

## Nation-Making at Barney Kiernan's

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**Abstract:** James Joyce, the ultimate modernist writer, has been read for too long as a rather apolitical, and certainly non-nationalistic, writer. This kind of reading was particularly attractive to New Critics, and other modernist interpreters, who emphasized the self-referential world of the narrative, or even clusters of texts, and also linguistic pyro-technics, over any mundane engagements with the political world surrounding either the time of authorship or of the diegetic period itself. Despite the long and dominant tradition of such "literary" readings of Joyce, and arguably his most celebrated work *Ulysses*, a novel so complex could of course never be utterly free from politicized readings. From Marxists to Feminists, generations of authors have found elements both to hail and to denounce this work. One of the most recent in this long line of unanticipated readings is the post-colonial one, represented by the likes of Cheng, Duffy and Nolan. What a post-colonial reading should accomplish is itself of course a still much debated and unresolved matter. Certainly, reducing all texts to the status of a either linguistic handmaiden or resistor to empire is no longer the only or primary options in this school of criticism. Rather, the idea is to find complexity where it was overlooked, and to find signs of either complicity or resistance where it was unseen. In this case, the Cyclops chapter has long been read as a straight-up caricature of the Irish nationalist, and Joyce's own post-national, if not anti-national stance. While Joyce was thoroughly a cosmopolitan both in life and in literary sensibility is quite beyond argument, but is cosmopolitanism necessarily opposed to nationalism, especially when it coincides with justice or the desire thereof? Is the Cyclops only a bigot? Is a degree of truth inadmissible because the figure of the witness so objectionable? Is the Citizen's boorishness meant to undermine the merit of any kernel of truth in his prejudiced speech? Or, is it meant to show the universal abjection of subaltern truth? Forever unsupported by all apparatus of State - the courts, history, etc. - always lacking in dignity, where is it supposed to rear its unsuspecting head, if not in the pages of the most subversive of mainstream or canonized texts? This essay tries to locate the subaltern in a most unlikely site - the ultimate modernity novel, Joyce's *Ulysses*.

The Citizen in the "Cyclops" episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is among the most disliked characters in that book. He has been, in fact, received with a venomous opposition that has rarely been the fate of fictional characters. What, one might

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wonder, could provoke such violent antipathy towards this character? Certainly world literature is not so impoverished in its representations of villains that a washed-up, bigoted drunkard in a Dublin bar needs to become the object of universal critical hatred. Pointing to his personality, objectionable as it may be, cannot begin to explain the mysterious intensity and unisonance of critical distaste for this character. A more convincing explanation might actually lie in the suggestion that the objection to the Citizen stems as much from an antipathy to his bigoted personality as to his nationalistic ideology.

Early Joyceans were so much more interested in the stylistic issues of his writing that they seemed content to take the Citizen at face value as Joyce's parodied offering of an Irish nationalist. The straightforward reception of the parody was in fact sufficient reason for many of these critics to regard the "Cyclops" episode as evidence of Joyce's ultimate repudiation of (Irish) nationalism. But even with later critics, as the content of Joyce's writings began to receive more attention, the Citizen's reputation saw no improvement, if anything it worsened. The theoretical opposition to the ideology he represents had hardened in the meanwhile. And the critics' whole-hearted theoretical rejection of nationalism was transitively applied to its embodiment, the Citizen. Just as early English critics seemed happy to find in Joyce's portraiture of the Irish nationalist echoes of the English stereotype of the Irish as barbarian, similarly the newer critics seemed thrilled to find in the Citizen the worst stereotypes of the nationalist as barbarian. But whether Joyce's portraiture of the barbarian Citizen is actually so unqualified, and by extension if Joyce's alleged repudiation of Irish nationalism is so unequivocal still remains an open question.

