficiently reveals why the *Planktai* lack a name in the language of men: they are outside normal human experience and can only be experienced by a kind of divine grace, in this case, Hera’s fondness for Jason. The consequences of traversing the *Planktai* without divine aid is death...no mortal can experience them unaided and survive. The *Planktai* thus indicate limit to human experience and knowledge, which is necessarily grounded on mortality...” (Clay 1972, 129). Odysseus’ announcement to Penelope that he passed them would mean that he either avers to some divine aid and favor which were not his or takes credit for transcending his proper human limits in so doing. Both seem out of character, leading me to endorse the possibility that Odysseus did not claim to have repeated Jason’s feat but rather explained to his wife Kirke’s advice concerning his options and how he hung “like a bat” from the fig tree to survive (*Od.* 12.433 ff.).

indirect discourse divulges how Odysseus might have boasted just a little in order to impress his wife, while failing to mention certain embarrassing events.

Corrine Pache detects the total absence of any comment to Penelope concerning the many women he spoke with in Hades (Pache 1999, 27). Irene de Jong calls attention to the oddity of Odysseus' use of the first person to describe events even before he had lost his men (de Jong 2001, 563), also noticing his total exclusion of his affairs with Kirke and Kalypso. But he does at least describe interacting with Kirke and Kalypso; the point of contention is how he construes what occurred with them. Does he admit to mounting Kirke's bed and mounting Kirke herself when he describes "all of her wiles and tricks" (*Od.* 23.321)? Homer depicts how Odysseus outlines the situation with Kalypso quite specifically (*Od.* 23.333-337), seeming to detail the tremendous appeal of her offer for the sake of letting Penelope know what an amazing opportunity he rejected. Significantly, he never refers to being forced to stay with either goddess, nor to any kind of compulsion or necessity, although that is definitively presented elsewhere as the reason why he slept with them (*Od.* 5.154, 10.293-298, 318-347; see S. D. Olson 1989a, 140). Even if he did not confess to extramarital sex, Penelope is certainly shrewd enough to surmise its likelihood. Nonetheless, Odysseus indubitably makes one significant excision in relating his tale, and de Jong's observation that "his encounter with Nausicaa is completely suppressed" (de Jong 2001, 563) now requires further consideration.

## THE INTERTEXTUAL OMISSION OF NAUSICAA

Why does Odysseus omit any mention of Nausicaa, even though he rejected her advances and behaved in a thoroughly upstanding manner? Most likely, Odysseus decides not to risk rousing his wife's jealousy. Leopold Bloom follows Odysseus' lead, just as Joyce is following Homer's, for like Odysseus, who never utters the name Nausicaa to his wife, Leopold never mentions his Nausicaa, Gerty MacDowell, to his wife either.<sup>22</sup> Like Homer, Joyce also employs a list of notable topics to convey Leopold's own narrative account of his adventures upon his return home. Joyce supplies a bit more information about what story Leopold decides to tell Molly about his day, but of course he does not convey it in direct speech:

With what modifications did the narrator reply to this interrogation?

Negative: he omitted to mention the clandestine correspondence between Martha Clifford and Henry Flower, the public altercation at, in and in the vicinity of the licensed premises of Bernard Kiernan and Co,

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<sup>22</sup> Margot Norris argues that Joyce's "Nausicaa" chapter exemplifies yet another aspect of Joyce's ingenious and cunning narration, in which Joyce engages in "a particularly devious procedure: a Penelopean gesture of weaving one myth into the text only to unravel it with another in order that the logic of the mythic effect in modernism's aesthetic ideology may be interrogated. Specifically, Joyce uses the Homeric narrative of Nausicaa to enact the repression of one of its own causal myths: the 'Trial of Paris,' the beauty contest whose outcome leads to the Trojan War" (Norris 1992, 165). John Rickard contends that Joyce creates "an unparalleled level of intertextuality in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*" and that "the 'Nausicaa' episode demonstrates his practice of loading a text with hidden references to other texts, myths, and tradition, a practice I will label 'intertextual memory'" (Rickard 1999, 169, 168). Rickard then acknowledges the problems posed by such intertextual links, due to what he calls "an ironic distance between the modern setting most immediately evident in the text and the ancient stories encoded more subtly within it" (Rickard 1999, 177-178). Judging the meaning of that distance is precisely the task of the reader, as he discusses at length (Rickard 1999, 171-180).

Limited, 8, 9 and 10 Little Britain street, the erotic provocation and response thereto caused by the exhibitionism of Gertrude (Gerty), surname unknown. Positive: he included mention of a performance by Mrs Bandmann Palmer of *Leah* at the Gaiety Theatre, 46, 47, 48, 49 South King street, an invitation to supper at Wynn's (Murphy's) Hotel, 35, 36, and 37 Lower Abbey street, a volume of peccaminous pornographical tendency entitled *Sweets of Sin*, anonymous author a gentleman of fashion, a temporary concussion caused by a falsely calculated movement in the course of a postcena gymnastic display, the victim (since completely recovered) being Stephen Dedalus, professor and author, eldest surviving son of Simon Dedalus, of no fixed occupation an aeronautical feat executed by him (narrator) in the presence of a witness, the professor and author aforesaid, with promptitude of decision and gymnastic flexibility.  
(U 17.2250-2266)

Joyce leaves no doubt about the extent of Leopold's cunning and wiliness as narrator: Leopold deletes and embroiders at will to create a favorable impression for his wife. He eliminates his masturbation on the beach and his correspondence with Martha Flower from his story, thereby hiding any "erotic provocation and response thereto" entirely. Furthermore, Leopold lies by fabrication as well as by omission, mentioning the performance at the Gaiety which he never saw.<sup>23</sup> John Gordon argues that when Molly comments on "the hotel story he made up a pack of lies to hide it" (U 18.37), she is perturbed by her husband's possible infidelity and is referring to this account of his day's activities, not a statement from any missing conversation (Gordon 1979, 337). The "hotel story" therefore incites Molly's jealousy, for Leopold is not only purposely ignoring his wife's adultery but alluding very coyly to the prospect of his

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<sup>23</sup> It is a successful ruse that makes Molly worry about his amorous adventures rather than smugly being satisfied with her own. Molly suspects that Leopold has had an orgasm since he left home that morning, although she is unsure of the exact context (U 18.34-35, 53-4).

own.<sup>24</sup> What is most unusual about Bloomsday may not be Molly's affair, but Leopold's new reaction to it. Gordon quotes Molly's preoccupation with Leopold's unusual attitude: "I suppose it was meeting Josie Powell and the funeral and thinking about me and Boylan set him off" (Gordon 1979, 337). Being "set off" in some extraordinary way seems to inspire Leopold to seek orgasm outside of his marriage. Molly's presumption that "yes he came somewhere I'm sure" (*U* 18.34) may be what is so unprecedented about Bloomsday. Perhaps Leopold is suddenly committing his own kind of infidelity, instead of just suffering his wife's wanderings patiently.

At any rate, in playing this game of dropping subtle yet jealousy-inspiring hints to his wife, Leopold is not submitting to her lack of fidelity entirely passively but engaging in what he terms elsewhere the "usual love scrimmage" (*U* 5.271). Even though he seeks to spur her jealousy, Leopold is also conspiring with his wife by helping her to consummate her affair by staying away from home.<sup>25</sup> Joyce fuels their efforts to seem oblivious to the affair, despite their complicity in engineering it, by helping them to keep the precise terms of their agreement secret and unreadable. What appears like a candid list of Leopold's secrets from his wife, and the confidences he

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<sup>24</sup> Gordon thus counters Kenner's claim that the hotel story is an "elaborate post-midnight lie" (Kenner 1977, 388), because Bloom's report only mentions the show's existence without informing Molly that he actually saw it (Gordon 1979, 337). Gordon further proposes that "Molly's immediate suspicions are of the future: she suspects he is really planning a second evening tryst with either Josie or 'one of those night women.' The passage quoted by Kenner and Wellington continues: 'he said I'm dining out and going to the Gaiety though I'm not going to give him the satisfaction'—what satisfaction? Of seeing that she's jealous, of course" (Gordon 1979, 337). Thus both Blooms have good reason to be jealous on Bloomsday.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret McBride recognizes how Leopold makes his own cuckoldry possible: "...[Leopold] gives Molly the freedom she needs (and thus ensures his own betrayal)" (McBride 1979, 25).

shares with her, is actually so complex that it conceals the exact nature of their interaction. Leopold's story is haunted by the same suspicion generated by Odysseus' story: the unspoken infidelity to which neither partner directly refers, but which both wives must surely suspect. Joyce then teases his readers, and in some sense mocks Homer, by offering the following commentary on Leopold's narration: "Was the narration otherwise unaltered by modifications? Absolutely" (*U* 17.2267-2268). Joyce provokes us to wonder if any narration inevitably alters historical fact according to the aims of the narrator, for like Odysseus' story to Penelope, Leopold's narration of his adventures is anything but candid, and it differs significantly from the events we the audience have known him to experience. Odysseus and Leopold display the same talent for omission as their creators do.

Fritz Senn insists that such omissions present a demand for intertextual comparison, since in Joyce's portrayal of Gerty, "An epic technique has been reused, the potency of absence, interdynamically" (Senn 1987, 47). The exclusion of Nausicaa and Gerty from both conversations between spouses in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* is yet another example of how Joyce emulates Homer by constructing a mimetic narrative ellipsis. Senn comments upon the profound consequences of such omissions: "What is omitted on purpose becomes retroactively underscored. Gnostic absences are efficacious. Homer handled them skillfully, sometimes, explicitly" (Senn 1987, 47). Indeed, so did Joyce, Odysseus, and Leopold.

## THE UNKNOWN, THE UNKNOWABLE, AND THE NARRATIVE METHOD

We can now appreciate the analogous aims of Homer and Joyce's narrative strategies. Any reasons that Odysseus might have offered for his adultery upon his return home, if he gave any at all, are forever cloaked in ambiguity due to the way that Homer constructed his narrative. Joyce made the same choice by never permitting his readers to hear Leopold or Molly try to justify their various dalliances to each other. Consequently, Odysseus' story upon reuniting with his wife after his infidelities remains forever private, just as the similar discussion between Molly and Leopold defies textual exposure.<sup>26</sup> We are privy to countless other intimate details of their lives: Joyce takes us to the bathroom with Leopold, and Homer's audience listens to every word spoken beneath the olive tree with Athena. But the moments when spouses acknowledge infidelity to each other are expunged entirely from both texts. The audience has no access to infidelity's confrontation and resolution, only to its emotions and consequences. Both the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* revolve around the unknown and unknowable content of the conversations about infidelity.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Clive Hart's point concerning *Finnegans Wake* is thus especially apt in the present case: "...it is not that we could know but don't; it is rather the information, the certainty, that we are seeking does not exist" (Hart 1966, 162). Homer and Joyce have eradicated any possibility of certainty with their chosen narrative designs.

<sup>27</sup> The issue of the unknown and the unknowable is particularly complex for Joyce studies, leading Fritz Senn to confess reluctantly to the "Defeatist's Creed" (Senn 1995, 226) in regard to *Finnegans Wake*: "Characteristic of our Wakean insights is their uneven distribution. Those passages which we seem to understand best become richer and richer as we go on....Other passages, alas, remain inert, almost wholly impenetrable" (Senn 1995, 233). What the ensues is what Tony Thwaites calls "a necessary proliferation of blind spots, where the rub is not that there is not meaning there, but that we have no way of telling if there is or not" (Thwaites 5). This elusiveness of meaning is the crux of the problem in *Ulysses* as well. Michael Patrick



Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* centers around the same unknowable scene. When Bill (played by Tom Cruise) returns home from his adventures to find the mask that he wore and then hid in a locked cabinet on his pillow, he realizes that his wife somehow suspected his indiscretions. Caught in his deception, he bursts into tears and sobs to his wife Alice (played by Nicole Kidman), "I'll tell you everything, I'll tell you everything" (Kubrick, 160). The screen goes dark and we never hear how he narrates everything, even though we have just watched it happen. The next scene begins with his wife smoking a cigarette with tears in her eyes. The audience is left to wonder what the husband confided. Did he admit that he would have consummated his adultery with a prostitute if Alice had not called him on his cell phone at just the right moment? Even more importantly, did he confess to kissing the prostitute and later learning that she had AIDS? Like Homer and Joyce, Kubrick hides the exact nature of Bill's revelation. The scene is as dark and impenetrable as Homer's indirect discourse and Joyce's gaps.

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Gillespie offers a way out of the labyrinth by conceding that a certain degree of indeterminacy is inevitable and unavoidable when reading any text: "Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle—indeed all of quantum mechanics—reminds us that we cannot simultaneously measure position and velocity or mass and speed, and the field theory explains why this is so: objectivity disappears when the observer is part of the system, for one's very presence adds a variable to what is being examined. This observation has both literal and metaphysical application to criticism. If we persist in ignoring this condition of indeterminacy which stands as an integral part of any reading, we will find ourselves continually frustrated in attempts at conventional comprehension. A more satisfying experience with the text can come only if we adapt our goals to reflect what we do have the power to know" (Gillespie 2002, 169). The present inquiry attempts to achieve that experience by assessing how much we as readers can know and cannot know due to the narrative strategies of our texts' creators. I concur with Gillespie that a more fulfilling appreciation of texts will result from our own acknowledgement of our limitations as readers. Further on poetic indeterminacy, see Paul Friedrich (1983).

Wallace Stegner also constructs his novel *Angle of Repose* around the unknown and unknowable reconciliation of adultery between the narrator's grandparents. During the novel, the narrator, Lyman Ward, speculates about how his grandparents' marriage survived and his own failed by reading his grandmother's letters and articles. Of his own wife's betrayal and of his grandmother's possible adultery, he concludes after extensive study,

So, I don't know what happened. I only know that passion and guilt happened, in some form....Up to now, reconstructing grandmother's life has been an easy game. Her letters and reminiscences have provided both event and interpretation. But now I am at a place where she hasn't done the work for me, and where it isn't any longer a game. I not only don't want this history to happen, I have to make it up, or part of it. All I know is the *what*, and not all of that; the *how* and the *why* are all speculation.

(Stegner 508, 524)

Homer and Joyce provoke their audiences to speculate about the how and the why in just the same way. Lyman continues that he is almost grateful for this uncertainty:

As one who loved her, I am just as glad not to have to watch her writhe. As her biographer, and a biographer moreover with a personal motive, probing toward the center of a woe that I always knew about but never understood, I am frustrated. Just where there should be illumination, there is ambiguous dusk.

(Stegner 524)

Stegner, Kubrick, Homer, and Joyce all compel their audiences to become permanently frustrated voyeurs. Lyman, though, thinks that such a viewpoint is more of a relief than an annoyance, for the more affection one feels for the characters involved, the more uncomfortable it becomes to invade their privacy by possessing such intimate knowledge of their intimate affairs.

The narrative structure that Joyce selects for *Ulysses* is now revealed to explain and justify his title. Even with his drastic diversions from Homer's style and content, Joyce is placing his readers in the same position as Homer's audience. Froma Zeitlin points out that in the *Odyssey*, "The poet structures his entire plot around Penelope's imagined state(s) of mind" (Zeitlin 138). Joyce does the same. Bloomsday revolves around Molly: what she might do, what she does do, why she does it, and how it affects Leopold. In this way, Joyce places his reader in the position of the cuckolded husband, so that the reader is obliged to share Leopold's anxiety throughout the day that comprises the book, until Molly speaks for herself in the "Penelope" section. The reader of *Ulysses*, like Odysseus, wonders and worries throughout the entire journey of the book about whether the wife has cheated. Leopold's tremendous anguish over the issue of Molly's sexual fidelity to him permeates the entire book. Surely Joyce meant for readers to cringe in sympathy and sadness when Leopold thinks, "Touch. Fingers. Asking. Answer. Yes. Stop. Stop. If it was it was. Must....O, he did. Into her. She did. Done" (*U* 8.591-2; 13.849).<sup>28</sup> Like Odysseus, the reader only learns the truth upon returning home with Leopold.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Other examples of Leopold's anxiety over Molly's infidelity abound (*U* 7.230, 8.102, 8.591, 8.631, 8.789, 8.852, 8.899, 8.1168). Hugh Kenner describes Bloom's agony thusly: "*Ulysses*... was long regarded as an eccentrically detailed account of a man spending a Dublin day: 'the dailiest day possible', it was even called. Not at all. The man is virtually in shock.... This is not a normal morning" (Kenner 1987, 51, 50).

<sup>29</sup> Marilyn French compares the reader to Odysseus as a premise of her book (French 1976). Dermot Kelly further suggests that "the adventures of *Ulysses* arise from the obstacles the reader has to overcome" (Kelly 7-8). John Rickard also refers to the reader's journey (Rickard 1999, 187).

In the end, we can never know exactly how these spouses justified or excused infidelity. We can only know that they did not decide to break up immediately as a result: “Divorce, not now” (*U* 17.2202). These texts, rather than providing a transparent glimpse into the inner workings of marriage, construct a zone of privacy around the marriages they portray. In this way, our texts exhibit the inscrutability and ineffability of love and marriage. The mystery of how marriages endure is illustrated by the narrative techniques that Homer and Joyce adopt. Their couples only give voice to the pain and joy that love brings, while enduring the ravages of infidelity. Their narrators prevent them from conveying exactly how and why they agree to preserve their marriages. Ultimately the duplicity of our narrators keeps the terms of their tolerance of infidelity thoroughly confidential. Simply the kindness, patience, and self-control that it requires for these couples in modernity and in antiquity to refrain from screaming accusations and cruel jibes shows a rare kind of unconditional love. Yet as much as we know about Odysseus and Penelope and Leopold and Molly, there remains much that cannot be known about them. Joyce’s and Homer’s narrative techniques compel the modern reader to grapple with the fact that one can never be certain what has occurred or is occurring in anyone else’s marriage. In Ithaca or in Dublin, it is difficult enough to know what is happening in one’s own marriage, let alone anyone else’s.

Homer and Joyce both utilize narrative techniques that respect such utter impenetrability. Instead of attempting to erase or defy what is incomprehensible, Homer and Joyce emphasize and enhance the unfathomable by deleting from their narration exactly how their couples address infidelity. The assiduity with which Homer and Joyce maintain such secrecy links their narrative methods and goals.

Marilyn Katz argues that such uncertainty pervades Homer's entire portrayal of

Penelope:

[Penelope] remains...elusive and indecipherable, suspended in an unknowability that is only imperfectly resolved by the words to which she gives expression.... The narrative action, beginning with Book 18, represents this state of indeterminacy....without permitting us access to any truth of ultimate intentions.  
(Katz 194, 93)

Hence the enigmatic quality of Homer's meaning is not achieved solely through narrative gaps, for even direct dialogue can defy definitive interpretation. The indecipherability of women's desires and motivations is matched by the inscrutability of how the partners in a marriage recover from the damage caused by extramarital desire. Such inscrutability is not an accident, but one of the defining characteristics of the narrative design of each text.

Peculiarly enough, the abiding perplexity about the reasons for love's endurance finds some autobiographical basis in Joyce's own life. For the mystery of the precise significance of the date June 16, 1904 in Joyce's life will always persist. Whatever occurred on that date with Nora Barnacle will always remain their affair, and theirs alone.<sup>30</sup> We the audience are again left only able to surmise what might have

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<sup>30</sup> For various speculations, see Brenda Maddox and Richard Ellmann, who calls the date of Bloomsday "Joyce's most eloquent if indirect tribute to Nora" (*JIII* 156, also see 155). Ellmann states elsewhere, "*Ulysses* was a tribute to his love [for Nora]...but it was also a tribute to his suspiciousness. He had winced too often to be sentimental" (Ellmann 1977, 23). Morris Beja insists on the importance of continued biographical studies of Joyce, as do Ira B. Nadel and William Brockman (Brockman 2002, Nadel 1991, 2002), conceding: "Some of our questions may never be answered satisfactorily, and there is a great deal about the life, career, character, and personal relationships of James Joyce that we shall never know. But it is valuable—necessary—to keep trying" (Beja 2002, 22). The unavoidable and puzzling intersection Joyce crafts between autobiography and fiction should only fuel such efforts by demonstrating both the value and necessity to which Beja alerts us. For

happened. The impossibility of knowing what happened to Jim and Nora on their historic Bloomsday, despite the often shocking deluge of intimate details which Joyce's letters provide, is mirrored by the textual impossibility of ascertaining the exact nature of the private conversations between Odysseus and Penelope and Molly and Leopold.

Finally, even though Joyce revolutionizes all of the conventional expectations of narrative, Joyce adopts Homer's reticence about the most sacred and secret of interactions, the communication between husband and wife about their most intimate affairs. The misery of infidelity for Leopold is unquestionably as piercing in modernity as it was in antiquity for Penelope. Yet the confrontation of adultery and its resolution are still as mysterious and unspoken in *Ulysses* as they were in the *Odyssey*, thanks to the duplicity of our narrators. The agony of communicating about infidelity pervades both texts, even as the exact nature of that communication remains unsaid and unknown. Its presence in its absence cannot be denied. In fact, its presence is even more pervasive and haunting due to its absence. Like the dubious "at four" conversation, Odysseus' story of his adventures and infidelities and Leopold's parallel one are both simultaneously present and absent. The report of their topics, offered by both Homer and Joyce, only increases our insecurity in asserting the meaning each couple ascribed to those events. In both cases, the lists detail facts in such a way as to obfuscate their meaning in their conversational context. Homer and Joyce engage in

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example, Nora's letters are "so strikingly similar to Molly's interior monologue" that most assume she was the model for Molly's narrative style (Herring 1969, 51). While Nora may have been a source of inspiration, Molly is nonetheless a fictional character, as argued by Alyssa O'Brien, who examines "the nine stages of the development of the 'Penelope' chapter in order to demonstrate that Molly is a 'mobile' fictional construct, composed of bits of text Joyce added stage by stage, and not a realistic figure" (Grodin 2002, 38).

narrative strategies which endow their married couples with the privacy to resolve their infidelities in secret, beyond the scope of narrator and audience. Their reticence and wiliness as narrators unites them, even as the variety of Joyce's narrative styles, and his bold and unprecedented treatment of sexuality, distinguish him as a modernist and set him apart from the modesty of Homeric style and language.<sup>31</sup>

Thus our narrators hide from their audiences the exact words that fuel the stability of marriage. Wendy Doniger suggests that their absence circumvents the conclusion that only the right words sustain a marriage.<sup>32</sup> Neither text contains anything even vaguely resembling a magic chant of forgiveness which could be conceived by readers to redeem every doubt in every instance. Words do not salvage love in either text. Rather, love seems to exist and persist in a realm which is not only beyond the capacity of narration but beyond language itself. By preserving the ineffability of love with their narrative strategies, Homer and Joyce create texts which illustrate how love defies our ability to explain it. However love endures, language can only gesture toward its mysteries.

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<sup>31</sup> Homeric language does not seem to have possessed enough "filthy" words to assume Joyce's style, even if Homer had been so inclined. Froma Zeitlin reminds us that "There are no precise terms in Homer either for sexual adultery or for marital fidelity" (Zeitlin 125). There are no terms for colloquial descriptions of sexual acts, either.

<sup>32</sup> Personal conversation, the University of Chicago, 9 January, 2002.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE CONVERGENCE  
OF HOMER'S *ODYSSEY* AND JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

VOLUME TWO

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE REBIRTH OF HEROISM

There she found Odysseus among the bodies of the murdered, splattered with blood and gore like a lion who comes from devouring an ox from a farm; and his whole chest and his cheeks on both sides are covered with blood, and he is dreadful to look upon, just so had Odysseus been splattered, his feet and his hands above.  
(*Od.* 22. 401-405)

So the nurse Eurykleia discovers Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey* after he slaughters Penelope's suitors: the extraordinary hero, winner of two battles, one for Troy and the other for his home. He stands fearsome and awesome (δεινός), drenched in blood like a lion who has just finished eating. The floor must be scraped clean of guts and blood and the house washed and purged with sulfur before he can reunite with Penelope (*Od.* 22.437-494). In contrast, Leopold Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses* would seem to be disqualified from the realm of heroism altogether. Leopold seems only to have the lion in him by virtue of the "Leo" in his name, returning silently to a marriage bed befouled by his wife Molly's sexual encounter with Blazes Boylan:

What did his limbs, when gradually extended,  
encounter?

New clean bedlinen, additional odours, the presence of a  
human form, female, hers, the imprint of a human form,  
male, not his, some crumbs, some flakes of potted meat,  
recooked, which he removed.  
(*U* 17.2122-2225)

Such a pitiful cuckold seems like the antithesis of Homeric heroism and Joyce's proof of its demise. Joyce's conception of heroism appears to supersede Homer's entirely: the extraordinary victor has become an ordinary victim. At first glance, then, Joyce's title ostensibly denotes that Joyce is replacing Homer's idea of heroism altogether, especially since deeming Leopold a hero in the Homeric sense seems like an oxymoron. Yet could the meaning of heroism in the two texts can be reconciled somehow, so that both texts corroborate the notion of an ordinary hero? Might Joyce's title be interpreted as his assertion that Odysseus and Leopold are the same kind of hero, displaying the same kind of excellence, despite the drastic contradictions between their circumstances and actions?

An answer may be found by considering the possibility that certain instances in which Homer and Joyce use the word hero (ἥρωας) serve to define one particular kind of heroism, revealing why Homer's and Joyce's conceptions of heroism are not diametrically opposed but actually quite complementary. Homer uses hero (ἥρωας) forty times in the *Odyssey*,<sup>1</sup> while Joyce uses hero, heroine, and its adverbial and adjectival forms twenty-seven times in *Ulysses*.<sup>2</sup> Examining every example here is impossible, but I will discuss some critical examples in order to appreciate how the use of the word hero (ἥρωας) exposes the meaning of heroism within each text. While

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<sup>1</sup> For a listing of these uses organized into categories, see Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> For a listing of these uses, see Appendix B.

Homer's use of hero (ἥρως) might have been due to metrical expedience rather than for any intentional artistic impact, it is intriguing to contemplate how Homer's and Joyce's uses of the word hero function to create and confirm a remarkably similar meaning of heroism.<sup>3</sup>

### THE ORDINARY TASK OF HEROIC ENDURANCE

To begin with, how can Homer's heroism be ordinary enough to include Leopold's exploits? We first encounter the word hero in the *Odyssey* in the context of divine aid and wrath, a context that reveals what ordinary heroism constitutes. Athena has just sprung into action on behalf of Odysseus, after receiving Zeus' permission to help him return home:

So she spoke, and beneath her feet she bound beautiful sandals, immortal, golden, which bore her over both the deep waters and the boundless land with the breath of the wind. And she seized her strong spear, tipped with sharp bronze, heavy, huge, and stout, with which she overpowers the ranks of **hero-men** [ἄνδρῶν ἥρώων], whoever are the kind that tend to anger her, that daughter of an oh-so-powerful father.

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<sup>3</sup> Alice Radin makes a compelling case for why Homer's repetition of a single, apparently inconsequential word can connote enormous meaning through its context: "Homer limits the temporal conjunction ἤμος ...to link a proverbial, time-reckoning event to an event that is actually happening within the narrative...the clause derives its meaningfulness from a view of time as cyclical. In Homer, ἤμος always connects a recurring point in cyclical time to a specific moment in the linear narrative" (Radin 293). I submit that Homer uses the word hero (ἥρως) to great effect in the same manner, inserting it to denote what moments and themes express the special kind of heroism he is depicting in the *Odyssey*.

(*Od.* 1.96-101, emphasis added)<sup>4</sup>

Being a hero, the audience learns here, is the task of a man. Homer uses the words man (ἄνθρωπος) and hero together almost as if they are inseparable, which they are most certainly not. Previously, the word hero was quite noticeably absent from the proem (*Od.* 1.1-10), where Homer initially refers to Odysseus only as a man without even mentioning his name, accentuating his humanity and his masculinity rather than his heroic status: “Tell for me the man, Muse...” (*Od.* 1.1). Placing hero and man together in the genitive case here has the grammatical effect of combining the meaning of the two words to express a single idea, accentuating the notion of hero-men, as opposed to hero-gods, and justifying my hyphenation.<sup>5</sup> By inextricably binding up his first use of hero with man, Homer announces that his heroes are definitively not gods, but men who quiver and suffer beneath the gods’ wrath. At least in this sense, hero-men are ordinary mortals.

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<sup>4</sup> W.B. Stanford notes that this is the only instance in Homer where Athena uses Hermes’ sandals: “Only here in Homer does Athena use the winged sandals attributed elsewhere to Hermes (*Od.* 5.45ff)” (Stanford 1996, 218). It is also the only time in the *Odyssey* when Athena wields her own spear. As A. P. David observes, shortly thereafter Telemachus puts her spear in a rack, where it rests with Odysseus’ abandoned spears for the entire *Odyssey*, never to be mentioned again (*Od.* 1.120-129, Personal conversation, The Committee on Social Thought, the University of Chicago, 1998). Telemachus, wondrous with the grace Athena sheds upon him, carries a bronze spear in his hand on his way to the assembly the next morning, but Homer gives us no cause to suspect that he has adopted Athena’s spear as his own when so many lay in the rack (*Od.* 2.10-13). Athena’s spear watches over the action of the household, just as it hovers over the actions of men, unacknowledged but ever-present.

<sup>5</sup> See Herbert Weir Smyth: “The genitive with substantives denotes in general a connection or dependence between two words....The substantives may be so closely connected as to be equivalent to a single compound idea” (Smyth 314). Homer resorts to the use of the genitive case in the present example to communicate his notion of the interconnection between heroes and men.

Hero-men must cope with force, symbolized by Athena's spear. For Athena does not only come to the aid of hero-men like Odysseus; she frequently subdues them (δάμνημι) with her spear when they anger her. Homer's use of an aorist subjunctive (κοτέσσειται, *Od.* 1.101) implies that her anger is customary (Stanford 1996, 218). By introducing his hero-men as those who suffer from habitual divine wrath, Homer implies that they cannot avoid being mastered by the gods. The hero-men beneath the spear exemplify the complexity of the heroic task: Homer's heroes face the double task of knowing when to suffer patiently the forces beyond their control and when to use the force at their disposal for their own benefit. Heroic endurance depends upon negotiating a very delicate balance between accepting what cannot be changed and fighting to alter what can be changed. Joyce gestures toward this idea in the *Skylla and Charybdis* section with an incredible economy of words: "Act. Be acted on" (*U* 9.979). This duality encapsulates the heroic task in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*. Just as Athena controls hero-men with the force of her spear, so hero-men must control their own forces, the desires of the heart (θυμός) in order to endure.<sup>6</sup> Hero-men must resist being entirely overcome by external forces while overcoming the forces that emerge from within. As hero-men, their challenge, and the test of their endurance, is taming themselves.

By presenting this image of Athena in conjunction with his first use of hero, Homer portrays a kind of heroism to which every human being can aspire, and in which every human being alive can and must participate. Everyone faces the task of controlling desire (θυμός) while suffering forces beyond one's control. Because

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<sup>6</sup> Caroline P. Caswell superbly explores the semantic range of θυμός and the difficulty of translating it adequately. I offer various translations in this essay for the sake of conveying its depth of meaning.

suffering itself, regardless of its source, provides the opportunity for human distinction, even the most ordinary person has the same chance of becoming heroic as an epic warrior does. R. Havard comments upon the chances of attaining such heroism: "Pain provides an opportunity for heroism; the opportunity is seized with surprising frequency" (Lewis 157). Extraordinary endurance of ordinary human life lends this heroism its special quality. Since rising to the challenges of suffering is its only imperative, one can qualify for this sort of heroism just as easily in Dublin in 1904 as in ancient Ithaca, or in Chicago in 2003. Still, such heroism is ordinary only because it is possible for ordinary people in any time and place. It requires a strength that is quite extraordinary indeed.

#### HOMER'S ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR HEROISM:

##### AGE, CLASS, GENDER, AND MORTALITY

The first person upon whom Homer bestows the title hero epitomizes the demands and requirements of such an ordinary brand of heroism. Athena names him while speaking to Telemachus, after arriving at the home of Odysseus, disguised as Mentor:

So, if you wouldn't mind, go and question **old-man-hero-Laertes**, who, so they say, no longer comes to the city, but far away in the fields suffers pains, together with an old woman servant, who puts out food and drink for him, once exhaustion has seized his limbs as he struggles to move up the hill of his vineyard.  
(*Od.* 1.188-193, emphasis added)

Surprisingly, Laertes is much like Leopold, suffering pitifully without any obvious resistance to his plight. Later, Penelope begs for the suitors' patience until she can

finish “a funeral shroud for Laertes-hero” (*Od.* 2.99), while Melanthius holds “an old, stout shield, speckled with rust, the one belonging to Laertes-hero, which he would always carry during his youth” (*Od.* 22.185). Young Laertes used to fight in battle. Now, like his rusty shield, he is old and worn, leading Thomas Falkner to suggest, “Like the dusty shield...Laertes’ heroic abilities are hidden from sight” (Falkner 45). By endowing Laertes with the title hero on these occasions, Homer emphasizes that heroes can be old, decrepit and vulnerable to suffering and death, but no less heroic for that condition. He indicates that hero-men bravely extend their mortal existence with every effort.

Other rather minor old fellows are also worthy of the title hero (ἥρως) in Homer’s mind. Aegyptius-hero is also infirm, “a man bent with old age, whose wisdom was past measure” (*Od.* 2.15-16). Like Laertes, he is bent (κυφός) by old age, but not broken. Homer manages to include the reason why Halitherses is a hero at the same time as he overtly names him as such: “Then among them spoke old-man-hero-Halitherses, son of Mastor, for he alone excelled all of his contemporaries in knowledge of bird omens and in speaking according to fate” (*Od.* 2.157-159). Far beyond anyone else, Halitherses knows the pain the future holds. As the last hero explicitly titled in the poem, Halitherses cautions the families of the suitors about the consequences of the suitors’ recklessness, imploring them to shun violence and avoid repeating the same mistake (*Od.* 24.454-462). Halitherses is named a hero while counseling restraint, not vengeance, stressing how crucial self-control is for this kind of heroism. Such temperance, guided by wisdom, along with great perseverance in the face of pain, earns hero-men a considerable degree of respect.



Homer's extension of the idea of heroism to include elders raises endurance to the same status and prestige as more traditionally heroic actions like battle. Homer's actual use of the word hero refutes the idea that heroism is connected to the transient vitality of youth usually presumed to be one of its immutable requirements.<sup>7</sup> By limiting his use of the word hero to moments that help to convey his new vision of heroism, Homer presents one example of how the oral poet engages in the process James Redfield describes: "The oral poet, like others, stretches his tradition as he puts it to use" (Redfield 1979, 95). By revitalizing his tradition in such an innovative way, Homer is leaving the ideals of the heroic age in the *Iliad* behind, presenting new ones in their stead.<sup>8</sup> Joyce is a revolutionary in part because of the way that he invented words.<sup>9</sup> Homer is a revolutionary because of the way that he used them.

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<sup>7</sup> Homer's valuation of heroes beyond the bloom of youth perhaps contributed to the evolution in the meaning of heroism in ancient Greece discussed by Douglas Adams: "The Greek words [hero (ἦρως) and Hera (Ἥρα)] can now be seen as the regular outgrowth of an important Indo-European cultural emphasis on youthful vitality. This cultural perspective had lost some of its power in the classical Greek polis but had still been very much alive in the heroic age" (Adams 1987, 177). Further, see Adams and Mallory (362ff.), and Hjalmar Frisk (645ff.).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Falkner explains: "Where the *Odyssey* differs from the *Iliad*, with regard to old age as with so much else, is in reformulating and even redefining the nature of heroism and heroic values...." (Falkner 35).

<sup>9</sup> Part of Joyce's unique genius was his habit of creating new words. Despite his professed ignorance of classical Greek (Schork 1998, 85-90), Brian Arkins examines how he generated new English words derived from Greek: "[Joyce] manufactures neologisms based on words in Classical Greek, which are new in a double sense: they are not merely novel in English, in which they did not exist until now; but they are based on words in Greek, which although formed from elements in that language, are themselves putative. Examples are 'gerontophils' meaning 'lovers of old men'...and (spectacularly) 'morphomelopancreates' meaning 'flesh all shaped skillfully by music' (*FW*, 115.12, 101.15, 88.9)" (Arkins 1996, 444). Homer and Joyce share the desire to stretch the meaning of their language beyond its conventional limits.

Homer's naming of old-men-heroes (*Od.* 1.189, 2.15, 2.99, 2.157, 7.155, 11.342, 19.144, 22.185, 24.134, 24.451) proves that for Homer in the *Odyssey*, heroism is not circumscribed by age. Of course, young men are heroes, too, evidenced by the heroic naming of both Peisistratus and Telemachus (*Od.* 3.415, 4.21, 4.303, 15.131). The first occasion establishes Peisistratus as a hero, whereas the next use confirms Telemachus's heroic status while simultaneously creating a kind of heroic equality between the two of them. The heroic circle is slowly widening as Homer expands his use of the word. The elder heroes' sons and grandsons are also heroes; heroism is thus not a status earned over the course of one's life due to experience, age, or excellence. Still, such uses of the word precipitate the question of the elitism of Homer's heroism. If heroism does not depend upon age, is heroism limited by nationality, class, or gender?

Many of Homer's other uses of the word hero display the inclusivity of this kind of heroism. For example, even the suitors themselves are called heroes when Athena declares, "Tomorrow call an assembly of all the Achaean heroes..." (*Od.* 1.272) The recklessness of the suitors, which Halitherses-hero condemns (*Od.* 24.451ff.), therefore does not eliminate them from the realm of heroism. We find a similar use at *Od.* 24.68, when Homer describes how the Achaean heroes moved around the pyre during Hector's funeral, and how men who were warriors competed in funeral games (*Od.* 24.88). The Phaeacians are heroes too, both in Odysseus' estimation and in Homer's. Alcinoos is named a hero by Nausicaa, who declares that the houses of the Phaeacians are not nearly so well-built as the house of hero Alcinoos (*Od.* 6.303). Odysseus addresses Alcinoos as hero, asking that he himself and Nausicaa not be blamed (*Od.* 7.303). Here Odysseus seems to use the title hero as an

honorific and flattering form of address. Alcinoos later orders Odysseus to listen to him so that at home again he may tell another hero of the Phaeacians' skills (*Od.* 8.242). Homer describes Odysseus marveling at the assembly places of the heroes in Phaeacia (*Od.* 7.44). Homer's heroes are everywhere, and we begin to notice how distinction rests upon one's particular kind of heroism rather than just upon being a hero at all. The suitors who violate the proper boundaries of hospitality are certainly not excellent men, but excellence does not determine eligibility for heroism. Being excellent and being heroic are two very different things for Homer.

Heroism is not limited to one nationality, either. Trojans are heroes, too, as Odysseus tells Achilles in Hades, "I could not tell or name all of the host of that he killed defending the Argives, but what a warrior was that son of Telephus that he killed with his sword, the hero Eurypylus!" (*Od.* 11.517-520) Odysseus also calls Pheidon, king of the Thesprotians, a hero (*Od.* 14.317), as well as the Sidonian king Phaedimus (*Od.* 4.617, 15.117). Thus Homer's heroism is not exclusionary according to nationality. Neither is it elite, accessible only to noble aristocrats. Moulis-hero, who is from Dulichium and pours the wine according to due measure (*Od.* 18.423) demonstrates that heroism is not limited by class, either. Even in the way he pours the wine and fulfills his fate in the world, he can be heroic. N. K. Sidhanta comments on Homer's tendency not to play favorites with his characters. Odysseus is obviously Athena's pet and special favorite, but Homer's favorites are not so easy to discern:

[In Indian epic] the minstrel is never definitely virulent against any character; and this is true of Greek heroic poetry too. As Professor Chadwick points out... 'there is a noteworthy absence of any display of feeling against the opponents of the poet's heroes--as much in the case of Penelope's suitors as in that of the Trojans.'  
(Sidhanta 26)

Homer's neutral attitude toward his heroes further expresses that the kind of enduring heroism found in the *Odyssey* is not limited by quality of character or accomplishment.

Whether Homer's heroes are definitively of a certain class and heritage has been a point of great contention, perhaps due to S. G. Farron's observation that "the obvious difficulty is determining which qualities or actions are aristocratic" (Farron 1979-80, 60).<sup>10</sup> Chantraine defines the word hero as a term of "politesse," civility and good breeding. In his definition, the word hero signifies a man's place in the world, being used commonly as a term of politeness indicating one's rank. Thus in this view, calling someone hero is a bit like calling them sir or my lord, making the word hero virtually equivalent with ἄναξ, lord or sire. Chantraine dismisses the possible partial divinity of the hero as well.<sup>11</sup> He notes that both after and before Homer, the meaning

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<sup>10</sup> The claim that Homer's world is not a starkly hierarchical and aristocratic one may seem a bit radical at first. But the theme of enduring heroism is not limited to any particular kind of person. For an extensive and compelling argument on the fundamental egalitarianism of the *Odyssey*, see S. G. Farron (1979-80). On the same issue, also see Calhoun (1934a, b), G. S. Kirk (1962) and P. W. Rose (1975). F. G. Naerebout explores the subject and concludes: "We simply do not know to whom these stories about the nobles were addressed and whose point of view is adopted" (1987, 111; see full bibliography). On the basis of such work, characterizing Homer's world as exclusively and solely aristocratic seems to be a substantial error. Stephen Scully comments how on the meaning of Demodocus' name implies a connection of the poet with "common people" (Scully 1981, 74-75), ushering poetry into a less elite realm.

