# THE CYCLOPS IN *THE ODYSSEY*, *ULYSSES*, AND *ASTERIOS POLYP*: HOW ALLUSIONS AFFECT MODERN NARRATIVES AND THEIR HYPOTEXTS

by

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Paul Peppis

*The Odyssey* circulates throughout Western society due to its foundation of Western literature. The epic poem thrives not only through new editions and translations but also through allusions from other works. Texts incorporate allusions to add meaning to modern narratives, but allusions also complicate the original text. By tying two stories together, allusion preserves historical works and places them in conversation with modern literature. *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp* demonstrate the prevalence of allusions in books and comic books. Through allusions to both Polyphemus and Odysseus, Joyce and Mazzucchelli provide new ways to read both their characters and the ancient Greek characters they allude to.

## Acknowledgements

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## Table of Contents

# List of Figures

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Allusions, through their reference to characters and events, borrow content from outside sources. Rather than simply stealing content, however, allusions implement source material into a second narrative and equate the two stories. James Joyce's 1922 novel *Ulysses* and David Mazzucchelli's 2009 graphic novel *Asterios Polyp* allude to *The Odyssey* to compare their modern narratives to Homer's work.

Classical allusions liken not only the contents of modern and ancient works but also their standing in the literary world. In her analysis of *Paradise Lost*, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski observes that Milton uses allusions in order to gain "inclusion in the company he expressly sought for such a work—the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and the Bible" (6). By engaging texts from different nations and eras, allusion connects literary works and places them in conversation with each other.

The combination of different texts questions the distinction between these texts. When discussing Neil Gaiman's allusions to Eurydice in *The Song of Orpheus*, Ryan Cadrette notes that Gaiman draws from multiple origin stories for the ancient Greek character. Rather than adhering to one work or distinguishing his sources, Gaiman combines multiple stories into a single narrative. By alluding to Eurydice, Gaiman also develops the character by deviating from her original mythology; thus "myth is not a single fixed text; it is a fluid and evolving structure" (Cadrette 74). Myths change over time, with allusions both borrowing from and manipulating their source materials.

By drawing on but branching away from ancient stories, modern narratives challenge the extent to which allusions truly connect two texts. *Asterios Polyp*'s plot resembles the journey of *The Odyssey*, yet the two protagonists exhibit contrasting

personalities. Matthew Brien Bennett draws attention to this irony, stating that Mazzucchelli designs episodes of *Asterios Polyp* so readers "interpret the episode[s] with previous knowledge of the *Odyssey*, for Asterios' actions rarely coincide with Odysseus'" (19). Mazzucchelli's allusions influence readers into equating Asterios Polyp, the titular protagonist, with heroism even though he lacks heroism. Thus allusions may produce contradictory readings, questioning whether the alluded text—known as the hypotext—and its modern counterpart—the hypertext—truly coincide.

In the following chapters, I will explore this complicated relationship between *The Odyssey* as a hypotext and *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp* as its hypertexts. Because *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp* possess hundreds of allusions to *The Odyssey* and other works, I limit my analysis to allusions to Polyphemus—the Cyclops who curses Odysseus, the protagonist of *The Odyssey*, after Odysseus blinds him—and allusions closely associated to Polyphemus. I have chosen to analyze Polyphemus because, though the Cyclops antagonizes the heroic Odysseus in *The Odyssey*, *Asterios Polyp* presents its protagonist as both Polyphemus and Odysseus while the protagonist of *Ulysses* claims solidarity with his enemies. The novel and graphic novel unite the separate characters of *The Odyssey*, showing how allusions not only incorporate a hypotext's original tale but also complicate the story and characters of that hypotext.

Before I began this thesis, I viewed allusions solely through their effect on hypertexts. Now I understand allusions function in two simultaneous directions. Two narratives combine so that a hypotext like *The Odyssey* and its hypertext cohabit within a single literary conversation: both stories function with a modern and ancient context. In my thesis, I present my discoveries of how allusions to Polyphemus effect both *The*

*Odyssey* and the hypertexts which allude to Homer, *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp*. Before my analysis, I will define the types of allusions I have discovered during my research. Through my independent exploration of allusions and categories of allusions, I clarify how allusions affect individual readers. Because allusions depend on readers' awareness of those allusions, my arguments reflect my personal interpretations and demonstrate that the individual reader plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of allusions.

# Chapter 2: Types of Allusions

## Direct Linguistic Allusions

Direct linguistic allusions occur when one work quotes a line or phrase from another work. Depending on the context, these quotes from the original text may or may not include quotation marks in the new text. In *Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel refers to a chapter from *The Odyssey* and directly quotes it: "Like Odysseus on the island of the Cyclops, I found myself facing a 'being of colossal strengh [*sic*] and ferocity, to whom the law of man and god meant nothing'" (214). Through a simile comparing her narrative to *The Odyssey*, Bechdel informs readers of her hypotext before quoting it. Many authors include quotations without stating their source or the original speaker; Bechdel states neither, but she recalls a specific event from *The Odyssey* to link the epic poem with the quote. Readers still need to be familiar with *The Odyssey* to identify Odysseus and Polyphemus, but Bechdel uses hypotextual context to ease the process of recognition.