To what extent Joyce's portraiture of the Citizen can be taken to be condemnatory of Irish nationalism depends on how free one feels to make claims about authorial intentions. Divination or attribution of such intentions is necessarily speculative. The purpose of this paper, however, is not to dismiss one set of claims on theoretical grounds in favor of another. Rather the purpose is to look at the sources - textual and extra-textual - of those claims and see if the same or similar sources could not yield a very different, or at least somewhat modified, set of claims. The difference between the two sets of claims may ultimately denote the receivers' preferences more than any quality intrinsic to the piece in question. But it might also indicate that the political content of Joyce's writings is more complex in its implications than the traditional monochromatic view of it would have us believe.

The political content in *Ulysses*, it should be noted, is by no means restricted to the "Cyclops" episode. One will find it abundantly present in "Aeolus" or "Circe," and at least traces of it in many of the other chapters. But "Cyclops" invites a reading for political content more than most others because it is embedded there more profusely and more explicitly than anywhere else in the

book. Additionally, it should be noted that an examination of the relationship between Joyce's art and his politics cannot and should not be restricted to a review of the content. His formal choices too can be revealing in this respect. The intricacies of such a relationship, especially as they manifest themselves in the "Cyclops" episode will be noted in due course. But before discussing the specific issues that arise in reading the "Cyclops" episode, it might be more suggestive to first take note of the conventional readings of that episode.

At the level of both content and of form, the critical responses to "Cyclops" have almost invariably been motivated by the same objective: to detect and promote Joyce's putative renunciation of Irish nationalism. At the level of content it has usually taken the form of very conventional character analysis with a strong negative reaction to the first-person anonymous narrator and the Citizen. The objection to these characters is not, however, restricted to the issue of their personalities. More significantly criticism has treated their dialogue as the self-defeating nationalistic component of the political discourse represented in that episode. At the level of form criticism has focused on the two kinds of narration that appear in that episode. The first-person narration of the anonymous narrator, like much of the dialogue of the pub-dwellers, except for Bloom's, has been regarded as self-incriminating. The parodic interpolations, which compose almost half of the episode, belong to an unknown narrator. But almost universally critics have treated these parodies as Joyce's belittling commentary on his compatriots.

One of the most obvious problems of the traditional criticism can most pithily be termed as "gullibility." Critics have taken at face value whatever Joyce has written. Most problematically they have read the author's political opinions in his fiction in a simplistic way that has rarely happened with any other writer. The reasoning that informs much of the critical reception of "Cyclops" seems to be as follows: the Citizen is a horrible character. He stands for nationalism. Joyce is making fun of the Citizen. Therefore Joyce is making fun of nationalism, and in particular rejecting Irish nationalism. Most critics will find this formulation of traditional criticism to be appallingly simplistic. What is truly appalling is not that the formulation is simplistic, but that the actual criticisms have so far been that way. The alleged unisonance of the traditional critical voice can be best observed in a direct presentation. Following is a fairly representative selection of the accusations directed at the Citizen:

Grotesque chauvinism makes him a joke, a lunatic has-been who must be humoured or gently edged towards sanity and whose fixations inhibit free discussion. If he is not always wrong, he is never original or stimulating . . . foot and mouth disease is the only serious issue he raises. (Hayman 247-8).

The Cyclops-Citizen rejects established law and offers only the violence of terrorism and muscle. (Hodgart 103)

... the citizen's rhetoric is 'all wind and piss like a tanyard' cat, and reveals that all the pretended devotion and nationalistic passion is a thick froth concealing a total absence of religious and political principle. (Peake 235-6)

