

Chapter 12: Cyclops

The action: An unnamed but colorful narrator is telling us about what happened around 5pm in a pub on the north side of town, when he was drinking with Joe Hynes and "the Citizen," among others. Hynes (you'll remember) is a reporter for the *Freeman's Journal*: we saw him at Paddy Dignam's funeral and at the newspaper offices and in "Ivy Day in the Committee Room." The Citizen is a one-eyed old athlete modeled after Michael Cusack, the man who founded the Gaelic Athletic Association, a nationalist organization that is something like a cross between the Little League and the Boy Scouts. It was probably the most influential part of the Celtic Revival, promoting Irish sports, the health and discipline of Ireland's youth, and totally committed to the "de-Anglicizing" of the country. The Citizen parallels the Cyclops, Polyphemus, in *The Odyssey*, and his having one eye contrasts him with Bloom, who you'll remember is characterized by parallax, a dual perspective that allows him to see things from someone else's point of view.

A few narrative threads are woven together in this chapter. Alf Bergen comes in laughing about the U.P.:up joke played on Dennis Breen earlier in the day. And the "Throwaway" winner at the horse race comes full circle, as everyone thinks Bloom has won a wager on long odds. Pub custom demands such a winner to stand rounds, so observe how everyone reacts to Bloom.

Bloom arrives looking for Martin Cunningham--they are arranging a sum of money to tide over the Dignam family till the insurance kicks in.



Michael Cusack of the GAA

This is the most political of Joyce's episodes. Determine if you can where he stakes his pennant in the wide field of the Irish Troubles.

Gigantism:

The episode jumps between our talented raconteur's voice and interpolated styles that narrate the action in parodies of other discourses. For example the mythological language of the Celtic Revival turns the Citizen into a figure reminiscent of Finn McCool, the legendary hero of Ireland's *Fianna*, which is more or less equivalent to Arthur's roundtable of knights. Probably the most important of these gigantifying parodies is the long one in the middle that renders in tabloid newspaper language the execution of an Irish hero (remember, the end of "Sirens" has put us in mind of Robert Emmett, the martyr-extraordinaire of Irish nationalism). Look especially for Bloom's definition of "nation" and how it differs from the Citizen's.

