

"So it returns." This is not the return of one who is forgotten, as Rip Van Winkle was forgotten after 20 years of absence (and as Odysseus was not, after the same period of time). Indeed, this is not the return of any one. Rather it is the *return*, the *recalling*, the *re-cycling* of experience that Joyce sees as underpinning all of human life. It is what makes metempsychosis and the entire enterprise of *Ulysses* possible.

Stephen, who never relinquishes his self-centeredness, only plays at otherness. In "Proteus" he imagines transforming into someone else in order to avoid arrest: "Other fellow did it: other me. Hat, tie, overcoat, nose. *Lui, c'est moi.*" (35); and in "Scylla and Charybdis" he thinks of a similarly evasive metamorphosis in order to get out of repaying a debt: "Wait. Five months. Molecules all change. I am other I now. Other I got pound" (156). In both of these imaginings, which occur in chapters in which Bloom is either totally absent or barely present, Stephen is not really becoming someone else, but only playfully creating another version of himself. It's not about otherness; the stress is decidedly on the *moi*, the "I."

By contrast, ever-empathetic Bloom is much more other-directed and often seeks an escape from his present self-considered circumstances, as when he painfully witnesses the descent of Dignam's coffin into the ground: "If we were all suddenly somebody else" (91). Bloom is both less self-confident than Stephen and less bound by the constraints of self-centeredness. We recall that near the end of his argument in the library in Chapter 9, Stephen quotes the Symbolist writer Maeterlinck: "*If Socrates leave his house today he will find the sage seated on his doorstep. If Judas go forth tonight it is to Judas his steps will tend.*" We encounter many people everyday, says Stephen "meeting robbers, ghosts, giants, old men, young men, wives, widows, brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves" (175). This may sound like Bloom's comment in Nausicaa, "Think you are escaping and run into yourself," but Bloom is talking about neither a philosophical construct nor an imaginative ploy to evade responsibility. The "yourself" that Bloom encounters is not "another I" nor some archetypal Bloom. It is Molly, who in her individuality ("only child"), *mirrors and completes* Bloom's individuality and solitude. This encounter is not a masked retreat back into selfhood, it is a marriage.

Similarly, Bloom's thought "Longest way round is the shortest way home" suggests that there can be no homecoming without an odyssey through the challenges and tribulations of other-filled life. And it promises that like *The Odyssey*, this epic narrative will end with its wandering hero at home, in his bed, with his wife.