Although at first sight these may appear to be sound assessments of the character of the Citizen, upon a closer examination they begin to falter. Hayman, hard put to assert as it seems clear he would like to that the Citizen has it all wrong, raises the absurd objection that "he is never original or stimulating." The objection coming from a non-specialist reader would be a perfectly valid one, but it is indeed a surprising response for a critical reader. It should be noted further that the particular objection of a character not being "original or stimulating" is not remotely acceptable in the case of *Ulysses*, even if it were for other novels. The main character of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom is himself never very "original or stimulating." If it is acceptable for the protagonist, with whom the reader spends almost nine-tenths of his reading time, to be a famously mediocre, boring middle-aged man, it is not clear why the Citizen cannot be an unoriginal boor for his part. But as Emer Nolan notes in his *James Joyce and Nationalism* (1995): "The question of the relative interest of Bloom's statements is affectionately dismissed: 'Poldy serious is Poldy dull as we see in Eumaeus' (98). The quarrel over the relative "originality" of fictional characters would be irrelevant if it were not symptomatic of deeper biases that have informed the reading of Joyce. The critics' willingness to make special concessions for shortcomings in Bloom that the Citizen is most conspicuously denied is not solely a matter of a reaction to their personalities. It might very well have to do with the ideologies they are considered to represent in this episode. Once again Emer Nolan's observation on this score is pertinent: "Indeed the entire critical history of reading Bloom's as the sole rational voice in this episode, and as a brave advocate of liberalism . . . seems to me to be deeply flawed" (96).

As with Hayman, Hodgart's statements too can be shown to be faulty and inexplicably biased. When Hodgart accuses the Citizen of rejecting 'established' law, he neglects to mention, as Nolan points out, that 'established' is by no means equivalent to 'accepted', 'agreed' or 'democratic' law. What laws - 'established' by whom, through what means, for whose benefit - does the Citizen reject? Hodgart's statement in the mouth of a coloniser would really be a wonderful example of the combination of obtuseness and insidiousness that had permitted the English to speak of atrocious situations in the colonies created by themselves in terms that appeared to be 'reasonable' and 'decent'. The 'English' law in Ireland was not popularly believed to be justly instituted at all. Additionally, the authority that can issue from such laws does not lead to benevolent government.

Under the circumstances the Citizen can hardly be said to be the representative, as Hodgart tries to suggest, of some barbarically anarchistic disobedience.

C. H. Peake's assertion that the Citizen's "nationalistic passion" is "pretended" and actually conceals "political principle," is even more deeply derivative of the colonialist perspective than the ones already analyzed. Hayman had objected to the Citizen's personality, Hodgart to an aspect of his ideological stance, but neither had denied him his feelings for his country, no matter how crooked or bigoted its expressions. Peake's antipathy for the Citizen's brand of nationalism goes so deep that he has to contend it by denying the Citizen his subjectivity. The denial is enacted in a two-fold process: first, the Citizen's statements are labeled as "rhetoric" and then that rhetoric is denied any merit. Peake's denunciation is particularly artful, because his disparaging remark about the Citizen's rhetoric is actually lifted from the mouth of the anonymous narrator. The anonymous narrator is perhaps the most famously bilious and irreverent character in the whole book. He dismisses everybody behind their backs. Whether the disparagements of such a universally dismissive character can and should be selectively applied to the Citizen is questionable. If his assessment of the Citizen's rhetoric is to be considered authoritative, then should not the same weight be given to his much less flattering responses to Bloom's idealism?

Peake is actually not alone in questioning the merit of the Citizen's rhetoric. For that is one of the main locations of the nationalistic discourse that is so central to this episode. Hayman too echoes a similar objection to the Citizen's rhetoric when he says that the only serious issue that the Citizen raises is the "foot and mouth disease." Hayman, not unlike Peake and a host of other critics, resorts to a form of argumentation that was the patented formula of the English against their colonial subjects: belittlement. Nothing seems to dismantle an argument more easily than a refusal to take it seriously. Before the blatant misrepresentation of Hayman's remark is exposed, it will be instructive to note that it is not a purposeless 'mistake'. By claiming that foot and mouth disease is the only serious issue he raises, Hayman is setting up a faulty parallel between the Citizen and Mr Deasy. Foot and mouth disease is really the (sole) rallying cry of the Ulster Unionist principal Deasy, who has the additional merit of being a misinformed bigot. By equating the Citizen with Deasy through this faulty attribution of a common cause, Hayman effectively tries to suggest that the Citizen's nationalism is based on a notion of history as mistaken as Deasy's.