<sup>11</sup> He writes, "Le mot est commodément traduit <héros>, terme de politesse usité pour les <héros> d'Homère, quel que soit leur rang. Mais <héros> comporte également une signification religieuse attestée après Homère: <demi-dieu> (déjà chez Hésiode), <dieu local> il s'agit d'un culte funéraire et le plus souvent d'un humain divinisé, comme Thésée, ou même Sophocle; le mot s'est finalement appliqué (Ar., Alciph., etc.) à un mort, un revenant. Le mot ἥρωες s'appliquant à la fois aux héros d'Hom. et à des dieux doit être un terme de respect et de politesse <sire>, etc. Le culte des héros ignoré des textes homériques est certainement très ancien, puisqu'il est

of heroism included some notion of deification; heroism then involved a kind of immortality and partial divinity that Homer acknowledged with his use of ἡμίθεος (*Il.* XII.23) and which is echoed by Chantraine's use of demi-dieu, half-god. Chantraine asserts, however, that the word hero finally becomes associated with death. Chantraine would agree that a ghostly death in Hades is the price of heroism in Homer's *Odyssey*; nothing else will do. For this reason, Homer's heroes in the *Odyssey* must be hero-men. Death makes time a precious commodity for the hero-man in a way that it can never be for a hero-god. Homer's hero-men must fight an entirely futile battle against time, knowing they must ultimately lose.<sup>12</sup>

Homer therefore does not want us to conceive of his heroes in the *Odyssey* as semi-divine or as simply some sort of lesser gods. Despite the hero cults of the Greek world, Homer is insisting that his heroes cannot and should not be worshipped as gods, because they are only godlike.<sup>13</sup> Heroes do not somehow become gods during their lives; rather, they live and die as heroes. Hence Lord Raglan makes a serious error when he claims, "We can now understand why heroes visit the underworld, the dwelling-place of the dead. They do so in order that they may return from the dead as gods. Odysseus, therefore, visits the dead as part of his progress to the divine kingship...." (Rank et. al., 130). Lord Raglan's is surely a flaw in method, since he

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attesté, semble-t-il, en mycénien où le datif \*triw-Ærvi signifie <au triple héros>, c'est-à-dire <au héros très antique>, cf. τριτοπάτορες, etc" (Chantraine 471).

<sup>12</sup> Stephanie Nelson argues that heroes must struggle to defeat time, even though they ultimately must be defeated by it: "The aim of the hero is, ultimately, the defeat of time. That is, the hero aims to overcome his own mortality" (Nelson 64). The fact that the hero is doomed to fail any makes his situation seem more tragic and more glorious.

<sup>13</sup> On the hero cults, see Roy Kenneth Hack (1929).

uses Egyptian and Nigerian rites to support his claim and nothing of Homer's own words. Lord Raglan compounds his error further by stating, "The Homeric poems are also mythological cycles dealing with the lives of hero-divinities..." (Rank et. al., 134).<sup>14</sup> Hero-divinities are exactly what Homer's heroes are not! Hesiod's heroes of the Fourth Age are hero-divinities, but Homer's heroes are hero-men, and he chooses his words to express that precisely. His single use of ἡμίθεος (*Il.* XII.23) conveys that this era of half-divine heroes is past and gone.

But the heroism of the *Iliad* may be quite at odds with the heroism of the *Odyssey*. If Homer is revising his own notion of heroism between the two poems, one change he may incorporate is the emergence of what were previously deemed unaristocratic, unheroic traits.<sup>15</sup> Homer's conception of heroism in the *Odyssey* may then circumvent the traditional notion of heroism found in the *Iliad*, by redefining its aristocratic elements to include ant-aristocratic ones, and in the process revealing yet another tension inherent to Homer's conception of heroism in the *Odyssey*. Yet Homer's new heroes in the *Odyssey* are still mortal men of a certain heritage and status in their society, even if they display various qualities which would not be deemed heroic by the standard of the *Iliad*.

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<sup>14</sup> Lord Raglan's theory of heroism is quite at odds with the Homeric heroism examined here. Robert Segal summarizes the conflict: "While Raglan *equates* heroes with gods, heroes for him do not *symbolize* gods. They *are* gods" (Rank et. al., xxvi). This equation is exactly what Homer's conception negates.

<sup>15</sup> S. G. Farron's case in this regard is extremely convincing, for he suggests that Homer "wanted to make a strong ethical and sociological statement. So he took for his hero the character who in the *Iliad* was notable for his unaristocratic, unheroic qualities and thus a foil for Achilles, and emphasized his unaristocratic traits, pointing out their sociological significance" (Farron 100).

Yet in both poems, gender is a definitive criterion for exclusion from the realm of heroism for Homer. No woman is ever called a hero in the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*. To Homer women are not lesser or inferior people due to their gender, but they are not heroines because the word and hence the concept does not exist. The Greek noun is of course a masculine one.<sup>16</sup> The OED's fourth definition actually includes gender as a qualification of a hero: "4. The man who forms the subject of an epic; the chief male personage in a poem, play, or story; he in whom the interest of the story or the plot is centered." Translations often gloss over the fact that Homer never uses the feminine form of the word in his poem. For example, the OED lists a 1615 translation by Chapman: "All th'heroesses in Pluto's house." Actually, the word *heroissa* (ἡρωῖσσα) is a Greek word but it is not Homeric nor is it found in Homer's usage. The word heroine (ἡρωίνη) does come to be used in Greek but again, not by Homer. As Coline Covington writes,

The concept of the 'heroine' is relatively recent as compared with that of the 'hero', and the term heroine was not used in Homeric or classical Greek literature until it appears for the first time, used ironically, in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Even more remarkably, it was not used in English or French medieval literature. 'Heroine' appears to have come into regular use first in French and then in English classical language, where it evokes a classical world in which the concept would have been unknown.

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<sup>16</sup> Liddell and Scott do cite the unusual use of the masculine noun to describe women, but there are certainly no such uses in Homer: "later, = μακαρίτης, deceased, Alciph.3.37, Hld.7.13: pl., *PMag.Par.*1.1390: freq. In Inscr., ἡρως χρηστέ, χαῖρε *IG* 9(2). 806, cf. 14.223, etc.; even of women, ib. 9(2).961(Larissa), al.; θεοῖς ἡρωσι, = *Dis Manibus*, ib. 14. 1795 (Rome), etc; ὑβρίσαντες τοὺς ἡρωας τῶν τέκνων ἡμῶν SIG 1243.23 (Acraeph.)."

(Covington 243)<sup>17</sup>

Her claim provokes the question: is the concept of a heroine foreign to the vision of the *Odyssey*?

The later development of the Greek language after Homer certainly proves that the idea of feminine heroism is not at all foreign or unknown to the classical world as Covington argues.<sup>18</sup> Latin had a word for heroine: Ovid's *Heroides* takes the word for its title and topic! But the concept of the heroine does not exist for Homer; Homer knows no specific word to convey a specifically feminine heroism. None of the many women whom Odysseus meets in Hades and allows to drink blood is identified as a heroine. "I cannot tell the stories or names of all of the wives and daughters of heroes that I saw" (*Od.* 11.328-9).<sup>19</sup> The women Odysseus has named belong to heroic

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<sup>17</sup> Liddell and Scott cite this use of the contracted form of the word, ἥρωϊνη, in *Ar. Nu.* 315, as well as *IG*14.1389i55. They also cite other uses: *Theoc.*13.20, 26.36, *Call. Del.*161, *D.P.* 1022, *Luc. Nec.*15, *D.C.* 48.502, *CIG* 2259, *IG* 3.889, *Jul. Caes.*334b.

<sup>18</sup> See Liddell and Scott, s. v. "ἥρωϊσσα" and "ἥρωϊνη". Chantraine also discusses the feminine forms and uses of the word ἥρωϊς, further establishing that feminine heroism is not at all anti-Greek: "Formations de féminins: 1) ἥρωϊς, -ίδος (Pi., etc.); 2) ἥρωϊνα (lesbien), pour le suffix, cf. Chantraine, *Formation* 205; autres formations plus tardives: 3) ἥρωϊσσα, ἥρωισσα (A.R., inscriptions) constitué avec le suffixe hellénistique -ισσα du type βασιλισσα, etc.; 4) ἥρωασσα (hapax crétois, Collitz\_Bechtel 4952); 5) ἥρωϊς (Lilybée, Ile s. av., cf. Kretschmer, *Gl.* 15, 1927, 306) sur quoi on ne peut faire que des hypothèses" (s.v. "ἥρωϊς", 417).

<sup>19</sup> One wonders how significant the omission of these women's names actually is. David Schaps explores the mention of women's names in court in ancient Greece and Rome and concludes: "the most respectful way to refer to a woman... was not to say what her name was, but to indicate whose wife, daughter, or sister she was; for indeed, if she was a proper woman, the jurors would not be expected to know her, but would be expected to know her *kyrios*" (Schaps 330). Corine Pache notes that Odysseus has already described 14 of these women before this objection: "The catalogue of women is a whole in itself, and when Odysseus interrupts himself, saying there is not enough time to tell everything, he has in fact concluded his own catalogue" (Pache 1999, 27). Pache observes that this catalogue is the only



families, but they themselves cannot be heroes. Using an accusative of respect accentuates that the women are only heroic in respect to their husbands and fathers. By leaving the rest of the female relatives of heroes nameless, he confers them to a kind of blank anonymity quite at odds with the Greek heroism with which we have thus far been acquainted, which demands and deserves kudos and accolades. The wives and daughters of heroes do not portray some feminine form of heroism. Rather, they can only demonstrate the same kind of enduring heroism that is Homer's particular twist to the *Odyssey*, the kind of heroism of ordinary mortals depending upon their choices to ensure their endurance. Penelope does possess ἀρετή, excellence, by matching her husband in cunning and prudence for the sake of maintaining her physical fidelity, as Agamemnon insists (*Od.* 24.193, 197). But she does not qualify as a heroine for this accomplishment of virtue. For Homer, old men, dead men, failed men, excellent men, warrior men, Greek men, Trojan men, Phaeacian men, poet men and servant men can all be heroic. Women cannot.<sup>20</sup>

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interruption to Odysseus' narrative, offered as a gift to Arete, in which he "steps outside his role of autobiographer and switches genre to become a genealogical poet" thus creating "a wonderful symmetry on both sides of the intermezzo" (Pache 29, 30). On the authenticity and effect of this catalogue of women, see further Denys Page (1955, 36), Mark Northrup (1980), Marianne Pade (1983), Lillian Doherty (1991), and Victoria Wohl, who asserts "This arrangement simultaneously points up the importance of women to the heroic, and even cosmic, order and leaves no doubt as to the role they must play in that order...It is clear from this list that the great women of myth are those who submit, not those who rebel..." (Wohl 1993, 36).

<sup>20</sup> Vicki Mahaffey claims that Joyce echoes Homer's categories for heroic eligibility: "Joyce's project in *Ulysses*...expose[s] the hero as a gendered construction, defined not only by sex but also by age, race, and class. The different roles in a Shakespeare play or in a Homeric epic are not reversible without dramatic alterations in meaning, for the simple reason that the meanings of sex, age, and class inhere in the culture; the text merely plays against them" (Mahaffey 1998, 153). Joyce manages to reverse the roles of Odysseus and Penelope with Molly and Leopold without entirely altering the meaning of their love. On how Joyce manages this inversion while still

Yet being a male is not enough to qualify as a hero, either, for Homer's heroes must be mortal and subject to death.<sup>21</sup> Life and death are the horizons of heroism for Homer. Immortality is not heroism but something else altogether. James Redfield writes that "A man becomes a hero because he cannot become a god" (Redfield 1975, 101), but for Odysseus, such a claim does not quite fit. After all, he rejects the chance for immunity from suffering, aging, and death that Kalypso offered him: "I told him I would make him without death and old age for all his days" (*Od.* 5.136), she confides to Hermes. But Odysseus aspires to become an old-man-hero who dies at home, gently, out of the sea, as Teiresias predicts (*Od.* 11.134-137), accepting suffering, old age, and death as the necessary prerequisite of his heroic glory. Odysseus is undeterred by future suffering, in spite of Kalypso's admonition that if he knew its extent, he would stay with her (*Od.* 5.206-210). He clings to his humanity, knowing he will eventually become a ghost (ψυχή) in Hades. Odysseus' absolute refusal to yield in this regard causes him to endure like a hero instead of living like a god. He is

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affirming Homer's meaning, see Chapter Six. In so doing, Joyce annihilates the traditional qualifications for heroism. Homer had already begun to erase the aristocratic and youthful elements of heroism, and Joyce proceeds to erase the element of gender. Homer and Joyce can thus be viewed to be engaging in the same battle of revising the traditional conceptions of heroism which they had inherited. As Mahaffey puts it, "Joyce's war with convention in *Ulysses* highlights the vitality of eschewing judgment and embracing the catalytic force of change" (Mahaffey 1998, 168). Homer may have been waging the same kind of war, by accepting ordinary and old men as heroic and by presenting a woman in Penelope who is so likeminded with her husband that she is his equal in excellence.

<sup>21</sup> Miller contrasts the different views of heroism and immortality implied by Liddell and Scott's definitions: "from Homer's archaic usage, where 'hero' is used for 'any free man' or, possibly, any significant man or 'gentleman' prominent in the epic or not; to Hesiod, who sets the hero in an age of his own, a past age... anterior to the duller and smaller present; and finally to Pindar, who defines the hero as a semi-divine being, above men, below the gods" (Miller 3).

extraordinary because he prefers the ordinary heroic end of death in Hades, seeking to win the immortality of the soul (ψυχή) in Hades, not the immortality of the gods.

Accepting the invulnerability of immortality would mean the death of Odysseus' humanity and of his heroism. Jean-Pierre Vernant insists that accepting Kalypso's offer is the equivalent of rejecting heroism: "Sharing divine immortality in the nymph's arms would constitute for Odysseus a renunciation of his career as an epic hero" (Vernant 1996, 188). The gods of the *Odyssey* enjoy a transcendence of time that heroes by definition cannot share. Heroes are mortal men. If they cease from suffering and dying, they cease to be heroes. Life and death are the horizons of heroism for Homer. To try to transcend them is to lose any eligibility for heroism. As Jasper Griffin confirms, "If the hero were really godlike, if he were exempt, as the gods are, from age and death, then he would not be a hero at all" (Griffin 1983, 92-93). For Homer, heroism is bounded by the limitations of a life in time and the sufferings it engenders. Kalypso's offer therefore presents Odysseus with a choice of deaths: the death-in-life of immortality, or a heroic death in Hades. His choice lends veracity to Dean Miller's conclusion that "Death *is* therefore the limit—the *only* limit—the hero accepts without demur" (Miller 383-4).

Homer reminds us of the fact that taking Kalypso up on her offer would be like a death for Odysseus with the very name that he gives her: listen to Menelaus, who uses her name as a verb: "πρίν γ' ὅτε δὴ θανάτοιο μέλαν νέφος ἀμφεκάλυπεν," "before the time when the dark cloud of death surrounded us" (*Od.* 4.180). Death enfolds and enshrouds just as Kalypso herself does.<sup>22</sup> So does sleep; Penelope uses the

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<sup>22</sup> The first formulation of this idea appears in my proposal for the Dissertation, "Echoes Between Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses*," submitted to The Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, 1998, 24-25.

same verb, ἀμφεκάλυπτω, to describe the power of sleep to make one forget all things both good and bad, once it covers the eyelids (*Od* 19.84-86, also see how sleep enfolds Odysseus, *Od* 5.493). The sleep most like death that Odysseus experiences on the way home (*Od* 13.80ff.) gives him forgetfulness from all that he has suffered. Being “kalypsoed” is suffering the kind of forgetfulness that removes all agency. Kalypso’s gift of immortality would be no different, requiring Odysseus to forget everything of his life as a hero and as a man. With Kalypso’s offer, Odysseus is actually given a choice of deaths: the death-in-life of immortality, or a heroic death in Hades. Odysseus knows that as a man and as a hero, he can never escape the all-encompassing cloud of death. His choice illustrates Dean Miller’s conclusion that “Death *is* therefore the limit—the *only* limit—the hero accepts without demur” (Miller 383-4). But Odysseus can and does escape the kind of death-in-life that Kalypso offers.

Stephanie West claims, “[Kalypso's] name underlines her function in the story” (Heubeck 1991, 73), referring to the way that Kalypso hides return from Odysseus for so many years while hiding him in her caves. But there is another, more significant way in which the meaning of Kalypso’s name underlines her function. If she could, she would veil everything that makes Odysseus like Penelope in order to make him like she is. By hiding him in her caves, she would not only hide his νόστος, homecoming, but also change the meaning of his κλέος, glory, by altering his identity as a mortal hero. Homer uses the verb of Kalypso’s name to highlight how Odysseus himself is acting like Kalypso by covering up his identity: “οὐλήν δὲ κατὰ ρακέεσσι κάλυψε” “and he hid his scar with rags” (*Od.* 19.507). He veils his scar and everything it proves about who he is, just as Kalypso herself would have done if he

had agreed to her offer. Kalypso desires to change the kind of hero Odysseus is, just as he uses the action of her name to effect such a change temporarily.

Thus Homer relies upon the meaning of Kalypso's name and the use of her name as a verb to convey how accepting her embrace would mean the death of Odysseus' heroism. He must embrace the necessity of death in order to be a hero. The heroic choice of Odysseus is to cling to his humanity, eventually becoming a ψυχή in Hades. Odysseus' absolute refusal to yield in this regard is what makes him a hero instead of a god.<sup>23</sup> What Odysseus and every hero must win is the immortality of the ψυχή in Hades, not the immortality of the gods.<sup>24</sup>

#### HEROIC ENDURANCE THROUGH SELF-RESTRAINT

Homer's language further expresses how Laertes' extraordinary endurance distinguishes him as a hero. When Odysseus goes to the orchard to greet his father upon his return home, he finds Laertes gardening, digging dirt around a plant while “πένθος ἀέξω” “fostering his pain” (*Od.* 24.231). This verb ἀέξω literally means to increase, but it can also mean to foster, nourish, exalt, glorify, grow or help to flourish or blossom (Liddell and Scott, Cunliffe). The verb describes crops to thriving

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<sup>23</sup> His decision leads Jean-Pierre Vernant to the realization that heroes need not always seek to defy or transcend death, because “The Kalypso episode presents, for the first time in our literary history, the heroic refusal of immortality” (Vernant 1996, 188).

<sup>24</sup> The immortality of the ψυχή in Hades cannot properly be called life, but the form of the ψυχή as a ghost does confer an immortality of sorts. Erwin Rohde elaborates: “To speak of an ‘immortal life’ of these souls, as scholars both ancient and modern have done, is incorrect. They can hardly be said to *live* even, any more than the image does that is reflected in the mirror...” (Rohde 9).

with rain (*Od.* 9.111, 9.358), waves rising (*Od.* 10.93), Telemachus growing (*Od.* 13.360, 22.426), and the day waxing toward noon (*Od.* 10.56). Eumaeus uses it to characterize how the gods reward labor and make his efforts prosperous (*Od.* 14.65, 14.66, 15.372). It seems like a very odd verb to apply to one's pain until we recognize what it connotes: the heroic embrace of the pain that fate and the gods inflict upon us. Laertes makes his pain bloom, just as a gardener tries to make a plant bloom. His task as a hero is to flourish, and he tries to do so in spite of his current degradation and despair. He fosters his pain not because he is a masochist and enjoys suffering, but because he has no other options if he wants to survive. Since he has not yet found any remedy for the triple wound of losing his only son and his wife and being besieged by the suitors, he must persevere. Old-man-hero Laertes relishes his sufferings just as he relishes life. He actually nurses his suffering, and even prolongs it, rather than giving up on life. For Homer, Laertes is heroic because he chooses to suffer rather than die. He keeps struggling to live like he struggles to inch through his orchard. He values life no matter how agonizing living has become. By naming him as the first hero in the poem, Homer is subtly insisting that such endurance is a kind of heroism.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> I join Thomas M. Falkner in his efforts to understand why heroism is not circumscribed by old age: "While the word ἥρωϊς in Homer may not be age-specific, heroism clearly means youthful heroism...[Nonetheless] There is within the heroic line of Laertes a rich agricultural tradition, one characterized specifically as an alternative to heroic warfare...in spite of his age, Laertes retains his heroic ability" (Falkner 30, 43, 46). On attitudes toward old age in ancient Greece, see further Bessie Ellen Richardson (1969) and Jan Bremmer (1987). One implication of Bremmer's work is that old women simply could not have been accorded the same respect as an old hero-man like Laertes in the Greek context. Without any heroic status due to being the wrong gender, "however much a male Greek may have loved his mother...old women as a category were an object of fear and loathing" (Bremmer 1987, 206).

Remarkably, Homer and Joyce each name Odysseus and Leopold directly as their heroes in the context that best illustrates what this heroism of endurance comprises: the context of earning homecoming. Leopold receives the title “our hero” in “Eumaeus” when he finally decides to return home with Stephen:

I propose, **our hero** eventually suggested after mature reflection while prudently pocketing her photo, as it’s rather stuffy here you just come home with me and talk things over. My diggings are quite close in the vicinity.  
(*U* 16.1643-1645, emphasis added)

Leopold is proposing that he and Stephen seek homecoming (νόστος), but Joyce is proposing that Leopold deserves to be accepted as our hero. We may be inclined to interpret this naming ironically or sarcastically, but given Homer’s portrayal of heroism in the *Odyssey*, it becomes rather difficult to defend dismissing Leopold as anti-heroic. Leopold is “our hero” when he is rescuing Stephen at the same time as he is rescuing himself. “After mature reflection,” he tries to withstand the pain of Molly’s adultery, pocketing her old picture and his memories along with any rancor. Leopold, like Laertes and Odysseus, refuses to give up on life and on love, resolved in his belief that “talking things over” at home is the best possible course of action. In this context, Joyce adumbrates the only trait Leopold shares with Achilles:

So saying he skipped around, nimbly considering, frankly at the same time apologetic to get on his companion’s right, a habit of his, by the bye, his right side being, in classical idiom, his tender Achilles.  
(*U* 16.1714-1716)

Bloom is a hero with an Achilles who both acknowledges his weakness and tries to protect it. Herein lies the active yet passive heroism that Odysseus exemplified and that Leopold also achieves.

With a striking parallel, only once in the *Odyssey* is Odysseus named a hero directly. While he is telling the story of his endurance to the Phaeacians, Odysseus describes how Kirke told him to travel to the rock in Hades where the two rivers meet, the very edge of death itself. Then he quotes her next instructions:

There and then, **hero**, draw near, just as I order you, and dig a pit of a cubit on each side, and around it pour a libation to all of the dead....and then right away the prophet [Teiresias] will approach you, leader of the people, and he will tell you your way and the extent of your journey and your return [νόστος]...  
(*Od.* 10.516-518, emphasis added)

Kirke addresses Odysseus as a hero when he is attempting to return home by gaining and following this advice from Teiresias:

Still, despite everything, you may yet return, even though suffering many evils, if you resolve to restrain your desires and those of your companions [αἴ κ' ἐθέλης σὸν θυμὸν ἐρυκάειν καὶ ἐταίρων], as soon as you shall bring your well-benched ship to the isle of Thrinacia, fleeing the violet sea, and grazing there find the cattle and good flocks of Helios...  
(*Od.* 11.104-109)

Teiresias warns Odysseus that only through self-restraint will he accomplish his homecoming to Ithaca.<sup>26</sup> As Kalypso confined Odysseus in her caves (ἐρύκω, *Od.* 1.14), so Odysseus must curb his own desire (θυμός) so as not to devour the oxen of the sun.

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Nagler equates the meaning of this restraint of desire with acting according to *sophrosune* (Nagler 1980, 95) and discusses the nature of Teiresias' advice. Helen North disputes that *sophrosune* is a heroic quality at all in Homer (North 1966, 2).



The Muse informs us right off, just as the poet did with πλάγχθη (*Od.* 1.2), that our hero is being controlled and overpowered.<sup>27</sup> His problem is that his own agency is being limited by forces larger than himself: he has to find a way to restore himself to voluntary action. Again the utter duality of Odysseus' task cannot be ignored: as he was being restrained, he must also restrain himself. He must achieve the delicate balance between struggle and restraint, resisting enough to restore his own agency but then resisting any reckless urges to act. Thus Kirke names Odysseus a hero while sending him to Hades to learn the importance of the self-restraint, prudence, and determination that Leopold displays when he pockets Molly's photo and invites Stephen home. Thus Homer and Joyce strive to expose a very ordinary kind of heroism which operates through extraordinary self-control.

Odysseus previously erred in this effort, for he is not the perfect hero in perfect control of himself. He sometimes fails to master his own θυμός and its passions, and the context in which Kirke names him a hero calls attention to his inconsistency in this regard. Barely a hundred lines earlier, Eurylochus accuses him of having lost his men to the Cyclops through his own recklessness (*Od.* 10.431-435), recalling how Odysseus' comrades were reputed to have destroyed themselves in the same way by eating the oxen of the sun and how Halitherses-hero condemns the suitors' folly (ἄτασθαλίη, *Od.* 1.7, 24.451). Odysseus stifles the urge to kill him (*Od.* 10.438-445), and Kirke invites the men to stay, claiming that they need to seize desire (θυμός) in their chests again, because so much suffering has made them withered (ἄσκελής) and

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<sup>27</sup>Victoria Pedrick describes how Odysseus is initially presented as one who is constrained. "[The Muse] begins by revealing the startling fact that he is stuck. He is not wandering after all, as the narrator said, but he is trapped, unable to move....the goddess exercises physical force (ἐρύκω) to keep the hero in her cave" (Pedrick 53, 55).

without desire (ἄθυμος) (*Od.* 10.457-465). Desire has dried up and shriveled, like a plant without water, and now requires cultivation. The men remain with Kirke, feasting and drinking wine, nourishing θυμός until the men caution Odysseus to remember his home (*Od.* 10.467-474). Odysseus forgets his own return for an entire year, so busy and content is he cultivating and satisfying his spirit (θυμός)! But he takes full credit for his decision to leave, never mentioning his comrades' sagacity in intervening when he announces to Kirke: "My heart (θυμός) is now eager to go, as are those of my comrades..." (*Od.* 10.484-485). Odysseus then returns home due in as large a part to his remarkable ability for restraint as to his capacity for initiative and action. But he is not infallible, and this advice from his comrades proves that his ability to control himself and direct his energy and passion toward the right ends sometimes wavers. Only in this context, the context of the crisis of controlling desire (θυμός), does Kirke call Odysseus a hero. The location of his heroic naming stresses the quality that fuels Odysseus' endurance and characterizes his heroism: the willingness and the self-control to endure pain.

Odysseus gives to Aias in Hades the same advice that he received from Teiresias, establishing that our hero understands the pivotal importance of restraint for this kind of heroic endurance. Odysseus instructs Aias with the motto that every enduring hero must follow: "δάμσον δὲ μένος καὶ ἀγήνορα θυμόν" "Subdue your passion [μένος] and your daring spirit [θυμός]" (*Od.* 11.562). Notably, Odysseus uses the verb δαμάζω, meaning to tame, master, control, curb, which correlates very closely with the verb δάμνημι, conveying how Athena treats hero-men with her spear (*Od.* 1.100), meaning similarly to force or overpower. While Odysseus' verb emphasizes restraint, Athena's verb emphasizes defeat (Cunliffe, Liddell and Scott).

What the hero must do with θυμός is what Athena does to men with her spear, highlighting the duality of the heroic task in trying to subdue one's self internally while being subdued externally.

Even Joyce's "sinewyarmed hero" in "Cyclops" (*U* 12.155) constantly strives for such domination over one's emotions: "The eye in which a tear and a smile ever strove for mastery were the dimensions of a goodsized cauliflower" (*U* 12.161-163). He is always trying to bear up, to enjoy life despite the agonies that bring tears to his eyes. Odysseus' sardonic smile and all of the countless tears he sheds on Kalypso's shores and elsewhere cannot be forgotten. Such heroes must ceaselessly strive to resist despair and tears and to keep smiling.

Moreover, Joyce's "hero" is dressed in the hides that Odysseus often wears, and his "balbriggan buskins" are sea purple, the purple of the nymphs in the cave of the Naiads, and the purple of Odysseus' cape in Phaeacia, only underlining the connections between ancient and modern heroism which Joyce incites his readers to make. Joyce's Homeric echoes here are so pronounced despite his obvious and hilarious parody that he reinforces the meaning of enduring heroism. For this "hero" of Joyce's shares the task of Homer's heroes, whoever tries to endure beneath Athena's spear. Unlike the way the ranks of hero-men in the *Odyssey* are described, this hero wields his own spear, like Telemachus so often does:

A couched spear of acuminated granite rested by him while at his feet reposed a savage animal of the canine tribe whose stertorous gasps announced that he was sunk in uneasy slumber, a supposition confirmed by hoarse growls and spasmodic movements which his master repressed from time to time by tranquilising blows of a mighty cudgled rudely fashioned out of paleolithic stone. (*U* 12.199-205)

This hero is a master: he masters his own dog with blows from a cudgel, a dog who poses no threat but seems to be making growls and jerks as he dreams. The blows serve to tranquilize the dog and let him continue his uneasy slumber. This hero has become the master of sleep and of force, evidently without any aid from Athena or Hermes. The hero therefore seems to have assumed some of the tasks the gods perform in the *Odyssey*, for Athena is the one who carries the spear and smites the ranks of men, while Hermes carries his wand with which to lull men to sleep as he pleases. This hero seems to please himself by smiting the ranks of dogs, always keeping his spear ready at hand, always using his own force for his own ends. His “formidable heart” fuels his efforts (*U* 12.165), “the loud strong hale reverberations” of which “thundered rumblingly causing the ground, the summit of the lofty tower and the still loftier walls of the cave to vibrate and tremble” (*U* 12.165-167). Like Poseidon, he makes the ground tremble; like Zeus, who hurls the thunderbolt, his heart sounds like thunder. Still, he is not “My hero god!” (*U* 15.1744) to whom the veiled sibyl calls out before her death in Night-town. Joyce’s hero is heroic for the same reason that Homer’s heroes were: because he struggles to endure in the most ordinary human way, by controlling his emotions. His self-mastery does not enable him to escape the most fundamental and universal task of the hero: the need to master himself and his passions.

Odysseus has learned the urgency of this task from Athena beneath the olive tree, when she told him,

So you endure by necessity, and tell no man nor woman  
of them all that you have come back from your  
wandering, but in silence suffer your many pains  
[πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλά], submitting to the violence  
of men [βίας ὑποδέγμενος ἀνδρῶν].

(*Od.* 13.307-310)

Athena warns Odysseus that only by means of tremendous self-restraint will he be able to reclaim his home. Odysseus violates one part of her admonition by announcing his identity to Telemachus, but he accepts the necessity of his silence in humiliation at the suitors' hands and clarifies the importance of suffering force before exerting it at the proper moment to Telemachus. When father and son are plotting revenge against the suitors, Odysseus counsels Telemachus to resist his urge to intercede too soon: "Even if they insult me within the house, still let the dear heart [κῆρ] endure in your breast while I am suffering evilly..." (*Od.* 16.274-275). Father and son agree upon the nature of their task of endurance, for Telemachus responds, "Father, most certainly, I think in time to come you will know my spirit [θυμός], for no weakness at all has a hold on me" (*Od.* 16.309-310). Earlier, Telemachus described how desire was rising within him for revenge against the suitors ("ἄξεται θυμός", *Od.* 2.315). But when Antinous hits his father with the footstool, Odysseus follows Athena's dictates, standing firm as a rock while shaking his head in silence and plotting revenge (*Od.* 17.462-465). Telemachus likewise increases pain instead of yielding to desire, enabling him to abstain from immediate action and plot revenge in silence as his father requested: "And Telemachus fostered in his heart great pain [πένθος ἄξει] for the smiting, but he let no tear fall to the ground from his eyelids, and he silently shook his head, plotting revenge" (*Od.* 17.489-491). The control Joyce's "sinewyarmed hero" in "Cyclops" (*U* 12.155) seeks, indicated by "the eye in which a tear and a smile ever strove for mastery" (*U* 12.161-162), is a direct reflection of how father and son both follow the course of action recommended by Athena.

Indeed, the bow contest succeeds precisely because of such silence and self-restraint. Homer is careful to inform his audience that Telemachus frustrates his desires during the contest by restraining himself:

Three times he made it [Odysseus' bow] quiver with his strength [βίη], hoping in his heart [θυμός] to string the bow and shoot an arrow through the iron. And now, finally, trying to pull it on the fourth try, he would have strung it with his strength [βίη], but Odysseus nodded and held him back, even as eager as he was.  
(*Od.* 21.128-129)

At his father's command, he sacrifices his own success, relying upon his strength to conceal itself rather than exhibiting it. Valuing patience over bold and brazen initiative, he masters himself accordingly through the fierce control he exercises over his force (βίη) and his passions (θυμός). Telemachus shares the ability to foster his pain and control his desires, rather than engaging in self-destructive behavior, with his grandfather and father.

Joyce is admittedly somewhat ironic in his depiction of this kind of Homeric heroism, but not in such a way that relegates heroism to meaninglessness. His narration of how Leopold acts "heroically" mocks Homer's conception of ordinary heroism in the *Odyssey* at the same time as he justifies its worth. His parody of heroism functions to confirm its persistence in a new form, not to render it null and void.<sup>28</sup> Consider this example from "Eumaeus", after Leopold fails to hail a ride:

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<sup>28</sup> S. L. Goldberg's proposal that "genuine parallels...between the common life of men and women in one age and the other...complicate and modify the mock-heroic perspective" (Goldberg 119) is endorsed by David Wykes: "[Leopold] is meant to be, not an 'anti-hero,' but a real hero...For much of the time the heroic is handled ironically in *Ulysses*, but the ends it serves are not ironical" (Wykes 315). The irony in Joyce's treatment of heroism does not necessarily reduce heroism to irrelevance or ridiculousness.

This was a quandary but, bringing common sense to bear on it, evidently there was nothing for it but put a good face on the matter and foot it which they accordingly did. So, bevelling around by Mullett's and the Signal House which they shortly reached, they proceeded perforce in the direction of Amiens street railway terminus, Mr Bloom being handicapped by the circumstance that one of the back buttons of his trousers had, to vary the timehonoured adage, gone the way of all buttons though, entering thoroughly into the spirit of the thing, he **heroically** made light of the mischance.  
(U 16.24-39, emphasis added)

Here the heroic thing for Leopold to do is to endure—not to whine or complain, nor to try to find a safety pin with which to effect a repair. Leopold is heroic because he refuses to be discouraged. By subscribing wholeheartedly “into the spirit of the thing,” he resigns himself to his bad luck that his button has “gone the way of all buttons.”<sup>29</sup> Like Laertes, he accepts the necessity of his own suffering. Here is nurturing pain (“πένθος ἀέξων”) in more absurdity than we could have imagined. Leopold remains undaunted by a lost button, while Odysseus and Laertes remain undaunted by nineteen years of misery!

Of course, the most significant pain that Leopold suffers on Bloomsday is Molly's sexual betrayal. That the button has gone the way of all buttons means only a little embarrassment. But Leopold does not want his wife to go the way of all wives, so to speak, and leave him. The pain that he cherishes is the pain of cuckoldry, for the sake of avoiding the pain of divorce. Leopold yields to the pain that loving Molly inflicts upon him rather than trying to escape from it by getting divorced. Joyce captures the various ramifications of this decision when Leopold kisses his wife's

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<sup>29</sup> Edmund Epstein detects a blatant reference to Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* in the phrase, noting that the adage “was certainly not well-known until Butler's novel made it famous” (Epstein 1969, 22).

rump in bed, thinking, “Divorce, not now” (*U* 17.2202). Leopold is impressively forgiving and desperately pathetic as he tries to save his home and his marriage.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, Joyce portrays how Leopold remains an unconquered hero like Odysseus. To this end, Lenehan makes this pronouncement about Blazes Boylan: “See the conquering hero comes” (*U* 11.340). Blazes is the conqueror who ravishes Molly and makes Leopold’s bed jingle on Bloomsday. But that is only part of the story, for “Between the car and window, warily walking, went Bloom, unconquered hero. See me he might” (*U* 11.341-2). Even though Leopold previously shunned confronting Boylan, feeling “Safe!” (*U* 8.1193) when he evaded him and now still worries that Boylan might catch a glimpse of him, his patience, perseverance, and self-restraint have enabled him and his home to remain unconquered. Joyce exploits his contrasting uses of the word hero to prove how extraordinary and impressive Leopold really is.

This insistence upon enduring and remaining unconquered despite enormous sufferings unites the Homeric and Joycean conceptions of heroism. Homer’s inclusion of the title hero at the point when Odysseus is about to confront the reality of death by visiting Hades while still alive draws attention to his choice to remain mortal and

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<sup>30</sup> Declan Kiberd thinks that Leopold’s perspicacity in recognizing how inconsequential Molly’s adultery is in the grand scheme of things distinguishes him as a very unusual hero: “Bloom’s sad lines of submission seem jagged with painful hesitations: ‘Too late. She longed to go. That’s why. Woman. As east stop the sea. Yes: all is lost.’ Yet it is at that moment that he becomes a true hero with the courage to see Molly’s infidelity as part of the larger process of nature” (Kiberd 160). Francis Mackey confirms why this attitude is exceptional: “Heroic, undaunted, he has refused to bow to the sad fate that seems to await him, that coincidence and chance seem to assure” (Mackey 62). Raleigh concurs that Leopold is “indomitable and thus heroic...The really splendid originality of Joyce’s conception was to place his hero in the most unheroic of circumstances” (Raleigh 1977a, 595). Heroism in this vein of argument derives from one’s reaction to circumstances, rather than from the circumstances themselves.



heroic, joining his father in embracing suffering rather than staying with Kalypso. Heroic endurance thus requires an extraordinary will to live and the tenacity to welcome suffering until a fully inevitable death arrives. Two passages of the *Odyssey* cited in Joyce's notes: "*Od.* 11.118.130—XXIII.250.275" (BC 28) betray Joyce's attention to Odysseus' decision to endure pain until his fated death. Joyce notes Teiresias' prediction to Odysseus: "You will make them [the suitors] pay the penalty for their violence when you come" (*Od.* 11.118), and Odysseus' pronouncement to Penelope: "Hereafter there are still countless toils, many and difficult, which I must complete in full..." (*Od.* 23.250). The rest of both citations detail Odysseus' next journey, wandering until he finds the man who calls his oar a winnowing fan, at which point he must plant it in the ground and make offerings to Poseidon. Only then can he return home for good. Joyce's notations comprise his acknowledgement that Odysseus must punish the suitors and then leave home again to finish the full measure of his suffering. Joyce's notice of the lines in the *Odyssey* establishing why Odysseus' homecoming is only temporary alerts us to a curious similarity between Leopold and Odysseus. They share the same need to endure suffering as they try to return home, knowing they must only leave again. After all, Leopold leaves home every morning, regardless of who prepares breakfast. Despite the banality of that departure, love always seems to require another return in both texts. Homecoming is not a single, discrete task, but a constant and continual effort.

## THE HEROIC REJECTION OF SUICIDE

In order to keep seeking homecoming, Odysseus and Leopold must reject suicide as a panacea for their suffering. Odysseus considers whether to drown himself or continue to endure in silence after his comrades released the winds of Aeolus (*Od.* 10.49-54), and he also loses his will to live momentarily when Kirke commands him to visit Hades (*Od.* 10.495-502). Suicide and murder alike are Leopold's greatest fears:

What did he fear? The committal of homicide or suicide  
during sleep by an aberration of the light of reason...  
(*U* 17.1765-1767)

Leopold views neither murder nor suicide as a satisfactory remedy, fearing the abandonment of reason. He considers hurting himself as one kind of "retribution" (*U* 17.2200) he might seek: "Suit for damages by legal influence or simulation of assault with evidence of injuries sustained (self-inflicted), not impossibly" (*U* 17.2203-2205). Hence both resist the urge to inflict harm upon themselves. Odysseus declines immortality and suicide; Leopold declines suicide and self-injury. In so doing, they demonstrate how embracing certain pains is their heroic task.

But why do Odysseus and Leopold sustain the will to live? They may very well have learned from the examples of their parents' failure to do so. That Leopold's father Virag is a suicide is no surprise, but Odysseus' mother Antikleia is not typically categorized as one. She is normally described as dying of a broken heart. Why is she too a suicide, and in whose opinion? In Hades, Odysseus asks her what fate of sad death overwhelmed her ( $\delta\alpha\mu\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ , *Od.* 11.171ff.). She attributes her death to her

longing for the extraordinary kindness of heart of her son, his unmatched  
ἀγανοφροσύνη (*Od.* 11.203, a full *hapax legomenon*):

Nor did the sharp-sighted archer attack me in my halls  
with gentle arrows and kill me, nor did any sickness  
come to me, such as the wretched wasting away that  
removes the spirit [θυμός] from the limbs. No, it was  
longing for you and for your advice, shining Odysseus,  
and for your kindheartedness [ἀγανοφροσύνη] that  
stole my honey-sweet will to live [θυμός].  
(*Od.* 11.198-203)

She later enumerates how death ensues once desire (θυμός) has left the bones:

For the sinews no longer keep the bones and flesh  
together, and the strong force of the blazing fire destroys  
them, as soon as the spirit [θυμός] leaves the white  
bones behind, and the soul [ψυχή] like a dream, floats  
away, to hover and drift.  
(*Od.* 11.221-222)

In death, Antikleia details the cause of her own death. She explains that the pain of her  
yearning for her son was so strong that it erased her will to live, the θυμός that  
sustains, inspires, and motivates the living. She concedes that her desire for her son  
became stronger than her desire to live. Unable to master her desires, she died.  
Antikleia's fate allows Odysseus to witness the consequences of failing to control  
desire (θυμός).