Unquoted direct linguistic allusions, on the other hand, rely on the reader to recognize the quote. The majority of linguistic allusions reference the Bible due to its popularity in Western culture. Chapter Twelve of *Asterios Polyp*—a chapter devoted entirely to religion—opens with: "Our father, Eugenios (the doctor), thought little about religion" (Mazzucchelli [142]). The line recalls the first line of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven," and emphasizes the allusion by enlarging the two words copied from the Prayer (*English Standard Version*, Matthew 6.9). Presented through a narration of the past, the allusion foreshadows the deaths of Asterios's parents soon after this past storyline. It also reinforces Asterios's theory that belief in God stems from the "creation

of [a] parent substitute" when children discover the imperfection of their parents (Mazzucchelli [152]). Thus the allusion contradicts and secularizes the original Prayer, replacing God with Eugenios, an unreligious man.

*Ulysses* similarly quotes the Bible in an ironically secular setting. When taking a bath, Leopold Bloom—the protagonist of *Ulysses*—says in first-person stream of consciousness: "This is my body" (Joyce 71). This is an unquoted direct linguistic allusion to the Last Supper, where Christ states: "This is my body, which is given for you" (Luke 22.19). Bloom associates himself with Christ through this allusion. Whether readers approve or disapprove of Bloom's identification with Christ, the allusion establishes a connection between the two and prompts readers to consider that connection.

While Joyce uses a single Biblical quotation to equate Bloom and Christ, John Milton associates all of *Paradise Lost* with the Bible. The epic poem expands upon the Fall of Satan, Adam, and Eve and incorporates multiple Biblical allusions, but it most clearly links to the Bible in its opening lines: "In the beginning how the heav'ns and earth" (Milton 1.9). Through this direct linguistic allusion to the first line of the Bible—"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"—Milton likens his introduction to the Bible's introduction (Genesis 1.1). This allusion suggests *Paradise Lost* will continue to correspond with the Bible throughout its narrative.

Milton's opening also alludes to the beginning of *The Odyssey*. Both epic poems command a Muse to tell their narratives: the sixth line of *Paradise Lost*, "Sing Heav'nly Muse," imitates the first line of *The Odyssey*, "Muse, speak to me" (Milton 1.6; Homer 1.1). Both incorporate the word "Muse," establishing a direct linguistic allusion.

However, the words largely differ between the two texts: thus the allusion more closely fits into the category of stylistic imitation than direct linguistic allusion.

**Stylistic Imitation**

Instead of frequently quoting *The Odyssey*, *Paradise Lost* more often imitates Homer's style. Milton begins by requesting the voice of a Muse, and he continues through epic similes. Homer utilizes epic similes throughout his works, such as describing how Artemis stands out among her nymphs and concluding with a simile:

> Just as when archer Artemis
> moves across the mountains, along the lofty ridges
> of Erymanthus or Taygetus, full of joy,
> as she pursues wild boars and swiftly running deer,
> with nymphs attending on her, daughters of Zeus,
> who bears the aegis, taking pleasures in the hunt,
> and Leto's heart rejoices, while Artemis
> holds her head and eyebrows high above them all,
> so recognizing her is easy, though all of them
> are beautiful—that's how that unmarried girl [Nausicaa]
> stood out then from her attendants (6.127-137).

Milton incorporates multiple epic similes, sometimes alluding to Greek myths like Homer and sometimes referencing Biblical stories. When describing the fallen angels occupying Hell, Milton recalls Moses summoning a cloud of locusts:

> As when the potent rod
> Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day
> Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud
> Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
> That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
> Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:
> So numberless were those bad angels seen
> Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell (1.338-345).

By imitating Homer and particularly Homer's epic similes, Milton fully transforms the story of Satan, Adam, and Eve into an epic poem and compares the Bible to *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*.

While Milton imitates a specific author, *Ulysses* imitates entire genres in different chapters. The penultimate chapter, "Ithaca," follows the style of a Christian catechism through its third-person questions and answers. This grants the narrative objective authority. While Stephen Dedalus and Bloom frequently narrate episodes of *Ulysses* in first-person stream of consciousness, "Ithaca" looks at the two characters from without. The stylistic imitation of a catechism reinforces the narrator's authority, informing the reader of the truths of these characters as a catechism teaches Christian doctrine.


Figure 1: Hana and Asterios drawn in different art styles. From *Asterios Polyp* ([41]). The graphic novel occasionally shifts from realistic illustrations to art styles unique to individual characters. Hana is drawn with red gestural artwork and Asterios is drawn in a blue Cubist style.