Denying a subject race an authentic history has also been a mainstay of colonialist strategy. In the early stages of occupation the denial is usually quite outright. A simple and blunt denial of the subject race's claim to having or having had a history as a unified people is usually sufficient at this stage. But as such a stance becomes progressively untenable, the colonialist typically resorts to the strategy of denying the history of the subject race any authenticity by finding

faults with specific, local details in one or another version of their narration. The standards that are applied in denying the subject race a unified history usually hold for the colonisers as well, but the strength of such a strategy rests on its selective application. The tendency in the bulk of criticism to accuse the Citizen of inaccuracies has a strong echo of this earlier colonialist practice. The critics' dismissal of the Citizen's arguments or sentiments because he cannot live up to the exacting standards appropriate for a historian are patently absurd. Few ordinary citizens, including the critics, would be able to live up to such a severe test of historical accuracy. But their inability at perfect historical recall in a public house discussion would not in their estimation discredit the validity of their own political tenets or sentiments. Why is the Citizen's alleged mendaciousness then seen to constitute such a rebuttal of Irish nationalism? The implication of this brand of criticism is really that if the Citizen knew his history right he would never be or become an exponent for so preposterous an ideology as nationalism.

The supreme irony of this whole debate, however, is that more often than not the Citizen does get his history right. Not all Joyce critics have been so blinded by their distaste for the Citizen's personality or their own ideological preferences as to fail to note the Citizen's merits, few as they are. Marilyn French writes: "He is a chauvinist; he is furiously intolerant; but he is right about Ireland's situation, if not her future" (155). Matthew Hodgart, though unsympathetic or mistaken in some of his other assertions about the Citizen, is also one who concurs on this point:

Incidentally the version of history given by the Citizen is hardly at all exaggerated from that favoured by the IRA today and only a little more from that taught in some Irish schools. It is not, however, a totally false view: the account of the English attitude to the Famine has some basis in truth (102).

Hodgart's acquiescence is more grudging than French's no doubt, but even in that reluctant admission two important aspects of the Citizen's history and rhetorics are noted. First, that the Citizen's version of the history is not - as Hayman would have it - fallacious and second, that the Citizen does talk about issues that are far more serious than the foot and mouth disease. The particular issue that is suggested by Hodgart is that of the infamous Irish famines of 1840:

They were driven out of house and home in the black '47. Their mudcabins and their sheilings by the roadside were laid low by the batteringram and the *Times* rubbed its hands and told the whitelivered Saxons there would soon be as few Irish in Ireland as redskins in America. (*U* 1365-69)

As Emer Nolan puts it: the Citizen's version of events "may tend towards mythology in its black-and-white view of Anglo-Irish relation, but the

straightforward charges of lying, ignorance or triviality scarcely apply to the citizen at this point" (98). There are actually two components to the Citizen's charge here. First, that the famines had decimated a vast majority of the population. Second, that the English had caused the famines to happen with genocidal intent. Before judging the validity of the Citizen's charges, it may be instructive to take note of the most recent scholarly perspective on these issues.

Amartya Sen, a Nobel laureate and professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University and a leading authority and pioneer of Hunger and Famine studies, writes: "No recorded famine has killed a higher proportion of the population than the Irish famine" (Sen 215). He also suggests that while the British government did not deliberately set out to starve the Irish, they certainly allowed it to happen through massive mismanagement and criminal negligence. Those who doubt the negligence factor would do well to recall a comment of Charles Edward Trevelyan, the head of the Treasury during the famines: "There is scarcely a woman of the peasant class in the West of Ireland whose culinary art exceeds the boiling of a potato" (Sen 218). The point being that the Irish taste for the potato was somehow more to blame for the famines than British policies in Ireland, of which Trevelyan was a major architect. That the cultural alienation of the rulers from the ruled enabled Trevelyan to follow his preposterous policies with even more atrocious comments has been well noted by Sen. He writes: "Ireland paid the penalty of being governed by a not particularly sympathetic ruling class, and cultural deprecation added force to political asymmetry" (Sen 218). Sen's findings show that an indecent number of people did die in Ireland and while the government did not cause it, nor did they prevent it. Sen argues that it could have been, like most famines, prevented. That the sufferers in this case were Irish, and not English, had to do with the government's apathy is also convincingly argued by Sen. Even if the British government was not guilty of genocide, they were undeniably responsible for the deaths of a great many people. The view of the situation that Sen propounds justifies the Citizen's aggrieved accusation much more than critics have traditionally admitted.