She recognizes that Laertes is managing to endure what she could not, telling  
Odysseus, “[your father Laertes] lies grieving in the orchard and nurtures great pain  
[πένθος ἀέξει] in his heart, longing for your return” (*Od.* 11.195). Her longing for her  
son kills her just as surely as the longing to eat the oxen of the sun kills Odysseus’  
comrades, although she is never blamed for the same degree of recklessness (*Od.* 1.7).  
Succumbing to grief seems to be less of a folly than eating what one knows is

forbidden (*Od.* 12.271-373), although both result in death. Nonetheless, in Joyce's judgment in his notes, her death is tantamount to suicide: "Antikleia dies of grief (suicide)" (*BC* 15). Joyce also wrote "Suicide 15.356" and beneath it, "Sisyphos—Antikleia" (*BC* 30). Antikleia failed to endure her pain, whereas Laertes and Sisyphos submitted to its necessity. In the line Joyce cites, Eumaeus tells the disguised Odysseus,

Laertes still lives, but he is always praying to Zeus that his spirit [θυμός] may pass away from his limbs in his halls. For relentlessly he grieves for his absent son, and for his lawful and respected wife, whose death agonized him most of all and brought him to old age before his time.  
(*Od.* 15.353-357)

Joyce specifically marks the line in which Laertes grieves most of all for Antikleia, the only place in the *Odyssey* where the depth of his grief for his double loss of wife and son is emphasized. He is so devastated by losing his beloved wife that he wishes for death, but he renounces suicide and tolerates his agony. Desire (θυμός) does not desert him in his suffering as Kirke suggests it does for Odysseus and his men. Joyce's consideration of Eumaeus' assertion about the extent of Laertes' grief at his wife's death supports the claim that Joyce intended to emulate Homer's focus upon the need to endure grief from the loss of loved ones. Joyce learned the same lessons that Odysseus did from Teiresias and Antikleia in Hades, and he appreciated their implications for the meaning of heroism.

Odysseus, like his father, succeeds where his mother failed. Leopold too succeeds, but where his father failed. Virag and Antikleia died for the same reason: grieving for a lost beloved. Leopold remembers finding his father after his suicide and

ponders what death incites: “No more pain. Wake no more” (*U* 6.365). Virag’s suicide note states that life has ceased to hold any attraction for him in his grief:

it is no use Leopold to be....with your dear mother...that  
is not more to stand...to her...all for me is out....  
(*U* 17.1881-1885)

Choosing to commit suicide once life seems futile is the ultimate failure of this kind of ordinary heroism that extends and values human life above all else. Virag seems to have made that choice by poisoning himself: “Verdict: overdose. Death by misadventure” (*U* 6.363, also see 6.529). His note indicates that he sought his own death for the sake of joining his wife, while Antikleia took no such decisive action and just let herself pine away.

By the standards of the heroism of endurance, Virag is no hero. Heroes are supposed to save lives. Yet in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus lets his comrades suffer all sorts of terrible deaths and is the only survivor to return home. Ironically, given the title of Joyce’s *Stephen Hero*, Joyce relies upon Stephen to protest that he is not a hero at all for this very reason, telling Buck Mulligan,

Out here in the dark with a man I don't know raving and  
moaning to himself about shooting a black panther. You  
saved men from drowning. **I'm not a hero, however.** If  
he stays on here I am off.  
(*U* 1.60-63, emphasis added)

Because the only life Stephen is trying to save is his own, he maintains that he is no hero because he decline to intervene or risk his own well-being for others; as he confesses in “Circe,” “Personally, I detest action” (*U* 15.4415). But *Ulysses*, like the *Odyssey*, venerates those who save their own lives and endure through restraint the urge for self-preservation, even if Stephen denounces that choice. Mr. Power and Mr. Dedalus underscore this point by condemning suicide:

But the worst of all, Mr Power said, is the man who takes his own life. (*U* 6.335)

They say a man who does it is a coward, Mr Dedalus said. (*U* 6.341)

It is not for us to judge, Martin Cunningham said. (*U* 6.342)

If we the readers are not supposed to judge, perhaps then the man who saves others' lives at the cost of his own is no more heroic than the man who saves his own life. The only anti-heroes in *Ulysses* and in the *Odyssey* are the ones who quit trying to endure of their own accord, refusing to attempt to save their own lives.

Love, then, has the power to kill in both *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey*. As Leopold muses, "Poor papa too. The love that kills" (*U* 6.997).<sup>31</sup> The pain that belongs to love killed Virag and Antikleia. Neither one can recover from grief, and so the loss of love kills them. Stephen has not yet experienced the pain of love: "Pain, that was not yet the pain of love, fretted his heart" (*U* 1.102). But the pain that has not yet become the pain of love for Stephen is fully in bloom for Leopold, Virag, Odysseus, Antikleia, and Laertes. Recalling Stephen's declaration that "*Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life" (*U* 9.842-3), we wonder how to interpret the pain of love. No one has any love for pain in the objective genitive sense.

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<sup>31</sup> John Gordon argues that this line refers to Virag's accidental murder of his wife because he unwittingly killed her with aconite, the same poison with which he killed himself. Oddly, another name for aconite is θηλύφονον, meaning literally in Greek "woman-killing" (Gordon 2001). The interesting implication for the present argument is that both Virag and Odysseus may be inadvertent murderers, because Virag would not have intended to kill his wife during intercourse by touching her genitals with the poison, just as Odysseus would not have intended to kill his mother due to his long absence. They may both bear some burden of guilt despite their lack of ill intentions, because, as Gordon recognizes, "you can kill someone without meaning to, and still feel like a murderer..." (Gordon 2001).

But they do feel the pain that belongs to love, in the subjective genitive sense. They know that to survive love's pain, they must follow Laertes' example. Only by cultivating pain (“πένθος ἀέξων”) can they resist succumbing to death. Life intensifies and extends pain, yet it is better to value pain, and even to encourage it to thrive, than to eliminate it through death. Treasuring pain has become another part of treasuring life. Leopold, Odysseus, and Laertes refuse to allow the pain that love incurs to annihilate their will to live or their passions (θυμός). Their insistence upon the value of living and loving is the hallmark of their heroism.

#### THE ANTI-HEROISM OF ENDURANCE AND THE BIRTH OF THE HEROINE

We can now return to my original problem, ascertaining how the slaughter of the suitors could demonstrate the same kind of heroism as Leopold's impassive return to his defiled bed. The circumstances of each man's heroic naming provide some resolution. The only time that Homer names Odysseus a hero is the moment when Kirke commands him to visit Hades in order to learn that only by controlling his desires (θυμός) can he return home. Despite the violence with which he finally punishes the suitors, that triumph operates through the self-restraint that preceded it concerning the oxen of the sun and divulging his identity. Only because he has waited patiently and prepared shrewdly for the right moment is he victorious. His unusual degree of restraint made his final lack of restraint with the suitors successful. In contrast, Joyce names Leopold “our hero” after he has returned from his own kind of Hades, Nighttown, and is relying upon the power of such restraint to repair his home.

When he decides to go home with Stephen in tow, Leopold exercises the restraint that Odysseus must visit to Hades to learn. “Prudently” pocketing his wife’s photo (*U* 16.1644), he reins in his emotions, what Homer would name θυμός, for the sake of his homecoming. Still sustaining his self-control, he brushes the potted meat that Molly and Boylan shared out of his bed without a word (*U* 17.2225), an impressive display of “equanimity” (*U* 17.2155, 2177, 2195). This choice not to struggle but rather to acquiesce may seem anti-heroic, but Pietro Pucci remarks that it is very often Odysseus’ best strategy. The “choice—to do nothing—seems *implicitly* the best thing to do...the posture of endurance emerges repeatedly as the solution Odysseus embraces, it being the more advantageous for his survival and protection” (Pucci 1987, 74-75). Leopold uses the same tactic regarding Molly’s adultery. In both cases, this avenue makes our hero-men seem less than admirable, leading Pucci to admit, “‘enduring’ necessarily implies survival, and so a questionable form of heroism” (Pucci 1987, 49).<sup>32</sup> Such heroism does not always seem to qualify as heroic.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> This equivocal sort of excellence perhaps accounts for why Morris Beja praises Bloom for his lack of histrionics, albeit cautiously: “...Bloom’s attitude toward Molly’s infidelity may be in part—not entirely, to be sure: I am trying not to exaggerate but to set up what I perceive as a proper perspective—be correct, arguably heroic, even wise. He is not the possessive, dominant male that husbands are ‘supposed’ to be, and for that he is subject of ridicule...” (Beja 1984, 119-120). Lauding Leopold seems more justified in light of how Odysseus triumphs at times by preferring equanimity to violence.

<sup>33</sup> Odysseus’ lineage raises doubts regarding his heroic status. Of his grandfather Autolycus, S. G. Farron states, “It would be difficult to imagine a more unheroic or unaristocratic ancestor” (Farron 64). W. B. Stanford contends that Joyce echoes this ambiguity: “Though Odysseus in Homer is (by mere convention) an aristocrat, much of his conduct...[is] far from aristocratic, especially in the *Odyssey*...Homer was no snob. When Joyce is criticized for unheroic elements in Bloom, he is all the more clearly in the traditional succession” (Stanford 1953, 126).



Joyce titles Achilles a hero in the exact context which underscores the contrasts between the choice to endure and survive versus the choice to exert force and risk death. Skin-the-Goat proclaims:

You could grow any mortal thing in Irish soil, he stated, and there was that colonel Everard down there in Navan growing tobacco. Where would you find anywhere the like of Irish bacon? But a day of reckoning, he stated *crescendo* with no uncertain voice, thoroughly monopolising all the conversation, was in store for mighty England, despite her power of self on account of her crimes. There would be a fall and the greatest fall in history. The Germans and the Japs were going to have their little lookin, he affirmed. The Boers were the beginning of the end. Brummagem England was toppling already and her downfall would be Ireland, her Achilles heel, which he explained to them about the vulnerable point of **Achilles, the Greek hero**, a point his auditors once seized as he completely gripped their attention by showing the tendon referred to on his boot. His advice to every Irishman was: stay in the land of your birth and work for Ireland and live for Ireland. Ireland, Parnell said, could not spare a single one of her sons.

Silence all round marked the termination of his finale.

(U 16.995-1010, emphasis added)

Ireland is the Achilles' heel of England, yet no Irishman should make the choice of Achilles in the *Iliad* to enter battle knowing it will mean death. Irishmen are to make the choice of Odysseus by refusing to fight, a choice that Joyce thought Odysseus made before the war by refusing to fight (Budgen 16, see p. 51), and that he again makes after his success as a warrior as he tries to return home. The role of the Achilles' heel in *Ulysses* betrays the ordinary human task of trying to overcome adversity, frailty, and vulnerability without resorting to force.

Consequently, the anti-heroism many readers find in the cuckolded Leopold Bloom actually does not contradict the Homeric conception of heroism in the *Odyssey* at all.<sup>34</sup> For Odysseus also found himself the target of similar criticism and complaint. Even in antiquity, Odysseus was accused of being anti-heroic by not living up to the proper standards of heroism. In this regard, Farron notes that “Scholium T *ad Od.* 7.216 says that some attack Odysseus’ statement here for being very unaristocratic (*agenstatos*) and not heroic (*oude heroicos*)” (Farron 87). In that instance, Odysseus asks Alcinous to allow him to eat in spite of his grief, for the belly insists upon the necessity of hunger regardless of the extent of one’s pain and suffering. In admitting his inability to master his hunger, he exposes himself to the criticism of being anti-aristocratic and anti-heroic.<sup>35</sup> By the scholiast’s standard, heroes should suffer their pain in silence and refuse to bow to necessity. Odysseus follows just that criterion when he masters his hunger and avoids his own destruction by eating the oxen of the sun and again while he remains in disguise at home being tormented by the suitors. Thus, Odysseus’ triumph like Leopold’s, consists not only in resisting necessity but in knowing when to yield to it. He satisfies his desires only when the consequences will not be disastrous; otherwise, he accepts his frustration and bides his time. The

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<sup>34</sup> Dean Miller explores in his Chapter Five, “Fools, Fools, and Antiheroes” “certain refactions or exofactions of the hero that show a marvelously mixed origin and character, sometimes extending toward the comic realm, and raising the possibility of the appearance of an antihero or ‘reversed’ hero in the epic context” (Miller xi-xii).

<sup>35</sup> Pucci explores the power of the belly and its role in the poem: “*Gaster* names the instinctual source of all the human activity the poem presents...he refers to the *Odyssey*’s moralistic stance [regarding] man’s attempt to satisfy his desires in an ideal way, through wisdom, shrewdness, and endurance so that the crudest features of *gaster* are controlled and sublimated....[Odysseus] stands and resists the disastrous or suicidal dictates of *gaster*” (Pucci 1987, 179-180; see 157-1 for Pucci’s full exegesis).

prudence to know when to resign themselves to the necessity of suffering and when to resist it or try to escape it distinguishes them both.

This skepticism about the merit of such heroism may be countered by the acknowledgement that the qualities promoting such endurance are commendable. The manner of Leopold's reentry into bed names those qualities and establishes why he is much more like Odysseus than we first imagined possible.

How?

With circumspection, as invariably when entering an abode (his own or not his own): with solicitude, the snakespiral springs of the mattress being old, the brass quoits and pendent viper radii loose and tremulous under stress and strain: prudently, as entering a lair or ambush of lust or adders: lightly, the less to disturb: reverently, the bed of conception and of birth, of consummation of marriage and of breach of marriage, of sleep and of death.

(*U* 17. 2114-2121)

Leopold returns to his bed with the same degree of self-discipline and caution with which Odysseus returns home: "with circumspection ... solicitude ... prudently ... lightly ... reverently..." Odysseus' return in disguise, his testing of Penelope, his decision to unveil himself to his son and recruit his help, and finally his cleansing of the house after the slaughter, all occur in the same manner and with the same method as Leopold's return. But Odysseus' rage at the suitors has become so suppressed in Leopold that he manifests it only with the flick of the wrist with which he cleans off his sheets and with the private condemnation, "Worst man in Dublin" (*U* 6.202). As Leopold counsels himself over his tormenting thoughts about Molly's affair, "Touch. Fingers. Asking. Answer. Yes. Stop. Stop. If it was, it was. Must" (*U* 8.591-592). He

accepts the pain of her infidelity as necessity, because he “Must”, much like Odysseus accepts his hunger on Thrinacia and his humiliation by the suitors while in disguise.

Leopold, however, refrains from inflicting pain on others as punishment or revenge for his own suffering, as Odysseus delights in doing during the slaughter (*Od.* 23.187-193, 465-477). Even Odysseus’ name stresses the duality of his role as both sufferer and agent of pain; he is the wounded one and the one who wounds (Dimock, Stanford 1962, Bolling, Clay 1983). Violence for Leopold is not an option: “Duel by combat, no” (*U* 17.2202). As Ellmann characterizes Leopold’s course of action, “The only bloodletting at the end of Joyce’s book is menstrual” (Ellmann 1977, 32). Herein lies one instance of a “revelation of the irreducible differences” (Iser 200) which Wolfgang Iser finds an inevitable result of Joyce’s Homeric intertext. Still, Leopold’s dedication to non-violence does not diminish the import of how both hero-men resign themselves to suffering because it is the only way for them to return home. Both prevail due to their extraordinary capacities for self-restraint while suffering whatever pain is necessary to achieve homecoming.

Given this congruence, Homer’s *Odyssey* and Joyce’s *Ulysses* both glorify a very ordinary kind of heroism at the same time as they portray an extraordinary way to triumph. When Stephanie Nelson avows, “Joyce wrote *Ulysses* about a new kind of hero, an ordinary hero. In a way, so did Homer” (Nelson 63), she is proposing that Leopold and Odysseus must transcend the old kind of martial heroism found in the *Iliad*: “Like Odysseus, if Bloom is to be a hero, he must find a new kind of heroism” (Nelson 79). Thus the ordinary kind of heroism that Joyce’s *Ulysses* represents is not an invention of Joyce at all, but an embrace of the same kind of heroism depicted in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus and Leopold are the same kind of ordinary human hero who

triumphs through extraordinary endurance. Odysseus, despite being in an extraordinary situation, endures by very ordinary means, controlling his impulses. Leopold is in an ordinary situation, yet he endures in an extraordinary way by the same ordinary means. Despite Joyce's objection that "A writer should never write about the extraordinary. That is for the journalist" (*JJI* 470), his focus upon the ordinary unveils how the extraordinary is not only hidden within the ordinary but emerges from it.<sup>36</sup> Any ordinary mortal can aspire to the heroism of endurance, but only extraordinary ones can achieve it. The endurance of heroism between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* is demonstrated by the heroism of endurance, exemplified by Laertes, Odysseus, Telemachus, and Leopold.

Thus Joyce employs the word hero in *Ulysses* to endorse the same sort of heroism portrayed in Homer's *Odyssey*, even as he purposely twists the way that such heroism is expressed in a new place and time. Joyce redefined what heroes can and should endure while still qualifying as heroes, inciting objections like the one raised by Christine van Boheemen: "all heroism in the Homeric sense is gone....the parallel remains ambivalent and unclear. Bloom is *both* different from *and* similar to the classical hero" (van Boheemen 1987, 142). *What* Leopold endures in *Ulysses* is very different from what Odysseus endures in the *Odyssey*, but *how* they endure is the same. While the expressions of enduring heroism have changed between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* due to the modern context, the meaning of this kind of heroism has not.

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<sup>36</sup> David Hayman comments, "[Joyce] has managed to show the extraordinary as a quality of the ordinary" (Hayman 1970, 17), while Richard Ellmann avers to Joyce's "need to seek the remarkable in the commonplace...Joyce's discovery, so humanistic that he would have been embarrassed to disclose it out of context, was that the ordinary is the extraordinary" (*JJII* 156, 5).

For this reason, Joyce's conception of heroism both revolutionizes Homer's and reinforces it simultaneously.

Finally, Joyce's words to his brother Stanislaus in a 1905 letter assume new significance:

Do you not think the search for heroics damn vulgar?  
...I am sure however that the whole structure of heroism  
is, and always was, a damned lie, and that there cannot  
be any substitute for the individual passion as the motive  
power of everything.  
(Kiberd 157)

Weirdly, Homer's *Odyssey* bears out why Homer might have concurred with Joyce's claim. Like Joyce, Homer may have found the search for heroics "damn vulgar." The prominence of the power of desire (θυμός) in Homer, and the need to master it at the same time as one encourages it, constitutes exactly the individual motive power to which Joyce alludes. By creating a conception of heroism fraught with ironies, tensions, and contradictions, the *Odyssey* demands the reconsideration and revision of its own premises. The poem critiques the very notions that it depicts, accomplishing the presentation and the revision of those notions simultaneously. Joyce's *Ulysses* engages in the same struggle with traditional heroic values, assuming the same posture of self-reflexivity, self-critique, and self-contradiction, exposing why "the whole structure of heroism is, and always was, a damned lie". Heroism deconstructs itself in both texts, appearing as itself and its opposite concurrently and discrediting the lie that only the extraordinary is heroic.

Consequently, the advent of modernism in Joyce's novel is not the advent of a new anti-heroic archetype but rather heralds the rebirth of a very ordinary kind of heroism distinguished by the extraordinary qualities of self-restraint, patience,

tenacity, and prudence. Joyce's novel affirms the heroism its title recalls. The achievement of homecoming by means of self-restraint reflects the symmetry of the underlying situations in the two texts in spite of countless conflicting incidents, salvaging Joyce's and Homer's conceptions of heroism from complete incommensurability. Investigating such symmetries for the sake of discovering how the significance of the Homeric intertext can contribute to our understanding of *Ulysses*, rather than simply dismissing its impact as trivial, should be the foremost priority in future intertextual Joyce studies. Textual exegesis remains the brave new world to be explored, because the possibilities of Joyce's texts have not exhausted themselves.<sup>37</sup> Hugh Kenner invited my line of inquiry by asking how Joyce's and Homer's meanings might converge:

Was Odysseus perhaps a Bloom perceived through Ionic hexameters?...Is this 1904 Ulysses perhaps the same man, recast in circumstance as also in headgear and idiom? In Homer he seems different, very; may we say though, thanks only to parallax?  
(Kenner 1979, 106)

Leopold wonders, "what's parallax?" (*U* 8.578). Heroic parallax is an illusion Joyce crafted with his title, one dispelled by which textual analysis. Heroism in the two texts initially seems parallel or double only due to the parallax imposed by a new cultural and historical context. The heroism of endurance proves why the meaning of heroism in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, in spite of its variations, is nevertheless coterminous. Joyce has not subverted Homer's heroism but given it a new guise. Heroism retains its meaning in its new form. Fritz Senn's declaration that "there are no Homeric

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<sup>37</sup> Recent superb work done by Sebastian Knowles (2001), Tony Thwaites (2001), Jennifer Fraser (2002), and John Gordon (2002) only bears out the truth of this assertion.

parallels”<sup>38</sup> now becomes a call to action. The intersections of meaning with Homer which Joyce has engineered pose still more enigmas yet to be explored, and new crimes of criticism yet to be committed.

The preceding project stands as a defense and proof of Stanford’s contention that “The differences between Homer and Joyce...are differences of idiom not axiom” (Stanford 1953, 136). Joyce’s new idiom, however, does herald one enormous innovation that bears out one “irreducible difference” (Iser 200) within the broader identifications. The new idiom does introduce one thoroughly new axiom: the equality of the genders. The gender barriers and boundaries of antiquity are thoroughly imploded by Joyce, proven by Vicky Mahaffey: “*Ulysses* affirms ‘the fact of vital growth’ (*U* 17.1005), not artificial categories such as gender, a word with an ‘end’ in it” (Mahaffey 168).<sup>39</sup> The meaning of heroism endures the ravages of cultural and historical context, but the constraints of gender roles and rules do not, enabling Molly to become the heroine that Penelope could never be. Homer had already extended the boundaries of heroism beyond the aristocracy and the young, but Joyce admits women to the realm of the heroic. Homer renders heroism ageless and classless. Joyce renders heroism genderless. Heroes suffer the mortal and human condition, and in the stories

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<sup>38</sup> The Eighteenth International Joyce Symposium, 18 June, 2002, Trieste, Italy. Jennifer Levine makes this point somewhat less vehemently: “The reader of *Ulysses* should not insist on parallels—Homeric or other—with too much vehemence” (Levine 134).

<sup>39</sup> Mahaffey elaborates: “...what Joyce systematically attacks throughout *Ulysses* are those compound cultural images that crowd out individual apprehension, experimentation, and thought, the products and prescriptions of what Gerty calls ‘Society with a big ess’ (*U* 13.666). Gender difference is one such debilitating mirage; boundaries, as Joyce describes them, are heuristic borders designed to be surpassed—not lightly, but at the appropriate time, to initiate new stages of cognitive and emotional development” (Mahaffey 168).



of their endurance told by Homer and Joyce lies the only immortality to which they can properly aspire.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE OXYMORON OF FIDELITY

O, weeping God, the things I married into!

(U 3.65)

In Joyce's *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom wonders about the state and fate of his marriage as he prepares to return home to his unfaithful wife, Molly:

The eternal question of the life connubial, needless to say, cropped up. Can real love, supposing there happens to be another chap in the case, exist between married folk?

(U 16.1384-6)

Infidelity is an even more imperative problem for Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*, because Agamemnon warns Odysseus in Hades that death by murder can be one danger presented by an unfaithful wife. Even though Agamemnon assures Odysseus that death will not come to him from his wife (*Od.* 11.444), and praises Penelope as circumspect (περίφρων, *Od.* 11.445-446), he still advises Odysseus to return home in secret to guard against any ambush, because "no longer is there trust in women" (*Od.*

11.456). Thus Leopold worries about whether he has lost “real love,” while Odysseus worries about losing not only real love but his life. Yet the actual infidelity that threatens Odysseus’ marriage is not committed by Penelope with any other “chaps,” namely the suitors, but by Odysseus himself with the goddesses Kalypso and Kirke. In contrast, in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, it is Molly’s assignation with Blazes Boylan that traumatizes her husband. Joyce, then, has exploited the privilege of retelling Homer’s poem in order to switch the gender of the adulterous spouse. Hence, at first glance, the incongruity between Homer’s faithful Penelope and Joyce’s adulterous Molly is undeniable and problematic.

For this reason, Lillian Doherty characterizes Joyce’s Molly as a complete contradiction of Homer’s portrayal of Penelope, asserting that “Joyce’s use of the Penelope figure is, in the first place, ironic. For his [Joyce’s Molly] is an unfaithful Penelope—a mythical oxymoron” (Doherty 1990, 343). Yet are Molly and Penelope as irreconcilably different as they initially appear? In my ensuing analysis of the justifications for adultery presented by Penelope, Molly, and Leopold, I seek to reveal why Joyce’s depiction of Molly constitutes a mythical affirmation of Homer’s Penelope in spite of Molly’s affair with Boylan, not a negation or a rejection of Penelope’s qualities and values.<sup>1</sup> For Joyce’s Molly is not an ironic version of

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce was indeed aware of the number of later stories in which Penelope does not remain faithful to Odysseus, as Philip Herring proves by citing his notes from Roscher on that topic (*BM* 65-66). Stuart Gilbert (1960, 395) and W. B. Stanford (1968, 217) both suggest Joyce was relying upon one of these variants in writing *Ulysses*, as Herring notes (*BM* 64), but Herring disagrees, stating that Joyce’s research into Gibraltar proves why Joyce was “not content with anchoring Molly to the post-Homeric tradition of the unfaithful Penelope” (*BM* 69). Joyce’s knowledge of the existence of versions of the myth in which Penelope is unfaithful does not automatically indicate his embrace of that model. I am interested in the ways in which

Penelope, but a version that Penelope herself admits that she could have become. By examining the epistemologies of infidelity that Molly and Penelope each offer during the course of each text, they will come to seem less antithetical than one might presently imagine possible. Both couples' marriages are sustained by an attitude of forgiveness toward infidelity first elucidated by Penelope. Despite the vast changes in cultural and historical context, it will become apparent that Homer and Joyce are both presenting to their audiences examples of how spouses can endure sexual infidelity, and why real love can and does exist between married folk.

PENELOPE'S EXCUSE FOR INFIDELITY:  
THE ETIOLOGY OF DIVINE INTERVENTION

We must first ask to what cause Penelope herself ascribes her own sexual fidelity. She covertly presents her opinion on the cause of adultery when she finally recognizes the disguised Odysseus upon his return and welcomes him home. After Penelope tricks Odysseus by suggesting that his bed has been moved (*Od.* 23.174-180), he flies into a rage at the thought and discloses to her the proof of his identity ( $\sigma\tilde{\eta}\mu\alpha$ , *Od.* 23.188), his knowledge of how he built the bed with the living olive tree as one of its posts (*Od.* 23.182-204).<sup>2</sup> Odysseus' rage is entirely misplaced, for if

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Joyce's portrayal of a wanton, lusty, and even promiscuous Penelope may emerge from Homer's own portrayal rather than from subsequent depictions.

<sup>2</sup> The exact meaning of the Greek text concerning the motion of the bed that Penelope orders has been much disputed, leading James O'Sullivan to state that "The bed of Penelope's instructions has been in and out so often—sometimes indeed simultaneously in and out—that it would be a mercy to decide where, or whither, it really belongs" (O'Sullivan 23). See O'Sullivan's resolution of the problem.

Penelope had actually allowed anyone else into her bed, her bed test would not have been any kind of test at all. As Stephen Whittaker points out, Penelope's bed test can only function as a test if she has been faithful; otherwise, anyone might know the sign of the bed through hearsay or personal experience, and the knowledge of its tree-post would prove nothing about Odysseus' identity.<sup>3</sup> Only once Penelope has proven her own fidelity by giving her husband the opportunity to identify himself with his singular knowledge of their bed does she burst into tears and run into his arms, hugging and kissing him and saying:

Don't be irritated with me any further, Odysseus, since surely in every other case you are the most sagacious of men. The gods grant us misery, the gods who begrudged that the two of us should stay with each other taking full joy in our youth and together approach the threshold of old age. So don't be enraged at me for this, nor insulted, because from the very first moment when I saw you I did not welcome you openly with love. For always the heart in my breast was full of anxiety, lest some mortal upon his coming should fool me with his words, for many men plan evil plots. Really, even Argive Helen, daughter of Zeus, would not have made love with a man from a foreign land, if she had only known that the warrior sons of the Achaeans were destined to bring her home to her fatherland. Most certainly in her case a god [θεός] stirred her to accomplish a shameful deed. Never before that time did she ever store in her heart such a harmful folly [ἄτη], from which even from the very beginning pain came to us, too. But now, since you have stated the obvious proofs about our bed, which no mortal has ever seen except you and I alone and a single handmaid, daughter of Actor, whom my father gave me before I ever came here, and the two of us kept the doors of our bedroom impenetrable, you have finally persuaded the heart in me, even as unbending as it is.

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<sup>3</sup> Personal conversation, The 18<sup>th</sup> International James Joyce Symposium, Trieste, Italy, 18 June, 2002.

(*Od.* 23.209-230)<sup>4</sup>

What Penelope chooses to say to welcome her husband home after nineteen years is rather shocking. Alfred Heubeck observes that “It is significant that she does not take credit for her steadfastness, but rather seeks to justify it” (Russo et. al. 1992, 337). Without overtly stating it, Penelope hints that she has been consumed by the anxiety that she might perpetrate the same kind of adultery as Helen. Penelope explains that a god stirred Helen to commit the shameful act of adultery and abandonment, through a folly, an ἄτη, which was not the fulfillment of a longstanding, premeditated wish but a sudden, divinely inspired impulse (*Od.* 23.222-224). The best translation of the term ἄτη is a matter of some debate, but the ideas of folly, infatuation, and blindness best express the altered frame of mind to which Homer is referring.<sup>5</sup> In his provocative study of the use and meaning of the word ἄτη,

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<sup>4</sup> The authenticity of *Od.* 24.218-224 has been challenged since antiquity, beginning with Aristarchus and continuing with the modern Analysts (see Hardy Fredericksmeier 1997, 487 for bibliography). Alfred Heubeck avers that these lines have an important role and ought to be retained, but he concedes that “At first sight these lines seem a superfluous and pointless excursus, easily removable and inappropriate to context...” (Russo 1992, 336-7). Heubeck then cites numerous ancient and modern scholars who have rejected these lines. George Devereux argues for their authenticity as “a stroke of genius on the part of Homer...they have a very pointed significance for understanding Penelope’s behavior on the return of Odysseus” (Devereux 379, 386). Because the idea expressed in these lines is so central to Homer’s conception of infidelity, I contend that these lines are anything but spurious or irrelevant.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Doyle’s study of the use and meaning of the term *ate* attempts to ascertain what its use means for “the fact of man’s human freedom and the degree of his responsibility, and the implications of the two for his destiny” (Doyle 1984, 5). Doyle offers various translations depending on context while admitting the difficulty of his task: “In stating that one possible meaning of ἄτη is ‘blindness,’ ‘infatuation,’ or ‘folly,’ and that another is ‘ruin,’ ‘calamity’ or ‘disaster,’ I do not assume that all occurrences of the ancient Greek word may be translated with total accuracy by one or another of these modern English words. Languages seldom offer such neat correspondences in semantics in non-technical words....to be capable of translating

Richard Doyle translates Helen's specific condition of ἄτη as one of "infatuation...[which is] a cause of suffering" (Doyle 15). Ἄτη must be acknowledged as a compulsion, not a conscious choice, recalling E. R. Dodds' assertion that

ἄτη is a state of mind—a temporary clouding or bewildering of the consciousness. It is, in fact, a partial and temporary insanity; and, like all insanity, it is ascribed, not to physiological or psychological causes, but to an external 'daemonic' agency.  
(Dodds 5)

Ἄτη should therefore be viewed as a kind of psychosis which distorts normal judgment and prevents its victim from making rational choices. Because it should properly be categorized as a sort of divine possession, Penelope exempts Helen from any guilt for actions taken under its influence.<sup>6</sup>

According to this epistemology of infidelity, strength of character or love cannot ensure fidelity, because anyone can be stricken by an ἄτη from the gods at any time. By claiming that a god inspired Helen to cheat, Penelope implies that her own

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accurately, to everyone's complete satisfaction, each instance in which ἄτη occurs in Greek poetry is impossible" (Doyle 3). Doyle, however, does an admirable job of attempting the impossible by defending his translations in his convincing textual discussions. Other superb analyses of the meaning of ἄτη include the work of R. D. Dawe (1967), J. M. Bremmer (1969, 99-134), and William Wyatt (1982).

<sup>6</sup> Doyle describes two kinds of ἄτη: "by 'subjective' I mean a state of personal, interior, mental 'blindness,' 'infatuation,' or 'folly,' something which affects a human being from within his own faculties or being. By 'objective' I mean something which comes on a human being from the outside, some 'ruin,' calamity,' or 'disaster' which is inflicted upon him independently of himself" (Doyle 3-4). Helen's ἄτη seems to defy this distinction because her urge seems to emerge both from within and from without: her folly is imposed upon her by Aphrodite and then alters her inner desires so that she chooses what she never would have otherwise, that is, to flee with Alexander. This combination of external affliction with internal agency is the paradox that makes understanding the mechanism of ἄτη so difficult.

fidelity has also been accomplished through the will of the gods, not her own determination. Her worry that Odysseus might return and catch her committing adultery with someone else who had tricked her into believing that he was her true husband, combined with her desire to avoid Helen's shame, made her suspicious of everyone. Her fear of being caught is a significant motivation for her fidelity.<sup>7</sup> But Penelope's primary goal during Odysseus' absence is not to become a victim of what Wendy Doniger calls "the bedtrick," which she defines as "going to bed with someone whom you mistake for someone else" (Doniger 2000, xiii).<sup>8</sup> Still, Penelope's caution alone was not enough to sustain her fidelity. She insinuates that she was faithful only because no god threw the ἄτη into her heart not to be so; she could have acted like Helen if only the gods had so decreed. For this reason, Penelope takes no pride in her fidelity. Penelope's excuse for Helen betrays her own sense of the frailty and tenuousness of the fidelity that she has preserved.

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<sup>7</sup> Fredricksmeier notes that many believe Penelope is admitting that she would have cheated if she thought she could have gotten away with it (Fredricksmeier 490), citing Anne Amory (1963, 120), Hannah Roisman (1987, 62), Patricia Marquardt (1985, 42), Sheila Murnaghan (1987, 141-2), and Marilyn Katz (1991, 185),

<sup>8</sup> Doniger notes Penelope's concern: "In the final speech of recognition and acceptance, she argues that she tested Odysseus for fear of being tricked like Helen of Troy" (Doniger 1999, 163). But Helen has not been tricked into believing Alexander was anyone else; she does not abandon Menelaus in the belief that she is leaving with another Menelaus! Helen is not the victim of any bedtrick, but the victim of ἄτη. Still, Doniger is quite correct that "Penelope's own nightmare is that she will turn out to be another phantom of Helen" (Doniger 1999, 163). Penelope's nightmare is actually two-fold: first, that that she will be stricken with ἄτη like Helen, or second, that she will fall prey to a bedtrick and commit adultery when she erroneously believes she is with her husband. Even without succumbing to any ἄτη, W. B. Stanford is convinced that Penelope's bed test might not prevent a god from tricking her: "for if the stranger was (as she feared) a god in the guise of her husband, what was to prevent him in his omniscience from knowing even the Secret of the Bed?" (Stanford 1968, 59).



Nonetheless, the ramifications of Penelope's excuse are still somewhat perplexing, because she seems to argue that had Helen possessed the knowledge of her imminent return, she would have restrained herself (*Od.* 23.218-221).<sup>9</sup> If so, then Helen would seem to have been in control of her actions all along, which contradicts the reasoning behind Penelope's excuse for her. Did Helen have any agency in her choice or not? Is Penelope making a literal claim that no one is culpable for adultery because it is an act of divine will?

Penelope certainly seems to excuse Helen entirely by citing the god as the cause and the ἄτη as the agent of Helen's adultery. Penelope's excuse for Helen exacerbates the confusion regarding the meaning of the Homeric concept of "double motivation, by which human actions are given motivation simultaneously on the divine and human levels" (Fredricksmeier 1997, 487).<sup>10</sup> Still, Penelope and Seth

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<sup>9</sup> Fredricksmeier comments that for both women, knowledge is the critical determining factor for their chosen courses of action: "The point of comparison is that the fidelity or infidelity of both women depends on their possession of an essential knowledge, that of Odysseus' true identity in the case of Penelope, and in Helen's case her own eventual return to Sparta" (Fredricksmeier 1997, 489). Kathleen Morgan avers that adultery in Homer is "an act whose shamefulness is by no means reduced even if the gods or deception, not the woman herself, are ultimately responsible" (Morgan 3).

<sup>10</sup> See his bibliography on the concept of double motivation. He interprets Achilles' decision to return to battle (*Il.* IX.629, 636) and Elpenor's death (*Od.* 2.61) to be other examples of its effects. Simply trying to make sense of Penelope's excuse for Helen forces us to confront the enigma of moral autonomy in Homer. Divine intervention does not circumvent free will, because, E. R. Dodds reminds us, "Homeric man does not possess the concept of will (which developed curiously late in Greece), and therefore cannot possess the concept of 'free will'" (Dodds 1951, 20). Even so, Daniel Levine suggests that divine inspiration does not entirely negate human intentions: "Divine intervention often serves to second a mortal's preconceived notion. For example, Athena inspires Penelope to set up the contest of the bow in the same lines as she had motivated her to appear before the suitors (*Od.* 18.158ff.=21.1ff.), but in the *homilia* Penelope had already announced her intention to do so (*Od.* 19.560-81)...Odysseus' own ingenuity saves him on the Scherian coast, but his rescue is

Schein agree that Helen's failure is not a moral one, while Fredricksmeier disputes that point (Fredericksmeier 1997, 488-91).<sup>11</sup> The controversy on this point arises because of Penelope's own uncertainty about the reasons for the differing fates of her and Helen. If we recognize that Penelope herself wonders why she was able to maintain her fidelity, her excuse for Helen seems much less incongruous and peculiar. Homer betrays Penelope's own uncertainty for the causes of fidelity by allowing her to offer such an ambiguous excuse citing divine intervention. Penelope resorts to such an

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attributed to Athena (*Od.* 5.426 ff., 436ff.); she inspires him to make a trial of the suitors to test their willingness to be reasonable (*Od.* 17.360 ff.), but he had already announced his intention of doing so (*Od.* 16.278ff.). Thus it is normal Homeric technique to attribute a character's sudden impulse to divine inspiration...." (Levine 176). We must remember that Penelope herself knows nothing of Homeric technique; Homer simply lets her borrow his method of attributing divine will to human motives as the basis of her excuse. For the matter at hand, the most important point is that when Penelope invokes Homer's typical etiology of divine intervention, she assumes indisputably that all human responsibility and independence of thought and action vanish during ἄτη.

<sup>11</sup> Hardy Fredericksmeier claims that Penelope "has already marked Helen's culpability by introducing their comparison with *oude* (*Od.* 19.218)" (Fredericksmeier 1997, 491). Further, he maintains that "divine will is commonly used in Homer to rationalize human error without exonerating the agent of moral responsibility" (Fredericksmeier 1997, 491). On this basis, Fredericksmeier claims that "Penelope exonerates Helen no more (and no less) than Nestor does Clytemnestra when he says of her that 'she had an understanding heart...but at last the doom of the gods [μοῖρα θεῶν] bound and overcame her' (*Od.* 3.266-69)" (Fredericksmeier 1997, 491). Seth Schein discusses the perturbing and complex nature of this mixture of divine and human agency (Schein 1984, 56-62). He refers to Helen's "characteristic blend of responsibility and lack of ultimate power" (Schein 1984, 23) and claims "Helen is a victim of the inevitability of her situation" (Schein 1984, 23). While Schein does not condemn Helen, he still does not accept that her act was the same as an act of god: "Because Homer tells us, in any given instance, that Athene or another god has made something happen, we tend to make the god the cause or agent. But in fact the achievement or excellence shown by a hero, or any unusual or striking occurrence, indicates retrospectively both to the poet and to his audience that a god has been present; actually the god is an *ex post facto* explanation, not a cause or agent of what happened" (Schein 1984, 57).

explanation because she finds no other convincing rationale. According to Penelope's logic, the gods are decisively liable for human fidelity. Helen could not have anticipated what shame she would bring upon herself precisely because the *ate* clouded her thinking, and so, Penelope maintains, Helen cannot be held accountable. Consequently, it follows that Penelope's circumspection and prudence do not earn her fidelity. Only the gods' beneficence allows it. On this basis, no one should be held responsible for sexual liaisons due to ἄτη from a god. Neither should anyone be venerated for avoiding ἄτη and remaining faithful. Adultery caused by ἄτη must be forgiven, since it should properly be viewed as an act of the gods. She takes this position since she cannot justify crediting herself with some unique or remarkable strength or virtue in regard to her chastity. Unlike the legend which has arisen surrounding her, she does not define herself as the paragon of virtue or the epitome of fidelity. Her fear of being caught or tricked, which kept her from committing Helen's crime, erased any sense of arrogance and condescension on her part.

