

I. AREA AND OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

This dissertation re-examines the representation of Irish nationalism in the “Cyclops” episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The double aims of this study are (1) to revise what passes for received wisdom – poetical and ideological – in “Cyclops” criticism and (2) to offer a novel – archaeological – reading strategy, which, by illuminating hitherto ignored or scarcely dwelt on recesses of the text, suggests that the representation of nationalism in “Cyclops” foreshadows the representational politics of *Finnegans Wake*.

My study participates in the on-going critical enterprise beginning with the 1990s’ introduction of post-colonial theory into Joyce criticism to reassess the relationship of Joyce’s texts to politics and history in general, and British imperialism and Irish nationalism in particular. I focus exclusively on “Cyclops” because this episode offers the most explicit but also the most complex and intricate textual engagement with Irish nationalism before *Finnegans Wake*, which this hitherto unattempted extended study aims to illuminate. Although the post-colonial turn in Joyce criticism has brought about a vigorous reappraisal of the previously almost unanimous critical description of the chapter’s representation of Irish nationalism in terms of Joyce’s moral (satirical) repudiation of it, the discursive context of Irish cultural nationalism can further refine and re-define our vision of the episode’s representational politics.

The novelty of the dissertation arises not out of the choice of the conceptual framework but its novel application. Post-colonial re-readings of “Cyclops” tend to highlight the text against diverse discursive backgrounds. The conceptual framework of my study – Irish cultural nationalism – has also been taken up as a relevant context for the episode (Andrew Gibson, Len Platt, David Lloyd). Acknowledging the merits of these readings – especially that through the discursive context they illuminate not only thematic but also formal features – and drawing on them creatively my inquiry points beyond them in two respects. In contradistinction to Gibson and Platt, who concentrate on how “Cyclops” engages with *one* particular manifestation of Irish cultural nationalism, the Celtic Revival of the 1890s, which provided the most immediate cultural context for Joyce, I emphasise that “Cyclops” is made up of vastly *heterogeneous* elements, therefore it stages and intricately subverts *diverse manifestations* of Irish cultural nationalist discursive practices. Lloyd, who discusses “Cyclops” against the backdrop of Irish cultural nationalist metaphysical assumptions in general, has greatly influenced my thinking about the episode’s textual politics, yet while his

holistic arguments operate on an abstract level, my investigations offer a *close reading* of the text through the lenses of the metaphysical and discursive cornerstones of Irish cultural nationalism.

I argue that the dense texture of “Cyclops” functions as a *heterogeneous site of ironic counterdiscourses* challenging discursive formations drawing on the two basic aspirations of diverse cultural nationalist projects – creating a homogeneous communal identity and representing the temporality of the nation in organicist terms as a teleological development – and subversively enlisting the key cultural means of their dissemination. With the exception of the first chapter, in which I discuss some overall formal features of “Cyclops,” in the next four chapters I examine hitherto ignored or scarcely dwelt on recesses of the text, revealing/creating ironic thematic and formal dynamics in them.

In the Introduction I briefly survey the development of the critical treatment of the representation of nationalism in “Cyclops,” paying special attention to the results of the past decade. The first chapter explores how several formal – structural and stylistic – features of “Cyclops” assume ironic counterdiscursive significance in the light of nationalist imaginings of the nation in organic terms. I examine how the deceptive mimicry of mimetic verisimilitude through the narrator’s persona ironically comments on the representational aesthetics of cultural nationalism; how the wholesale structural dynamics of splitting and parodic multiplication evokes and ironically counteracts the anti-colonial nationalist formation of identity within a Manichean structure on the one hand, on the other hand how it ironically refracts the translational aesthetics of anti-colonial Irish cultural nationalism – the belief in the translatability of Gaelic culture (spirit) into the English language. In contrast to the usual critical practice of highlighting Cyclopean nominal manipulations through the lenses of Homeric myth, I explore them against the backdrop of nationalist nominal practices. Since a considerable amount of critical commentary has already been amassed on the overall formal features of the episode, my argument in this chapter is constructed along with an evaluation of previous narrative models, suggesting that the formal complexities of “Cyclops” render most of them inadequate.

The second and third chapters complement each other in the sense that in both a bulky Cyclopean name list provides the dynamic focus of the discussion. In the second chapter it is the longest Cyclopean catalogue of “many Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity” through which I explore how “Cyclops” stages a comic intervention into the practice of ancestors-worship, one of the cornerstones of Romantic nationalism. I argue that the gigantic inventory

functions as a sort of psychograph of the citizen as well as a site of ironic counterdiscourses working against his and by extension Irish nationalist stances and rhetoric. Complying with the citizen's hero-worship, the enumeration initially seems to dramatise the cultural nationalist aestheticisation of Irish history into a series of heroic tableaux blending myth and history, yet several potential dynamics within the list undermine the practice – the inventory scrambles chronology, exposes the inescapably perspectival nature of historical knowledge and suggests that historical meaning is the product of retrospective semantification. Several other features of the nationalist historical imagination – analogy-mongering, ascribing symbolic roles to women, and the melodramatic construction of Irish history – which are conjured up on the discursive level in “Cyclops,” highlight numerous other ironic dynamics in the catalogue. An important aim of this chapter is to offer a corrective to the reified critical vision of the citizen as the embodiment of some kind of definable ideology – even if there has never been a consensus as to what kind.