This lengthy excursus into political economy was not so necessary to justify the Citizen's claims, for they are quite well-founded in the estimation of most well-informed modern readers. But this juxtaposition reveals a crucial peculiarity of colonial discourse. Sen can establish as facts what the Citizen can at best claim to be true. Sen can prove his facts because he has at his disposal a kind of intellectual and material resources that the Citizen does not have. In fact, such resources have been more readily available at the service of empire than ever at the cause of colonized peoples. The colonized battle the stories that the rulers tell about them without the benefit of a commensurate cultural capital to bolster their own stories. They are constantly asked to produce a proof, when they do not have the withals to do so. This failure consequently leads to their being accused of ignorance and lying. If the dynamics of colonial discourse is deemed irrelevant to

the modern critical reception of Joyce, then that notion can be dispelled by another look at the tenor of critical statements about the "Cyclops" episode.

Hugh Kenner considers Barney Kiernan's to be a "Dark tavern dominated by a mad fool" (104). Peake too sees everyone in the pub as "foolish toppers" discussing "matters about which they are both ignorant and indifferent . . . with no genuine convictions at all" (235-6). The colonial, unable to tell his story convincingly to the outsider, does exactly what the reader sees the Citizen and his cronies doing. They retreat to a 'den of nonsense', where the official lie does not constantly negate their subjectivity (Hayman 257).

This long quarrel is not about only setting the record right on what the Citizen, contrary to the claims of many critics, does get right. For many of these traditional anti-Citizen Joyceans what might be a more alarming contention is that the immensely valid subjectivity and largely correct notions of the Citizen were not matters that had entered Joyce's mind without his knowledge or will. Joyce did not in the course of 'mocking' Irish nationalists, accidentally attribute to his token nationalist an impressive subaltern perspective. Joyce may have been more aware of this process than critics have suspected or have been willing to admit until now. This view of Joyce should not appear to anyone as an outlandish perspective that is only recently being grafted onto the novel to suit the wishes of some new critical theory. The lead for such readings can go back to a source as venerable and as friendly to Modernism as Richard Ellmann's biography of Joyce. It is amazing that critics have for so long chosen to ignore Ellmann's observation that the Citizen is "an aspect of Joyce's mind" (268). Ellmann's comment is instigated by Joyce's critical writings. In some of these essays he himself enumerated the Irish nationalist historical case. Some of the statements in these essays will be seen to have startling echos of the Citizen's speech. In the famous 1907 essay, "Ireland, Isle of Saints and Sages," Joyce writes:

The English now disparage the Irish because they are Catholic, poor and ignorant; however it will not be so easy to justify such disparagement to some people. Ireland is poor because English laws ruined the country's industries, especially the wool industry, because the neglect of English governments in the years of the potato famine allowed the best of the population to die from hunger. (CW 167)

The Citizen is not far off the mark by Joyce's measures:

There's no-one as blind as the fellow that won't see, if you know what that means. Where are our missing twenty millions of Irish should be here today instead of four, our lost tribes? And our potteries and textiles, the finest in the whole world? And our wool that was sold in Rome in the time of Juvenal and our flax and our damask from the looms of Antrim and our Limerick lace, our tanneries and our white flint glass down there by Ballybough and our



Huguenot poplin that we have since Jacquard de Lyon and our woven silk and our Foxford tweeds and ivory raised point from the Carmelite convent in New Ross, nothing like it in the whole wide world . . . What do the yellowjohns of Anglia owe us for our ruined trade and our ruined hearths? (*U*, 1239-48, 1254-5)