Penelope thus emphasizes her own sexual fidelity without praising herself for it.<sup>12</sup> She avoids assuming any moral superiority because of her chastity. In fact, she takes great pains not to seem morally self-righteous in the slightest. Penelope, then, offers a very surprising defense of infidelity. She absolves adultery as the product of

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<sup>12</sup> Fredricksmeier concurs: "Penelope actually emphasizes her own chastity through implicit contrast with another's adultery" (Fredricksmeier 1997, 489). Victoria Wohl thinks that Penelope's words "suggest that Penelope, like Helen, has known the pain of being a desiring subject. The grammar [of her excuse] unites them, although one will be remembered for her chastity, the other for her adultery. At the moment when her sexuality is harnessed, when she becomes an example for the ages to come, Penelope recalls her association with the unruly, incomprehensible forces of female sexuality and creativity....Penelope's submission [to her husband, indicated at *Od.* 23.205ff.] is an *exemplum* in both senses of the word: a copy of the dangerous female prototypes and an archetype for future housewives" (Wohl 1993, 44-45).

divine intervention, excusing sexual infidelity on the basis of extenuating circumstances, in particular, the extenuating circumstance of being afflicted with blindness and folly by a god (ἄτη, *Od.* 23.222-223).<sup>13</sup> Given her chastity, such a position seems entirely unnecessary. She needs no such excuses to defend her behavior, but due to her heightened sense of her own weakness and fallibility, she shuns moral condemnation.

Penelope's excuse is the excuse one might expect from unfaithful wives in certain modern contexts, especially on Jerry Springer and similar sleazy talk shows. Her excuse is the ancient form of the colloquial expression that "the gods made me do it, I couldn't help it." One of the most famous unfaithful wives in Western literature, Helen, has previously resorted to the same excuse for her adultery while telling a story to Telemachus about how she was the only one to recognize Odysseus when he entered Troy in the disguise of a beggar and killed many Trojans. Helen describes her reaction when she realized Odysseus had come:

And the other Trojan women wailed shrilly, but my heart was warmed, since already the heart within me had changed course and now desired to return home again, and I looked back with grief upon the blindness of my folly [ἄτη], the one which Aphrodite gave me when she led me away from my beloved fatherland, after abandoning my child and my marriage bed and my husband, a man who was lacking nothing at all within his heart, nor in his bodily form.  
(*Od.* 4.259-264)

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<sup>13</sup> Only once in Homer, at *Iliad* XXIV.480, is Hector named as the sole human source of an ἄτη. Doyle confirms that in every other instance, divinities are the sources of ἄτη. He cites the following examples of divine agents of *ate*: Zeus (*Od.* 12.372; *Il.* II.111; VIII.237; IX.18, 504, 505, 512; XIX.88, 136, 270), Aphrodite (*Od.* 4.261; *Il.* XXIV.28), Apollo (*Il.* XVI.805), and the Erinyes (*Od.* 15.233), (Doyle 21-22).

Helen deems her infidelity to be the result of how she became a victim of Aphrodite, not of how she, as a responsible moral agent, made a choice to betray her husband and leave home.<sup>14</sup> Helen believes that she would never have left home if Aphrodite had not stricken her with ἄτη, and Penelope of course joins her in this belief (*Od.* 23.218-221). Only Aphrodite’s ἄτη is to blame, the blind delusion that she gave to Helen as she led her astray. Given the power of ἄτη, Helen finds no reason to fault herself for what she has done. Even though Penelope calls her act a shameful one (*Od.* 23.222), Helen displays no shame whatsoever except for one self-denigrating comment made in passing (*Od.* 4.145).<sup>15</sup> The way that she refers to her homeland as beloved, and specifically emphasizes that her husband has no flaws which caused her desertion, further accentuates how Aphrodite’s influence is at work, rather than her own inclinations. But she does have regrets, and she bemoans the capriciousness of the

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<sup>14</sup> Kathleen Morgan observes that the position that “a god made Helen do it...[is] a conventional view of Helen in the Homeric poems” (Morgan 2), citing Helen’s own insistence in this regard (*Od.* 4.261-262; *Il.* 6.349), as well as Priam’s agreement (*Il.* 3.164) and Telemachus’ own position (*Od.* 17.118-119). Morgan refers readers to Linda Clader (1976, 22) on the “blameless Helen” theme.

<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Morgan disagrees that Helen has no shame in the *Odyssey*, pointing out that Helen shares Penelope’s view because of “her self-reproach ἐμῆιο κυνώπιδος (*Od.* 4.145); similarly, Helen in the *Iliad* rebukes herself (*Il.* 3.180, 242; 6.344ff.; 24.764)” (Morgan 3). Helen’s lone act of self-denunciation in the *Odyssey* seems like a polite figure of speech offered by a genteel hostess more than an expression of genuine anguish and regret, a marked difference from the severe tone of her self-criticism in the *Iliad*. This single, almost cavalier self-condemnation stands in direct contrast with her attitude in the *Iliad*, where she assigns blame to herself very harshly, as Mary Ebbot examines: “the nemesis toward Helen and her marriage is fully expressed—by Helen herself...it cannot be the narrator who questions Helen’s worth...only Helen can do this, and so, to allow the alternative viewpoint to emerge, Helen herself must present the negative reaction to her own behavior” (Ebbot 1999, 19, 20).

gods who led her to commit such an error. Now, in retrospect, she is full of sorrow for abandoning her family.

Helen's line of reasoning might inspire one to wonder if the ἄτη excuse is one motivation for Zeus' complaint about mortals that prefaces the *Odyssey*. Zeus gripes that mortals blame the gods for bringing pain upon themselves far beyond what is fated (*Od.* 1.32-34). By blaming an ἄτη from the gods for causing her to leave home, Helen is also accusing the gods of instigating all of the pain that ensued during the Trojan War. Homer supplies no corroborating information to confirm Helen's pronouncement that Aphrodite's ἄτη is to blame, but neither does he discredit it in any way. Certainly there is no evidence that any god warned her of the consequences of her error, as Zeus describes that Hermes did for Aegisthus (*Od.* 1.38-43). But Helen herself would not be expected to divulge that any person or god had advised her against such a path, even if someone had, because she would thereby incriminate herself. Homer refrains from commenting on whether Penelope's and Helen's excuse for her infidelity is an example of how humans blame the gods for pain they truly bring upon themselves, leaving his listeners to make their own judgments about the sources of ἄτη and whether this fleeting kind of madness is just grounds for exculpation for any reprehensible acts.

For his part, Menelaus at least seems to be trying to accept Helen's explanation for her betrayal, with somewhat mixed results. He attempts to suppress his rancor and resentment toward her, and for the most part, he succeeds.<sup>16</sup> In his speech following

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<sup>16</sup> One wonders how much the magic drug that Helen casts into the wine to erase all pain and wrath before telling her story of infidelity (*Od.* 4.219-232) has helped Menelaus assuage his rage concerning his wife's desertion. Ann Bergren insists because that the drug has enabled Menelaus to recall Deiphobus' presence with Helen (*Od.* 4.276), her second husband after Paris' death and proof that her allegiance could

Helen's, during which he relates how Helen changed her voice to sound like the Greeks' wives as she attempted to make them give away their position from within the Trojan Horse, he too presumes that Helen must have been afflicted by divinity to do such a thing: "It must have been destined for some god to command you [Helen], some god [δαίμων] who wished to grant glory to the Trojans" (*Od.* 4.274-5). Menelaus does not specify which god might have inspired Helen to act, but by alluding to the δαίμων, he unquestionably does not condemn Helen alone for her deception. He concludes that Athena must have led Helen away after Odysseus restrained his men from speaking or leaving the Horse (*Od.* 4.289). Some controlled jealousy and hostility on Menelaus' part can be confirmed by Nancy Felson's observation that Menelaus "challenges and corrects Helen's claim that she had become pro-Akhaian by the time she encountered Odysseus as a beggar in Troy... the juxtaposition of his damaging story with her exonerating one undermines his wife" (Felson 1997, 173, note 11). Fritz Senn thinks their interchange reveals a complex marital friction: "The two anecdotes do not quite tally, but they need not contradict

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not have been fully with the Greeks, "Helen's *pharmakon* has recoiled upon its practitioner. By permitting Menelaus to recall without pain, what pain might have kept beyond recall, Helen's 'good drug' and her 'good tale' have reminded Menelaus of another, similar feat of Odysseus, one that violates her claim to *kleos* and *eoikota*" (Bergren 1981, 210). Her drug has not achieved her aim of narrating "a painless painful memory" (Bergren 1981, 207) for her husband. Even drugged, the tenor of Menelaus' speech reverberates with his sense of betrayal and indignation. For an interesting comparison of the roles of various drugs in the poem, see Victoria Wohl (1993). For meticulous treatments of the combined impact of Helen's and Menelaus' speeches, see Barry Powell (1970), Ann Bergren (1981, 207-210), Patricia Marquardt (1985, 44-47), Simon Goldhill (1988, 19-24; 1991, 61-64), Douglas Olson (1989a), Mihuo Suzuki (1989, 60-70), Hardy Fredricksmeier (1997, 491-493), and Victoria Wohl (1993, 33-35), who claims the two speeches dramatize "the problem of the essentially indeterminate and undeterminable quality of (female) speech or creativity" (Wohl 1993, 34).

each other. They are full of domestic decorum and connubial tensions” (Senn 1984, 77).<sup>17</sup> Menelaus’ story reveals that he cannot quite resist repudiating his wife’s behavior. However wounded and irate Menelaus may still be over Helen’s desertion, their stories illustrate how they are trying to overcome the past and restore some measure of affection, warmth, and trust.

With that goal in mind, both Menelaus and Helen have agreed to define her treachery as an act of the gods, an act over which she had no control, whether Menelaus fully believes that or not. As Felson admits, Menelaus’ reference to the δαίμων serves the purpose of “technically letting Helen off the hook” (Felson 1997, 173, note 11). Yet Senn surmises that Menelaus mentions the δαίμων “no doubt with utter courtesy” (Senn 1974, 77), not as a sincere conviction. Even if that is the case, could there be any better foundation upon which to rebuild their marriage? Their love for each other is not compromised by this account of events. By blaming the gods, they have no need to blame each other and can rebuild their life at home together.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John Winkler’s view complements Senn’s: “Menelaos’s Helen and Helen’s Helen are, on the surface, two quite different characters...but stand side by side without forcing an acknowledgement of the contradiction. Instead, both versions are presented politely and firmly, as if the audience would readily understand that multiple and irreconcilable versions are the norm in human affairs, and that husbands and wives...can agree to disagree” (Winkler 140). The net effect of the two speeches illustrates the animosity and antagonism on Menelaus’ part roiling beneath the surface civility of their marriage.

<sup>18</sup> Felson-Rubin comments that Menelaus “is generous to Helen not from wisdom or personal heroism, but from incomplete humanity” because Helen and Menelaus “do not partake fully of the human condition [and] are exempt from the full force of human pain and of bitterness over past wrongs” (Felson-Rubin 1996, 99). Schein acknowledges her “immunity and exemption from the normal human consequences of her behavior” and explains how Helen’s peculiar intermediate status between divine and human: “Just as Achilles, though responsible for the destruction of Troy, is not morally blameworthy, so with Helen: she is simply who she is and what she is, simultaneously more-than-human and all-too-human” (Schein 1984, 23). In



Oddly, Helen's excuse for her infidelity can now be viewed as identical to Penelope's excuse for her fidelity: both the faithful wife and the unfaithful wife claim that the gods are responsible. The enigma yet to be resolved is why Penelope, the faithful wife, elects to give her husband the excuse of the unfaithful wife upon his return. Why does Penelope draw such an analogy between herself and Helen, and what are its implications?

Penelope's analogy serves a very important dual purpose. First, as Patricia Marquardt explains, Penelope relies upon the comparison with Helen

to bolster her defense of any 'folly' for which she herself might be criticized by Odysseus...she is concerned with righting herself in Odysseus' eyes....Her careful defense not only disarms her husband but potential critics as well.  
(Marquardt 1985, 45-46)<sup>19</sup>

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escaping death by being transported to the Isles of the Blessed (*Od.* 4.561-69), the immortality this couple will share means transcendence from the realm of heroism as it is defined in the *Odyssey*. Norman Austin calls Helen "something more than human, a daughter of Zeus who escapes human constraints altogether" (Austin 1994, 10), suggesting "her eventual apotheosis would be the inevitable conclusion" (Austin 1994, 16). On the issue of Helen's and Menelaus' semi-divinity, see further John Pollard (1965, 98-109), Linda Clader (1976), Friedrich Solmsen (1982), Otto Skutsch (1987), and Mary Ebbot (1999). Their unusual status leads one to question whether their solution to forgiving infidelity would be effective for other, more ordinary mortals. Mary Ebbot explores the various paradoxes which this status creates in Helen's character as "a woman who knows and respects shame; yet, by her own admission, she is also a shameless woman....the complexity and ambiguity of Helen results from her mixed identity of shame and shamelessness" (Ebbot 1999, 17, 18).

<sup>19</sup> Victoria Wohl views Penelope's excuse as "a defense of herself: if Helen can be forgiven for committing adultery, she should be pardoned for having almost done the same. It is an admission of how close she came to infidelity, an apologia for her awareness of her own sexuality" (Wohl 1993, 44). Kathleen Morgan views Penelope's comparison to establish the contrast between the two women: "Far from adducing any parallel, she contrasts herself with Helen [*Od.* 23.219-224] and thereby underlines and justifies her own exacting caution that has been necessary until this moment" (Morgan 2).

Those critics she is worrying about probably include her own son, so she seeks to make her own behavior in teasing the suitors seem stellar and beyond reproach.<sup>20</sup> Second, the analogy with Helen enables Penelope to offer her husband a reprieve for his infidelity by indicating her forgiveness in the most ingeniously reticent and taciturn manner. She does not directly refer to the possibility of Odysseus' infidelity, despite the fact that he has accused her of being unfaithful in his rage over the moved bed. To defend herself, she offers an excuse so deftly crafted that it manages to establish her own fidelity while exonerating his infidelity at the same time. She accuses him of nothing. Instead, she makes a veiled announcement that infidelity with those from foreign lands can be forgiven if it is interpreted as an act of ἄτη sent by the gods. Hannah Roisman elucidates how Penelope's suspicion of Odysseus' infidelity is mentioned only in the context of her acceptance of it:

Whereas the more immediate comparison is between Penelope and Helen, at a second level a comparison between Helen and Odysseus can be noted. In referring to a return to one's native land, Penelope implicitly asks Odysseus whether he has done anything that he would not have done had he known that he was to return to his native land. Her reference to the love between Helen and the foreigner Paris (*Od.* 23.219) could raise the issue of whether Odysseus had foreign lovers. In such a case, the reference to divine causation (*Od.* 23.222-3) would indicate her forgiveness and understanding *post factum*; on the level of conversation between the poet and the audience, it could allude to Kirke and Calypso. (Roisman 68)

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<sup>20</sup> On Telemachus' conflict with his mother, see Victoria Wohl (1993, 38-40). Also see Stanley Hoffer on Telemachus' role in the bow contest (1995).

Penelope is definitely worried about the appeal of someone foreign and different.<sup>21</sup> With the lies he told already her, she may very well be wondering about the possible infidelities that he is concealing from her. As Frederick Ahl and Hanna Roisman notice, “She points out obliquely, yet firmly, that he was hardly candid with her either” (Ahl and Roisman 1996, 268), but she does so in such a truly circumspect way that it does not rankle him. Instead of overtly accusing her husband of betraying her, and revealing her anger or jealousy, she details her own situation in such a way as to forgive his infidelity most subtly and cunningly before he can even allude to it.<sup>22</sup> By not putting him on the defensive, she may hope that he will feel comfortable being completely honest with her. Her most clever trick is to provide this justification of infidelity before Odysseus can confide anything to her about his exploits away from home. This strategy repairs her marriage and reunites her with her beloved husband without any animosity. Penelope’s behavior illustrates how male infidelity in the Homeric world is not deserving of the same harsh censure and disapproval that Helen’s infidelity provokes. The sexual double standard reigns.<sup>23</sup> Usually, for that

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<sup>21</sup> This attraction to the exotic may have inspired the Blooms’ romance. Leopold remembers why Molly found him so attractive: “Why me? Because you were so foreign from the others” (*U* 13.1209-1210).

<sup>22</sup> Penelope must be angered that Odysseus has mistrusted her enough to disclose his identity to many others before her. Roisman argues that “[Penelope] greets her husband not with unalloyed delight, but rather with mixed feeling provoked by Odysseus’ earlier treatment of her...Penelope’s cool and formal welcome after Odysseus’ nineteen-year absence is understandable. It reflects her hurt and annoyance that Odysseus has kept his identity hidden from her, his wife, just as he had from the suitors and other members of his household whom he suspected, while everyone else in his immediate circle of friends must have known who he was” (Roisman 59, 62). Also see Chris Emlyn-Jones (1984, 1-2).

<sup>23</sup> S. D. Olson defines this standard: “husbands may have occasional outside sexual liaisons, but are expected to be unfailingly virile, capable of defending their

reason, male infidelity is viewed as insignificant and beneath mention in the Greek context, leading Fritz Senn to remark upon how unusual it then seems that the audience is carefully informed that Laertes abstained from extramarital sexual contact with Eurykleia in order to avoid his wife's anger (*Od.* 1.428-433).<sup>24</sup> Penelope's excuse betrays the fact that she recognizes the likelihood of her husband's infidelity but exerts herself to pardon it in a manner that allows her to exhibit her own chastity.

As the faithful wife confronting the unfaithful husband, Penelope restrains her own emotions for the sake of saving her marriage, greeting Odysseus with unconditional love and acceptance. She practices the kind of self-restraint that Teiresias has recommended to Odysseus in Hades (*Od.* 11.104-109) and that subsequently Odysseus has counseled others to develop, first Aias in Hades and later on Telemachus, Eurykleia, and the servant women in Ithaca (*Od.* 11.562; 16.274-279; 19.485-487; 22.411-418). As she confronts her husband, his possible infidelity pales

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own interests against daunting odds. Wives and the other women within a household are to remain absolutely sexually pure, even in the most extreme circumstances" (Olson 1989b, 140). Another result of this double standard is the fact that in all probability, Odysseus has also committed rape as a warrior. Paul Friedrich notes that the epithet "sacker of cities" (πτολίπορθος, *Od.* 8.3, 9.530, 14.447, 16.442, 18.356, 22.283, 24.119; *Il.* II.278, X.363) probably indicates rape as well as plunder, and that such sex was thoroughly acceptable within its cultural context (Committee on Social Thought seminar, The University of Chicago, 19 June, 1995; more generally on the role of Aphrodite in the poem, see Friedrich 1978 and 1997). Seth Schein establishes the etymological basis for this connection: "The sack of the city is associated with sexual violation... It is no accident that the phrase *kredemnon luesthai*, 'to loosen a veil,' can mean either to sack a city or to breach a woman's chastity" (Schein 1984, 9, also see his references).

<sup>24</sup> Fritz Senn, personal correspondence, 1 July, 2002. Odysseus, like his father, does refrain from any interaction whatsoever with Nausicaa which could be construed as sexual, providing some ground upon which to propose that Laertes and Odysseus hold themselves to a somewhat different standard of fidelity than the typical double standard of their culture.

in importance, now that he has chosen to return to her. In the most coded and circumspect way, she discloses that she can forgive any sexual encounters that he has had by citing the mitigating circumstance of an ἄτη like Helen's. Her desire to take him back, no matter what he has done during his absence, motivates the content of her speech. Penelope's excuse is really intended to be an excuse for Odysseus.

#### MOLLY'S DEFENSE OF INFIDELITY: A TRIVIAL TRANSGRESSION

Given that Helen is the adulterer in the *Odyssey*, it might seem like Molly assumes her role, not Penelope's. Yet Joyce has enabled Molly, as his modern Penelope, a "Penelope stay-at-home" (*U* 9.620), to adopt the roles of Penelope and Helen simultaneously. Joyce places Molly in the same situation as Penelope, even though his Molly is also a version of Helen because Molly has erred and cheated. Despite being the adulterer, when Leopold returns home and climbs into bed, Molly must exercise the same kind of cunning self-restraint that Penelope did upon Odysseus' return. Strangely enough, Molly, the unfaithful wife, finds herself in the same position as Penelope the faithful wife: she feels compelled to make excuses for her husband's infidelity! Molly suspects that Leopold has not been entirely faithful, and the reader knows that she is correct in some sense. John Henry Raleigh regards Molly's view of Leopold as "the fullest and most complete picture of a husband by a wife in literature" (Raleigh 1977a, 594). Yet he makes one critical mistake by stating that "he also masturbates, but she, quite clearly, does not know this" (Raleigh 1977a, 594). Quite to the contrary, Molly does indeed realize that Leopold has had an orgasm

since he left home that morning. She just does not know in what context he did so. She is certain, however, that the context was not love:

yes he came somewhere Im sure by his appetite anyway  
love its not or hed be off his feed thinking about her so  
either it was one of those night women if it was down  
there he was really and the hotel story he made up a  
pack of lies to hide it planning it  
(*U* 18.34-37)

Not that I care two straws who he does it with or knew  
before that way though Id like to find out  
(*U* 18.53-4)

Evidently, in Molly's view, sex and love have had nothing to do with each other on this Bloomsday.<sup>25</sup> Molly comforts herself with the knowledge that whatever behavior Leopold engaged in, "anyway love its not" (*U* 18.35). She is sure that Leopold does not love anyone else, just as Molly herself does not love Boylan. Why she is so sure is rather uncertain, since he has shown no appetite at all since he returned home, unless she is referring to his request for breakfast in bed the next morning. At any rate, Molly is convinced that she knows everything about her husband: "I know every turn in him...he can't keep a thing back" (*U* 18.1530-1531). Not incidentally, Penelope could have quite rightly said the same about her husband, the man of many turns (*πολύτροπος*, *Od.* 1.1; 10.330). Knowing what she knows, like Penelope, Molly accuses her husband of nothing, controls her jealousy, and hides her suspicions. Molly praises her own restraint in this regard and even implies Leopold returned home to bed because of it: "we are a dreadful lot of bitches I suppose its all the troubles we have

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Brown argues that this view permeates and typifies Joyce's works: "Love, for all Joyce's desire to replace romantic mystifications with biological certainties, is not solely represented as sexual passion" (Brown 1985, 34). But this fact does not invalidate "his belief in the irreducible significance of sexuality" (Brown 1985, 135).

makes us so snappy Im not like that he could easy have slept in there on the sofa in the other room” (*U* 18.1459-1460). Penelope has displayed the same self-control and the same insight into her husband’s behavior with her excuse. Weirdly enough, Molly offers the excuse for infidelity that one would expect Penelope to embrace, even if she declined to put it into words:

The voyages those men have to make to the ends off the world and back it’s the least they might get a squeeze or two at a woman while they can going out to be drowned or blown up somewhere  
(*U* 18.853-855)

Molly is the one who would seem to give voice to the attitude of warriors’ wives of any time or place, allowing for infidelity as a harmless indulgence amidst the risks and horrors of the voyage. She possesses the outlook of the faithful wife waiting at home, forgiving all sexual wandering as the inevitable right of the journey. In this sense, by refusing to condemn wandering husbands no matter what they have done, Molly reflects Homer’s version of the faithful Penelope who does the same with her excuse.

Even so, Joyce’s Molly Bloom would seem to act more like her Homeric counterpart Helen by breaching the bonds of her marriage with her adultery, rather than respecting them as Penelope does with her chastity. Molly challenges the conventional barriers of propriety and morality in her society, defending her need to be sexually satisfied as she has not been with her husband for over a decade.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Morris Beja corrects a significant misconception about the Blooms’ sex life by asserting that their “abstinence has not been total. What they have not had is what the Ithaca chapter calls ‘complete carnal intercourse, with ejaculation of semen within the natural female organ’; instead, ‘carnal intercourse had been incomplete, without ejaculation of semen within the natural female organ.’ For some reason, the term ‘incomplete,’ if noticed by critics at all, is apparently taken to mean ‘nonexistent,’ rather than ‘partial.’ Bloom and Molly do have *some* forms of sexual activity with each other...” (Beja 1984, 112-113). Molly is thus sexually unfulfilled not due to a

why cant you kiss a man without going and marrying  
him first you sometimes love to wildly when you feel  
that way so nice all over you you cant help yourself  
(U 18.102-104)

Molly claims that she can't manage to resist that feeling of arousal any more than Helen claims that she could resist the ἄτη of Aphrodite. But for Molly, her desire not to resist desire has no divine source. Like Helen, Molly does not feel that she has incriminated herself by failing to overcome her lust. Like Penelope, she exonerates infidelity because it is an act where "you cant help yourself," one which is not entirely within the realm of one's own agency. Molly agrees with Penelope and Helen that somehow, adultery is not solely the responsibility of the person indulging in it, although Molly does not explicitly blame divinity.

Further, like Penelope does for Helen and Odysseus, Molly denigrates the severity of the crime she has committed. Penelope diminishes the impact of sexual infidelity by classifying it as the product of divine intervention. Molly takes a similar stance by categorizing sexual infidelity as a rather minor indiscretion. Molly thinks that her infidelity simply isn't all that important, commenting, "stupid husbands jealousy why cant we all just get along" (U 18.1392-1393). Penelope too dismisses jealousy as a viable reaction to infidelity, suppressing her emotions in order to make it possible for her and Odysseus to "get along" and forge ahead together, just as Molly wishes, and just as Menelaus and Helen exemplify.

Unlike Helen, who takes great pains not to blame Menelaus for her folly, Molly does blame Leopold for her transgression. Leopold muses that it's "bad policy

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total lack of sexual contact with her husband, but in spite of the contact that they do have.



however to fault the husband” for adultery (*U* 13.966), even though Molly does so by stating:

its all his own fault if I'm an adulteress as the thing in  
the gallery said O much about it if that's all the harm we  
ever did in this vale of tears God knows its not much  
(*U* 18.1516-1518)

Molly appeals in a most colloquial manner to God not to condemn adultery as a heinous act. Sexual infidelity is a small offense, she contends, in this life of so much pain and suffering: “God knows” there are worse crimes in life, which is nothing more than “a vale of tears” anyway. By lessening the gravity of sexual infidelity, Molly resorts to one form of Penelope’s excuse and relies upon it to vindicate her own and her husband’s dalliances on Bloomsday. Far from blaming the gods, though, Molly asks God in her rhetorical turn of phrase “God knows” to lessen the solemnity of such adulterous mistakes. Unlike Helen, Molly chooses to cheat on her husband of her own free will. The capacity for free will which was once impossible in the *Odyssey* has now asserted itself in *Ulysses*.<sup>27</sup> In modernity, Molly can act entirely on her own volition. There is no indubitable or even likely manifestation of God anywhere to be found to blame. Molly wants God to recognize that there are many much worse acts that she could have committed, but the text provides little assurance that there is a God who hears her.<sup>28</sup> Surprisingly, the idea that there are worse things than cheating on a

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<sup>27</sup> See footnote 10 of the present chapter.

<sup>28</sup> The issue of whether God is dead in Joyce’s *Ulysses* is a complex one. Sheldon Brivic proposes that Joyce assumes the role of God in his texts (1985). Whether Joyce’s texts posit a transcendent God or not, any divine presence is so inscrutable, and Joyce’s characters are so alienated from it, that Molly’s exclamation cannot justifiably be viewed as a declaration of faith in God. Penelope’s certainty that gods interfere in human affairs is quite at odds with Molly’s vague and rather

spouse seems to have originated with Penelope. But most significantly, neither woman denounces adultery or lust as the cause of all evils.

Penelope's justification of her own fidelity, which operates by defending Helen's infidelity, serves simultaneously as the best justification for Odysseus' infidelity, and now, with a reverberating intertextual echo, for Molly's. Penelope was the first to minimize the significance of infidelity with her excuse. Molly only seconds her motion. In the same way, Joyce is seconding Homer's motion as well: sexual infidelity should not destroy a marriage. Joyce seems to have found his model for forgiving adultery, rather than inflating it to a crime of enormous proportions, in Penelope's excuse. Penelope mitigates the impact of sexual infidelity by reducing it to an expression of divine whims, not a whim of the participants. Because Penelope relegates adultery to a vulgar and trite error inflicted by the gods, Penelope's excuse becomes an intertextual authorization of Molly's trivialization of infidelity. Even though Penelope blames the gods for causing infidelity, while Molly appeals to God in her rather tongue-in-cheek manner not to revile it, both women assent that sexual infidelity need not be deplored so strenuously as one might expect.

#### THE CONSPIRACY EXCUSE: CONSENSUAL INFIDELITY

Hugh Kenner notices how Joyce focuses upon the ordinary flotsam and jetsam of married life, rather than its scandalous and prurient details:

Trysts, assignations, adulteries, these are banal. It seems part of Joyce's art to relegate that order of melodrama to

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idiomatic appeal to some distant God to acknowledge adultery as a somewhat minor crime.

the wings, and focus our attention instead on the  
perdurable texture of the ordinary.  
(Kenner 1974, 19)

How can “trysts, assignations, adulteries” be consigned to the realm of banality by the spouses involved? One answer is that the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* both contain another defense for infidelity other than its status as a rather inconsequential mistake: spousal consent. Both the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* display how adultery which is ratified by an arrangement between spouses, and which is conducted without the goal of tricking the other spouse, is not really an act of perfidy. While adultery never becomes quite mundane, it loses much of its destructive and wounding power when it does not operate by means of deceit.

Molly’s affair with Boylan definitely falls under this rubric of spousal consent. The careful lies that she and Leopold construct to hide her adultery are really a conspiracy between them to create the illusion of normality. They connive together to ignore Molly’s adultery and to avoid confrontation and accusation. When Molly comments on “the hotel story he made up a pack of lies to hide it” (*U* 18.37), what Leopold is hiding is her adultery, not his own. He is conspiring with her not only to conceal her affair but to allow her to consummate it (McBride 1979, 25). Molly of course knows that is the case and prides herself on her honesty because she never seeks to deceive her husband: “he cant say I pretend things can he Im too honest as a matter of fact” (*U* 18.1019-1020). Like the proverbial ostrich who buries its head in the sand and is then delighted that it can see nothing, so Molly and Leopold bury their own heads regarding direct discussion of Molly’s affair. Leopold seems to value their silence on the topic of infidelity, thinking: “Should a girl tell? No, a thousand times no” (*U* 13.750). Like Joyce, they concentrate on “the perdurable texture of the

ordinary” in all its forms, from buying soap to cleaning house and rearranging the furniture (Kenner 1974, 19). Also like Joyce, they avoid melodrama at all costs. Little do they realize that by resisting accusations and rage over infidelity, they are following the dictates that Penelope herself has proposed and obeyed with her excuse.

The subtle negotiation by which each couple agrees to these dictates is strikingly similar. The conversation that Odysseus and Penelope have before the fireplace during his disguised return, as she probes him to ascertain his identity and he probes her to ascertain her fidelity to him (*Od.* 19.104ff.), is much like the one in “Calypso” between Molly and Leopold, because of the way each conversation is governed by a subtext. The conversation between Penelope and the disguised Odysseus is as coded and as laden with underlying and taciturn meaning as the one in “Calypso.” For the Blooms’ conversation constitutes what is essentially a coded covenant of infidelity, an unspoken marital agreement that they will pretend not to know what they both know. Kenner remarks that “Their conversation is guided by a set of agreements not to ask, not to comment” (Kenner 1987, 51). The same can be said of the disguised Odysseus and Penelope, for Penelope may suspect that the beggar is her husband returned long before she admits it. In support of this possibility, Philip Harsh argues that they communicate by code as they test each other during this conversation.<sup>29</sup> In both cases, the married partners know each other so well that they seem to be communicating on many different levels at once, as we have already observed between Helen and Menelaus. What they do not say is as important as what they do say. Their words alone do not convey the totality of their interaction.

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<sup>29</sup> See Philip Harsh. Winkler discusses how this view has evolved due to the work of later critics (Winkler 155).

Despite this symmetry in communication styles, Leopold and Odysseus are diametrically opposed in their responses to spousal infidelity. Unlike Odysseus and his fury when he considers the possibility of the invasion of his marriage bed, Leopold seems to concur with Molly and Penelope that there are worse things than sexual attractions to people other than one's spouse: "She must have been thinking of someone else all the time. What harm?" (*U* 13.884-5). Leopold does not protest when he is not the only object of his wife's desires. He acquiesces to her infidelity as yet another secret between them, despite the agony it causes him: "Always see a fellow's weak point in his wife. Still there's destiny in it, falling in love. Have their own secrets between them" (*U* 13.972-3). Their intimacy is so pervasive as to include intimate knowledge of intimate betrayal. Leopold casts Molly's infidelity as a secret between them rather than a betrayal, "one of love's little ruses" (*U* 13.757),<sup>30</sup> rather than disloyalty.

Leopold interprets his own ruses in this way too, like his correspondence with Martha Clifford. He asks himself if he is committing a folly through this clandestine interaction.<sup>31</sup> In some sense, Leopold asks if himself if he is behaving like Helen, under the control of some ἄτη!

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<sup>30</sup> The last three pieces of evidence that I have selected to reveal Leopold's attitude toward his wife's infidelity all occur during his own episode of infidelity masturbating on the beach (*U* 13.750, 757, 884-5). What applies to his situation with Gerty also applies to Molly's situation with Boylan, in a dramatic textual demonstration of the Blooms' likemindedness and equality. Gerty's ruse is to wave her kerchief in parting: "She half smiled at him wanly, a sweet forgiving smile, a smile that verged on tears, and then they parted" (*U* 13.764-765). One can imagine either of the Blooms managing such a half smile when they finally look each other in the eye again on the day after Bloomsday.

<sup>31</sup> On the numerous sorts of folly pervading *Ulysses*, see Robert Bell (1996), who never mentions folly in Homer at all.

Folly I am writing? Husbands don't. That's marriage does, their wives. Because I'm away from. Suppose. But how? She must. Keep young. If she found out. Card in my high grade ha. No, not tell all. Useless pain. If they don't see. Woman. Sauce for the gander.  
(U 11.874-877)

"Suppose" Molly found out, he wonders, "but how"? Then he thinks "she must" know, even though she doesn't admit to knowing; he doesn't really imagine that he has completely fooled his wife with a full-blown deceit. Finally he recognizes that their implicit agreement is not to tell all, thus avoiding all of the "useless pain" that would result from the confession of extramarital encounters. Finally, he thinks what's sauce for the goose is "sauce for the gander," meaning that if Molly can stray, then it's only fair for him to do so as well. He decides that he is not committing any folly because their reticent collaboration equals unspoken permission to engage in various extramarital pursuits. Thus the conspiracy excuse relieves Leopold's guilt over his flirtations.

More evidence for Leopold's reasoning about this method of coping with marital infidelity can be found after he brushes away the potted meat that Molly and Boylan shared in his bed and climbs in himself:

If he had smiled why would he have smiled?

To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be the first, last, only and alone whereas he is neither first nor last nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity.  
(U 17.2124-2131)

He did not smile because wiping away the remnants of the intercourse Molly indulged in with someone else has hurt him badly.<sup>32</sup> But if he had been able to overcome his pain enough to do so, he would have smiled at the realization that his wife desires him only as one in a series of desires, just as he himself has had a series of desires for many women. Thereafter the series of desires is specified as the highly controversial list of Molly's possible lovers (*U* 17.2125-2142). Whatever position one takes on the frequency of Molly's infidelity, Leopold comes to resign himself to his cuckoldry by appropriating Molly's own view of adultery, although she has never voiced that view frankly to him. As he tries to come to terms with what is happening to his marriage, Leopold wrestles with various emotions: "With what antagonistic sentiments were his subsequent reflections affected? Envy, jealousy, abnegation, equanimity" (*U* 17. 2154-55). This combination of emotions shows that Leopold's equanimity has only been accomplished through remarkable self-mastery, the same kind that Penelope and Molly also had to achieve upon the return of their wandering husbands.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Declan Kiberd examines the cost of Bloom's resignation to the pain of being cuckolded: "Bloom's sad lines of submission seem jagged with painful hesitations: 'Too late. She longed to go. That's why. Woman. As east stop the sea. Yes: all is lost.' Yet it is at that moment that he becomes a true hero with the courage to see Molly's infidelity as part of the larger process of nature....Bloom forgives his wife in his own mind, almost before the evil deed is done, but he never manages to put his tired arms around her at the end of the day and forgive her in person" (Kiberd 160). Leopold's forgiveness is so torturous to him that he cannot extend it directly to his wife, but the forbearance he displays in recognizing how inconsequential the effects of Molly's adultery are in the grand scheme of things distinguishes him as a very admirable hero.

<sup>33</sup> Beja notes how extraordinary and difficult this kind of self-mastery is, commenting that it eluded Joyce himself: "Few men in Bloom's 'attendant circumstances' would or could display such 'equanimity,' to be sure. Certainly not James Joyce: when he was misled into believing in 1909 that Nora had once been unfaithful to him, his reaction seems to have been crazed....it seems to me to indicate that Bloom is a *better* man—a better *man*—than his creator" (Beja 1984, 120). On Joyce's jealousy and preoccupation with cuckoldry, see further Ellmann (1977, 22-

His equanimity is the result of this musing:

Equanimity?

As natural as any and every natural act of a nature expressed or understood executed in natured nature by natural creatures in accordance with his, her and their natured natures, of dissimilar similarity. As not so calamitous as a cataclysmic annihilation of the planet in consequence of a collision with a dark sun. As less reprehensible than theft, highway robbery, cruelty to children and animals, obtaining money under false pretenses, forgery, embezzlement, misappropriation of public money, betrayal of public trust, malingering, mayhem, corruption of minors, criminal libel, blackmail, contempt of court, arson, treason, felony, mutiny on the high seas, trespass, burglary, jailbreaking, practice of unnatural vice, desertion from armed forces in the field, perjury, poaching, usury, intelligence with the king's enemies, impersonation, criminal assault, manslaughter, willful and premeditated murder.

(*U* 17.2177-2194)

Joyce gives us a catalogue of crimes rather than a Catalogue of Ships!<sup>34</sup> This list of crimes much more heinous than adultery establishes a foundation for Molly's plea that

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23). Bloom's ability to accept being cuckolded without histrionics echoes Penelope's same capacity with her excuse. Beja praises Bloom for this reason, albeit cautiously: "Bloom's attitude toward Molly's infidelity may be in part—not entirely, to be sure: I am trying not to exaggerate but to set up what I perceive as a proper perspective—be correct, arguably heroic, even wise. He is not the possessive, dominant male that husbands are 'supposed' to be, and for that he is subject of ridicule..." (Beja 1984, 119-120). Beja need not be so hesitant in asserting Leopold's sagacity in the matter of Molly's affair; Penelope's prudence and her excuse correspond with Leopold's attitude of acquiescence toward infidelity, and both are deserving of admiration, not scorn. Francis Mackey considers Leopold's resistance of despair and rage to be evidence of his heroism: "Heroic, undaunted, he has refused to bow to the sad fate that seems to await him, that coincidence and chance seem to assure" (Mackey 62).

<sup>34</sup> Jan Gaertner calls lists "a rare feature in modern literature" (Gaertner 2001, 298), but Fritz Senn persuasively establishes their abundance and importance for Joyce (Senn 1992). Gaertner does cite Lohmann (Lohmann 1998, 117) on "the catalogues in Joyce's *Ulysses*, which characterize Bloom's fussy bookkeeping style of thinking" (Gaertner 298). See Gaertner for a review of the literature on epic catalogues



“if that’s all we do in this vale of tears God knows its not much” (*U* 18.1516). Both Leopold and Molly concede that many crimes are much more reprehensible than adultery. Thus the likemindedness of the Blooms even extends to their unspoken agreement about the magnitude of infidelity.<sup>35</sup> Without such an accord, Leopold would be too furious to reclaim his bed after Boylan departed, and his marriage might not have survived even until the end of Bloomsday.

Leopold voices in “Cyclops” the philosophy that guides his behavior. “—But it’s no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That’s not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows it’s the very opposite of that that is really life” (*U* 12. 1481-1483). What is really life? “Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred” (*U* 12.1485). “Force, hatred, history, all that” is irrelevant; it is hopeless to try to redeem past injustices in Leopold’s view. All that matter is life and love; insult

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(Gaertner 298-299, notes 1, 2, 3). Gaertner claims that “catalogues, as lists, are alien to the narrative proper” (Gaertner 299), but what is so interesting about this list is how it informs the narrative and enriches and enhances Joyce’s depiction of the Blooms’ likemindedness. To this end, this list is utilized to two of the same ends as those in epic, which Gaertner describes as “describ[ing] characters of the plot [and] provok[ing] or increas[ing] the reader’s emotional involvement in the narrative” (Gaertner 300). On the structure and function of Homeric catalogues, also see W. W. Minton (1962), C. R. Beye (1964), B. B. Powell (1978), George Huxley (1966), Mark Edwards (1980), Mark Northrup (1980), Marianne Pade (1983), and Elizabeth Minchin (1996).

<sup>35</sup> Winkler remarks that the *Odyssey* “exalts a certain, quite explicit ideal of marriage” (Winkler 160), which, Odysseus announces, is based upon likemindedness, (ὁμοφροσύνη) between spouses. The concept is mentioned directly in the *Odyssey* only once when Odysseus wishes likemindedness for Nausicaa in her own marriage (*Od.* 6.180-185). Felson-Rubin’s discussions of Penelope’s and Odysseus’ likemindedness are woven throughout her work (1996, 1997), and she summarizes others’ work on the topic (1997, 159, note 1). See also Cedric Whitman (1958, 303), Norman Austin (1975, 181, 188ff., 203ff., 231), Thomas Van Nortwick (1979), Joseph Russo (1982), Sheila Murnaghan (1987, 118-147), Simon Goldhill (1988), Marilyn Katz (1991), and Victoria Wohl (1993). Likemindedness is the foundation of any happy home in Homer or in Joyce, and examples of it pervade both texts.

and hatred are really a kind of death-in-life. Leopold rejects hatred, force, history, rage, vengeance and the like for the sake of living and loving. His words in the bar actually apply to his most intimate and personal private affairs.