In the third chapter I inquire into how “Cyclops” ironically comments on a major nationalist anxiety: the fear of the contamination of the cultural and racial purity of the nation. “Cyclops” critics have often commented on how Joyce caricatures the purist stance in the citizen's anti-Semitic attack on Bloom. The text evidently dramatises the violence lurking in communal identity formation both on a discursive level – in the barflies', especially the citizen's abject othering of Bloom – and in the citizen's use of physical force to rid the community of Bloom's contaminating presence, invoking St. Patrick to carry out the same task not long before. While critics customarily emphasise Bloom's role in countering this, I explore how the discursive and physical violence in the name of the purity of the nation is counteracted on the formal level by a long list of saints intruding upon the narrative space of Bloom's othering. With this move, Cyclopean irony also loosens another cornerstone of Irish Romantic nationalism: the figuration of Ireland as *Insula Sacra*.

The fourth chapter explores how “Cyclops” offers a comic critique of the nationalist imagining of the nation's temporality as a teleological development. Discursively – especially but not exclusively in the citizen's “prophecies” – the text conjures up the nationalist organicist vision of time, more particularly, the figuration of history as the prophet of a future national regeneration, along with the dramatisation of several *topoi* characteristic of the Irish context. However, the nationalist vision of temporality is undermined by means of hitherto not noted subtextual/intertextual dramas. In particular, I focus on how the text weaves and

unweaves two powerful images of national salvation in popular history: the Tree of Liberty and the Red Hand.

The final chapter, somewhat shifting the emphasis, concentrates not on how “Cyclops” ironically re-inscribes crucial discursive *formations* of Irish cultural nationalism, but on how it portrays the cultural *processes* and deploys the cultural *media* – the popular ballad, the newspaper, and drama – through which discursive formations emerge and become building blocks of national identity. Benedict Anderson’s definition of the nation in terms of an “imagined community” has already been used to describe the representation of nationalism in “Cyclops” (James Fairhall, Vincent J. Cheng), but it has not been applied to describe the performative aspects of the text yet. Anderson’s performative model of the nation as an imagined community of newspaper reading communicants and of individuals connected through unisonance, imagined sound, provides a useful, even if only partially suitable theoretical frame for discussing the Cyclopean representation of the use of newspapers and ballads in nation formation. Concerning drama, I focus on how the episode comically conjures up and re-negotiates anti-colonial nationalist performance practices, especially those characterising the Queen’s Royal Theatre, one of the commercial theatres in turn-of-the-century Dublin, which rivalled the Abbey in its claim of being the national theatre of Ireland.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The method I deploy is that of the archaeologist. I contextualise and historicise discursive formations and the vehicles of their dissemination woven into the composite texture of “Cyclops” to better illuminate the ideologically subversive implications of the text. My inquiry, which is mostly informed by the concerns and methods of post-colonialism, relies on various sources: (1) it draws on the work of the theoreticians/critics of the modern idea of the nation such as Benedict Anderson, Homi K. Bhabha, and John Hutchinson, the critique of teleological modes of historical imagination offered by Hayden White and Michel Foucault, also acknowledging those Joyce critics who have already illuminated aspects of Joyce’s text through their insights such as Robert Spoo, James Fairhall, Vincent J. Cheng; (2) it applies the most recent results of cultural critics focusing on Ireland such as Kevin Whelan, David Lloyd, Oliver MacDonagh, Luke Gibbons, Joep Leerssen, C. L. Innes, Mary Trotter, Richard Kearney, Declan Kiberd, Mary Helen Thuente and Seamus Deane to the text. Along with the

theoretical components, my analyses also rely on (3) ample documentary sources – such as revivalist histories of Ireland, newspapers, political ballads and melodramas – and (4) my scrutiny of the genetic development of “Cyclops.”

The archaeological approach to “Cyclops” is justified in several ways. The text abounds in elements that bear the semiotic incrustations of time. This is suggested by the fact that Don Gifford’s *Annotations to Ulysses* beside the “Ithaca” and “Circe” chapters provide the most guidance in the case of “Cyclops.” Although Gifford’s annotations lend immense help to first readers of *Ulysses*, the extensive microphilological spadework I have carried out facilitates the emergence of shades of meaning that Gifford’s notes do not suggest, and through them I highlight such intricate ironic dynamics within the recesses of the text that complicate the ideological implications of the text.