Critics who object to the Citizen have seized upon the exaggerations or fulsomeness of his speech to discredit him. Since when were fictional characters obliged to speak with academic soberness and exactitude? What ought to be noted here is that, contrary to Hayman's insidious and careless suggestion, the Citizen's version of history is imaginatively more compelling and credible than anything offered by Deasy. Similarly, the Citizen has a verbal force of rhetoric that is unmatched by anything in the representation of Deasy. Moreover, as Nolan points out, "in so far as it has once been the language of the writer himself [it] takes on other implications and suggestions, in its parodied form, beyond those of mere repudiation and mockery" (99). This is not to suggest, of course, that the concurrence of specific details in Joyce's early essays and the Citizen's speech suggest an authorial endorsement of the character's views. Although some critics have felt free to read Joyce's condemnation of Irish nationalism in his fiction, to claim the contrary on the basis of his fiction would be equally faulty. What can be claimed is the following: Joyce was not, as some of the aestheticists would have it, unengaged with political issues. Rather, as Vincent Cheng suggests in *Joyce, race and empire* (1995) that what Joyce "wrote as a young man reveals an intellect intensely concerned and pointedly thoughtful about the Irish 'race', the 'Irish question' and imperial England, voicing political arguments and consistently positions on . . . topics [that he] represented, developed and further nuanced in his fiction for the rest of his life" (4).

The relationship Cheng suggests has been so vigorously denied by traditional critics that the supposed apoliticalness of Joyce has come to assume a truth value simply by repetition. As Dominic Manganiello writes in *Joyce's Politics* (1980): "The tenor of innumerable critical statements about Joyce is that he was indifferent to politics" (1). A fuller statement of this can be found in Seamus Deane's essay "Joyce and Nationalism": "It is well-known that Joyce, like Stephen Dedalus, considered himself to be the slave of two masters, one British and one Roman. It is equally well known that he repudiated the Irish Literary Revival . . . Repudiating British and Roman and rejecting Irish nationalism and Irish literature which seemed to be in the service to that cause, he turned away from his early commitment to socialism and devoted himself instead to a highly apolitical and wonderfully arcane practice of writing. Such, in brief, is the received wisdom about Joyce and his relationship to major political issues of his time" (23). This, Deane says, is also "one of the more secure assumptions" (40) about the life and work of Joyce. In essence these assumptions helped to propagate a view of Joyce, where his engagement with the disciplines of

literature and religion (and the attendant political complications) were seen to be crucial motivators in the creation of his fiction. His engagement with politics, however, was never seen to be of comparable significance. The relative unimportance of politics as an impetus behind his creations rested on his presumed indifference to the subject at the time he wrote *Ulysses*.

The contrary perspective has been convincingly argued in Enda Duffy's *The Subaltern Ulysses* (1994). Duffy cites letters such as the one to Mary Kettle in which Joyce sympathizes with the death of her husband in the First World War and that of her brother in the aftermath of the Rising as evidence that Joyce kept abreast of current events. The claim is justified because in the letter Joyce notes that he had read of the brother's death in the *Times*. More telling is Joyce's reply to a request from the *Journal de Geneve* for an article on the Easter Rebellion of 1916. He commented:

The problem of my race is so complicated that one needs to make use of all the means of an elastic art to delineate it . . . I am restricted to making a pronouncement on it by means of the scenes and characters of my poor art. (Duffy 14)

The case for political engagement need not rest, however, only on the strength of the evidence of non-creative writings.