Furthermore, the recurring mention of folly, geese, and smiling in relation to fidelity in “Eumaeus” serves to clarify Leopold’s attitude toward the causes of adultery, when “Bloom...without the faintest suspicion of a smile...reflected upon the historic story” of adultery while in conversation with Stephen, Henry Campbell, and Skin-the-Goat about Parnell (*U* 16.1359-1361). Leopold defends against the condemnation of the folly of the husband who forgives: “Though it was no concern of theirs absolutely if he regarded her with affection, carried away by a wave of folly” (*U* 16.1386-1388), despite his acknowledgement of the agony of humiliation: “...she of course, woman...very effectively cooked his matrimonial goose, thereby heaping coals of fire on his head much in the same way as a fabled ass’s kick” (*U* 16.1393-1399). Leopold’s concluding thoughts on the matter apply to his own situation with Molly just as accurately, exposing Leopold’s understanding of the basis and meaning of adultery in order to reveal why it may not be as devastating and cruel as one usually assumes it to be:

North or South, however, it was just the wellknown case of hot passion, pure and simple, upsetting the applecart with a vengeance and just bore out the very thing he was saying as she also was Spanish or half so, types that wouldn’t do things by halves, passionate abandon of the south, casting every shred of decency to the winds.  
(*U* 16.1406-1410)

This train of thought follows Leopold’s repetition of the advice of Agamemnon from Hades: “A more prudent course, as Bloom said...would have been to sound the lie of the land first” (*U* 16.1349-1351).

This conversation eventually leads Leopold to show Stephen Molly's picture, with the query "Do you consider, by the by...that a Spanish type?" (*U* 16.1425-1426). Molly's hotblooded passion is so innate in her, so elemental to her heritage and personality, that Leopold loves her both because of and despite the dictates of her passions, which, after "upsetting the applecart" did indeed "cook his matrimonial goose." Yet Leopold embraces the folly of his affection as no one else's business, excusing Molly's adultery as an act of "passionate abandon" rather than one of betrayal or cruelty. As Leopold finds "the slightly creased photo creased by opulent curves, none the worse for wear...In fact the slight soiling was only an added charm like the case of linen slightly soiled, good as new, much better in fact with the starch out" (*U* 16.1465-1470), so he tries to assess his marriage the same way, as "none the worse for wear" and "good as new, much better with the starch out." Even jealousy can be said to have "produced, if desired, a fluctuation of pleasure" (*U* 17.2167-2168), for outrage in Leopold's mind seems simply to be the way of things regarding love: "From outrage (matrimony) to outrage (adultery) there arose naught but outrage (copulation)..." (*U* 17.2196-2197). Leopold agrees with his wife that some sort of "outrage" in the domestic realm can hardly be avoided anyway, and at any rate such outrages are certainly not deserving of the universal condemnation one usually presumes adultery to deserve.

At first glance, the Blooms' joint refusal to permit consensual adultery to become a calamity seems quite at odds with Penelope's situation. Why would Penelope, usually viewed as the epitome of chastity and fidelity, need to invoke spousal consent as an excuse for an infidelity that she never commits anyhow? The answer lies in the way in which Homer presents Penelope as not simply and

unequivocally a virtuous and forgiving wife.<sup>36</sup> Like her counterpart Molly, she can be accused of betraying her husband due to the timing of her announcement of the contest of the bow. Felson-Rubin argues that "...by setting up the contest now she risks infidelity" (Felson-Rubin 1996, 167). Combella condemns her even more harshly for this decision: "Penelope, the model of cautious, shrewd intelligence, acts on this one occasion like a rash, precipitate fool" (Combella 1973, 40). Thus Penelope creates the opportunity to cheat on Odysseus if he does not return in time. Is the contest yet another indication of her "faithful duplicity" (Winkler 147), the same strategy that she used before to solicit gifts from the suitors (*Od.* 18.282-283)? Her instigation of such a contest can be viewed either as proof that she was not willing to wait chastely for her husband indefinitely, or that her secret recognition of her husband's presence galvanized the contest in order to encourage him to unveil himself.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Many scholars avow that Penelope is thoroughly faithful, despite the perplexing nature of her motives from *Od.* 18.158ff. until she recognizes Odysseus at *Od.* 23.205-208. Calvin Byre is one example, claiming that "...it is to his portrait of Penelope the good, the clever, and the faithful that he [Homer] has devoted the most space and the most care" (Byre 1988, 171). This view has "spawned numerous scholarly attempts to excise any passages that undermine the image of Penelope as unproblematically faithful" (Felson-Rubin 1996, 164). The premise of the present essay is that Penelope's fidelity is thoroughly problematic, from the reasons she gives for it in her excuse to the way that she risks it in the bow contest. Her sexual fidelity is unassailable, but her emotional fidelity is quite dubious, for, as Devereux advocates, it is quite plausible that "Penelope, ostensibly speaking about Helen, is actually justifying her innermost thoughts, temptations, and wishes, though not her deliberate actions" (Devereux 384).

<sup>37</sup> Calvin Byre refers to this enigma as "the theme of silent intrigue that runs throughout the last half of the poem" (Byre 1988, 173). Felson-Rubin examines the extensive debate surrounding the point at which Penelope recognizes that the man before her is her husband returned (Felson-Rubin 1996, 166, 170; Felson 1997, 152-3, note 14), deeming Philip Harsh, Joseph Russo (1982), Anne Amory (1963, 105-8), Norman Austin (1975, 282), and John Winkler "Intuitionists," scholars who subscribe

In either case, she can rely upon the conspiracy excuse to exculpate her for exposing herself to the possible infidelity of a second marriage. Her potential infidelity is never presumed to be caused by god-sent infatuation (ἄτη), even though Athena

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to the idea that Penelope has already intuited her husband's presence somehow when she sets up the bow contest and that this conviction about his unannounced presence guides her actions. Russo summarizes this view: "the poet is able to show in rare detail how the long separated husband and wife are attuned to one another's presence long before they can share a full and conscious enjoyment of this presence. They 'know' and express much more on sub-conscious levels than they can process consciously and state explicitly" (Russo 1982, 18). Winkler modifies Harsh's extreme stance that Penelope is certain of the beggar's identity by proposing that "there are good reasons to think that everything she says and does in Book 19 is guided by her thought that the beggar might be, indeed, stands a very good chance of being, Odysseus" (Winkler 1990, 142-143). Other Intuitionists include W. J. Woodhouse (1930, 80-91), Denys Page (1955, 119-136), Cedric Whitman (1958, 303), Reinhold Merkelbach (1969, 9-15), G. S. Kirk (1962, 245-249), W. B. Stanford (1968, 55, 253, note 25), and Douglas Stewart (1976, 103ff.). Felson-Rubin joins Ulrich von Wilamowitz (1927, 46), M. H. A. L. H. van der Valk (1949, 194-95), Anne Rankin (1962), Agathe Thornton (1970), Frederick Combella (1973, 38), Bernard Fenik (1974, 116-120), Daniel Levine (1983), Thomas Van Nortwick (1983), Chris Emlyn-Jones (1984), Sheila Murnaghan (1986, 1987), Calvin Byre (1988), and R. B. Rutherford (1992, 29-38) in disputing this contention with great vigor, writing, "Homer has Penelope, in [a] state of ignorance, set up the contest" (Felson-Rubin 1996, 166; see further 1996, 166-170; 1997, 57-63). She offers the following interpretation of Penelope's behavior, following Van Nortwick (1983): "Wife and goddess are at cross purposes: Penelope weeps for the loss of Odysseus [*Od.* 21.55ff.] while at the same time, as a tool of Athene, she unwittingly works for his return. The coexistence of these two levels of intentionality generates irony" (Felson-Rubin, 1996, 169; also see Felson 1997, 152-3, note 14). This sort of interpretation of Athena's interference helps to make sense of Murnaghan's position that "Penelope acts out a kind of recognition of Odysseus but does not actually recognize him" (Murnaghan 1987, 52). All of these analyses struggle to resolve the great ambiguities and apparent inconsistencies in the representation of Penelope. In Marilyn Katz's view, "the question of her intentionality" cannot be definitely established because "the narrative renders [it] both problematic and indiscernible" (Katz 1991, 154). The very fact that Penelope's state of mind resists total elucidation results from one of the poem's narrative strategies (Katz 1991, 93), leading Katz to "comprehend these ruptures in the coherence of character instead under the rubric of indeterminacy...[which] has a specific and definable function in the poem as we possess it" (Katz 1991, 113). Katz's position is rewarding and provocative because she places value upon such indeterminacy rather than insisting upon trying to erase it through textual exegesis and supposition.

inspires her to have the contest (*Od.* 21.1-4).<sup>38</sup> Penelope's possible infidelity of remarriage would be permissible not due to madness, but due to a previous marital contingency agreement. By initiating the contest, Penelope is remaining true to Odysseus by keeping her promise to him when he left home that once their son is grown up and bearded, she would forsake her husband and remarry if he had not returned by then (*Od.* 18.256-273). Uvo Hölscher proposes that "For the faithfulness of Penelope to remain believable, she has to have an exterior reason to give up her waiting, despite her faithfulness" (Hölscher 134). Indeed, remembering her promise to remarry provides her with a righteous motive: to be faithful to her agreement with her husband, she is now obligated to put her fidelity in jeopardy. Penelope thus attributes her vow to marry the winner of her contest to be a substantiation of her fidelity to her husband. She construes her possible infidelity through remarriage as only further evidence of her marital devotion. Penelope's incentive for the bow contest, her promise to Odysseus, turns the contest into a tribute to his memory, whether she knows that he is present or not. Because she is acting to keep her promise, even her infidelity in a second marriage can be interpreted as a kind of fidelity to her husband's wishes.<sup>39</sup> Thus Penelope is cunning enough to find a way to prove her emotional fidelity even when she seems to be putting her sexual fidelity at risk.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Penelope seems to retain her own agency along with Athena's encouragement, having planned the contest long before Athena inspires her (*Od.* 19.576-580), as Levine discusses (Levine 176; see my footnote 10 in the present chapter).

<sup>39</sup> Agathe Thornton judges her dedication to fulfilling their agreement to be evidence of complete loyalty (Thornton 102ff.).

<sup>40</sup> Most Intuitionists naturally claim that her promise to remarry is only a deceit. Against them, Calvin Byre argues that "Penelope has at last become reconciled

Yet if Penelope suspects that Odysseus is the beggar previous to the contest, this line of reasoning may be only a useful illusion which she develops in order to put a very clever scheme in motion. In that case, she is really collaborating with the beggar whom she presumes to be her husband, vowing fidelity to his past wishes even as she manipulates events so that he can prove his identity indisputably. Winkler gives Penelope a tremendous amount of credit for her perspicacity by declaring that

her plan [of the bow contest], offered to the beggar and confirmed by him [*Od.* 19.572-587], enables their common goal to be realized. In this sense I claim that she is a very active author or contriver of the revenge plot, setting it up for Odysseus to execute.  
(Winkler 154-155)

Penelope's mention of the old promise to remarry becomes in this perspective another impressively duplicitous trick like the bed test, yet another example of why she is the

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to the idea of remarrying" (Byre 167), noting that Hartmut Erbse concurs that "her words to the suitors do constitute a sincere promise to remarry" (Byre 161; see Erbse 83-89). Van Nortwick (1983) and Rankin (1962) concur, while Rutherford calls her attitude toward the second marriage one of "miserable reluctance" (Rutherford 33). In contrast, Levine thinks that Penelope's "laugh at *Od.* 18.163 is a reflection of her intention to lead [the suitors] on... Her laugh appropriately conveys both sides of her character: it emphasizes her chastity and introduces her cleverness" (Levine 177, 178). Byre explains Penelope's behavior from her laugh onwards as the will of Athena: "she finds herself impelled by the goddess to do something for which she herself cannot immediately see any grounds" (Byre 163). Likewise, Fenik underscores Athena's inspiration but asserts, "Penelope is both deceiver and deceived" (Fenik 120, see 116-120). While she "hoodwinks" (Fenik 116) the suitors with her promise, she is hoodwinked by Athena and her disguised husband. Murnaghan affirms this assessment (Murnaghan 1986, 105ff.). Patricia Marquardt interprets her proposal of the contest as "another example of her cunning, a desperate final attempt to put off the suitors forever, with any luck... the timing [of the contest] does not necessarily presuppose a prior recognition of Odysseus" (Marquardt 1985, 41; also see Combella 1973, 32-40). Fenik, Marquardt, and Levine draw attention to the possibility that she can offer a false promise of remarriage without deducing her husband's presence.

equal of her shrewd husband. If the bow contest is itself a conspiracy with her husband, then she needs no excuses for it at all!

Whether she recognizes Odysseus prior to the contest or not, Penelope's bow contest, like Molly's tryst with Boylan, is more of a marital conspiracy than a marital betrayal. In the context of her promise, even if Penelope has no awareness that her husband is present, the contest can be interpreted as the execution of a previous marital pact. On the other hand, if Penelope has been concealing her early recognition of her husband, the contest is an amazingly clever marital ploy to reclaim their home. Weirdly, then, both Penelope's equivocal infidelity (by virtue of her willingness to remarry), and Molly's unequivocal adultery (intercourse with Boylan), can plausibly be classified as the result of their fidelity to their husband's wishes. Both women indicate their readiness to commit adultery that is pre-approved by their spouses. But they constantly respect the primacy of their marriages by preparing the conspiracy excuse as the rationalization for their behavior. In this way, their apparent infidelity can be viewed as a guise for a complex brand of fidelity.

Odysseus and Leopold also both act in ways that would be defined as unfaithful by typical definitions but that actually promote their fidelity by virtue of their motives. Odysseus is faithfully unfaithful in this vein with both Kirke and Kalypso because of his enduring insistence upon returning home to Penelope (*Od.* 5.151-158, 215-224; 10.483-486). Nonetheless, Odysseus can be accused of some ambivalence concerning his desire to return home, for he does forget to leave Kirke for an entire year until his comrades remind him that they should seek homecoming



(*Od.* 5. 151-158, 215-224; 10.466-474).<sup>41</sup> Further, when Homer discusses Odysseus' affair with Kalypso, he emphasizes Odysseus' unwillingness while acknowledging her attractiveness. He sleeps with her every night by compulsion, due to necessity, not his own free will ("ἀνάγκη" *Od.* 5.154): he is the unwilling participant in the sex the goddess wills ("παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθέλουση" "unwilling next to the willing nymph," *Od.* 5.155). Yet Homer implies that at one time Odysseus was certainly a willing participant with the inclusion of the phrase "οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη" "no longer was the nymph pleasing" (*Od.* 5.153). With this addition of οὐκέτι (no longer), Homer stresses that at one point Odysseus was a lusty and eager adulterer. Once his interest waned, he sobs on the shore wishing for home. At least, that is how Homer accounts for the situation. In both cases, Odysseus seems to stay with the goddesses long enough to satisfy his physical passions, and only then does his mind turn toward his need for Penelope and home. Odysseus is not under the influence of any overtly named ἄρτη, but the direct orders of goddesses.<sup>42</sup> For him, Helen's and Penelope's excuse comes closest to being literally true, in that he commits adultery with

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<sup>41</sup> He agrees to sleep with Kirke in the first place with the hope of saving his comrades whom she has turned into pigs, but he agrees to do so only after she promises not to harm him (*Od.* 10.325ff.). The compulsion upon him seems to emanate from the need to persuade her to save his comrades.

<sup>42</sup> S. D. Olson affirms Odysseus commits adultery with goddesses "although always with the excuse that he does so under constraint (*Od.* 5.154ff.; 10.293-8, 318-47)" (Olson 1989a, 140). With Nausicaa, though, he "shows considerable restraint" (Olson 1989a, 140). Olson suggests that in the case of the goddesses who "inhabit the fantastic fairyland of Wanderings...surely at least in part ...a man's extra-marital liaisons are in some sense 'not real' and thus pose no genuine threat to his wife or to his relationship with her" (Olson 1989a, 140). Victoria Wohl states that "Odysseus' struggles against these two women illustrate most clearly the nexus of violence and sex in the poem's gender relations" (Wohl 1993, 24; for her comparisons of the affairs with Kalypso and Kirke, see 24-27).

goddesses at their command. That necessity gives his adulteries the same purpose as Penelope's bow contest, because he seems to indulge in them as a last resort in the hope that eventually he will be allowed to make his way home. In his adulteries he is not conspiring with Penelope, but for her and for the sake of returning home to her.

Leopold maintains the same kind of faithful infidelity by writing to Martha, desiring Gerty, and masturbating on the beach without ever being diverted from his desire to return home to his wife. The thrill of his desire (*U*13.688-750) subsides, leaving him berating himself:

What a brute he had been! At it again?...An utter cad he had been! He of all men! But there was an infinite store of mercy in those eyes, for him too a word of pardon even though he had erred and sinned and wandered...That was their secret, only theirs, alone in the hiding twilight...  
(*U* 13.745-751)

Of course, it is not only their secret, because Molly knows about his orgasm, so the pardon he sees in Gerty's eyes will be present in the future in his wife's eyes. Like Penelope, Leopold errs and wanders not through intercourse but through extramarital desire. The desire that he feels, and that he imagines Gerty feels, involves a marital violation in itself: "Whitehot passion was in that face, passion silent as the grave, and it had made her his" (*U* 690-691). It is hard to imagine that Penelope did not experience this kind of passion, which amounts to a sort of infidelity, after her years of abstinence and her years of flirting with the suitors, especially since Penelope confesses her own ambivalence to the disguised Odysseus, admitting that "my heart is stirred in two ways, back and forth" (*Od.* 19.524) about whether to remarry.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Frederick Ahl and Hanna Roisman claim that Penelope represses her recognition of her husband so as not to have to confront her own ambivalence,

Telemachus has noticed her indecision and alerted his father to it (*Od.* 16.73), and Athena has done the same (*Od.* 13.336-338, 379-381).<sup>44</sup> Like Leopold and Odysseus,

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explaining that she “probably recognizes him quickly. What complicates and delays her acknowledgement even to herself, much less to anyone else, is that Odysseus is not the young prince that he was” (Ahl and Roisman 1996, 279). She refuses to recognize him right away “because she does not want him back as he is; because she does not wish to cease being what she has become” (Ahl and Roisman 1996, 260). Rankin claims that Penelope’s dream expresses not only her vacillation but favor for the suitors: “Penelope herself reveals [by telling her dream] that her desire to keep the suitors is stronger than her longing for Odysseus’ return... a part of her prefers one of the suitors...” (Rankin 1962, 622-623). Devereux mentions “Penelope’s tardiness and overt reluctance in recognizing Odysseus” and “her unconscious hostility toward Odysseus” (Devereux 1957, 382), arguing that the grief in her dream for the dead geese bears out her unconscious allegiance with the suitors. On arguments for and against this line of Freudian interpretation, see Louise Pratt (1994, 148, n. 4). For a general summary of scholarly positions on Penelope’s dream, see Katz (1991, 146). If one accepts the view that the dream reveals her affection for the suitors (as Katz (1991, 146-7) and Felson (1996) do), then Penelope and Odysseus seem equally torn at different times about returning to each other and thus are even likeminded in their ambivalence about whether they will reunite. Louise Pratt believes that “The problem of the dream sign’s interpretation seem to embody precisely this uncertainty” (Pratt 1994, 152). On the other hand, Winkler thinks that Penelope never actually had such a dream and that it “can be better seen in its context of covert and guarded negotiation as her attempt to convey a message to the beggar, who she now has very good reason to think may be Odysseus himself. Her talking about a dream is not a straightforward report but a stratagem” (Winkler 1990, 153). Is Penelope ambivalent, like the Odysseus who forgets to return home for a year, or a master schemer determined to salvage her home, like the returned Odysseus who suffers humiliations in disguise? Homer not only leaves both possibilities open, he crafts his poem such that both possibilities can hold true. A. H. M. Kessels contends that the “poetic creativeness” evidenced by the dream suggests that it is a “poetic invention by Homer... not a dream in the strict sense of the word” (Kessels 107, see 83-132 on Penelope’s three dreams). Marilyn Katz traces the ways that such indeterminacy pervades Homer’s portrayal of Penelope (1991). The advantage of this portrayal is that neither husband nor wife are perfect models of fidelity, but ordinary, flawed, confused mortals with unusual capacities for weaving plots and schemes.

<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, Athena proceeds to encourage Telemachus’ skepticism concerning his mother’s fidelity, directly contradicting her assurance to Odysseus regarding Penelope’s steadfastness. She warns him that his grandfather and uncles are bidding Penelope to marry Eurymachus and thus he must beware lest his mother steal some treasure from their halls against his will. She follows this warning with a

Penelope's desire for her spouse persisted, but there is every indication that it was not all-consuming and exclusive.<sup>45</sup> Penelope and Leopold both suffer "all kinds of crazy longings"(U 13.779), although they maintain physical fidelity.

However Penelope may have coped with her frustrated passions, Leopold is delighted with his encounter, thinking "Chance. We'll never meet again. But it was lovely. Goodbye, dear. Thanks. Made me feel so young" (U 13.1271-1273). Even his desire for another has brought him closer to his wife, mostly because it reminded him of his own youth, and happier days with Molly, as he ponders,

Nightstock in Matt Dillon's garden where I kissed her  
shoulder. Wish I had a full length oilpainting of her  
then. June that was too I wooed. The year returns.  
History repeats itself. Ye crags and peaks I'm with you  
once again. Life, love, voyage round your own little  
world And now?...All quiet on Howth now. The distant  
hills seem. Where we. The rhododendrons. I am a fool  
perhaps. He gets the plums, I the plumstones. Where I  
come in. All that old hill has seen...Never again. My  
youth. Only once it comes.  
(U 13.1091-2094, 1097-1099, 1102-1103)

In feeling young and desirous, he seems to remember why he has stayed with his wife, and why he still wants to do so. Afterwards, he muses, "Go home. Too late for *Leah*."

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generalization about the θυμός of women, who tend to switch their loyalty to new husbands and forget their children by the departed husband (*Od.* 15.20-23). Her assumptions regarding the entire female gender are reminiscent of Agamemnon's warning to Odysseus in Hades, in which he presumes that the behavior of one woman (his wife) is indicative of the qualities and capacities of her gender as a whole (*Od.* 11.432-434). Athena may simply desire to hurry Telemachus on his way home, but the instrument of suspicion upon which she relies to accomplish that goal is rather peculiar.

<sup>45</sup> Fredricksmeyer describes the tightrope Penelope walks between disloyalty and fidelity (1997), noting how Books 4, 13, and 23 "maintain both sides of Penelope's ambiguity between adultery and fidelity" (Fredericksmeier 1997, 494).

*Lily of Kilarney*. No. Might still be up....Better go. Better. I'm tired to move" (*U* 13.1212-1213, 1247-1248). He is undeterred in his desire to return home, even though he wants to avoid confronting his wife awake tonight.

In the same way that Penelope remains faithful despite the contest and her wavering and alternating desires, that Odysseus remains faithful despite consorting with goddesses, and that Leopold remains faithful despite his masturbation, his desire for Gerty, and his letters to Martha, so Molly's sexual infidelity does not negate a certain kind of emotional fidelity and loyalty to which Harry Levin alludes rather sarcastically, stating that Molly is "faithful in her fashion" (Levin 126).<sup>46</sup> She is faithful in the sense that she never deceives him, nor abandons him like Helen does to Menelaus. Her husband knows exactly what she intends to do, and he even aids her in doing it by staying away from home. Peculiarly enough, as a faithful wife, Molly enacts her affair only in such a way as to protect their home. Molly surmises that perhaps Leopold has sent their daughter Milly away so that she cannot witness her mother's affair:

only hed do a thing like that all the same on account of  
me and Boylan that's why he did it Im certain the way  
he plots and plans everything out I couldn't turn round  
with her in the place lately  
(*U* 18.1007-1009)

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<sup>46</sup> Levin calls that fashion "the fashion of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* or Dafoe's *Moll Flanders*, though she disapproves of the latter" (Levin 126). John Lammers compares Molly with the *Wife*, arguing, "the *Wife* and Molly are alike because they openly declare the desirability of female dominance" (Lammers 488).

Molly insists that Leopold is partly in control of her infidelity, plotting and planning it out in his usual way.<sup>47</sup> Like Menelaus, Leopold sustains his wife's infidelity, but unlike Menelaus, he does so only after engineering it himself. Leopold's own words seem to confirm this state of affairs: "Sometimes Molly and Milly together. Anyhow I got the best of that" (*U* 13.785-786). Molly's infidelity is thus more of a very odd marital covenant than a deceit or a betrayal. Penelope's flirting with the suitors, like the bow contest, in light of her promise to Odysseus or her private understanding that they are acting in collusion, is the same kind of matrimonially endorsed scheme.<sup>48</sup>

Thus certain instances of apparent infidelity do not qualify as disloyalty because they do not contravene the parameters of the marriage. For example, listening to his wife elicit gifts and admiration from the suitors while hiding her intentions (*Od.* 18.282-283) arouses no rancor in Odysseus. Winkler explains why not: "Clearly [Odysseus] has no doubt about her allegiance to his estate and appreciates what we might call her *faithful duplicity*" (Winkler 1990, 147, emphasis added). Here her faithful duplicity lies in tricking the suitors. But that same faithful duplicity operates against her husband, too, during the bed test and when she struggles with her own ambivalence. Faithful duplicity also governs the interaction between the Blooms; their careful equivocations are not lies designed to exploit each other but motivated by kindness and the desire not to wound the other with specific knowledge of the details

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<sup>47</sup> Robert Boyle regards this assumption to be relatively fair and accurate: "She puts the blame on Bloom if she is an adulteress, and with some justification...Molly judges she would never have been in the situation where this particular adultery, at least, could have been effected if Bloom had not plotted it" (Boyle 419). McBride assents (McBride 1979, 25).

<sup>48</sup> As Winkler puts it, "Homer arranges [matters so] that she seduces and that she not be blamable for her seduction" (Winkler 147).

of infidelity. Odysseus demonstrates that kind of faithful duplicity by not declaring his desire for the goddesses, while Leopold demonstrates it with his plots and plans in sending Milly away and in hiding his exchanges with Martha and Gerty. Faithful duplicity is the oxymoron that controls the interactions of spouses who love each other and wish to stay together in spite of everything. Of course, one “irreducible difference” (Iser 1974, 200) remains: Molly actually commits adultery, so the Blooms’ complicity has a much different effect than the complicity between Odysseus and Penelope upon his return, which serves to prevent her adultery.

The absence of malicious duplicity between spouses, emphasized by both Homer and Joyce, redeems the bond of allegiance and trust that is normally violated by extramarital desire. Molly, Penelope, and Leopold can all reasonably be accused of committing a kind of faithful infidelity, that is, an infidelity that has somehow been matrimonially sanctioned. Every one of them relies upon the conspiracy excuse for one reason or another. Only Odysseus never needs to use it, because he is able to state truly that divinities compelled his infidelity. Most importantly, none of them seem inclined either to forgive or to indulge in the kind of adultery that Agamemnon’s wife Clytemnestra commits, which is knowingly and strategically accomplished through lies and deception with only malicious aims in mind.

#### THE AMBIGUITY AND AMBIVALENCE OF FIDELITY

Penelope’s chastity and Molly’s promiscuity notwithstanding, the two women share a similar conundrum: despite loving their husbands, they are consumed with ambivalence about staying married. Like Penelope does (*Od.* 19.524, 16.73), Molly

considers her options: “suppose I divorced him Mrs Boylan” (*U* 18.846). Yet this seems to be only vague pondering, since earlier she has asserted vehemently, “I’d rather die 20 times over than marry another of their sex” (*U* 18.231-232). She decides to try to save her marriage: “I’ll just give him one more chance I’ll get up early in the morning” (*U* 18.1498).<sup>49</sup> Finally Molly agrees with her husband’s rumination about their early days of love: “Ben Howth. That rules the world” (*U* 11.1183-4). The love she felt on Howth is her last waking thought, and she says yes to that love and that man, “well as well him as another” (*U* 18.1604-1605), all over again on Bloomsday.

While those words connote a certain degree of ambivalence and resignation that correspond with Penelope’s own declared indecision during her husband’s absence, Molly, like Penelope, once again chooses to stay with her husband. Molly’s first words in the book in response to Leopold’s offer of breakfast encapsulate the multiplicity of her desires. “Mn” (*U* 4.57), she says, which Leopold interprets to mean “No. She didn’t want anything” (*U* 4.58). The ambiguity of that murmur, beginning with an “m” sound that one expects to be affirmation like “mmhmm,” but turns to the negative with the “n” sound, turns out not to mean ‘no’ at all. He brings her tea, sugar, cream, bread and butter. Her “mn” that means yes and no has become a decisively capitalized “Yes” (*U* 18.1609) by the end of the book, a “yes” to begin together once more. Whether she gets up early the next morning or not, one thing is sure: their home has not been conquered on this Bloomsday. They end where they began, in love with each other and still struggling to endure the pain that love brings.

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<sup>49</sup> The Blooms are even likeminded about the possibility of divorce, for Leopold ponders and rejects the notion, too: “Divorce, not now” (*U* 17.2202). Divorce seems to be an outside possibility for both Blooms, but one to be avoided at almost any cost.



The pain of their love is where Joyce's depiction of Penelope is anything but ironic. The pain of love that Stephen has not yet felt is fully theirs: "Pain that was not yet the pain of love fretted his heart" (*U* 1.102). Molly makes the same choice that Penelope herself does: to accept the future pain that love will engender. When Odysseus tells Penelope that the future still holds more agony for them, she insists upon knowing why immediately (*Od.* 23.247-262). Like Odysseus' father Laertes, who copes with suffering by nurturing pain ("πένθος ἄέξων," *Od.* 24.231), Penelope faces her pain and even increases it with her knowledge of its future certainty, rather than trying to escape it. As a result, she learns that Odysseus has returned home only to leave again. It is a common misconception that Odysseus and Penelope will live happily ever after until Odysseus' prophesied death comes gently out of the sea (*Od.* 11.134-137). But the other half of the prophecy is that Odysseus must wander until he finds the man with the winnowing fan; only then can he plant his oar and return home for good (*Od.* 23.266-284). Their future holds many more lonely years apart. Penelope understands the extent of the pain the future will bring. Still, she delights in the hope of a happy old age, clinging to the possibility of the future happiness they may yet share. This determination to stay together, fueled by the willingness to endure the pain of love, unites Joyce's Molly's and Homer's Penelope. Both women grapple with their uncertainty but then choose lives at home, embracing the pain that their love for their husbands incurs.

Having established how much Molly and Penelope have in common, Molly's monologue "Penelope" now seems to deserve its name. When Molly thinks of her husband, "well hes beyond everything" (*U* 18.578), Penelope would agree with her about Odysseus. Molly is not only a mythical oxymoron: she is also a mythical

reincarnation. She is another Penelope in another time and place, confused about how to protect her home, ambivalent about her husband and about her own best course of action.<sup>50</sup> Molly is a loving and honest wife much like Penelope. A certain kind of fidelity prevails in Molly, the same kind that prevents the bow contest from undermining Penelope's fidelity.

The contrast between Penelope's steadfast chastity and Molly's bold promiscuity serves to reveal that *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey* share the same galvanizing problem: the fragility of fidelity. Zeitlin's claim that Penelope's sexual fidelity to her husband is "the principal anxiety that hovers over the whole poem" (Zeitlin 122) is just as accurate when applied to *Ulysses*. The meaning and action of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* hinge on the innate and pervasive ambiguity of female desire and fidelity, what Zeitlin calls "the radical unknowability...of the unexpressed secrets of a woman's desire" (Zeitlin 137). Richard Brown conveys a similar idea slightly differently: "The secret of desire remains a secret" (Brown 1989, 110). At any rate, the mystery that surrounds feminine desire leads Zeitlin to characterize "the inherent dilemma of [Homer's] poem" as one "which assures us of Penelope's fidelity, while also keeping it in doubt..." (Zeitlin 122). *Ulysses* in a very odd way accomplishes the same task, because Molly and Penelope experience the profound uncertainty that always accompanies the endurance of fidelity. Molly's fidelity is constantly in doubt, and in the sexual sense, her fidelity is proven to fail, while Penelope generates doubts about her own fidelity by announcing the bow contest. In both modern and ancient contexts, much of the fascination surrounding fidelity seems to derive from its innate

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<sup>50</sup> Daniel Levine emphasizes that "Penelope's personality is complex: she is on the one hand a confused woman with a divided mind, but, like Hera, she is capable and clever..." (Levine 178). One can say exactly the same of Molly.

instability and vulnerability to failure. In Homer and in Joyce, fidelity seems eminently unreliable, incredibly elusive, and impressively enduring at the very same time. Odysseus, Molly, Helen, Penelope, and Leopold can all be defined as either faithful or unfaithful, depending on whether the epistemology of infidelity to which one subscribes serves to provide immunity from blame for extramarital desire and/or adultery. Even Penelope and Leopold can be categorized as unfaithful if desire for others counts as infidelity. The faithful wife, whether her name is Penelope or Molly, has never seemed more of an oxymoron, because the conception of fidelity in both texts is so complex. This oxymoron of fidelity is not a unique feature of modernity or an invention of Joyce, but another example of how Joyce was emulating Homer's *Odyssey*.

#### THE REVOLUTION OF GENDER ROLES REGARDING ADULTERY

Despite the many intersections of meaning that the previous comparison between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* has uncovered, it is nevertheless quite incontrovertible that modernity has had a huge impact on the consequences of adultery. The fact that Molly's consensual adultery can occur without catastrophic effects is testimony to the way that modernity has erased the most severe penalties of adultery, penalties that would have been inescapable for Penelope in her cultural and historical context. Herein lies one instance of a "revelation of the irreducible differences" (Iser 1974, 200) which Wolfgang Iser observes emerging from the mythic parallel that Joyce cultivates. For if Penelope were ever to have invited anyone else into her bed, she would not have become like Helen, who incites the Trojan War but

returns home. A cheating Penelope surely would have become like Clytemnestra, the adulterous wife of Agamemnon whose lover Aegisthus is responsible for her husband's murder upon his return.<sup>51</sup> Yet as Froma Zeitlin discusses, Homer arranges matters so that Penelope cannot even imagine committing Clytemnestra's crime, because she knows nothing about it (Zeitlin 143). Telemachus, who knows the story, withholds it from his mother, and Odysseus likewise withholds it from his wife.

Zeitlin argues,

This serious gap in information is hardly an oversight. The only story of an errant wife in the present time that Penelope is permitted to know (and this from Telemachos) is that of Helen, who she now curiously defends...  
(Zeitlin 1995, 143)

In light of my past discussion, Penelope's defense of Helen's adultery seems less bizarre than before, since it functions to let Odysseus know that he will not be subject to the accusations that he might otherwise have anticipated and feared from his wife. Had Penelope known the Clytemnestra story, she might have been less perturbed that Odysseus tested her as he did and disclosed his identity to others before her, especially with Agamemnon's warning to him from Hades in mind (*Od.* 11.441-456). The fact

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<sup>51</sup> I choose this spelling of the name based on Patricia Marquardt's argument that "Clytemnestra is preferable to Clytemestra in that it highlights the fundamental point of contrast between the cunning wives [Penelope and Clytemnestra]—marital fidelity and infidelity" (Marquardt 1992, 241). Her study bears out that Clytemnestra means "famous wooing" while Clytemestra means "famous cunning" (Marquardt 1992, 246), supporting her conclusion that "In the very name Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife is condemned for her lack of fidelity and by virtue of the comparison between her and Odysseus' wife, Penelope's conspicuous possession of fidelity is affirmed and celebrated. Thus, a hierarchy of values is established in the *Odyssey* which praises a woman's intelligence or cunning, to be sure, but only in the service of fidelity..." (Marquardt 1992, 252). The poem demands comparison between Penelope, Helen, and Clytemnestra; on this linkage, see Charles Beye (1974, 97), Linda Clader (1976, 29), Sheila Murnaghan (1987), and Victoria Wohl (1993, 35).

that Telemachus and Odysseus opt to hide Clytemnestra's crime from Penelope conveys the extent of their fear that just letting Penelope be exposed to the idea that a wife could do what Clytemnestra did might infect Penelope with the urge to do the same. Doniger too cites the power of such a bad example as the cause for their concealment (Doniger 1999, 163). Clytemnestra is never protected by the ἄτη excuse and is held fully accountable for her pitiless and cruel betrayal. The perceived need to keep Penelope ignorant underscores the persistent danger that any woman might decide to transform herself into such an evil traitor even without the intrusion of any ἄτη.

Despite the precaution of keeping Penelope ignorant of Clytemnestra's crime, within the world of the poem Penelope's own excellence is undoubtedly and undeniably based upon her physical chastity in combination with her emotional loyalty and suspicion of strangers which protect that chastity. Agamemnon announces as much to Amphimedon in the second Nekyia:

Happy son of Laertes, Odysseus of many resources, truly full of excellence was the wife you won, so worthy of heart was blameless Penelope, daughter of Icarius, as she was so well mindful of Odysseus, her wedded husband. Hence the fame of her excellence shall never perish, but the immortals shall make among men on earth a lovely song regarding steadfast Penelope. Not in this way did the daughter of Tyndareus devise evil deeds and murder her wedded husband, and a hateful song shall be hers among men, and she will bring evil reputation upon all women, even upon her who acts well.  
(*Od.* 24.192-202)

Agamemnon actually addresses Odysseus even in his absence, speaking directly to him in an unusual apostrophe by one character to another absent character. The peculiarity of how Agamemnon speaks directly to the absent Odysseus emphasizes

Agamemnon's glee at the way Odysseus has managed to avoid his own fate and at the way in which Penelope's virtue makes Clytemnestra's perfidy seem even more heinous by comparison. Agamemnon is congratulating the absent Odysseus in his apostrophe to him even as he is gloating over his wife's contemptible reputation in song. In the process, Agamemnon defines excellence for women as chastity, since the immortality Penelope has won, the "κλέος...ἥς ἀρετῆς" (*Od.* 24.196-197), is inseparable from her loyalty in waiting chastely for her husband.

More than two thousand years later in Dublin, Molly can freely choose to cheat on her husband without finding herself in the situations of either Helen or Clytemnestra. She can make love with Boylan and send him on his way without fear that he will claim the kingdom and rally his comrades to kill her husband, or do so himself. In Dublin, Molly is able to become the heroine that Penelope could never be in Ithaca. Homeric Greek has no word for heroine; Joyce refers to "Irish heroes and heroines" (*U* 12.176) but never calls Molly a heroine directly. But Molly is a heroine who achieves a liberation from the sexual constraints of society, a liberation that would have proved impossible for Penelope to achieve without causing the destruction of her home with Odysseus. By taking full advantage of this historical shift, Joyce has manufactured a full inversion of sex roles: the wife now cheats while the husband wanders nearby, instead of the wandering husband cheating afar while the faithful wife waits at home. In some sense, Odysseus has become Molly, and Penelope has become Leopold. The circumstances of cultural and historical context have made this reversal possible, while still preserving the same depiction of marriages based on likemindedness.

Such defiance of typical gender roles is not necessarily a thoroughly original innovation on Joyce's part, for it may find its inspiration in Homer's reverse sex similes.<sup>52</sup> Zeitlin remarks that "the crucial and obvious difference" between Penelope and Helen is that

Helen went away; Penelope did not. Yet if Helen went away, we might add, so did Odysseus. Does Penelope's version hint at a reversal of genders and thus obliquely refer to Odysseus as well? This suggestion might perhaps seem oversubtle, but it just so happens that to clinch the moment of their final reunion, the text immediately resorts to the last instance of those 'reverse sex similes' that are such an important and recurrent stylistic feature in the *Odyssey*.  
(Zeitlin 144-145)

Zeitlin views this reverse sex simile (*Od.* 23.231-239), occurring when Odysseus finally embraces the wife who is truly fitted to his heart (θυμαρής, *Od.* 23.232), as further evidence that Penelope's excuse for Helen's adultery also applies to Odysseus.<sup>53</sup> For the simile makes Penelope and Odysseus interchangeable in their emotions and experiences by describing Penelope as being as happy and grateful as a man would be who sets foot onshore after he has swum safely away from a shipwreck, just like Odysseus himself did in Scheria (*Od.* 5.394-395). If Penelope can have the identical emotion that her husband had in another setting, then it is not so farfetched to consider Odysseus a wandering adulterer like Helen. Winkler views the simile as Homer's virtually unprecedented assertion of equality between the sexes:

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<sup>52</sup> Excellent work has been done recently on numerous aspects of gender in Joyce; see the collected essays edited by Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless (1982), Christine van Boheemen (1989), Susan Stanford Friedman (1993), Richard Pearce (1994), Jolanta Wawryzcka and Marlena G. Corcoran (1997), and Kimberly Devlin and Marilyn Reizbaum (1999).

<sup>53</sup> On Homer's reverse sex similes, also see Helene Foley (1978).

At this moment they embrace and feel the same feelings, think the same thoughts, as if they were the same person: for a moment we cannot tell which is which. It is not easy to say in the cultural language of that highly stratified society that men and women are in any sense equal. But the author of the *Odyssey* has succeeded in doing so.