The use of my strategy is also justified by the fact that Joyce’s text, especially the gigantic catalogues forming the dynamic foci of two chapters – the inventory of eighty six allegedly “Irish heroes and heroines of antiquity” and the nominal procession of seventy nine “saints and martyrs, virgins and confessors” – are the products of gradual augmentation, Joyce piled them on in the successive stages of the writing process. Since several insights offered in the second and third chapters derive from the perusal of the genetic development of the catalogues I include their graphic outline in the chapters. The results of my philological spadework and the insights based on the genetic development of the text are never presented for their own sake but to highlight the complex interaction between the discussed textual item and its narrative context.

It may be somewhat cumbersome that the dissertation offers an abundance of footnotes. They are the by-products of the archaeological reading strategy, and their function is mostly to document or illustrate the insights offered in the main body of the study. Their overabundance in the second chapter is due to the fact that the items in the unruly list of heroes radiate in so many directions, can be caught up in so many semantic and semiotic games that they refuse to stay in place within a linear narrative, thus the main body of the study requires footnotes.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The reading strategy deployed in the dissertation through the novel use of the context of Irish cultural nationalism re-defines the representational politics of “Cyclops.”

(1) The dissertation revises some of those reified critical visions concerning the poetic features and ideological implications of “Cyclops” that have persisted even after the post-colonial turn in Joyce criticism. (a) Emphasising the thematic and formal heterogeneity of “Cyclops” it calls into question the adequacy of binary or bipolar models in describing the episode’s narrative structure. (b) Along with this, it argues that “Cyclops” resists the critical urge – prevalent for decades, and still present in some post-colonial readings – to force its ideological implications into neat political allegories. (c) Contrary to the almost unanimous critical vision that the citizen embodies some kind of definable ideology, my inquiry demonstrates that this anonymous figurehead, just like the heterogeneous list of heroes, functions as a *motley* woven out of colonial representations of the Irish, diverse cultural nationalist *topoi* and conflicting nationalist discourses.

(2) The novel application of the context of Irish cultural nationalism:

(a) ascribes ironic counterdiscursive significance to several overall formal – structural and stylistic – features of “Cyclops” such as the use of a narrator, the only one in *Ulysses*; the split structure – a stylistically and perspectively disjointed, fractured body of narrative – and the nominal economies of the episode;

(b) facilitates the emergence of ironic thematic and formal dynamics in the most problematic and hitherto scarcely discussed formal features of the text: its numerous lengthy lists.

(c) reveals and/or creates in the recesses of the text not readily visible subtextual/intertextual dramas subversively re-staging diverse cultural nationalist *topoi* and subversively enrolling cultural vehicles of inventing the Irish nation – newspapers, ballads, and drama, the last one with the most radical effects. “Cyclops” dramatises and counteracts the melodramatic imagination of Irish anti-colonial nationalism on several levels. The grotesque altercation between the citizen and Bloom boiling over into physical aggression and the finale of “Cyclops” is scripted in several ways according to the generic conventions of melodrama. Nonetheless, while within the binary structure of the melodramatic imagination the moral order is restored in the end, the good defeats the wicked, in “Cyclops,” paradoxically, it is the multivalent encoding of the ending according to conflicting symbolic constructs of the

powerful Irish anti-colonial tool of melodrama that undercuts rather than sustains the possibility of a clear-cut victory.

(3) The final conclusion of the dissertation is that nationalism in “Cyclops” functions as a vast and ludicrous heterogeneous net, and this way the episode foreshadows the representational politics of *Finnegans Wake*.

(4) The results of the microphilological spadework providing the basis of this study can also serve the purpose of revising Gifford’s annotations.

IV. PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THE THESIS

Articles:

1. “ ‘The Correspondence of Birds to the Things of the Intellect’ : James Joyce and Flann O’Brien.” *English Studies and the Curriculum. Proceedings of the First TEMPUS JEN Mini Conference*. Debrecen: KLTE, 1996. 11-19.
2. “The Political Ballad in Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” *Alternative Approaches to English-Speaking Cultures in the 19th Century*. Ed. Nóra Séllei and Tamás Bényei. Debrecen: KLTE, 1999. 126-139.
3. “Island of Cyclopiian Saints: Nationalism and Religion in the ‘Cyclops’ Episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” *Focus: Papers in English Literatures and Cultures. Special Issue on James Joyce*. Ed. Mária Kurdi and Antal Bókay. Pécs, 2002. 55-68.
4. “Making Hope and History Rhyme: Nationalist Historiography in the ‘Cyclops’ Episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 8:1 (2002): 131-150.

Review:

1. Senn, Fritz. *Inductive Scrutinies: focus on Joyce*. Dublin: Lilliput P. 1995. *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*. 5:1 (1999): 262-65.

Papers delivered: 11.