Reactions to contemporary politics can be read in Joyce's artistic choices, such as the date whose unfolding his novel purportedly records. Duffy writes: "By choosing a date that was more than a decade before he began to write, he appeared to elude in his art the claims of the troublesome aspects of contemporaneity. He was able to credibly write in ignorance of events occurring in the years 1914-22, when the book was being written" (17). Traditionally Joyce's choice of this date has been seen as one of the many indications of his disinterest in the goings on of that volatile period beginning with the Rising of 1916 and ending with the Anglo-Irish treaty in November 1921. But Duffy's suggestion that Joyce's patronizing pronouncements on the influence of Irish political development upon him in the years when he wrote *Ulysses* were "the rhetorical shield of an artist who found his art threatened by shifting referents in the dialectic between the artist and his nation" (15) seems more persuasive. Joyce, after all, was the self-fashioned apolitical exilic writer who would, like his protagonist Stephen Dedalus, "forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race" (16). The irony of that arrogant self-appointment is, of course, that the race had forged a conscience to become a nation simultaneously and independently of the artist's promised mission. Outstripped by his people in this respect, it was naturally safer for Joyce to situate Bloom's day in the politically more stagnant year of 1904. Asked of his opinions on events in 1919, Joyce answered his friend Frank Budgen, "Tell me why you think I ought to change the conditions that gave Ireland and me a shape and destiny?" (153).

Duffy is correct to note that Joyce's "irony and his rhetorical questions show him somewhat bitter that the initiative of creating conscience had momentarily been taken from him" (15).

The importance of this complicated relationship that Joyce had with his subject cannot be overemphasised. Joyce's various comments about his formal ambitions have misled many critics into overlooking that obsession with form does not necessarily preclude a deep engagement with subject. Nor can anyone deny that Ireland was the subject of Joyce's writings as much as anything ever was his subject. But as Duffy carefully documents, Joyce's relationship with this subject was never an easy one. Especially during the period of the composition of *Ulysses*, his subject had proved itself to be an exceedingly volatile one. Throwing back the date of Bloom's day from that period gave him the stable relationship with his subject that he needed for a prolonged project, but other complications remained. Namely, his nation was forming itself before his eyes even before he had completed the "national epic" that was to enable Ireland to effect such a transformation. Joyce's bitterness and disappointment at being outstripped by the vulgar pragmatism of his compatriots in this nation-making enterprise should be neither ignored nor underestimated. Also if one takes into account the resentments that Joyce might have felt towards his subject, for its insubordination to his artistic will and needs, Joyce's irony begins to appear in a very different light. The parodic interpolations in the "Cyclops" episode then no longer seem to comment so much on Irish nationalism as on Joyce's difficult relationship with his subject.

The insistent and ingenuous tendency of earlier critics to take the parodic interpolations at face value has had the effect of shifting focus from what is truly original in Joyce's writing to that which is merely novel. What is truly more shocking in "Cyclops" than the parodic interpolations is the author's refusal to efface the cultural subtext of his material. Joyce, though working in the vein of realism or naturalism to a large extent, takes their mimetic quality of those forms to new limits. Few writers have ever had the audacity or need to so persistently document the minutiae of a local culture in the folds of a fictional narrative that is presumably not intended exclusively for readers of that locality. Due to this habit, Joyce ends up achieving in this episode, especially in the parodies, something that a whole brigade of Irish Revivalists had failed to do. He forces upon a world readership the details of Irish lore and legend as much as a living document of the daily life of "dear dirty Dublin." Whether he was motivated, like the Revivalists that he scorned, to give to his local culture such a place of pride in world literature seems uncertain. But that his writing certainly has this effect is undeniable. If his parodies are read as denunciations of Irish nationalism, they should be also read as an ironic admission of the tenacious hold that Joyce's subject had on him, even as it was moving away from him.

A re-reading of "Cyclops," in this light will also have to reconsider the implications of the naturalistic parts of that episode. The emphasis on representation over invention is much more justified here, than say it would be in an episode such as "Circe," because this is one of the chapters where Joyce vigorously employs his art to its mimetic purposes. The insistent mimeticism of his art suggests that one would be justified in assuming that the way Joyce depicts Barney Kiernan's is not far from what in reality the corresponding site may have been like. As such "Cyclops" can also be taken much more as a fair and representative type of a lower order public house in the Dublin of the first decade of the previous century. The men at Barney Kiernan's, with their uneducated, chauvinistic, anti-semitic idling, may not be atypical of the setting or class to which they belong. But the case against them should not be overstated as it almost always has been in Joyce criticism. The counterparts of these men in most cultures were not much more enlightened or accommodating, and sometimes have been much worse.