(Winkler 161)<sup>54</sup>

Homer's insertion of a reverse sex simile at this point encourages the audience to extrapolate and to consider other possible parallels unconstrained by gender. Homer's reverse sex similes denote an equality between the sexes that Homer's language and society generally did not possess by corroborating the notion that a male hero can have the same experience as a woman, and vice versa. Joyce's gender inversion of the adulterous partner in *Ulysses* imitates the gender inversions that Homer himself was toying with in such similes.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Winkler and the Intuitionists' position serves to advance this notion of equality substantially, because Penelope is elevated from being a victim of circumstances to being a trickster as good, or even better than, her husband. Winkler explains why this is the case: "What the *Odyssey* demonstrates, in its cunning way, is that *mētis* [cunning] is not sex-specific. It does so by half-accepting the quiet wife convention for most of its length, and only at the end surprising us with the suddenly unmistakable realization that Penelope had chosen to put the bow into this stranger's hands, thinking that there was every likelihood that he was Odysseus, but remaining only 99% certain. Only at the end when she had tricked him does the poet make us see that we had probably been underestimating her..." (Winkler 160-161).

<sup>55</sup> The feminine qualities of Leopold's character have drawn much attention; the significance of his status as the "new womanly man" (*U* 15.1798-99) has been explored by Elaine Unkeless (1969), Suzette Henke (1990, 106-125), and Joseph Boone (1982, 1993). Scott Klein discusses the fact that this aspect of "Joyce's characterization...has a precedent in the *Odyssey*....Homer twice describes Odysseus with explicitly feminine epic similes [where] he is placed in the poetic roles of wife and mother" (Klein 1989, 617). He cites *Od.* 8.522-530 and 10.407-415 and concludes simply by claiming that Joyce "would have noticed these intimations of Homeric androgyny and integrated them into his own 'heroic' characterization" (Klein 1989, 618). The most obvious example would seem to be the name on Leopold's birth certificate, "Leopold Paula Bloom" (*U* 17.1855); another may be the weird mention



In the same vein, Homer's construction of the reunion between Penelope and Odysseus begins to erase typical gender roles and boundaries.<sup>56</sup> Penelope's bed test, which, along with the bow contest, Leopold might deem another "one of love's little ruses" (*U* 13.757), removes her from the usual passive, feminine role. The success of the bed test, Felson states, depends upon Odysseus' "capacity to reverse roles in their courtship" (Felson 1997, 64). The effect of this ability, she suggests, is tremendous:

The reversibility of their roles annuls the gender hierarchy so prevalent in other couples' relations in the text, with Alkinoos and Arete as an interesting exception. The *homophroneonte noemasin* that Odysseus posits as the foundation of a good marriage and the marriage-bed rooted in the earth, constructed from an olive tree, and made with his own hands,

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that Leopold "pulled his dress to" (*U* 8.1143). Bloom's androgynous tendencies actually establish another parallel between them since Odysseus is described as being "like a woman" in the two similes Klein discusses. Suzette Henke argues that "By the end of Kirke, Bloom has been psychologically purged of both guilt and sexual humiliation and feels ready to reassert the inherently feminine dimensions of his androgynous personality" (Henke 1987, 55), and Odysseus upon his return in this hug would seem to do the same. Leopold's androgynous nature is not necessarily a revolutionary change on Joyce's part, given that its inspirations can be found within Homer's poem. Constance Tagopoulos ventures, "Archaic literature is often seen to feminize male heroic characters (or to masculinize heroines) in order to enlarge and expand meaning" (Tagopoulos 1992, 196).

<sup>56</sup> Beye judges this emergence of the new role of women to be one of the enormous differences between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He comments upon the relative paucity of women in the *Iliad* and their preponderance and prevalence in the *Odyssey* and then contrasts the conception and presentation of gender in the two poems, differentiating between "the notion of a woman as an object and possession" in the *Iliad* and "the notion of woman as a needed and feared figure" in the *Odyssey* (Beye 87ff.). Beye regards women in the *Odyssey* as powerful rather than passive, observing that "The ever-recurring feature of the women in this poem is their dominance in the male-female relationship...Penelope represents the eternal seduction, temptation, the eternal *need*...in the man's viewpoint, Odysseus' return to Penelope represents man's utter dependence upon women" (Beye 96, 98). Women in the *Odyssey*, at least, are not solely the passive, subjugated, and helpless creatures that most stereotypes might lead us to expect.

eliminate gender hierarchy and reverse domination and subordination.  
(Felson 1997, 64)

Homer is exposed as a rather radical egalitarian, for the notion of *ὁμοφροσύνη*, likemindedness, seems to presuppose a certain equality between the sexes. The likemindedness that Joyce crafts between Molly and Leopold, and their role reversal with Molly being the sexual aggressor and adulterer, thus emerges not as a modern mythical deviation contrived by Joyce but as another subtle yet resonant intertextual echo with Homer. Molly even joins in Agamemnon's censure of her gender as a whole: "we are a dreadful lot of bitches" (*U* 18.1459). She can condemn women for their foibles at the same time as she commits them:

either he wants what he wont get or its some woman  
ready to stick her knife into you I hate that in women no  
wonder they treat us they way they do we are a dreadful  
lot of bitches I suppose its all the troubles we have  
makes us so snappy Im not like that  
(*U* 18.1456-1460).

What Molly hates in women is how they will steal your man and then be "ready to stick her knife into you"; Molly condemns Clytemnestra's act only indirectly, by criticizing any woman roused to violence or murder whether literally or figuratively. The image of being knifed in the back which Molly evokes cements her impression of her own gender's capacity for betrayal, leading her to condone why men "treat us the way they do", with such suspicion, the same way Agamemnon recommends that Odysseus return home. Molly insists that she is different, "not like that", and indeed, the absence of deception, malice, and rage directed at Leopold as the result of her affair with Boylan seems to weaken the accusation of betrayal her sexual wandering might seem to warrant. Nonetheless, such an achievement of infidelity without any aspect of betrayal would make her rather unusual for her gender by the standard she

herself offers. By joining in Agamemnon's intertextual chorus about the perfidy of women, while managing to avoid such perfidy herself while still committing adultery, she defies all proper gender boundaries.

Molly thus does not escape one stereotypical role only to be trapped within another. Her ability to manipulate gender roles constantly, and to negotiate between them in ever more surprising ways, is Joyce's way of calling attention to the need to recognize our own complacency with the familiar masculine/feminine dichotomy. Kimberly Devlin discusses how Molly's many masks and masquerades proclaims the exigency of a thorough reevaluation of the utility of gender as a category.<sup>57</sup> Molly's very versatility in the realm of her own gender construction is a demand for her audience to recognize the need to follow her example and violate traditional roles in

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<sup>57</sup> Devlin argues, "Molly's monologue is a concatenation of roles...If gender is one of several ideologically dominant tropic differences, with masculinity and femininity divisible into many subtropes, then Molly is surely a 'polytropic' woman...'Molly' is really a male female impersonation, a 'man' doing a 'woman' who in turn does both genders....the potential audience of Molly's (and Joyce's) gender impersonations is constituted by readers of *Ulysses* itself: the show is aimed at us. We are invited to see ourselves in Joyce-doing-Molly-doing-whomever, to recognize our own en-gendered in-scriptings....Putting on 'womanliness' that repeatedly puts on 'manliness' allowed Joyce to articulate one of his canniest critiques of the ideology that produces the oppressive categories themselves" (Devlin 1994, 82, 99, 100). Vicki Mahaffey describes Joyce's struggles with gender conditioning thusly: "In designing *Ulysses*, Joyce first identifies what the socially conditioned reader is most likely to want and expect from male and female characters of different ages, and then he provides his readers with characters who frustrate and implicitly challenge that desire. The bewildering friction that results is designed to expose the gender system itself as an arbitrary and inadequate fiction, to measure its isolating mechanisms against the urgent complexity of personal desire" (Mahaffey 1998, 153). Both Devlin and Mahaffey comment upon the ways in which the reader is compelled to suffer the abrasively contradictory aspects of gender representations, with the result of acknowledging the hopelessly insufficient expectations that gender boundaries create. Precisely by problematizing gender, Joyce seeks to defeat its power and to reveal its irredeemable weaknesses and flaws.

order to move beyond them. Only then can we ever hope to understand our humanity in a way that is not circumscribed by gender.<sup>58</sup>

Thus Joyce's retelling of Homer's poem does not simply affirm Homer's careful progress toward abolishing the limitations of gender. Joyce accomplishes the annihilation of gender roles and limits toward which Homer only gestured. The consequences of infidelity that were once determined by gender in ancient Greece are no longer applicable in modernity. The cultural context of *Ulysses* makes it possible for Molly to ignore the gender roles regarding adultery in which Penelope was ensnared. With her trivialization of infidelity and her invocation of spousal consent, both of which Joyce allowed her to inherit from Homer's Penelope without her knowing it, Molly transcends the historical gender roles that created the double standard which permits men, but not women, to cheat.<sup>59</sup> In this way, infidelity has surmounted the historical and cultural boundaries of gender in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Penelope's excuse provides an egalitarian basis for the forgiveness of infidelity in any place and time for both genders.

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<sup>58</sup> Harper contends that Homer and Joyce are joined in this effort to shock and motivate their audiences into rejecting the ideologies they have inherited: "Both Homer and Joyce draw attention to the constructed, ultimately fictive qualities of the gender distinctions in narratives that allow some to be actors and others to be acted upon...both the Greek epic and the modernist novel allow the flaws in the gendered system to be revealed as systemic, thus letting in the potential for a beyondness or an outside..." (Harper 181).

<sup>59</sup> I hope to have now nullified Murray Beja's complaint that "In recent Joyce criticism, there has been an increasing willingness to become aware that Bloom transcends the usual male stereotypes; unfortunately, there has not been a corresponding willingness to recognize that Molly transcends the usual female ones" (Beja 1984, 121).

Doniger's evaluation of the impact of cultural context upon gender helps us to recognize why the same story, in the present case, the story of homecoming, may abound with changes due to a new cultural setting but maintain its integrity and its meaning. She argues very persuasively that in Greek and Indian myths, similarities persist along gender lines which withstand changes in cultural context, leading her to claim that "gender trumps culture" (Doniger 1999, 309).<sup>60</sup> Gender also trumps culture in Homer and Joyce, because Molly and Penelope are more alike in their ambivalence and scheming than they are different due to Molly's adultery. The likemindedness that distinguishes Odysseus' and Penelope's marriage distinguishes the Blooms' marriage as well. Yet in another sense, culture also trumps gender, because the stigma of adultery is no longer confined to women in modern culture.<sup>61</sup> The effects of infidelity are not determined by gender in Joyce's modern context as they once were in antiquity. With this change, the gender of heroism becomes irrelevant. Heroism, like the consequences of adultery, no longer depends upon gender in its new, modern context. In *Ulysses*, Joyce annihilates the gender roles and rules that have governed

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<sup>60</sup> Doniger writes, "...gender transcends culture in establishing lines of convergence between texts in different cultures that tell the same sorts of stories about men and women. Women resemble one another across cultures in certain ways more than they resemble the men within their own cultures. Differences in gender are more significant than differences in culture; gender trumps culture. We began by suggesting that the two sets of texts, Hindu and Greek, were shadows of one another; and we may conclude by noting that in each set of texts, culture is the shadow of gender" (Doniger 1999, 309).

<sup>61</sup> Brown comments on how radically Joyce's conception releases women from their historical submission: "In this fiction which celebrates the personal strength and sexual desires of women, and which recognizes the depth of social and economic exploitation, Joyce was arguably offering a kind of feminism which was as far reaching as that of the English suffragists..." (Brown 1985, 117).

love, marriage, and heroism for centuries.<sup>62</sup> Brown's suggestion that Joyce's "novelty consisted in the fact that it was built out of heretical revision and re-reading of the orthodoxy it hoped to supplant" (Brown 1985, 164) now assumes even greater clarity. The Homeric orthodoxy that a cheating wife becomes an evil Clytemnestra or a regretful Helen and that a cuckolded husband becomes a murdered Agamemnon or a resentful Menelaus has been replaced by a modern Joycean world in which the unconditional love that fosters Penelope's excuse and Leopold's equanimity not only prevents infidelity from becoming a catastrophe, but qualifies as a particular kind of heroic excellence.

#### THE TRIUMPH OF REAL LOVE

Penelope's excuse, and Molly's and Leopold's defenses for adultery, are distinguished by how vehemently they reject repudiating adultery as immoral. In the end, the determination of blame and fault concerning infidelity must be made by Homer's and Joyce's audiences alike. According to Seth Schein, Penelope's excuse is

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<sup>62</sup> My argument here may seem to contradict van Boheemen's claim: "...the last chapter of *Ulysses*, characterized by its unpunctuated flow of feminine speech, is the *locus* of the invention of what we now call 'gender,' the understanding of sexual difference as inscription and style, rather than an ontological essence...Joyce invented 'gender' long before philosophy caught up with it, or consumer culture and the power of the media made the re-inscription of sex as gender seem natural to us" (van Boheemen 1999, 268, 280). I suggest that Joyce is destroying the category of gender even as he creates it; that is, precisely by "inventing" gender he is exposing it as a veil, a role, a pose, rather than as an ontological status permanently separating the sexes. Derek Attridge thinks Joyce's narrative points toward "the possibility that gender might be less rigid, less oppositional" than the strongly patriarchal structure the book's context might suggest, citing Richard Brown's efforts to prove how Joyce sought to redefine the typical binary gender opposition as it has been traditionally understood in a patriarchal context (Brown 1985, 98-102).

the most sympathetic thing anyone in the *Odyssey* says about Helen. Penelope refuses to join in the otherwise universal condemnation of her by the poem's male characters, a condemnation that is usually considered by readers to be that of the poem itself...In light of Penelope's comment, it might be more accurate to say that in the end the poem leaves the question of Helen's moral responsibility and even the moral status of adultery open and in doubt, however much it may tempt a listener or reader to share in the majority judgment against her and her behavior.  
(Schein 1996, 25)

In *Ulysses*, Joyce, like Penelope, refuses to join in the censure of adultery and the adulterer. Like Homer, Joyce depicts the contexts of adultery and leaves his audience to make their own moral judgments.<sup>63</sup> Homer and Joyce seek to exhibit the effects of adultery and to provoke the consideration of the ethical problems surrounding it without attempting to provide any definitive resolution.<sup>64</sup> Penelope's excuse is her attempt at resolution, and an invitation to the audience members to seek their own.

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<sup>63</sup> Jeri Johnson also finds no justification in *Ulysses* for moral condemnation, quoting Julia Kristeva: "It has been a mistake to search in this ending for a recognition, or, on the contrary, a censuring of female sexuality" (Johnson 1989, 207; Kristeva 1986, 29). Oliver Taplin discovers how Homer refrains from the same sort of judgment about the nature of war in the *Iliad*: "The *Iliad* does not explicitly condemn war nor does it try to sweeten it; indeed its equity is essential to its greatness. It presents both sides, victory and defeat, the destroyer and the destroyed; and it does not judge between them. The gain and loss are put side by side without prejudice" (Taplin 1998, 111). In both poems, Homer strives to portray his themes in all of complexity, avoiding any simplistic verdicts or decrees about the meaning of the action while creating the opportunity for his audience to make their own assessments.

<sup>64</sup> For John Rickard, this uncertainty is an inescapable result of reading *Ulysses* in part because of the way the text frustrates the reader's desire for completion (on narrative closure and resolution in *Ulysses*, see Rickard 1999, 187-198; also see Karen Lawrence 1981, 201-206). Rickard argues, "The text both hints at and mocks this desire for closure, refusing finally to provide the neat ending that most readers crave" (Rickard 1999, 187). Nonetheless, that "refusal to provide any final sense of closure" (Rickard 1999, 196) does not condemn *Ulysses* and its readers to the realm of hopelessness or futility: "The plot of *Ulysses*, then, is part of a design that excludes

As we come to recognize this challenge presented by both texts, the challenge to ascertain what love is and how infidelity affects it, Joyce's intertextuality emerges as a call to action, a call to understand how the meaning of love and marriage endures the ravages of changes in cultural and historical context. Despite its absurdly romantic, melodramatic, sappy tone, "Nausicaa" captures the essence of the universal love story:

She thought she understood. She would try to understand him because men were so different. The old love was waiting, waiting with little white hands stretched out, with blue appealing eyes. Heart of mine! She would follow, her dream of love, the dictates of her heart that told her he was her all in all, the only man in the world for her for love was the master guide. Nothing else mattered. Come what might she would be wild, untrammelled, free.  
(U 13.667-673)

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closure as a possibility and yet provides *possibility* as a substitute for closure and a hedge against meaninglessness and fragmentation...the text can now insinuate every kind of possibility" (Rickard 1999, 197, 191). To borrow the words of T. S. Eliot, in *Ulysses*' end there then lies a beginning, an invitation to futurity. In contrast, Paul Schiffer takes the opposite position that the close of *Ulysses* is "a vast, lyrical *ricorso* which brings Joyce's endeavor to a point of fulfillment" (Schiffer 1979). Christine van Boheemen discusses the crisis that the idea of an ending incited for Joyce, commenting that Joyce "wrote Harriet Weaver that the penultimate episode was 'in reality the end of *Ulysses*' since 'Penelope' has no 'beginning, middle, or end' (*Letters I*, 172) Not only was Joyce unable to separate himself emotionally from his work and declare it finished (he kept reworking the text of *Ulysses* as long as possible), he was unable to name the ending an end, to think of it as final" (van Boheemen 1999, 270; also see 1987, 172-173). Further, she argues, "*Ulysses* mocks the reader's expectations of resolution...Open-endedness, then, the absence of climax, the permanency of acutely unsatisfied desire, is not only characteristic of the plot of *Ulysses*; it marks the personality of its characters" (van Boheemen 1987, 161, 159). Leaving his readers with such unsatisfied desires creates an identification with his characters that underscores his depiction of the basically insatiate nature of desire. Brown states that "Joyce offers the tantalizing prospect of an end, an answer, a final female truth" (Brown 1989, 110). But Joyce purposely does not fulfill that promise of conclusion; in the wonder of not knowing lies the possibility of seeking a truth beyond gender.



Such words transcend their context to apply to Penelope and Molly as well. For both women, despite being consumed by doubt, decide love is the master guide and all that really matters. Following that “dream of love” becomes liberation for many women, Nausikaa and Gerty included, who are able to be “wild, untrammled, free” in the choice to yield to the dictates of the heart. Yet that liberation is not limited to the female gender. Leopold and Odysseus also prioritize the “dream of love” above all else, Leopold by resigning himself to Molly’s affair and Odysseus by refusing Kalypso’s offer. Love must be the master guide for both spouses or it cannot truly be love, love in which the beloved is “all in all” no matter what has occurred.

Finally, Joyce’s revolution of Homer’s poem compels readers to question the importance of sexual fidelity in any place and time. In the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, the most valuable kind of fidelity seems to involve never trying to deceive one’s partner, not just making love only to one’s partner. Fidelity in marriage becomes an expression of the enduring desire to stay with one’s spouse despite moments of doubt and desire for others. Marital fidelity in both contexts seems to be distinguished by its ambiguity rather than by its clarity, leading to its oxymoronic status. Revealed in all of its complexities, fidelity often includes episodes of what appear to be infidelities, which spouses must reconcile with some kind of epistemology. Joyce’s citizen in “Cyclops” explains the nature of the quandary: “—A dishonoured wife, says the citizen, that’s what’s the cause of all our misfortunes” (*U* 12.1163-1164). Penelope herself, by offering her excuse, is sagacious enough to acknowledge and resolve this predicament when her cheating but faithful husband returns home. Through a very different turn of events, in a very different place and time, Molly and Leopold manage the same kind of resolution. In the *Odyssey* and in *Ulysses*, ambivalence, temptation, jealousy, and

adultery comprise the perilous atmosphere of marriage. Yet in Ithaca and in Dublin, real love still flourishes, despite its errors and its pains. Homer and Joyce portray how real love triumphs in the same way in either the modern or the ancient context: by learning to embrace the pain that belongs to love, and by forgiving infidelity in all of its forms.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ONOMASTIC MYSTICISM

Names change: that's all. Lovers: yum yum.

(*U* 12.1099-1100)

This rather startling claim that only names change while lovers remain yummy demands further exploration, especially in the context of a book whose title immediately betrays Joyce's intention of retelling the myth of Odysseus. Because of that title, every name seems like an oxymoron, because it somehow contradicts and affirms the Homeric name to which it corresponds. Joyce's *Ulysses* actually poses the question of what a name signifies: "What's in a name? That is what we ask ourselves in childhood when we write the name that we are told is ours" (*U* 9.927-8). Hence the text itself invites the present inquiry. If nothing changes from life to life, text to text, except the name, Joyce would seem to be indicating some tremendous congruence of meaning with Homer's *Odyssey* which surpasses that of simple parody, satire, or irony. Do the name changes that Joyce engineers in his retelling somehow reveal what

is enduring between the two texts? Might naming only mask some persistent continuity of meaning in spite of Joyce's new cultural and historical context? One can arrive at some resolution regarding such questions by examining the intertextual echoes which emerge from the relationships between the name of Homer's hero, Odysseus, and his title, the *Odyssey*, and the name of Joyce's hero, Leopold Bloom, and his title, *Ulysses*.

Does Joyce's method of naming match Homer's in any way?<sup>1</sup> For, as Fritz Senn observes, "Naming is potent...Naming confers power...[it is] an action through words" (Senn 1995, 10, 14).<sup>2</sup> He continues, "Joyce exploits the confusions inherent in

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<sup>1</sup> The importance of name choices as expressions of meaning for both Homer and Joyce has been thoroughly established and explored. W. B. Stanford discusses how Homer selects "Significant Names," for artistic effect (1959, xxi-xxii; see further 1972, chapter 7). On the many hermeneutic consequences of naming and etymology in Homer, see Louis Phillipe Rank (1951), W. B. Stanford (1952), George Bolling (1966), Hans von Kamptz (1982), K. Marót (1960), Jenny Strauss Clay (1972), Hugo Mühlestein (1987), and Otto Skutsch (1987). On the power of withholding and declaring names in the *Odyssey*, see Calvin S. Brown (1966), Norman Austin (1972), Bernard Fenik (1974, 5-60), Alice Webber (1989), Glenn Most (1989a, 1989b), John Perradotto (1990, 94-170), S. D. Olson (1992), Irene de Jong (1993), and Carolyn Higbie (1995). On the impact of Joyce's naming choices, see Richard Ellmann (1977, 10-44), Maud Ellmann (1982), Edmund Epstein (1984), Fritz Senn (1982, 1995), Christine van Boheemen (1987), Andreas Palme (1990), Carla De Petris (1991, ed.), and Claire Culleton (1994). As Richard Ellmann concludes, "Not the least of Joyce's affinities with Homer is the virtual obsession with naming and not naming: a chief source of interest, and a repeated one, in the *Odyssey*, is the suspense of first withholding and then disclosing the hero's name, whether to the Cyclops, to Nausicaa, to the suitors, even to his wife. A name for both Joyce and Homer, is a weapon, a brand, an alarm" (Ellmann 1977, 13). The title of Joyce's novel certainly lives up to all three labels.

<sup>2</sup> Christine van Boheemen cites the same power of naming but suggests that it operates partly through parody, commenting that *Ulysses* "is riddled with mocking lists of names...Joyce punctures the self-identity of the name as the anchor of signification...the way names are handled in *Ulysses* is so blatant a violation of the convention of self-identity that one gets the impression of deliberate parody...but even if Joyce's game with names, especially in 'Cyclops,' turns into a debunking

naming” (Senn 1995, 12). Senn’s argument for Joyce is equally true for Homer.<sup>3</sup> The ensuing analysis of the meaning of the names the *Odyssey*, *Ulysses*, *Odyseus*, and Leopold will illustrate how similar Joyce’s and Homer’s goals and methods of naming were. Both rely upon the power of naming to convey the actions and characters of their heroes even though they thought that naming also enhances certain ambiguities about their heroes. Names are like clues, or codes, demanding interpretation,<sup>4</sup> promising a profound depth of meaning to their audiences. Their naming choices connote such complex possibilities that their meaning is often so elusive that it defies clarity, however tantalizing it is to the audience. The present inquiry will at least expose why Homer’s and Joyce’s naming choices entice their audiences to consider the notion of rebirth very seriously, even if the truth of that notion cannot be proven conclusively with textual evidence.

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parody, the almost obsessive energy and force of it all testify to the continuing power of the idea of the name” (van Boheemen 1987, 154, 153, 154, 155).

<sup>3</sup> Carolyn Higbie explores “the particular importance of naming in the *Odyssey*,” contending in her study of the use of patronymics that “These patterns of naming show us that the family is of primary importance to one’s identity in the world...Naming, recognition, and identity are irrevocably linked in the Homeric world of heroes...A name conveys more information in the heroic world than in ours” (Higbie 1995, 190, 189). David Shive traces the naming of Achilles in the *Iliad* (1987).

<sup>4</sup> Listen to Fritz Senn: “Personal names are shown to be problematic...identification becomes our readers’ necessity and pastime more than an overt concern of the work” (Senn 1995, 11). The conundrums emerging from the complexities of Joyce’s naming choices requires efforts like Shari and Bernard Benstock’s (1980). As Senn reminds us, “The naming is at least as important as the name used” (Senn 1995, 11).

## JOYCE'S ACCIDENTAL AFFIRMATION OF HOMER'S GREEK TITLE

Let us begin with Joyce's title, which recalls Homer's *Odyssey* without echoing it exactly. Why did Joyce transform Homer's title and his hero's name? If he wanted to retell Homer's *Odyssey*, why is his book not entitled *The Journey of Bloomsday*? Or even *Leopold's Odyssey*? After all, to a non-Greek reader like Joyce, Homer's title would seem to indicate a journey without naming any particular hero. For as I established in Chapter One, Joyce had nowhere near enough competence in Greek to obtain any independent linguistic insight into the meaning of Homer's Greek title. Yet we may identify another likely source of his motivation in titling his book from a rather puzzling comment Joyce made to Herbert Gorman, suggesting why Ulysses was his favorite hero and referring to his first encounter with the hero through Lamb:

I was twelve years old when I studied the Trojan War but the story of Ulysses alone remained in my recollection. It was the mysticism that pleased me...  
(Stanford 1951, 62)

The present exploration of naming seeks to expose how Joyce relied upon the power of naming in order to invoke a certain kind of mystic relationship with Homer's *Odyssey*. The mysticism that pleased Joyce may still please us, his readers, if we can only learn how to recognize and appreciate it.

At least in the realm of naming his text and his hero, the intertextual resonance that Joyce achieved without knowing Homer's Greek text is really rather incredible. For Joyce's title manages to accomplish many of the same effects of Homer's Greek title, effects which one might think would be mostly obscured by translation. For the

original Greek poem that we call Homer's *Odyssey* was not really titled an "odyssey" at all as the word has come to mean in English. In their standard Greek-English lexicon, Liddell and Scott do offer "odyssey" as the only translation of Homer's title, and the Oxford English Dictionary even lists the English word *odyssey* as being derived from Odysseus' name. But peculiarly, the Greek title Ὀδύσσεια seems to have no etymological relationship with the Greek word ὁδός for way, path, or traveling, that would justify the translation of Ὀδύσσεια as *odyssey*. Hence the emphasis upon traveling that the English title *Odyssey* creates is misleading, since Homer's original title conveys an emphasis on a man and his name, not on a journey. The idea of journeying seems to have become associated with the word Ὀδύσσεια due to the events of Homer's poem that bore it as a title.<sup>5</sup> Homer's original title is better taken as a derivation of the hero's name, meaning the ways of Odysseus. Quite remarkably, Joyce gives his book *Ulysses* the title that the *Odyssey* deserves, by making the title the name of the man himself, rather than the name of his actions. The titles that both Homer and Joyce select thus contribute to an intricate interweaving of character, action, and meaning. Because both titles name the text, the hero, the hero's actions and character all at once, what Christine van Boheemen claims about the title *Ulysses* is equally true of the Greek title Ὀδύσσεια:

the name is knitted into the words of the text, which are both its product and its source. In thus fusing name with the story belonging to the name, Joyce makes it impossible to ask the question of priority, of origin.

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<sup>5</sup> Liddell and Scott's citation of Herodotus 4.29 as an example of the use of Ὀδύσσεια as a word for a journey shows how the influence of Homer's poem led to this meaning and use of the word. With a plural article, Liddell and Scott cite its later use meaning "games in honor of Odysseus". See Liddell and Scott, s.v. Ὀδύσσεια.

Which is first, character or action? He makes them into functions of each other.  
(van Boheemen 1987, 153)

Homer first blurred the line between the story and the name, and the English translation of his title, with the imputation of the idea of an odyssey, both distorts and illuminates that intersection. Senn finds Joyce enacting the same equivalence between name and action: "...names, for all of their accepted substantiality, soon dissolve into doings, into the verbs from which grammar distinguishes them, at least in Indo-European languages" (Senn 1995, 9). Character and action are inextricably bound up together in Homer's acts of naming, just as they are for Joyce.

#### THE AMBIGUITY OF THE NAME ODYSSEUS

To understand Homer's title, then, one must understand the meaning and significance of the name Odysseus. Its etymology and meaning are quite controversial and enigmatic.<sup>6</sup> W. B. Stanford, Norman Austin, and George Bolling agree that the name Odysseus is most likely not of Greek origin and has no etymological connection with the Greek work *ὁδός*, journey.<sup>7</sup> Nowhere is there any evidence that the name Odysseus derives from anything concerning journeys. Rather, Odysseus' name

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<sup>6</sup> On the etymology and meaning of the name Odysseus, see Paul Kretschmer (1896, 280-282), Louis Phillipe Rank (1951, 52-60), K. Marót (1960), George Bolling (1966), W. B. Stanford (1952), George Dimock (1962), Jenny Strauss Clay (1983), Simon Goldhill (1991), and Charles Segal (1994, 33). Also see W. H. Roscher's volume on mythology (645ff.), which R. J. Schork and Philip Herring confirm that Joyce owned and consulted during the writing of *Ulysses* (Schork 1998, 85-90, and *BM* 50).

<sup>7</sup> See W. B. Stanford (1952), George Bolling (1966), and Norman Austin (1972).



conveys the idea of wounding and wrath, as derived from the verb ὀδύσσομαι. This verb is cognate with ὀδύνη, pain or grief, and is only used once in Homer in its participial form ὀδυσοῦμενος at the moment when Odysseus' grandfather Autolycus names him as one like himself, saying,

My daughter's husband and my daughter, give him whatever name I say. For certainly I am here as one who has angered and wounded and been angered and wounded [ὀδυσοῦμενος], by both men and women over the fertile earth, so let the name by which the child is called be Odysseus.  
(*Od.* 19.406-409)

Stanford argues that Odysseus means "Child of Woe," connecting his name to the word odium (Stanford 1996, 332-333), but acknowledges the problems with translating ὀδυσοῦμενος and understanding its meaning in relation to Odysseus' name:

It is unfortunate that Homer's only explicit reference to the etymology of the name Odysseus is ambiguous...The *schema etymologicum* turns, of course, on the unique participle *odussamenos* (*Od.* 19.407-409). Both its meaning and its syntax have been long disputed...Does it imply 'wrath' or 'hatred'? Has it an active or passive force?  
(Stanford 1952, 209).

Thus the etymology of Odysseus' name connotes wrath, hatred, or wounding, and further implies that Odysseus is both the agent and the victim of such events.<sup>8</sup> Its duality of meaning gives credence to the proposition that a more accurate translation of Homer's title would be *The Wrath and Hatred of Odysseus and for Odysseus*.

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Ellmann describes Joyce's rejection of these common etymologies: "Joyce knew another putative etymology, from Roscher's huge *Lexicon*, where the name of Odysseus was said by Silenus of Chios to derive from 'big ears descended from Zeus'. The big ears he did not use, nor Ovid's remark, '*non formosus erat*' (*Ars Amatoria* II.123), but he worked out his own etymology, *outis* + Zeus, the divine nobody, at once unique and nondescript" (Ellmann 1977, 13).

How Odysseus is wounded and suffers pain during the *Odyssey* is obvious and undeniable.<sup>9</sup> Odysseus' name illustrates how he is the expert not just in enduring pain, but in inflicting it. As Jenny Straus Clay observes how Odysseus' name encapsulates the tangle of opposites that characterize him:

Troubles inflicted and troubles endured—these are the two-fold aspects of the hero. The name itself, Odysseus, embraces both and is profoundly ambiguous in its significance.  
(Clay 1983, 56)

George Dimock also comments on the active and passive senses conveyed by the etymology of Odysseus' name. He explains that

To 'odysseus' (*odysasthai* in Greek) is usually said to mean 'be wroth against,' 'hate,' and to be connected with Latin *odisse*...in the *Odyssey* *odysasthai* means essentially 'to cause pain (*odyne*) and to be willing to do so.'...Just as 'suffer' brings to mind both the internal and external aspects of being a victim, so 'odysseus' implies subjectively and objectively what it is to persecute...the seven-odd instances of this verb outside the *Odyssey* show nothing inconsistent with this meaning.  
(Dimock 1962, 106-107)

Pain and suffering are incontrovertibly inherent in the meaning of Odysseus' name. Odysseus' choice to reject Kalypso's offer of immortality, and to travel to Hades to consult Teiresias to learn how to return home, is, Dimock argues,

to accept pain as the only basis of meaning in this life or the next...For the secret of life which Odysseus has come to the world of the dead to discover is the necessity of pain and its value.  
(Dimock 1962, 114, 115)

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<sup>9</sup> See my pp. 81-83 on Odysseus' announcement of his name to the Cyclops and on how he continually fulfills the meaning of his name as the wounded one and the one who wounds.

Finally, Dimock concludes, “there is no human identity in other terms than pain.” (Dimock 1962, 116). This compelling, convincing, and in my view, absolutely correct, reading of the *Odyssey*, inspired by the meaning of Odysseus’ name, rests entirely on the spelling of Odysseus with an omicron and a delta. For only when the name Odysseus is spelled with a delta does it recall the words ὀδύσσομαι, to wound or be wounded, to anger or be angry; ὀδύνη, pain; and ὀδός, odyssey, even though the latter is only a colloquial association unjustified by etymology. The name game here is obviously much more than just a game to Homer. Homer utilizes naming to reveal his hero’s qualities and actions. Naming is a serious ploy intended to convey meaning and information, not a trifling or silly indulgence.<sup>10</sup>

Austin contends that Homer embraced the confusion incited by the etymology of Odysseus’ name and wanted to exploit the tensions caused by its ambiguous meaning.<sup>11</sup> The question then becomes whether such associations were traditional or whether Homer himself perhaps inspired them by revolutionizing his inherited tradition with his spelling of Odysseus. Carolyn Higbie’s argument supports the possibility that Homer may have altered his hero’s name.<sup>12</sup> Is there any reason to

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<sup>10</sup> In this vein, Carolyn Higbie reminds us, “Naming is not merely etymological play to Homer. It is an important part of identity and status in the heroic world and the recognition of that identity and status by others” (Higbie 1995, 5).

<sup>11</sup> Austin discusses the dilemmas of interpretation posed by Odysseus’ name: “Since antiquity the name of Odysseus has been the subject of philological controversy. It is probably of non-Greek origin and bears, therefore, no etymological connection with the verb *odymai*.... Still the pun is there, whether by orphic or diaskeuastic interpolation. Homer insists on the pun and our only doubt is whether to translate the name in the active or passive sense, Odysseus the man who suffers or inflicts pain, the Hated or the Hater” (Austin 1972, 2).

<sup>12</sup> She claims, “As the poet created scenes and characters, he also created names.... Vignettes like those in *Il.* 14.442-45 and 6.21-25 illustrate how easy it is for

believe that the name Odysseus was one of Homer's inventions, his own twist upon the name he inherited from tradition?

George Bolling claims that Homer's spelling of Odysseus is not the original form of the name, for vase inscriptions show the name spelled with a lambda instead of a delta. He mentions "Quintilian's statement that the name was *Olisseus* in the Aeolic dialect," and then concludes,

...the form with λ is original and the Ionic form is due to a connection by popular etymology with the verb *odussasthai*, 'to be wroth'....This not only explains the λ of the Latin *Ulixes*...but also does sway with the assumption of a change of δ into λ, which, except for one gloss of Hesychius [λάφνε · δάφνε Περγαῖοι] is entirely without parallel in the Greek language.  
(Bolling 1965, 65)

Arguably, then, Homer altered the spelling of the name as he had inherited it from tradition, and he did so in an unprecedented way. K. Marót proposes that the original pun innate to the name depended upon the relationship between ούλή, wound or scar, and the spelling *Oulusseus*, accentuating his wounding and wounded status (Marót 1960, 1-6). Homer replaced the puns incited by the spelling of *Olyseus*' name with a lambda with new ones related to its spelling with a delta. The associations and implications of the name with its spelling with the letter delta better conveyed Homer's idea of who his hero was and what he did. Farron confirms that the insertion of the letter delta into *Olyseus*' name served various artistic purposes for Homer:

Throughout the *Odyssey* *Odysseus*' name is constantly punned on as basic to his character....This punning was important enough for Homer to produce it by spelling *Odysseus*' name in the way he did. This was probably a

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the poet to invent new names and biographies whenever he might deem it necessary" (Higbie 1995, 22-23).

change from the original spelling: *Olyseus*, cognate with Latin Ulixes.  
(Farron 1979-80, 63-64)

Homer's goal in altering the spelling of his hero's name was to make such punning possible, punning that reveals the characteristics of his hero and illustrates his theme of the value and necessity of pain so well illuminated by Dimock. Isn't it amazing what one little delta that used to be a lambda could do!

Further, Farron explains why such linguistic puns were so pivotal for Homer: "To the ancient Greeks, puns, especially those involving a person's name, were serious and relevant since words were believed to be joined by nature to their objects" (Farron 1979-80, 63). The name for the Greeks is the man: there is no separation between the meaning of the name and the person it describes. Austin even goes so far as to assert that this "identity of name and person endows the name with extraordinary potency..." (Austin 1972, 3). The idea of suffering wounds and inflicting them along a journey, while somehow managing to display human excellence through heroic endurance, is the most fundamental theme of Homer's poem. Homer utilizes his hero's name to portray that theme. Identity and action are inextricably bound up together in Odysseus' name.

#### THE RETURN OF THE LAMBDA AND THE LION

Homer's employment of puns as a poetic device for conveying meaning is reflected in Joyce's fixation with cultivating countless wordplays and puns. In fact, Joyce's embrace of punning and its potential is so enthusiastic and so consuming that Sebastian Knowles avers, "The whole fabric of *Ulysses*, certainly, depends on the

pun” (Knowles 14).<sup>13</sup> As a result, focusing on the impressions Joyce created by spelling is especially rewarding. For example, John Gordon proves the veracity of Daniel Gunn’s statement that “*Ulysses* invites and encourages obsession in its readers” (Gunn 35) with his analysis of why the letter “c” appears more frequently in the “Ithaca” chapter than anywhere else in *Ulysses*. Gordon’s effort helps us to understand why it is quite plausible that Joyce might have chosen his title precisely for the sake of including an “l” in it, an “l” that would match the first letter of the first name of his hero Leopold. Gordon suggests that “Joyce uses the superabundance of ‘c’s in the hope that in some capacity they will register and thus reinforce certain effects approximated by other means” (Gordon 1994, 45, 55). Joyce used every means he could think of, names and spelling included, to accentuate meanings also put forth in other ways, just as Homer did.

Ascertaining the meaning of the name Ulysses presents the same problems as its ancient form Odysseus. Joyce elects to use neither the Latin cognate Ulixes nor the Italian cognate Ulisse, although he was definitely familiar with both. The exact nature of the evolution from Ulixes to Ulysses is uncertain, although Caroli Egger mentions one possibility (Egger 183). Joyce chose a version of the name which mingled its many transformations over time, the version which Lamb used and with which Joyce first became acquainted. Joyce eliminates the “x” of the Latin Ulixes, returning to the double “s” of the Greek Odysseus and Olyseus.<sup>14</sup> By choosing the names Ulysses and

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<sup>13</sup> Ellmann writes that “the puns and international jokes that resulted [from the Triestine dialect] delighted Joyce” (*JJII* 196). Even the most cursory glance at *Finnegans Wake* reveals Joyce’s enchantment with linguistic puns and wordplays.

<sup>14</sup> Oddly enough, the spelling of the names Achilles and Odysseus is totally fluid, because either one can be spelled with double or single consonants depending on

Leopold Bloom, Joyce repeats the “l” of the traditional spelling Olyseus. There is some indication that he knew of the ancient spelling Olyseus, along with various other permutations of the spelling of the name over time, because Roscher provides a quite exhaustive examination of the name in his volume on mythology that Joyce was known to own and read (Schork 1998, 85-90; *BM* 50). Nevertheless, Homer’s disappearing lambda in Olyseus’ name finds parallels in Joyce’s disappearing “l”s. For instance, Martha Flower’s “l”s prove to be of great significance, because of the difference between “I called you a naughty boy because I do not like that other world, Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word?” (*U* 5.244-246).<sup>15</sup> Also, Leopold loses an “l” in his name when he is identified in the paper as “L. Boom” (*U* 16.1260, 1262, 1265, 1274, 1275, 18.1264), despite his emphatic note of the letter which begins his name when asked for the purpose of the report (*U* 6.882). Just as Olyseus identifies himself as “no one,” the misprint transfigures Leopold into nobody recognizable. Joyce was well aware of this parallel and had even copied *Od.* 9.366-367, where Olyseus calls himself Nobody, in his notebook.<sup>16</sup> Joyce subsequently allowed his own hero to luxuriate in temporary anonymity as well.

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metrical restrictions. Achilles then loses his second lambda while Olyseus loses his second sigma on many occasions in each poem.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick McCarthy notes, “The 1961 edition did restore another of Martha’s errors, ‘that other world’ which was ‘corrected’ to that other ‘word’ in the 1934 American edition.... ‘Word’ is fertilized into world by the addition of a phallic ‘l’, just as in another chapter the removal of another ‘l’ will reduce Bloom to Boom, rendering him symbolically impotent. It is a chance error on a typewriter that opens up these possibilities” (McCarthy 1987, 67). Herein lies a superb example of the perils of editing *Ulysses* and its significance for textual interpretation.

<sup>16</sup> See Schork (1998, 85-90), and my footnote 18 on p. 16.

Aside from the resurrection of the letter “l”, a partial resurrection of Odysseus’ original Greek name, what does the name Leopold mean? Does it affirm or negate the meaning of Odysseus’ name? Leopold literally means “people bold,” deriving from the German *liut*, “people,” and *bald*, “bold”. Flora Haines Longhead claims that it is a Teutonic name meaning “the people’s prince; bold for the people” (Longhead 1966, 71). Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges concur in their dictionary entry:

**Leopold** (m.) English; of Germanic origin, composed of the elements *liut* people + *bold* bold, brave. The first element was altered by association with Latin *leo* lion. A name of this origin may have been introduced into Britain by the Normans, but if so it did not survive long. It was reintroduced from the Continent towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, partly in honour of King Leopold of the Belgians (1790-1865), the uncle of Queen Victoria...  
(Hanks and Hodges 1990, 203-204)<sup>17</sup>

Weirdly enough, Odysseus seems like a bold prince of the people more than Leopold ever could be! Ever weirder is the fact that the name Leopold quite undeniably calls to mind the etymology of Achilles. Gregory Nagy has brilliantly and exhaustively explored the meaning of the name Achilles as “ he whose *laos* [host of fighting men] has *akhos* [grief]” and discusses how that name reveals its hero’s nature and the themes of the *Iliad* as a whole (Nagy 1999, 69-93). Leopold, like Achilles, is defined by his name as a member of his community, as a bold man of the people. His name emphasizes his social identity and his personal characteristics simultaneously.

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<sup>17</sup> Caroli Egger adds further authority to this etymology: “Leopoldo, Léopold, Leopoldo Leopold Leopold: Leopoldus, I, m. Nomen coaluit ex *liut* (apud Anglos et Saxones *leod*) et *bald* (*pold*), quorum priore *populus*, altero *strenuus, fortis* significatur. Est ergo nominis interpretation: *strenuus in populo*” (Egger 114).



Yet bold is not usually the first word that comes to mind to describe Leopold. Leopold himself refers to the “bold hand” of Blazes Boylan, describing his handwriting on the envelope of his letter to Molly (*U* 4.244). Molly almost immediately calls him by his nickname “Poldy” (*U* 4.246, 4.268, 17.2002), in essence calling him the bold one even though there is no indication that she realizes that. At first glance, the name Leopold seems to be related with lions, for most readers know that Leo is cognate with lion without any clarification. Thus the pun innate to Leopold’s name is that he is bold like a lion. While the Oxford English Dictionary does not include an entry for the name Leopold, the name Leon is confirmed to mean lion. Like the presumed relationship between odyssey, Odysseus, and ὁδός (path, journey), this association of Leopold with lions is not etymologically justified. The name Leopold does indeed have two cognates which are derived from Greek, Leo and Leonard, for which Flora Haines Longhead offers the following etymologies: “Leo (Greek) Lion....Leonard (Greek) Strength of a lion: lion-hearted” (Longhead 71). Of Leo, Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges note, “In modern use it seems also to have been given as an omen name by parents who wished for a ‘lion-hearted’ son” (Hanks and Hodges 203-204). Caroli Egger confirms this leonine aspect of the names related to Leopold (Egger 113). Oddly enough, the Leo prefix of Leopold’s name also serves to recall the peculiar status of his Judaism: David Gross remarks of the name Leon that “Many Jews bear this name mistaking it for a Jewish name” (Gross 85). Like Leopold himself, the uncircumcised Jew, his name is a bit Jewish and yet not really Jewish at the very same time.

So it is a pun operating by means of spelling, like the one that Homer manufactures with his change of the lambda in Olyseus’ name to a delta, that makes

Joyce's readers think of lions. Leopold's name announces that he has some of the lion in him, a boldness which distinguishes him. Such leonine qualities join Leopold with his Homeric predecessors because of the abundance of lion similes in the Homeric poems.<sup>18</sup> Rainer Friedrich explains that lion similes are typically used in the *Iliad* in battle scenes to describe warriors fighting or preparing to do so, for the lion is "the heroic animal *par excellence*...the lion simile not only illustrates, it also glorifies" (Friedrich 1981, 121). William Magrath finds the lion similes in the *Odyssey* to be more equivocal, concluding that the lion similes contribute to the way in which Odysseus "represents in his character simultaneously beauty (*kosmos*) and the beast" (Magrath 1981, 212). What similarity with lions might equate Leopold with Odysseus or Achilles?

Achilles and Odysseus are both described as lion-like, but with very different connotations. Friedrich notes that "only once in the *Iliad* does a lion simile seem to be used to criticize a hero's behavior" (Friedrich 1981, 121). In the *Iliad*, Apollo bewails the desecration of Hector's corpse and condemns Achilles while comparing him to a lion:

But it is the baneful Achilles, gods, whom you prefer to help, the one whose mind is not intent on anything right or just, and neither can the purpose in his breast be bent, but like a wild lion at the bidding of his great strength and bold spirit goes forth into the flocks of mortals in order to win a meal, even so Achilles has lost all pity,

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<sup>18</sup> The *Iliad* contains more than thirty examples of the lion simile, while the *Odyssey*, which is much less dependent upon similes in general, contains only seven. For a full bibliography on the use and meaning of lion similes, see Rainer Friedrich (1981, 120, n.1) and William Magrath (1981, 205, n. 1). These two scholars do not seem to know of the other's existence and cite different sources. Most recently, see John Watrous (1999) and Fred Naiden (1999).

and neither does he have any shame, which harms men  
greatly and benefits them in the end.  
(*Il.* XXIV. 39-45)<sup>19</sup>

Achilles is like a wild lion who cannot be bent (*gnamptos*, *Il.* XXIV.41) from his goal. His purpose is inflexible and unjust, making him pitiless and cruel, quite at odds with the kind and considerate Leopold.

Homer likens Odysseus to a lion three times in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus is first described with a lion simile when he emerges naked from the bushes to ask the princess Nausicaa for help, after leaving the isle of Kalypso and drifting at sea for twenty days, and finally landing on the Phaeacians' shore:

Out he came like a lion raised in the mountains, trusting  
in his own strength, who goes forth pounded by rain and  
wind but with both eyes blazing. He goes right in the  
middle of the cattle or sheep, or hunts after wild deer,  
and his belly demands him to go even into the closely-  
built pasture in order to attack the flocks.  
(*Od.* 6.130-134)

His hunger inspires his daring: he attacks for the sake of his own sustenance, out of the depths of misery.<sup>20</sup> As Friedrich notes, this simile is rather unusual in that it has transcended “its traditional martial context” (Friedrich 1981, 124). Leopold's desire to return to his own desecrated bed after Molly's tryst is possible only because he trusts in his own strength. Odysseus' need for self-preservation overwhelms all other

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<sup>19</sup> Christine Caswell even dares to claim that: “In Akhilleus, the θυμός is lion-like and not to be turned from the course it is set on, any more than once can turn aside a lion from his purpose in finding food” (Caswell 1990, 33). Odysseus would seem to have displayed the same capacity in his slaughter of the suitors, as indicated by the simile presented when Eurykleia finds him afterward (*Od.* 22.401-405).

<sup>20</sup> Friedrich comments that like *Il.* 24. 42 ff., the simile “elaborates the condition of a living being which, exposed to the natural elements, is driven by sheer need...whose strength of attack is born, not of its valour, but of desperation” (Friedrich 1981, 123).

priorities, just as Leopold's desire to save his marriage overcomes his humiliation at his situation. Both are like the lion who is pounded and beaten by circumstances but who forges ahead no matter what, determined to find sustenance. Leopold's circumstances, however, make him seem even more pitiful and pathetic than Odysseus, because he is tormented not by any external necessity but by his own choice to return home to Molly.

While Leopold, who accepts his own cuckoldry passively, may seem anathema to vicious warriors like Achilles and Odysseus, the name Joyce bestows upon him implies some intrinsic similarity despite the glaring contradictions between them. Leopold's name encourages readers to seek out his ferocity and his boldness, qualities that may initially seem antithetical to his character and circumstances. Later on, Odysseus is again described with a lion simile after he has slaughtered the suitors and stands terrible to look upon, stained with blood in his victory like a lion that has been feeding on an ox (*Od.* 22.401-405). Eurykleia repeats this simile exactly in her report to Penelope that Odysseus has slain the suitors (*Od.* 23.48ff.). Odysseus, the hunter, has slain the hunted, in this case, the suitors. But he does not eat them, like the Cyclops devoured his men "like a lion born in the mountains" (*Od.* 9.292-3). The Cyclops eats like a lion, while Odysseus hunts like one. Odysseus is sated by the murders themselves and by his own revenge. His filth is proof of how he has protected his οἶκος and restored his family. Leopold is the same kind of lion who saves his own home, although through no such display of martial strength and skill. He achieves "equanimity" (*U* 18.2177) without any form of revenge, displaying the pity and mercy that the lion-like Achilles is condemned for lacking. "What retribution, if any?" (*U* 18.2200 ff.) is pondered, but Odysseus' brand of vengeance is rejected:

“Assassination, never, as two wrongs did not make one right” (*U* 18.2201). He considers other possibilities (*U* 18.2201-2209), but finally to “justify to himself his sentiments” he is comforted by “the futility of triumph or protest or vindication: the inanity of extolled virtue: the lethargy of nescient matter: the apathy of the stars” (*U* 18.2224-6). Odysseus’ recovery of his home and the restoration of his identity is accomplished only by making his floors run with blood. Leopold wrestles with events and the emotions they have aroused in him in his own mind until he arrives at the same kind of resolution and satisfaction that Odysseus achieves only once he is covered in the suitors’ blood, glaring at their dead corpses.

Given this contrast, Leopold may be more like Penelope than Odysseus or Achilles in his leonine aspects, for Homer describes her distress at being surrounded by the suitors with another such simile: “like a lion was confused in the middle of men, fearing when they close in around him the dangerous circle, while she worried about such things, sweet sleep fell upon her” (*Od.* 4.791-3). Magrath notes that “this is the only victimized lion of the *Odyssey*...there is no fitting doublet for this simile in the *Iliad*” (Magrath 1981, 296). Leopold is exactly such a persecuted lion, feeling so trapped and under assault that he flees from his wife’s lover Boylan in the street, breathing “Safe!” (*U* 8.1193) once he has escaped him. Like Penelope, Leopold is finally rescued from his anxieties by sleep. The lion in Leopold’s name draws attention to the many different ways that Homer shows how one can act like a lion. Being leonine is not limited to a single form of aggressive attack but rather constantly seems to indicate a certain determination, resilience, and power even in the face of tremendous hardship. In this sense, Leopold lives up to the lion in his name.

Leopold's leonine qualities begin to emerge in the "Circe" episode, albeit in a rather ironic and sarcastic guise. Mrs. Breen tells him, "You were the lion of the night" (*U* 15.447); Signor Maffei appears to bring "your lion to heel...Leo ferox there..." (*U* 15.711-12), and Martha Clifford calls him "Henry! Leopold! Leopold! Lionel!" (*U* 15.753).<sup>21</sup> Molly confirms her own sense of the lion in Leopold, thinking, "sure you might as well be in bed with what with a lion God Im sure hed have something better to say for himself an old Lion would..." (*U* 18.1376-78). Penelope also likens her husband to a lion, saying, "My worthy husband, the lionhearted one, practiced in all forms of excellence [ἀρετή] among the Greeks..." (*Od.* 4.274ff., repeated at 4.814 ff.). Penelope and Molly both declare that they are married to men that they feel have something of the lion in them. Penelope, however, associates her husband's lion heart with his virtue and excellence (ἀρετή), while Molly seems to be deriding Leopold with the comparison. Being in bed with a lion like Leopold is far less rewarding than she would like. In fact, Molly even thinks that an "old Lion" would be an improvement upon her husband! Leopold is somehow not quite the lion he should be; from Molly to Signor Maffei, the lion in Leopold, "Leo ferox," is more reason to mock him than to admire him.

For this reason, Penelope's and Molly's comments upon the leonine qualities of their respective husbands do not necessarily endow Leopold with the same heroic

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<sup>21</sup> Attempting to catalogue the profusion of permutations of Leopold's first name and surname is far beyond my present scope, but the abundance of such examples should be noted, for "The adventures of the name Bloom itself constitute almost a separate voyage as it steers among Bloom the dentist, Bloomusalem, Bloombella, and other variants..." (Ellmann 1977, 13). Mark André Singer has catalogued the myriad of variations upon the name Dublin in Joyce's works, a truly fascinating array of permutations (2002).

status as Odysseus and Achilles, for Joyce may be simply making fun of his own hero.

Claire Culleton discusses why this might be the case:

Often selecting names that carry literary or cultural echoes, names that give the reader a false lead, names that, in their very precocity, tease the reader into misappropriating an otherwise good hunch, Joyce manipulates the reader unwillingly to participate in the name game. Names are rarely to be trusted in Joyce....Just when a name seems propitious, just when a name would seem to be working for a character, Joyce creates an opposite effect, mocking, at various points in his texts, **the magic of onomancy**, while using it to his advantage at other places...  
(Culleton 22, emphasis added)

Joyce's title itself operates through the magic of onomancy by compelling readers to try to comprehend what names indicate both explicitly and implicitly. In so doing, Joyce is emulating the same magic of onomancy that Homer generated in his title and in hero's name.

Joyce perhaps first confronted the magic of onomancy in his own life, in the name of his wife, Nora Barnacle. Brenda Maddox states, "The homage to Nora's surname, and by extension to geese and seabirds, can be found throughout Joyce's work" (Maddox 1988, 380; see further Robert Day 1975). The meaning of Penelope's name has been a puzzle since antiquity. Recently, Olga Levianouk explores how her name recalls the halcyon and the nightingale, while also reinforcing the solar theme which Douglas Frame has proven is so pivotal for the *Odyssey* (Frame 1978, Levianouk 1999). Penelope's attachment to the geese in her dream in Book 19 may serve to illustrate how she shares such vigilance, prudence, and fidelity with the geese

who are her namesake (Levianouk 1999, 97; also see Pratt 1994, 149-151).<sup>22</sup> Paul Friedrich makes a compelling case for the critical role of birds in the *Odyssey*, a role which extends far beyond that of the geese and is more pivotal than most scholars have ever acknowledged.<sup>23</sup> The avian intersection in the meaning of these feminine names connote an intense and complex intertextual resonance, while also exposing the degree to which Joyce incorporated the autobiographical in his work.<sup>24</sup> The lion became Joyce's point of intersection between Penelope, Odysseus, and the Blooms in the realm of naming. Nora knew that her Jim loved lions, commenting "I often think he must like the cemetery he is in. It is near the zoo and you can hear the lions roar" (Maddox 362). But, she remembered after his death, he did not like flowers (Maddox 362). That Joyce put the name of the lion into his hero is then not so surprising, given its Homeric relevance and his own affinity for lions. But the surname Bloom of course

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Friedrich claims her name derives from a word for "duck or wild goose" (Friedrich 1997, 313; see his citations to Frisk (1960) and Kretschmer). Helen's name also indicates a similar connection to the sun (Skutsch 1987, 189; see his full exegesis on how Helen's name is connected to her nature).

<sup>23</sup> Paul Friedrich alerts us to the significance of different kinds of birds mentioned in different contexts throughout the *Odyssey*, proving how integral a role the avian plays in giving meaning to the action while reinforcing the themes of the entire poem (1997). He begins by announcing that the *Odyssey* "identifies or at least names 21 kinds of birds (13 at the [sub]specific level), of which some, like the nightingale and the bearded vulture, contribute strikingly rich threads to an extraordinary cultural and anthropological web...inform[ing] us just how an avian symbolism permeates much of the *Odyssey* and at times constitutes points of gist" (Friedrich 1997, 306). He concludes "Birds in Homer project or represent emotional states and processes (organized according to a folk psychological code) without which any generic interpretation of Homeric (ethno)psychology must be seen as deficient" (Friedrich 1997, 316).

<sup>24</sup> See Morris Beja (2002) and Ira Nadel (2002), in particular. The numerous mentions of geese in relation to the issue of adultery and fidelity is very notable; see *U* 11.874-877, 16.1393-1399 and pp. 272-277.



calls flowers immediately to mind, and Nora's memory of Joyce's distaste for flowers leads me to inquire next what other significance the name Bloom might possess.

#### THE SURNAME BLOOM AND THE ENDURANCE OF THE IRON-LIKE HERO

The surname Bloom is the quintessential example of how Joyce depends upon the magic of onomancy to reinforce the intertextual echo with Homer that he is cultivating, and *Ulysses* proclaims how that is the case: "Bloom (properly so dubbed)..." (*U* 16.1307). Leopold's surname affirms the identity of name and person that is found in Homer while managing to hint at some mystical connection between Leopold and Odysseus. Leopold's last name may seem to provoke a crisis of uncertainty, because Bloom is an adopted name which appears to hide his racial heritage and conceal his identity.<sup>25</sup> Yet Bloom's name is less of an imposture than it first appears. Consider these two entries in Patrick Hanks' and Flavia Hodges'

*Dictionary of Surnames:*

**Bloom** 1. Jewish (Ashkenazic): Anglicized spelling of BLUM. 2. English: metonymic occupational name for an iron worker, from ME *blome* ingot of iron (OE *blōma*). The mod, Eng. word *bloom* flower came into Eng. from ON in the 13<sup>th</sup> cent., but probably did not give rise to any surnames.

**Blum** Jewish (Ashkenazic): ornamental name from Yid. Blum flower (Ger. Blume).

Vars: Blume, Bluhm, Bloom.

(Hanks and Hodges 58)

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<sup>25</sup> Culleton explains why, after quoting the moment in the "Circe" episode when Bloom is told: "No, Leopold. Name and memory solace thee not" (*U* 14.1074). "Bloom, of course, has no *real* name to solace him, since by deedpoll his father changed the family name from Virag to Bloom (*U* 17.1866-1867). Bloom's surname is a fraud" (Culleton 61).

Culleton also comments that “*Virag* means *flower* in Hungarian” (Culleton 26). Thus the meaning of the name Bloom as what a flower does retains the meaning of its Hungarian predecessor, while its derivation from the Middle English meaning “ingot of iron” adds a new element. These two coexisting meanings of Leopold’s surname connect him with his Homeric namesake in a very specific way, while also establishing the Jewish origin of his adopted name. But does iron arouse any intertextual echoes? Does iron have any Homeric significance?

Indeed it does. Odysseus is the man with a heart of iron; Telemachus tells Menelaus that nothing had warded off destruction for his father, “not even though the heart within him was certainly as hard as iron” (*Od.* 4.293). At this point, Telemachus praises the strength of his father’s heart, even while he mourns the fact that he believes that a heart of iron was not enough to save Odysseus. Actually, Odysseus’ iron-like heart does sustain him, and his comrades remark upon his resilience and his resistance to fatigue and suffering. When Odysseus does not want to land at the island of Helios due to Kirke’s and Teiresias’ warnings not to eat the oxen of the sun, Odysseus’ comrade Eurylochus tells him:

Hard you are, Odysseus; for in your case, your strength far surpasses others, and you are never weary in your limbs. Really, you must be wholly made of iron, since you will not let your comrades, overwhelmed with exhaustion and fatigue, set foot on shore, where on this sea-girt island we might once again make a satisfying meal, but just as we are, you order us to wander through the swift night, being driven away from the island over the violet sea.  
(*Od.* 12.279-285)

Moreover, Odysseus shares this iron-like capacity for endurance with Penelope. Upon his return, while Penelope is still suspicious and uncertain of his identity, Odysseus tells her:

no other woman would harden her heart this way,  
standing apart from her husband who after so many  
terrible toils has returned in the twentieth year to his  
fatherland. So come, nurse, make me a bed, so that I  
may lay down all alone, for the heart in her breast is  
indeed of iron.  
(*Od.* 23.168-172)

The verb that I have translated as “harden” (τλάω) usually means to endure. Here Penelope strengthens her heart, shoring up her determination, so as not to yield too quickly in case Odysseus is not himself but someone trying to deceive her. The iron-like strength of her heart helps her to protect herself.<sup>26</sup>

This hardness of heart is also averred to in the *Iliad*, but not always as a trait worthy of excellence. When Patroclus begs Achilles for mercy, asking not that his life be spared but that Achilles permit his body to be cremated, Achilles refuses, and so Patroclus tells him, “Your heart is of iron” (*Il.* XXI.357). Achilles’ iron heart is another symptom of his complete lack of pity and mercy of which Apollo complained (*Il.* XXIV.39-45). Kalypso’s declaration that the heart in her breast is not of iron, but has mercy and pity, also links these two concepts (*Od.* 5.190-191). In contrast to Achilles, his father Priam has the same hardness of heart that Odysseus and Penelope display. When Zeus sends Iris as a messenger to Priam to tell him to take Achilles gifts and ransom his son Hector’s body, his wife Hecabe tells him, “Of iron surely is your heart” (*Il.* XXIV.205). After Priam actually kisses the hands of his son’s killer,

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<sup>26</sup> Telemachus also notices the hardness of her heart, but likens it to stone, not iron (*Od.* 23.103).

Achilles expressed his admiration for the strength it must take to do so with the identical words to Priam (*Il.* XXIV.521). In these examples, the ability to endure tremendous suffering is associated with having a heart like iron. But for Achilles, having a heart of iron represents a shameful lack of compassion, whereas in the cases of Penelope, Priam, and Odysseus, it indicates an admirable insistence upon endurance. The lion simile characterizing Achilles only emphasizes how Achilles' inflexibility fuels his cruelty (*Il.* XXIV.39-45), while the lion similes characterizing Odysseus depict him seeking survival and just revenge. For Odysseus, Penelope, and Priam, the inexorability that makes them like iron benefits them by instilling in them the strength to endure, whereas for Achilles, that same iron-like obstinacy fosters the wrong goals.

Thus the unusual capacity for endurance which Leopold shares with Odysseus, Penelope, Achilles, and Priam is emphasized by the etymology of his surname Bloom. Leopold's new family surname retains its Judaism and preserves the meaning of the old name Virag, while adding a new dimension of meaning that identifies its possessor with iron. The iron quality of Odysseus' and Leopold's characters must not be denied. The many humiliations that Odysseus endures at the hands of the suitors before he identifies himself (*Od.* Books 15-22) find their parallel in the silence of Leopold, who brushes the potted meat from Molly's assignation with Boylan out of his bed without a word. Leopold simply finds "some crumbs, some flakes of potted meat, recooked, which he removed" (*U* 17.2124-2125). Both Odysseus and Leopold sustain enormous pain for the sake of a greater goal. Although their pain assumes different forms, their goal in enduring it is the same: the preservation of their homes and marriages. They persevere only due to the iron-like power of their self-mastery and self-control. Being

like iron indicates their tenacity, not any lack of compassion. Significantly, the Butcher and Lang translation was entirely adequate for Joyce to craft this affinity with iron and with lions. Joyce needed no Greek to develop this intertextual echo.

Such an iron-like intransigence and lion-like resolve seems to contradict the literal English meaning of Leopold's surname, which might imply that Bloom somehow blooms during *Ulysses*. Molly notices this meaning of her surname: "you're looking blooming Josie used to say after I married him" (*U* 18.843). Odysseus too blooms in a sense when Athena pours beauty over him to restore him to his former appearance during his reunion with Penelope, and "from his head his hair flowed in curls like the bloom of a hyacinth flower" (*Od.* 23.156-157). Bloom's chosen pseudonym is Henry Flower, so his own alter ego's name as well as his surname both elicit similar connotations. Whether Bloom is in his bloom, past his bloom, or has a "womanly bloom" (*U* 14.676), Culleton implies that the name Flower is a pun in the Greek spirit that Farron discusses, because Bloom gives himself a name that describes who he is and how he behaves.<sup>27</sup> Joyce creates an intriguing paradox with his hero's name: he is the man of iron, bold, like a lion, who nonetheless blooms.<sup>28</sup> The active

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<sup>27</sup> Culleton writes: "Flower is a name that typifies Bloom's character. It is a name that is appropriate, but it is also a name that demands to be considered specifically because it is self-generated" (Culleton 27). She comments further on Bloom's pseudonym: "Henry is a German name, a name that traditionally means ruler of the house... Bloom uses the flower metaphor for his genitals, but the flower is usually the metaphor for the female pudendum... The name Henry Flower allows Bloom the fantasy of being the dominating, sexual, virile ruler of the house while at the same time it admits to the unlikelihood of such" (Culleton 27).

<sup>28</sup> For another perspective on flowering and blooming, consider Derek Attridge's proposition: "Leopold Bloom's phrase 'language of flow' (*U* 11.298)... alerts us to the fact—otherwise obscured by our rush from signifier to signified—that the word spelled 'flower' can also mean 'one who flows.' As we have seen, Henry Flower is also a flow-er; and Molly Bloom in 'Penelope,' although she is

and passive character of Odysseus' name, along with its attendant contradictions, are all captured in the name Leopold Bloom.

#### THE MANY MYSTICAL PROMISES OF NAMING

Now, if we are to recognize fully how Joyce's title depends upon the power of onomancy, we must examine the subtitle of *Ulysses*, observed by Paula Froula:

Tossed off as bawdy wordplay in a private letter and veiled in Italian and Triestine dialect, the only subtitle Joyce ever (to my knowledge) gave *Ulysses* has gone virtually unremarked...Ellmann notes that the Italian 'Ulisse' ossia 'Sua Mara Grega' means literally 'Ulysses' or 'His Greek Mother,' thus a comic glance at Homer, but the Triestine epithet means 'His whore of a mother.'  
(Froula 87, 274)<sup>29</sup>

Joyce's subtitle, although it does not appear in the text, refers more to Molly than to anyone else. Molly realizes this and protests, "can you feel him trying to make a whore of me what he never will" (*U* 740).<sup>30</sup> Froula explains why the name Joyce gives her partially succeeds in that aim:

Molly's...nickname, the OED notes, is 'occasionally applied to a prostitute.'...In Marion/Molly, Joyce found both a proper name replete with autobiographical, theological, and literary associations and a cunningly

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usually discussed by critics as a flow-er, is also a flower, a flower of the mountain" (Attridge 1989, 560).

<sup>29</sup> She quotes Ellmann's translation of Joyce's Italian and Triestine dialect, *SL* 275-277.

<sup>30</sup> On Molly's awareness of her creator and her admonitions to him, see Chapter Two, pp. 89-103.

common noun for his *putana madonna* or  
whore/virgin/mother...  
(Froula 88, 170)<sup>31</sup>

Froula then concludes that the unifying characteristics of the various names Joyce chooses throughout his works suggest that all heroes are mystically connected, writing,

...the names of Bloom's and Stephen's mothers (Ellen Higgins, Mary/May Goulding) recall those of the quasiautobiographical Gabriel Conroy's (Ellen) and, of course, of Joyce's (Mary), suggesting the psychohistorical identity of all of these heroes.  
(Froula 169)

From this perspective, then, Ulysses is Leopold is Molly is Odysseus is Joyce: Ulysses is the hero in all of us, the hero we have been, the hero we may yet become. Joyce makes himself one of his own heroes by inserting himself into his own text with Molly's plea to him: "O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh" (*U* 18.1128-9). Further, he recalled a dream in which he gave a young woman a letter he had pseudonymously signed *Ulysses*, (Maddox 186, *JJII* 548) and signed another letter "Stephen Daedalus" (Ellmann *JJII* 154, *Letters I*, 54). Froula notes the effect of the identification Joyce fosters between himself and his characters:

the texts at moments explicitly assert this continuity between Joyce-the-artist and his characters...Much is at stake in the jocoserious self-irony of these performative self-representations, for, far from comfortably distancing the artist (and by extension his readers) from his characters, as pure irony would do, it unsettlingly implicates him—and with him, his readers—in his culturally derived personae and the critique they set in motion.  
(Froula 2)

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<sup>31</sup> Molly doesn't like her name and remarks, "my mother whoever she was might have give me a nicer name the Lord knows after the lovely one she had Lunita Laredo" (*U* 18.846-847).

By alluding to his own identification with the name of his book and with his characters, Joyce challenges his readers to consider if a hero by any other name is still a hero, and perhaps the same hero at that. The mysticism that Joyce appreciated in Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, which previously seemed to defy explanation, now seems to explain itself if we suppose that Joyce's mystical sense of the fundamental equivalence of all heroes on the journey of the soul is betrayed by the names that he selects.

Consequently, one is led to wonder if Odysseus and Leopold are actually the same hero. *Ulysses* itself offers some evidence that Leopold is Odysseus reborn in the Ithaca section:

Would the departed never nowhere nohow reappear?

Ever he would wander, selfcompelled, to the extreme limit of his cometary orbit, beyond the fixed stars and variable suns and telescopic planets, astronomical waifs and strays, to the extreme boundaries of space, passing from land to land, among peoples, amid events. Somewhere imperceptibly he would hear and somehow reluctantly, suncompelled, obey the summons of recall. Whence, disappearing from the constellation of the Northern crown **he would somehow reappear reborn above delta** in the constellation of Cassiopeia and after incalculable eons of peregrination return an estranger avenger, a wrecker of justice on malefactors, a dark crusader, a sleeper reawakened...

(*U* 17.2011-2023, emphasis added)

Has Odysseus reappeared reborn after incalculable eons of peregrination as Leopold Bloom? It seems a logical conclusion, especially after the preceding discussion of the odd concordances between Joyce's and Homer's names, which are nothing short of epiphanic and mystical in their impact. Littmann and Schweighauser view the effect of various astronomical allusions, including this one, as proof of metempsychosis and



discuss how this delta, the brightest star in a constellation, plays a substantial role in *Ulysses*.<sup>32</sup> It is mentioned as having appeared: “about the period of the birth of William Shakespeare over delta in the recumbent neversetting constellation of Cassiopeia...” (*U* 17.1121-1123), and other stars appear in relation to the births of Stephen and Leopold and the birth and death of Rudy (*U* 17.1123-1136). That Joyce includes “Patrick W. Shakespeare” (*U* 12.190-191) in his list of “heroes and heroines of antiquity” (*U* 12.176), as Culleton observes, “cleverly merging his own nameling, Patrick W. Joyce, with the name of the Elizabethan bard, once again suggesting the Irishness of the next Shakespeare” (Culleton 19) only increases our commitment to the idea that Joyce’s title *Ulysses* is his taciturn endorsement of the possibility that those heroes and heroines of antiquity have already returned. Delta is also a mathematical symbol for change, representing the changes Ulysses undergoes, Ulysses who as Odysseus lost his lambda to become Odysseus in Homer, only to regain his lambda as

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<sup>32</sup> Mark E. Littmann and Charles A. Schweighauser examine the proliferation of astronomical references in *Ulysses* and conclude their analysis by stating that “Joyce allows astronomy to enunciate...the apotheosis of Leopold Bloom...” justifying their assertion that “Bloom has returned to his home, to the delta of Cassiopeia, Shakespeare’s home...This is a book about metempsychosis. Bloom is Shakespeare” (Littmann 244, 243). They observe that Stephen has specifically thought of “the delta of Cassiopeia” earlier in the day in relation to his theory of metempsychosis and discusses the star that rose at Shakespeare’s birth and “shone over delta in Cassiopeia, the recumbent constellation which is the signature of his initial in the stars” (*U* 9.930-931; also see *U* 3.410). Further, they state that “Cassiopeia is a fine W, for William Shakespeare” (Littmann 239) and that “both Bloom and Stephen are associated with another triangle: the delta of Cassiopeia...Stephen’s Greek last name, Dedalus, begins with a delta” (Littmann 241). The Greek letter delta, the delta of Cassiopeia, the idea of the trinity, parallax, and metempsychosis all seem to be connected by Joyce’s naming of his heroes and his detailing of astronomical events. “The apathy of the stars” (*U* 17.2226) is countered by the vitality of the stars’ symbolism. Further see John Gordon (1994, 2002), who has taken the command of the text, “Read the skies” (*U* 9.939), to heart and examined the tremendous importance of the sky and its significance for what goes on beneath it.

Joyce's Ulysses reborn over delta. How striking it is that the mythical Olyseus is reborn Odysseus with a delta in Homer's poem, while in *Ulysses*, Leopold's name begins with the original lambda of Olyseus and ends with another lambda followed by the delta of Odysseus, itself tracing a cycle of rebirth. The transformation that delta indicates in both the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* provides some substantiation of the many longstanding suspicions that *Ulysses* documents the existence of metempsychosis.<sup>33</sup>

The correlations incited by my comparison of naming in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* far surpass any that Joyce could have intended, given his lack of Greek. Whatever reappearing reborn above delta may mean, it cannot be denied that Joyce delights in the magic of onomancy, and that such delight was one that he shared with Homer. Homer's zeal for paranomasia in relation to what Stanford called "Significant Names"<sup>34</sup> is matched by Joyce. Homer and Joyce seek to insinuate various meanings subtly into their texts with the allusions, themes, and etymological associations provoked by their name choices. Much of their shared zest for cunning onomancy derives from the fact that they utilize names that reveal as much as they conceal. Joyce's title and names, like Homer's, function as a veil. To penetrate that veil,

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<sup>33</sup> On metempsychosis in *Ulysses*, see Fritz Senn in particular (1992). On metempsychosis in ancient Greece, see Herbert Long (1948), who finds that only two out of three beliefs concerning the soul which are necessary for metempsychosis are present in Homer: first, "that the soul can exist apart from the body" and second, that soul "can inhabit a body other than human" (Long 2). But "the third of the necessary presuppositions for metempsychosis, that the soul must be the personal element in every being, is not to be found in Homer, nor Hesiod....Pythagoras...is the most likely claimant to the credit for originating belief in a personal soul" (Long 4). The doctrine of metempsychosis may then have found its seeds in Homer, but by no means can it be called a doctrine of Homer.

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 1 of the present chapter and W. B. Stanford (1959, xxi-xxii, and 1972, chapter 7).

ancient and modern audiences alike must come to recognize that naming is a pretense that can deceive even while it also serves as an accurate expression of identity. We are well-advised to heed Stephen's warning that "Sounds are impostures...like names" (*U* 16.362-3). The mysticism that pleased Joyce can still be appreciated in the imposture of naming in which both he and Homer indulge themselves. The imposture of the name endures from Homer to Joyce, leaving readers to seek out Ulysses in all guises, forms, and names. The onomastic mysticism which Joyce crafted only reinforces readers' sense of the importance of the *Odyssey* for Joyce's novel. Moreover, the onomastic mysticism which we just encountered at every turn lends a new weight to Leopold's surmise: "Nothing new under the sun" (*U*13.1104-5) and to Stephen's gnomic aphorism: "As it was in the beginning, is now" (*U* 2.200-201).

Nonetheless, we are still somewhat at a loss to ascertain conclusively what onomastic mysticism might mean. One of Molly's pronouncement offers perhaps the most incisive criticism of Joyce's evocation of his Homeric intertext and encapsulates the frustration it engenders: "if I asked him hed say it was from the Greek leave us as wise as we were before" (*U* 18. 241-242). Both Joyce and Leopold do precisely that, Leopold in response Molly's question about metempsychosis (*U* 4.341) and Joyce with his title *Ulysses*. Perhaps we should not then be surprised when we confront the truth of Fritz Senn's observation that in Joyce, "Potent naming and ineffability go together" (Senn 1995, 10). Even Jenny Strauss Clay's study of two names in the *Odyssey* reinforces the idea of a divine realm of knowledge unavailable to mortals.<sup>35</sup> Hence, like Plato's Socrates, we may become wiser only because we recognize how

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<sup>35</sup> "*Moly* and *Planktai* reveal the absolute superiority of divine to mortal knowledge, and the presence of these peculiarly divine names points to the existence of a sphere of knowledge accessible solely to the gods" (Clay 1972, 131).

much we do not know. Onomastic mysticism only fuels our suspicions that Joyce's entire book is a testimony to the possibilities of rebirth, an endorsement of metempsychosis as the way of things for human beings.<sup>36</sup>

## REBIRTH AND RESURRECTION IN HOMER AND JOYCE

Surely now we have arrived at a notion of rebirth which, despite how Joyce seems to be cultivating and fostering its credibility at every opportunity, stands in direct contradiction to Homer's view of life and death. Any intimation of rebirth in Joyce must be his own original innovation, one which finds no grounding whatsoever in Homer. The usual understanding of the Homeric conception of death as a one-way trip to Hades is familiar and entrenched; as Gregory Nagy explains, "On the surface, then, it seems as if the Homeric poems point to Hades as the ultimate destination of the *psukhe*....we are left with the initial impression that the dead person stays dead forever" (Nagy 1980, 162, 163). In traditional interpretations, the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  that Odysseus wins in *Od.* 1.5 goes to Hades upon the moment of death, and as Nagy concedes, it seems as if the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  goes to Hades and there it stays. One life may be all the hero lives, and then the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  would seem to dwell in Hades ever after.

Because Homer depicts the journey of the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  to Hades, the argument that the world of Homer's *Odyssey* is governed by rebirth may initially seem altogether

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<sup>36</sup> Joyce's works as a whole have been thought to endorse rebirth, leading Ellmann to comment "That the dead do not stay buried is, in fact, a theme of Joyce from the beginning to the end of his work" (*JIII* 244) and Sebastian Knowles to decree vehemently, "Bringing back the dead is Joyce's obsession" (Knowles 57). Oddly enough, perhaps Jamesy alerts us to the task at hand in *Ulysses*: "Didn't I tell you? As true as I'm drinking this porter if he was at his last gasp he'd try to convince you that dying was living" (*U* 12.1362-1363).

outrageous. Yet the idea of rebirth is not one that is foreign to the Greek world: even Leopold knows metempsychosis is a Greek word, although it is not one that even occurs in Homeric Greek.<sup>37</sup> The secrecy and ambiguity of the doctrine of rebirth has long been acknowledged and substantiated. The mystery religions following Homer were subsumed by the same ambiguity, although most scholars agree that rebirth was one of the doctrines of the religion.<sup>38</sup> But much of the confusion arising from Homer's terms for soul (ψυχή), heart (θυμός), and mind (νόος), which I first mentioned and addressed in Chapter Two, can be resolved if we realize how Homer's conception of life and death is actually gesturing toward the possibility of rebirth. For Homer, the afterlife may actually be much more than a desolate end in Hades, a position which Gregory Nagy supports in his analysis of Patroklos' cremation in the *Iliad*:

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<sup>37</sup> George Foot Moore argues that through the Orphic religion, from the sixth century B.C. on, "...probably, the idea of metempsychosis, at least in a religious connection, was introduced into Greece. The view of the Greeks themselves, that Pythagoras, with whose name the belief is peculiarly associated, appropriated the doctrine from the Egyptians, must be rejected; for among the many and confused notions of the ancient Egyptians about the hereafter, the transmigration of souls does not figure" (Moore 25). Perhaps Homer, not Orphic religion, may actually have planted the first seeds of this idea of rebirth in his poems. On Joyce's incorporation of the Orphic in *Ulysses*, see John Gordon (1985).

<sup>38</sup> The insinuation of the mysteries into *Ulysses* has been ably proven by Martha Carpentier (1990) and Marsanne Brammer (1996). Carpentier's discussion of Bloom as hierophant (*U* 9.1221) and "the Eleusinian ritual, symbolically enacted by Bloom and Stephen in 'Ithaca'" (Brammer 225), in conjunction with Brammer's understanding of "'Kirke' as a mock initiation imitat[ing] the epiphanic design of a mystery initiation" (Brammer 119) bears out the ways in which Joyce incorporated the secrecy and solemnity of the Eleusinian mysteries into his novel. On the secrecy of the mysteries, see Brammer (118-122), who discusses why such an initiation might lead to a moment of mystical knowledge and insight (120). On mystery cults, see Joseph Campbell, ed. (1955) and Walter Burkert (1990). On mysticism in Joyce, see Jackson Cope (1970), Colleen Jaurrette (1991), Jack Vespa (1994), and Marsanne Brammer (1996, esp. 120-121).

The comparative evidence reveals that the cremation of Patroklos is a traditional theme founded upon concepts of afterlife beyond Hades. Such concepts...are overtly attested in Indic institutions, especially as represented in prayers to the god Savitr and in rituals involving the so-called Indic Fire....Yet the divergence [of Homer's conception of death from the Indic formulation in which consciousness and the faculties become eventually reintegrated with the body by way of cremation] lies not in what the Greek formulation says about the afterlife but rather in what it leaves unsaid....**Beneath the surface, we find an echo of a Homeric hero's afterlife.**

(Nagy 1980, 161, 163, 187, emphasis added)

That echo of an afterlife may validate the prospect of rebirth in Homer. Nagy further observes how ψυχή is never mentioned by Homer in the context of a fainting episode and suggests that it is avoided for the sake of avoiding any confusion between syncope and any potential resurrection:

There may be a more sublime reason for the avoidance of the word *psukhe* in Homeric descriptions of a hero's revival. As we have noted, the synonymy of *thumos/menos/psukhe* at the moment of death implies an affinity of *psukhe* with consciousness—an affinity which is then suspended in Hades. If it is simply a matter of suspension, however, then the door is left open for imagining an eventual restoration of synonymy, with all three words *thumos/menos/psukhe* once again capable of designating the identity of the deceased; the setting of such a restoration is, I submit, the eventual reintegration of *psukhe* and body, when the deceased comes back to life. In that case the avoidance of *psukhe* in descriptions of a hero's revival from a swoon would be motivated by a need to keep this theme distinct from the theme of a hero's revival from death.