If the denunciation of the men at Barney Kiernan's will derive from a (stereotypical) sociological perspective, then that perspective should also be allowed to illuminate other aspects of this context. Besides the displays of chauvinism what also transpires in the bar, that almost no critic has commented on is that these are ordinary men engaged in their very ordinary way in the enterprise of making a community. The Homeric correspondences have been taken so much at face value in connection to Joyce, that the important disjunctions have been noted too infrequently. The clue of Cyclops has been embraced with typical gusto by Joyce critics to proclaim the Citizen a barbarian. But the Cyclops in Joyce are in one respect quite different from the ones in Homer. In the Greek epic we are told that "Cyclops have no muster and no meeting / no consultation or old tribal ways/ but each one dwells in his own mountain cave" (230). Their inability to form a community is one of the principal reasons for which the Cyclops in Homer are considered barbaric. The same cannot be said of the men at Barney Kiernan's. They do have a meeting, a consultation of sorts and they do remember "old tribal ways" (232). This is the kind of public place where they can bring the history they cannot tell convincingly to outsiders. By telling that to each other, they reinforce the notions of a mythic community that will permit them to be effective participants in forging a nation. What earns them scorn is that they participate in this act of nation-making at its lowest rung. Their tellings of history, their formulations of group identity are chauvinistic and exclusivistic. But these faults do not negate the nature of that activity. Nor is the low quality of their performance sufficient grounds to dismiss the validity of the project. That they may replicate the erroneous model of their oppressors is a laughably invalid objection to the liberationist impulse of any oppressed group. One cannot be expected to not seek independence for fear of inflicting on others the torments they currently endure.

Joyce's mimetic representation of the public house culture in this respect is accurately reflective of the low grade nation-making activity that must have been a staple activity of many such pubs at the time. Without such a pre-existing culture it is unthinkable that the Irish as a nation would have produced the revolutionary activities that led to their Independence. For the more militant activists of a culture to appear in a liberationist struggle, and especially to be successful, a larger sympathetic and cooperative community has to exist. Barney Kiernan's embodies nothing less than a fairly ordinary day inside one of the many potential centers of contact that over time can foment and sustain such a community. While the Jewish Bloom's being cast out from the bar certainly has to do with the anti-semitism of the men at the pub, other - perhaps more compelling - factors should not be overlooked. Bloom is perceived to be stingy and as such not welcome in the pub culture where the men treat one another. But more importantly, Bloom is both an individualist and a pacifist who is unable to participate in the low-grade nation-making enterprise of the men at Barney Kiernan's. Whether Bloom could find a venue more conducive to his delicate temperament, where he would be able to participate in such activity is an open question. That his creator certainly could not is quite clear.

Joyce was certainly repelled by the vulgar ideology represented by the Citizen and his cronies. He probably did not expect to see any fruitful outcome of their jingoistic efforts. Yet, the political events in Ireland at the period when Joyce was writing *Ulysses* proved him wrong. Joyce was not opposed to the ends that the movement would achieve, but he was certainly uncomfortable with the means by which they were being achieved. More than anything else, it was the irrelevancy of his stated mission to the success of that movement that discomposed him. Joyce's begrudging acquiescence to the political imperatives of the time are well noted in comments such as the following: "I do not want to hurt or offend those of my countrymen who are devoting their lives to a cause they feel is necessary or just" (Duffy 15). The bitter irony of Joyce's position might have been that the sovereignty of his nation was as dearly held an ideal for him as was the sovereignty of his art, yet through his arrogant self-positioning, as much as through the agency of historical events, the two had come to odds. What one finds in "Cyclops" is not so much the repudiation of nationalism, nor a celebration of it. But Joyce's ironic and ambivalent efforts at reconciling his intractable subject to the equally uncompromisable vision and form of his art.

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