(Nagy 1980, 164-165)

Nagy's insights resolve the variations of vocabulary in Homer's descriptions of syncope and death. When a man dies, he loses his θυμός and his soul and becomes a soul in Hades, whereas when he faints, his θυμός is regathered again in his flesh. If

his ψυχή were said to return to him instead, then he would be reborn. Homer avoids mentioning ψυχή to describe reviving from a faint in order not to confuse the idea of rebirth and the regathering of θυμός in flesh after a faint.<sup>39</sup> The ψυχή can then be interpreted to be the form of a person, the form one retains in both life and death. Stephen's words express this idea: "My soul walks with me, form of forms" (*U* 3.279-80). The repeated assertion that human beings only live one life, the same premise most suppose Homer to depict, "One life is all. One body. Do. But do" (*U* 9.653, 11.907-908), is called into question by its repetition in reference to Stephen and then Leopold in relation to walking. "He walks" directly precedes these words in "Skylla and Charybdis", while "In Gerard's rosary of fetter lane he walks, greyedauburn" precedes them in "Nausicaa", recalling Homer's epithet for grey-eyed Athena. Stephen's discussion of the "mystical estate of fatherhood" (*U* 9. 838) in the context of his discussion of Shakespeare becomes even more critical, for now "Every life is many days, day after day. We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves" (*U* 9.1044-1046) becomes a much more serious proposition regarding rebirth. Despite Stephen's own dismissal of his theory (*U* 9.1064-1066), he is wrestling with its veracity quite sincerely: "I believe O Lord, help my unbelief. That is, help me to believe or unbelieve?" (*U* 9.1078-1079). Joyce's novel forces his readers into the same crisis of belief, or of unbelief, as the case may be.

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<sup>39</sup> Christine Caswell confirms the veracity of this idea: "Although *thumos/menos/psyche* are functional synonyms at the moment of loss of consciousness, *thumos* and *psyche* diverge depending on whether revival or death occurs subsequently: *thumos* is the element which returns to the body upon revival; *psyche*, on the other hand, is that which survives death; and *menos* apparently can be connected only with a living body, like *thumos*" (Caswell 2-3). Further, see Nagy's citation of Böhme (Nagy 1980, 163) and Alfons Nehring (1947).

The fact that mysticism is what pleased Joyce about the hero Ulysses now gains even more significance. Mysticism is not a concept commonly applied to Homer's *Odyssey*. Yet the source of the mysticism that Joyce appreciated may lie in the action of Homer's story itself, an action that distinguishes Odysseus from all other heroes: Odysseus has returned from death and returned home. He knows life and death like no other hero ever has, because he is a hero of two kinds of νόστος, both the return from Hades and the return home. His comrades return from Hades but they do not return home, so Odysseus is in the privileged position of knowing death and life and the meaning of return in a way that no other hero possibly can. In this sense, the theme of return is surprisingly compatible with mysticism and with the notion of rebirth, as the work of Douglas Frame establishes. Nagy summarizes Frame's conclusions: "the *Odyssey* itself is built on the symbolism of rebirth from death, as visualized in the dynamics of sunrise after sunset and as verbalized in the *nóos/nóstos* of Odysseus himself" (Nagy 1980, 165). Frame connects the etymology of the Greek word νόος, mind, with the Greek verb νέομαι, return home:

...the connection still felt by Homer between the 'wiliness' and the 'wandering' of Odysseus goes back to a fundamental connection between 'mind' and 'returning home,' and that the relation between what Odysseus 'is' and what he 'does' has a solid basis in the history of the Greek language.  
(Frame ix)

Yet what is it that Odysseus does? The ambiguity of his heroic task in *Od.* 1.5, "ἄρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων" (*Od.* 1.5), which I examined extensively, makes it very difficult to understand precisely what Odysseus does in the poem and therefore what kind of a hero he is. One of Odysseus' accomplishments, however, is quite indubitable: he returns from death. Douglas Frame concurs: "There



could be no more emphatic evidence for a “return from death” than the Nekyia”

(Frame 38). Yet Frame also wonders about the meaning of *Od.* 1.5, asking,

Does the expression ‘winning his life’ imply ‘winning his life back again’ or merely ‘remaining alive’? Such ambiguity could well be the reflection of a traditional ‘return from death’ motif.

(Frame 20)

The most important implication of *Od.* 1.5 thus emerges: is Homer depicting Odysseus not only as a hero of return but as a hero of a particular kind of return, a return from death? For Homer, by defining Odysseus as a hero of return, may also be creating the possibility of as a hero of rebirth.

Many rebirths of the hero are portrayed in the Homeric poems that occur during a single lifetime.<sup>40</sup> Frame further asserts that the root of νόστος and νέομαι itself connotes the idea of rebirth: “The Indo-European root *nes-* meant not only ‘return from death,’ but also, implicitly, ‘return from darkness.’ The same composite meaning was also present in the Greek root, on the evidence of the *nóstos* of Odysseus” (Frame 21). Return somehow conveys the sense of a return to light and life,

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<sup>40</sup> As Frame explains, “That the return from Ogygia has been poetically conceived as a return from death is very clear....The name of Odysseus’ captor for seven years, related as it is to the verb *kalupto*, suggests both ‘darkness’ and ‘death’” (Frame 73, 21). He notes the uses of the verb *nostesein* (*Od.* 10.284-5), commenting, “Homer seems to realize that merely emerging alive from Kirke’s palace Odysseus accomplishes a *nostos*, originally a ‘return to life’” (Frame 52). “It is well recognized that Priam’s ransom of Hector in *Iliad* 24 is represented as a journey to the underworld and a consequently ‘return to life’” (Frame 153). Rick Newton calls attention to another example of Odysseus’ possible rebirths at *Od.* 7.133-206, in which Homer’s “evocation of the birth process suggests a new beginning for the hero: his break with the imaginary world is complete....His return to the human world...reaffirms the value of human life, despite its sorrows and sufferings. Specifically, Odysseus’ rebirth implies a celebration of his own personal spirit. The hero who sits on the Ogygian shore and cries for home is not the hero known to Homer or his audience....As Odysseus enters the poem he buries any traits of diffidence which he exhibited when he was spiritually dead” (Newton 19).

making the idea of rebirth a very plausible and compelling one indeed. Frame argues, however, that Homer did not know of the etymological connotations of such words.<sup>41</sup> The most fascinating possibility provoked by Frame's work is the fact that although Homer did not consciously exploit the etymological connection between the words, his poems nevertheless illustrate that connection, and in so doing covertly express a vision of the cycle of life and death as a series of rebirths.

Frame discusses how subtle and hidden the connection between νόος and νέομαι is in the *Odyssey*, revealing how and why the idea of rebirth may be quite enigmatic and subtle as well.<sup>42</sup> Frame then concludes, "Just as the connection between *nóos* and *néomai* is only latent in the encounter with the Lotus-eaters, so is the idea that a *nóstos* was originally a 'return from death'" (Frame 36). In this perspective, *Od.* 1.5 assumes a new implication: Odysseus may win his own rebirth. For if *Od.* 1.5 hints that Odysseus can "win his life back again," as Frame suggests, while the comrades win "a return from death," that would imply that heroes might be able win νόος back from all kinds of deaths: from the loss of consciousness, from the cave of the Cyclops, from their visit to Hades, from Ogygia, and perhaps also from their own

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<sup>41</sup> "Homer no longer understood the connection between *nóos* and *néomai*. It is therefore expected that traditional material which preserved the etymological connection has been altered and obscured in Homer's own creation" (Frame 34-35).

<sup>42</sup> "In Book 9 Odysseus encounters the Lotus-eaters, whose food causes anyone who eats it to lose his desire to return home. This loss of desire is a kind of 'forgetfulness,' as is revealed by two closely related collocations, both in verse-final position: *nóstou te lathésthai*, 'to forget their homecoming,' in line 97 and '*nóstoio láthetai*,' that he might forget his homecoming, in line 102. What is suggested by the forms of *lanthánomai*, 'to forget,' in these collocations is that the loss of a 'return' is at the same time a loss of 'mind'" (Frame 35).

deaths. Heroes may then be able to return from Hades more than once. Is there anything in Homer's language to suggest this possibility?

Two different goddesses provide what may be encoded hints in that regard. Kirke appreciates how Odysseus and his comrades are all heroes of return by naming them all “δισθονέες” “dying twice” (*Od.* 12.22). Yet if their visit to Hades is construed as a death, they should only be once-died upon their return. Kirke's epithet may reflect her perspective as an immortal, in which she is immune to time and so refers to the visit to Hades and their eventual deaths all at once, although the latter death has not yet occurred. But her epithet might also be construed to mean that their own births indicate a death which preceded those births, so that the death which is yet to follow for Odysseus “out of the sea” would then be his third death, not his second. If one does not ascribe the epithet's meaning to reflect her transcendent view of time, Kirke seems to presume the men have died once already simply by virtue of being alive. The oddity of Kirke's label here reminds us of the cyclical nature of death and how uncertain we actually are about its mechanisms. If Kirke is averring to rebirth, the very subtlety of that allusion only reflects the subtlety with which it was promoted in antiquity, in Homer's poems, and even in Joyce's texts. Moreover, Persephone plays a critical role in the *Odyssey* and in our understanding of the avenue of rebirth that it leaves an open possibility.<sup>43</sup> Persephone is the one to give Teiresias νόος in Hades

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<sup>43</sup> Discussing the significance of the myths about principal goddesses of the Eleusinian cult, Demeter and Persephone, Walter Otto argues that Persephone is integral to the interrelation between life and death: “the sorrowful descent of the virginal Persephone [into Hades] *precedes* the introduction of grain raising. Only since Persephone has been wedded to Pluto, only since she has been Queen of the Dead, has there been harvesting and sowing. Death is prerequisite to growth of the grain... In birth itself, in the very act of procreation, death is at work. It is at the base of all new life...” (Otto 20). Carpentier explores Joyce's encounters with the Demeter/Persephone myth and with the mysteries in Roscher and others (Carpentier

(*Od.* 10.494). While all the rest of the ghosts (ψυχαί) in Hades drift voicelessly and witlessly, only Teiresias retains his power of mind and thought, but only through Persephone's beneficence. That she has this power in Homer is enormously important, because it implies that she may have the power to reintegrate the hero's parts and return him to life if she so desires. Persephone seems closest to being the goddess of rebirth in Homer, the one who determines who can function and return to life.

The power of Persephone may also be interpreted to prevent Odysseus from learning about rebirth during his visit to Hades. After Odysseus' many encounters with souls (ψυχαί), he waits for a long time, hoping that some souls (ψυχαί) of even older times may appear. But they never do, and Odysseus offers the reason why:

But I stayed right there, in the hope that some other hero-men might yet come, those who had perished earlier. And surely I still would have seen other men of that earlier time, whom I wished to see, Theseus and Perithoos, wonderful children of the gods. But before I could, the tribes of the dead gathered there with an awesome wail, and green fear seized me, lest upon me dread Persephone might send the head of the Gorgon, that dreadful beast, out of the house of Hades.  
(*Od.* 11.625-635)

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224-226). The influence of Helen Blavatsky and the doctrines of the Theosophists upon Joyce should not be ignored; as Brammer examines, the comment "A. E. the master mystic? That Blavatsky woman started it. She was a nice old bag of tricks" (*U* 7.784-785), combined with Ellmann's insistence that while Joyce might have remained somewhat skeptical, he was "genuinely interested in such Theosophical themes as cycles, reincarnation, the succession of gods and the eternal mother-faith that underlies all transitory religions" (*JIII* 99) supports her contention that "Joyce produces in 'Kirke' his own vaudevillian burlesque of the mysteries, working the myth, ritual, and symbology of Egyptian, Eleusinian, Mithraic, and Masonic rites into the very structural and thematic scaffolding on which the episode is staged" (Brammer 88). This sort of incorporation of religious ritual should not lead anyone to suppose that Joyce then necessarily ignored Christianity, as Michael O'Shea proves by exploring "the importance of [Catholic] liturgy as a device of character exposition" (O'Shea 184, 124).

Odysseus is seized with terror before he can see the souls (ψυχάι) of that earlier age. He assumes that they are there, but none of the tribes of the dead that he has so far witnessed are from that earlier age. His fear of Persephone drives him away before he can establish whether those souls (ψυχάι) who died long ago actually are still in Hades. The only souls (ψυχάι) Odysseus meets in Hades are those recently dead, perhaps existing in Hades in a kind of Homeric purgatory between one life and another. Odysseus does not realize it, but it is possible that those souls (ψυχάι) of an earlier age have already returned to the light of the sun again in a new incarnation. Odysseus' wait, and the absence of the souls (ψυχάι) of those heroes of earlier times, lends plausibility to the notion that Homer's poem at least creates the possibility of metempsychosis, unintentionally or not.

Furthermore, “θανάτῳ ἄγχιστα εἰκῶς” the “sleep most like to death” (*Od.* 13.80) which the Phaeacians cast upon Odysseus as they speed him home at long last might also contain some indication of rebirth, however concealed it may be. David Grene's concern that sleep and death cannot be alike because one can awake from sleep is remedied if one accepts that one might also awaken from death.<sup>44</sup> Another equally odd and disconcerting statement which might point toward precisely the same conclusion is made in “Cyclops” when the most significant part of the attire of the “sinewyaremd hero” is described: “From his girdle hung a row of seastones which jangled at every movement of his portentous frame and on these were graven with rude yet striking art the tribal images of **many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity**” (*U* 12.176, emphasis added). This girdle seems reminiscent of nothing that Odysseus ever wears. Rather, it recalls the shield of Achilles. Just what the shield of

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<sup>44</sup> Personal conversation, The University of Chicago, 9 January 1999.

Achilles means about the theme of the *Iliad* as a whole has been much examined and disputed.<sup>45</sup> Here Joyce creates another such dilemma for the reader. We receive, however, no information about the scenes' content like Homer provides about Achilles' shield (*Il.*18.32ff.). Instead, Joyce gives us a list of names, a list that purports to name many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity. Yet not everyone on the list is even Irish! Nevertheless, heroes and heroines of all sorts are included under this rubric, despite the fact that they seem neither Irish nor particularly ancient.

**many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity,**  
Cuchulin, Conn of hundred battles, Niall of nine hostages, Brian of Kincora, the ardra Malachi, Art MacMurragh, Shane O'Neill, Father John Murphy, Owen Roe, Patrick Sarsfield, Red Hugh O' Donnell, Red Jim MacDermott, Soggarth Eoghan O'Growney, Michael Dwyer, Francy Higgins, Henry Joy M'Cracken, Goliath, Horace Wheatley, Thomas Conneff, Peg Woffington, the Village Blacksmith, Captain Moonlight, Captain Boycott, Dante Alighieri, Christopher Columbus, S. Fursa, S. Brendan, Marshal MacMahon, Charlemagne, Theobald Wolfe Tone, the Mother of the Maccabees, the Last of the Mohicans, the Rose of Castile, the Man for Galway, The Man that Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo, The Man in the Gap, The Woman Who Didn't, Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, John L. Sullivan, Cleopatra, Savourneen Deelish, Julius Ceasar, Paracelsus, sir Thomas Lipton, William Tell, Michaelangelo Hayes, Muhammad, the Bride of Lammermoor, Peter the Hermit, Peter the Packer, Dark Rosaleen, Patrick W. Shakespeare, Brian Confucius, Murtagh Gutenberg, Patricio Valasquez, Captain Nemo, Tristan and Isolde, the first Prince of Wales, Thomas Cook and Son, the Bold Soldier Boy, Arrah na Pogue, Dick Turpin, Ludwig Beethoven, the Colleen Bawn,

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<sup>45</sup> Oliver Taplin argues that the shield "*makes us think about war and see it in relation to peace....we are made to contemplate the life that Achilles had renounced and the civilization that Troy will never regain....The shield of Achilles brings home the loss, the cost of the events in the Iliad*" (Taplin 1998, 110, further see his bibliographical references).

Waddler Healy, Angus the Culdee, Dolly Mount, Sidney Parade, Ben Howth, Valentine Greatrakes, Adam and Eve, Arthur Wellesley, Boss Croker, Herodotus, Jack the Giantkiller, Gautama Buddha, Lady Godiva, The Lily of Killarney, Balor of the Evil Eye, the Queen of Sheba, Acky Nagle, Joe Nagle, Alessandro Volta, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare.  
(*U* 12.151-205)

We can at least be certain that heroism for Joyce is yet again not circumscribed by gender or by class. Cleopatra and The Woman Who Didn't stand side by side on this list without any kind of qualification. Surely Gautama Buddha, Julius Caesar, Herodotus, Dante, and Gutenberg are not Irish heroes of antiquity; Cuchulin is more the kind of guy we would expect to be mentioned here, and he is indeed listed first (*U* 12.176). Ulysses and Leopold are noticeably absent from the list, yet this list is comprised only of "many," not all, such heroes, inviting us to seek the rest of the unnamed. Only if we subscribe to the idea of rebirth does this list begin to make any sense at all, for then we can assume that these heroes and heroines of antiquity just keep coming back in new incarnations with new names, hidden underneath the "rich incrustations of time" (*U* 12.1463-1464). Another mention of stones refers to Parnell:

Dead he wasn't. Simply absconded somewhere. The coffin they brought over was full of stones. He changed his name to De Wet, the Boer general...Highly unlikely of course there was even a shadow of truth in the stones and, even supposing, he thought a return highly inadvisable, all things considered.  
(*U* 16.13004-5, 1310-1312)

O rocks indeed! The false stones in the coffin place death in the realm of illusion and announce that resurrection, even a false one in a scheme like this, functions by changing one's name. The shadow of truth in Parnell's coffin stones may actually

emerge from the “graven seastones” who tell the story of life, death, and rebirth of heroes and heroines.

One permutation of the name Odysseus in *Ulysses* promotes the same suspicions.

...Bloom dissented tacitly from Stephen’s views on the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature. Bloom assented covertly to Stephen’s rectification of the anachronism involved in assigning the date of the conversion of the Irish nation to christianity from druidism by Patrick son of Calpornus, son of Potitus, son of **Odyssus**...

(*U* 17.29-30, emphasis added)

Joyce mimics the typical Homeric identification by patrilineal descent and then inserts the misspelled Greek name of the hero whose name has been at issue from the novel’s title onward as part of the evidence for Leopold’s covert assent to Stephen’s rectification of an anachronism! But Odysseus has lost his “e” and only appears in this distorted form; this fourth generation ancestor of the man “sent by pope Celestine in the year 432” (*U* 17.30-31) cannot be Homer’s historical Odysseus. But the notion that Odysseus, Olysses, Ulysses, and Odyssus might all “reappear reborn above delta” time and time again becomes even more intriguing, especially when Bloom is dissenting from “the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature” just before the introduction of the name Odyssus, mentioned in the context of the superannuated, provokes us to consider that likelihood all the more seriously. Odysseus’ lost epsilon in the new name Odyssus recalls the “e” in eternal, precisely the issue at stake.

Of course, the Homeric afterlife and the possibility of rebirth are shrouded in mystery. In no sense does Homer’s poem straightforwardly and unequivocally endorse the certainty of rebirth. Joyce’s *Ulysses* does not do so either; any endorsement of



rebirth in either text is only covert and clandestine. But *Ulysses* permits its heroine to tackle the issue directly. Molly is the one to pose the question of rebirth within *Ulysses*, asking her husband in all ignorance about the meaning of a word that she has encountered:

—Here, she said. What does that mean?  
He leaned downward and read near her polished thumbnail.  
—Metempsychosis?  
—Yes. Who’s he when he’s at home?  
—Metempsychosis, he said, frowning. It’s Greek: from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls.  
—O, rocks! She said. Tell us in plain words.  
(*U* 4.347-343)

Her exclamation “O rocks!” now can be recognized as a foreshadowing of her address “O Jamesy” (*U* 18.1128), reflecting her frustration with the elusiveness and power of her creator. Joyce’s book is his own response to Molly, while Leopold struggles to find “plain words” for Molly. Before responding to his wife, Leopold wonders about the nature of human existence and the order of things after death, especially in relation to the journey of poor Dignam’s soul:

Bone them young so they metempsychosis. That we live after death. Our souls. That a man’s soul after he dies, Dignam’s soul....  
(*U* 4.352-353)

Then Leopold remember the right term and answers Molly:

Reincarnation, that’s the word.  
—Some people believe, he said, that we go on living in another body after death, that we lived before. They call it reincarnation. That we all lived before on the earth thousands of years ago or some other planet. They say we have forgotten it. Some say they remember their past lives.  
The sluggish cream wound curdling spirals through her tea. Better remind her of the word:

metempsychosis. An example would be better. An example?  
(*U* 4.361-368)

So Leopold gropes for an example of metempsychosis for his wife. The chiasmic structure of the two sentences that begin and end with “better” demarcates Leopold’s thoughts, but it also creates a cyclical structure that reflects the cycle of life and death that Leopold is considering. Leopold considers quite seriously the possibility that there is more than one life and that the acts of one life have consequences in a future one: “If you do [eat beef] the eyes of that cow will pursue you through all eternity” (*U* 8.535-36).<sup>46</sup> He thinks rebirth is a definite possibility, and he is not as ignorant as we might first suspect on the topic: “Bloom’s serial explication of ‘metempsychosis,’ after only a brief moment of getting his thoughts together, is surprisingly accurate” (Senn 1992, 109). Senn argues that Bloom is not wrong to include animals and trees in the cycle of rebirth according to the Walker’s pronouncing dictionary quoted by Gerty MacDowell (*U* 13.342-43),

which reads: ‘The transmigration of the soul into the bodies of other animals, as taught by Pythagoras, and still believed in some parts of the East.’ So the idea of transformation into animals or plants traditionally can be evoked by the term.  
(Senn 1992, 109)

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<sup>46</sup> Intimations of Hinduism in *Ulysses* only enhance the attraction of the idea that it exemplifies rebirth. Julian Wasserman contends that Joyce relied upon “the worship of Shakti found in Hinduism” but he avoids discussion of rebirth, instead focusing on how Shakti might have influenced Joyce’s presentation of male-female relationships (1986). Further on Hindu echoes in *Ulysses*, see Suzette Henke, who concludes, “A Hindu belief in symbolic reincarnation must surely have appealed to Joyce’s protean imagination” (Henke 1986, 319).

For this reason Senn discounts McCarthy's claim that Bloom "makes a howling blunder" trying to clarify his definition.<sup>47</sup> Leopold's musings are not so silly or absurd after all, for even Stephen contemplates the possibility long before his argument about Hamlet in the library: "Their dog ambled about a bank of dwindling sand, trotting, sniffing on all sides. Looking for something lost in a past life" (*U* 2.332-333). Is this dog Argo? It could be. We simply cannot know, except that such a dog in a book with such a name invites us to entertain the possibility. Leopold's jumble of thoughts reflect the complexity of arriving at any resolution on the matter: "God made the country, man the tune. Met him pike hoses. Philosophy. O rocks!" (*U* 11.1162).

Hugh Kenner alludes to the possibility of Joyce's endorsement of metempsychosis by prefacing one of his books with the passage from the myth of Er in Book 10 of Plato's *Republic*, in which Odysseus chooses his next life.

And it was a sight worth seeing to behold several souls chose their lives. And a piteous and laughable and amazing sight it was also. The choice was mostly governed by what they had been accustomed to in their former life...

It so happened that the soul of Odysseus came forward to choose the very last of all. He remembered his former labours and had ceased from his ambition and so he spent a long time going round looking for the life of a private and obscure man. At last he found it lying about, ignored by everyone else; and when he saw it, he took it gladly, and said that he would have made the same choice if the lot had fallen to him first.

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<sup>47</sup> McCarthy quite properly notes that "metamorphosis is a theme already associated with Stephen Dedalus, both through the Ovidian reference in his surname and through his musings on supernatural metamorphosis (the Holy Ghost changing into a bird to impregnate Mary) and protean shape changing" (McCarthy 187, 23). Such changes of form are only a step away from the concept of the transmigration of souls.

(Plato, *Republic* X-620. Translated by A. D. Lindsay, Kenner 1987, epigraph)<sup>48</sup>

But Kenner never ventures to explain what Plato might have meant or how this passage is relevant to *Ulysses*, most likely because Leopold cannot be proven to be Odysseus reborn by means of textual evidence. Yet Joyce's clues in that regard encourage us to take that notion very seriously indeed. Joyce's title may comprise his oblique assertion that *Ulysses* enacts the example of metempsychosis that Molly requests from Leopold (*U* 4.331-343), by depicting how Leopold lives the life that Odysseus chose, the life of a private and ordinary citizen who minds his own business (“μνήμη δὲ τῶν προτέρων πόνον φιλοτιμίας λελωφηκυῖαν ζητεῖν περιοῦσαν χρόνον πολὺν βίον ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτου ἀπάγμονος” Plato 620 c, Ed. Gould). Joyce's title, combined with his depiction of Leopold Bloom, who appears like the quintessential private citizen who minds his own business, at least invites us to consider whether Leopold and Odysseus could be the same hero on the same journey of the soul (ψυχή). Maybe Ulysses is Odysseus is Leopold, reborn in Dublin. Maybe Joyce's title is a mystical title, indicating how Odysseus might “reappear reborn above delta” as another Ulysses by the name of Leopold. Certainly the notion that Penelope, in her Dublin incarnation as Molly, gets even with Odysseus (a.k.a. Leopold) by being the one to cheat in this lifetime, is a fascinating, intriguing and eminently satisfying prospect, even though it defies any conclusive textual proof.

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<sup>48</sup> Allan Bloom translates this passage a bit differently: “And by chance Odysseus' soul had drawn the last lot of all and went to choose; from memory of its former labors it had recovered from love of honor; it went around for a long time **looking for the life of a private man who minds his own business**; and with effort it found one lying somewhere, neglected by the others. It said when it saw this life that it would have done the same even if it had drawn the first lot, and was delighted to choose it” (Bloom 303, 620c-d, emphasis added).

Perhaps Joyce then accepts the invitation he finds in the myth of Er in the *Republic* to tell the story of Odysseus' next life.<sup>49</sup> For Plato has Socrates describe in the myth of Er what it actually means to be a hero of return. Little did we suspect, returning from Hades may not be the extraordinary accomplishment of Odysseus and his comrades alone. Rather, the remarkable thing about their return from Hades is that they were conscious of it and knew it has happened, as Leopold considers: "They say we have forgotten it. Some say they remember their past lives" (*U* 4.364-365). Maybe all of us go to Hades and return again, lifetime after lifetime, but we never realize it or recognize that it is happening. Joyce's *Ulysses* may be intended to inspire us to try to recognize what we have forgotten after traversing the river of Lethe: maybe we are all heroes of return, the return to life and to death. Odysseus has chosen to continue that journey in the *Odyssey*, by not staying with Kalypso and trying to be invulnerable to death and old age. In the myth of Er, he makes a similar choice about how to live, by accepting the limitations of human life and apparently rejecting his past ambition and

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<sup>49</sup> Plato's *Republic* is not cited in *Ulysses*, although a book of his dialogues on poetic inspiration are (Gillespie 1983, 102; see my footnote on p. 91). Plato's *Republic* is not included in any of Joyce's library listings (Gillespie 1983, 1986; Connolly 1955), although a book entitled *Socratic Discourses of Plato and Xenophon* is mentioned (Gillespie 1986, 185). It seems very unlikely that Joyce had never heard of the myth of Er, but I find no certain evidence of his reading of it. The absence of any comments about it may be yet another puzzle Joyce laid out for the professors. The idea of souls choosing future lives depending upon their habits is not limited to the *Republic*, so Joyce may have encountered it in the *Phaedo* (81e ff.) or the *Phaedrus* (248-249), which he did own in the aforementioned volume. On the relation between the *Symposium* and the "Oxen of the Sun" episode, see June Allison (1979). Whether Joyce knew the myth of Er or not, and whether his Platonic resonance in general is coincidental or intentional, its relevance to his novel's interpretation is striking.

love of fame and honor (φιλοτιμία, 614c) as a desirable goal.<sup>50</sup> But Er himself is able to avoid drinking the water of Lethe that causes forgetfulness of the soul's journeys, and so "come back to life, he told what he saw in the other world" (Bloom 297, 614b). For that reason, Socrates concludes his story, "And thus, Glaucon, a tale was saved and not lost, and it could save us, if we were persuaded by it..." (Bloom 303, 621 c).<sup>51</sup> Might *Ulysses* then persuade and save us, so that Joyce is functioning as another Socrates? Joyce surely intended for us to wonder, even if we could never know for certain. Every reader must decide what to believe on his or her own: "Either you believe or you don't isn't it" (*U* 1.622-623).

Our intertextual reading of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, culminating in the discovery of onomastic mysticism, lends great credence to the weird possibility that Joyce intended to tell the story of the private and ordinary man that Odysseus chooses to become in Plato's *Republic* after Homer has finished with him. The idea that rebirth governs human existence can be traced back to Homer's *Odyssey*, even if that idea was not consciously known to Homer but buried in the etymology of the traditional language he inherited. Joyce would seem to have intuited some intimations of rebirth in Homer which have eluded almost all of Homer's other readers. When Leopold muses, "In the midst of death we are in life. Both ends meet" (*U* 6.759-760), he just may be giving voice to the cycle of life and death portrayed by the *Odyssey* and

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<sup>50</sup> Rainer Friedrich mentions "Heroic Man's perennial quest for honor, *philotimia*" citing the desire to obtain it as the motive for the Cyclops episode (Friedrich 1991, 22, see also 26).

<sup>51</sup> Bloom notes, "'Saved' in this context has a double sense. Superficially it means that Er came back, so the tale was preserved. But it also means that it has been given meaning, that it has been supported in the deeper sense that gives the surface plausibility" (Bloom 472).

*Ulysses*: “History repeats itself. Ye crags and peaks I’m with you once again. Life, love, voyage round your own little world” (*U* 12.1093-4). So the voyage continues. Our intertextual reading gestures toward the possibility that life’s voyage does not end at death, but that death is simply another voyage. “One life is all. One body. Do. But do” (*U* 9.653, 11.907-908) may describe the individual’s perception of the human plight on the journey of the soul as it walks from Ithaca to Dublin and beyond. Even life and death may then be simply different names for the same odyssey.

## EPILOGUE

### LOVE AND ITS DISGUISES

Uncertainty, ambiguity, indeterminacy, doubt, ambivalence: all have punctuated, plagued, and generally pervaded my intertextual reading of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, just as such concepts proliferate in the works of secondary scholarship on these texts. Meaning remains somehow elusive and just beyond our grasp, not only while studying each text alone but especially when considering both in conjunction. Finally, then, it would seem that Joyce's title, combined with his advice about reading the *Odyssey* first, as a prelude to *Ulysses* (*Letters I*, 174, 193), comprises an invitation to understand any word in *Ulysses* as an instance of syllepsis in which contextual and intertextual meaning coexist simultaneously, exactly as Michael Riffaterre discusses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> He writes, "syllepsis consists in the understanding of the same word in two different ways at once, as *contextual meaning* and as *intertextual meaning*. The contextual meaning is that demanded by the word's grammatical collocations, by the word's reference to other words in the text. The intertextual meaning is another meaning the word may have, one of its dictionary meanings and/or one actualized within an intertext. In either case, this intertextual meaning is incompatible with the context and pointless within the text, but it still operates as a second reference—this



Yet my reading also contradicts some of his presumptions about how syllepsis might function within a literary text, because what is extraordinary about *Ulysses* is the way in which Joyce manages to avoid making “intertextual meaning...incompatible with the context and pointless within the text” (Riffaterre 1980, 637-638). I find one such example in the words of Buck Mulligan to Stephen: “He knows you. He knows your old fellow. O, I fear me, he is Greeker than the Greeks” (*U* 9. 614-615). Taken out of context, it seems like Buck comments to Stephen on Jamesy’s enterprise: Jamesy “knows” Stephen and the old fellow Homer, so by this point, Jamesy may seem more Greek than Homer! But the vast majority of Joyce’s references to his intertext are not at all irrelevant, not “incompatible” with context in the slightest, nor “pointless” for the action. Joyce weaves his intertextual commentary into his text so seamlessly that even the most obvious intertextual allusions, such as “Tried, like another *Ulysses*” (*U* 9.403), “a Penelope stay-at-home” (*U* 9.620), “One thinks of Homer” (*U* 9.1165), “her siren charms” (*U* 16.1382-1383), “his matrimonial goose” (*U* 19.1389), are all entirely appropriate within the world of *Ulysses*. Yet the richness of meaning thereby evoked is perhaps the value and beauty of syllepsis which Riffaterre attempts to expose, arguing:

Syllepsis is a word best understood in two different ways at once, as meaning and as significance. And therefore, because it sums up the duality of the text’s message—its semantic and semiotic faces—syllepsis is the literary sign par excellence.  
(Riffaterre 1980, 638)

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one to the intertext. The second reference serves either as a model for reading significance into the text (e.g., *point d’eau* read as ‘no water’ in a text here it should mean ‘water,’ and seems to) or as an index to the significance straddling two texts” (Riffaterre 1980, 637-638).

Every word of *Ulysses* which I have quoted as textual evidence fulfills this standard, by constituting both meaning and significance at the same time, not only for the world of the Blooms and of Odysseus, but for the world of James Joyce and Nora Barnacle. This intersection creates much of the book's fascination, its mystery, and its triumph.

Riffaterre proceeds to conclude, "Thus undecidability can exist only within a text; it is resolved by the interdependence between two texts" (Riffaterre 1980, 638). My intertextual reading of *Ulysses* does not seem to have defeated "undecidability", indeterminacy, ambiguity, and the like entirely. In the present case, intertextuality does not seem to erase undecidability at all. Rather, the intertextuality of the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* seems to engender such indeterminacy and even to ensure it. The ambiguity and uncertainty which suffuse Homer's and Joyce's depictions of married love and its quandaries finally expose the degree to which ineffability is woven into each text, so that the confrontation of ineffability becomes the inevitable consequence of any serious and thoughtful study of either text or of both texts in conjunction. That is not to claim that intertextual reading (or any reading of Joyce, for that matter) does not bear fruit. Seth Benardete's Platonic reading of the *Odyssey* (1997) inspires and hopefully justifies the relevance of my conclusion with Socrates' claim in the *Meno*:

Some things I have said of which I am not altogether confident. But that we shall be better and braver and less helpless if we think that we ought to inquire than we should have been if we indulged in the idle fancy that there was no knowing and no use in seeking to know what we do not know—that is a theme upon which I am ready to fight, in word and deed, to the utmost of my power.  
(Plato 1986, 214)

The same is true for intertextual studies of Homer and Joyce: we are better for undertaking the search, even if our inquiries are never quite as satisfying or as conclusive as we might hope.

Ultimately, Dorrit Cohn's complaint that "Nowhere in [Joyce's] works can we find an example of that union of affection and sensuality which we like to call love" (O'Brien 1969, 37) has been quite thoroughly repudiated by my efforts. Quite to the contrary, the Blooms' union is exactly the kind of union Cohn hungers for, reflecting the same kind of union portrayed by Homer in the *Odyssey*, "love that dare not speak its name" (*U* 9.659). Still, the doubt and ambivalence that haunts real love torments Leopold, and he yields to his frustration in "Circe," declaring, "Man, woman, love, what is it? A cork and a bottle. I'm sick of it. Let everything rip" (*U* 15.1973-1974). Leopold's exasperation later melts along with his own language, for by book's end, back in bed with his wife, love and patience prevail. We feel the poignancy of why Leopold knows "Returning [is] not the same" (*U* 13.1103-1104), yet Joyce enables us to appreciate the permutations of love through the permutations of language. "Letting everything rip" in "Circe" becomes letting everything rest in peace in "Ithaca" and "Penelope."

While the ambivalence, doubt, and uncertainty which characterize married love and its endurance may not be what we like to call love, it is still truly what love comprises. As if they intended to follow Achilles' decree in Hades to Odysseus not to mitigate the grimness of death (*Od.* 11.488ff.), Homer and Joyce refuse any sentimentality in rendering love in all of its pains and complexities in their portrayals of married love. While Joyce's new form and new context may make it seem like love

and heroism are both casualties of modernity, neither are. Infidelity and heroism shed their gendered aspects in Joyce, exemplifying “History repeating itself with a difference” (*U* 17.1525-1526). Yet otherwise, precisely because of all of the tensions and apparent contradictions inherent within and between them, Joyce’s conceptions of fidelity and heroism remain thoroughly Homeric and Odyssean. Herein lies only one example, albeit an important one, of how an appreciation and understanding of Homer’s *Odyssey* fuels and fosters an appreciation and understanding of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and vice versa. Joyce’s own advice about reading what would eventually be voted the best book of the century consistently and unfailingly endorsed that premise. My intertextual reading has borne out its veracity and its value.

In the end, our two texts converge most undeniably in the realm of love. In the words of T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, “Love is most nearly itself/ When here and now cease to matter” (Eliot 31). Love becomes itself in the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* by transcending context and circumstance. The story of real love is the same story in any place and time, the story of how love surmounts doubt, ambivalence, jealousy, and separation. However much love becomes a torment due to the particular agonies of a particular time and place, real love prevails despite the suffering it causes its possessors. The love between Penelope and Odysseus on Ithaca is reborn in the love between Molly and Leopold Bloom in Dublin. Molly Bloom’s “yes I will Yes” (*U* 18.1608-1609) resounds across the centuries. Even the capital “Y” in the final yes embodies her determination and her joy. Love triumphs through that embrace of futurity, the choice to keep returning to each other again and again, no matter what the cost. In Homer and in Joyce, love is the very best kind of return.

## APPENDIX A

### USES OF THE WORD HERO (ἥρωας) IN HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

Use of hero in a context of self-restraint and the need to control desire (θυμός):

*Od.* 2.96-99, 4.312, 4.423, 10.516, 24.68, 24.452

Uses of hero-men:

*Od.* 1.189, 1.272, 4.268, 11.629, 24.25

Uses of hero to describe old men:

Aegyptius, *Od.* 2.15

Halitherses, *Od.* 2.157, 24.451

Echeneus, *Od.* 7.155, 11.342

Laertes, *Od.* 1.189, 2.99, 19.144, 22.185, 24.134

Uses of hero to describe young men:

Peisistratus, *Od.* 3.415, 4.21, 15.131

Telemachus, *Od.* 4.21, 4.303

Uses of hero to describe others than Achaeans:

Phaeacians, *Od.* 7.44, 6.303, 7.303

Sidonian king Phaedimus, *Od.* 4.617, 15.117

Pheidon king of Thesprotians, *Od.* 14.317

Eurypylus, *Od.* 11.520

Uses referring to Odysseus:

*Od.* 4.267-270, 14.97

Uses naming Odysseus a hero directly in conversation:

*Od.* 10.516

Uses to name Telemachus:

*Od.* 4.21, 4.303, 4.312

Uses to name Laertes:

*Od.* 1.189, 2.99, 19.144, 22.185, 24.134

Uses to name Menelaus:

*Od.* 4.423, 15.52, 15.62, 15.121, 24.25

Use to name a poet:

Demodocus, *Od.* 8.483

Use to name a herald:

Moulios, *Od.* 18.423

Uses of heroes in general, inclusive terms about white, male warriors:

*Od.* 1.272, 4.268, 7.44, 8.242, 11.329, 11.629, 14.97, 21.299, 24.25, 24.68,  
24.88

Uses about dead heroes in Hades

*Od.* 11.329, 11.629

Uses to name women, gods, or animals: none

## APPENDIX B

### USES OF HERO AND ITS FORMS IN JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*

*U* 1.62: Stephen says to Buck Mulligan, "You saved men from drowning. I'm not a hero, however. If he stays on here I am off."

*U* 6.289: Martin Cunningham says that Reuben gave the boatmen a silver florin for saving his drowning son's life "like a hero."

*U* 9.623: Stephen describes the Trojan Horse in the library as "the wooden mare of Troy in whom a score of heroes slept..."

*U* 10.492: "He's a hero."

*U* 10.503: refers to saving a drowning man as "the act of a hero"

*U* 10.834: "they are throbbing: heroes' hearts." A print of boxers Stephens looks at in a window

*U* 11.340: "conquering hero"

*U* 11.342: "unconquered hero"

*U* 11.1274: "a gallant pictured hero"

*U* 12.83: "heroes voyage from afar to woo them"

*U* 12.155: "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 widemouthed largenosed longheaded deepvoiced barekneed brawnyhanded hairylegged ruddyfaced sinewyarmed hero."

*U* 12.176: "the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity", introducing a long list of names

U 12.609: “the hero martyr when about to pay the death penalty knelt in a most christian spirit in a pool of rainwater, his cassock above his hoary head, and offered up to the throne of grace fervent prayers of supplication.”

U 12.639: “The hero folded her willowy form in a loving embrace murmuring fondly  
*Sheila, my own.*”

U 12.644: “the hero boy who went to his death with a song on his lips as if he were but going to a hurling match in Clonturk park”

U 12.1008: “a comely hero”

U 12.1213: “a race of mighty valorous heroes, rulers of the waves”

U 14.1331: “our famous war hero”

U 15.1744: “My hero god!”

U 15.4680: “armed heroes”

U 16.1005: “Achilles, the Greek hero”

U 16.1643 “our hero” (referring to Leopold)

U 17.644: “*My Favourite Hero*”

heroine: U 12.176: “the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity”

U 15.4418: “heroine of Jericho”

heroic: U 15.781: “heroic defence”

heroically: U 16.38: “he heroically made light of the mischance”



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