*Asterios Polyp* similarly imitates an artistic movement rather than a specific literary or artistic work. Mazzucchelli often deviates from the graphic novel's typical visual style by drawing different characters in different styles. During these instances, Asterios is depicted in a Cubist style: his body consists of multiple three-dimensional shapes, particularly cylinders (Figure 1). Many of these shapes are loosely connected, with Asterios's forearms and upper arms almost disconnected from each other. Rather than imitating reality, Mazzucchelli evokes the style of abstract art to convey the unreliability of visual reality, using Cubism to highlight the inner disjunction hidden beneath Asterios's uniform exterior.

**Visual Allusions**

Mazzucchelli employs visual illustrations to connect Asterios to abstract art and Cubism, making this connection both a stylistic imitation and a visual allusion. Using image to connect one work to another, visual allusions may appear in either artwork or verbal descriptions. Joyce implements visual allusion in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* through a textual image. The novel's protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, pictures "a hawklike man flying sunward above the sea…a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being" (Joyce, *Portrait* 121). While Stephen imagines this man in response to his own name, Dedalus, the image alludes to both Daedalus—a Greek artificer who builds wings for himself and Icarus, his son—and Icarus. The man flies sunward—as Icarus flies so high that the sun melts his wings—and forges wings—as Daedalus creates wings which ensure his survival. Rather than alluding solely to the

plot of the Icarus myth, Joyce describes settings like the sea and the workshop to produce an image within the text and the reader's mind. Thus the allusion functions as both a textual and visual cue, encouraging visual imagination through physical details.

While literature requires more words and details to produce an image, graphic narratives need none. Chapter Eighteen of *Asterios Polyp* lacks text but offers the most intricate visual allusion in the story. This chapter recounts the Orpheus myth by drawing Asterios as Orpheus (with a lyre in hand) passing Cerberus (a three-headed dog) into the Underworld (descending into a subway station) and crossing the River Styx (riding a subway car which floats atop a river) to bring his wife, Eurydice (Hana), back to life. The chapter visually recalls Chapter Three, where Asterios passes a dog, descends into a subway station, and takes the subway in order to reach Hana. Through visual repetition, Mazzucchelli directly compares Chapter Three to the story of Orpheus. While Chapter Eighteen already alludes to Orpheus and emphasizes *Asterios Polyp*'s role as hypertext to the Orpheus myth, Mazzucchelli doubles the chapter's visuals to enrich his visual allusion and connect Orpheus to both Asterios and modern New York.

*Fun Home* similarly implements visual allusions to associate Bechdel and her father with Icarus and Daedalus, although Bechdel relies on accompanying text to explain this allusion. After showing herself balancing atop her father's feet and saying "I soared above him," Bechdel notes the similarity to "Icarian games" and recalls "the fate of Icarus after he flouted his father's advice and flew so close to the sun his wings melted" (3-4). Bechdel combines visual allusion with character allusion to reinforce the connection between her hypotext—the Icarus myth—and her graphic memoir.

**Character Allusions**

Character allusions refer to characters from another text. They are often used to relate a character from a hypertext to a previous, hypotextual character. To establish the Orpheus myth as a hypotext of *Asterios Polyp*, Mazzucchelli alludes to Orpheus by name: the play directed by Willy Ilium and designed by Hana is titled "*Orpheus (Underground)*" ([183]). This allusion prepares the audience for Chapter Eighteen, where Mazzucchelli includes a stage with Willy directing the story of Orpheus. Although the textless chapter would visually remind many readers of the Orpheus myth and particularly of the Greek Underworld, Mazzucchelli includes a character allusion to assist readers.

Bechdel also implements both visual and character allusions in the introduction of *Fun Home* (Figure 2). While Mazzucchelli separates his character and visual allusions to Orpheus by many pages, Bechdel combines the two to draw attention to them. Readers familiar with the Icarus myth would recognize her character allusion, but her visual allusion could easily be glossed over due to its occurrence in everyday life. Bechdel notes the image's commonality, beginning her graphic memoir with: "Like many fathers, mine could occasionally be prevailed on for a spot of 'airplane'" (3). Through her character allusions, however, Bechdel elevates the meaning of this commonplace image. The visual image equally contributes to the character allusion, allowing readers to visualize the allusion and its context within the story.


Figure 2: Bechdel and her father reenacting the Icarus myth. From *Fun Home* (4). Alison Bechdel balances atop her father's feet in a game of "airplane." Bechdel compares the image to the story of Icarus and Daedalus through surrounding text.

*Fun Home*'s textual character allusions utilize simile to compare one character to another, with Bechdel acting "like Odysseus on the island of the Cyclops" and her and her father engaging in a "reenactment" of the Icarus myth (214, 4). Other authors invoke character allusions without explanation, requiring the reader to imagine how the allusion connects to the hypertext. *Ulysses*, for example, alludes to Odysseus—aka Ulysses—through its title. This indirectly links the entire novel to Odysseus. Joyce's schemas gives *Ulysses* chapter names that refer to episodes of *The Odyssey* in an order which nearly matches the narrative structure of *The Odyssey*, advancing the titular character allusion by connecting the novel to *The Odyssey* ("Gilbert" and "Linati"). Bloom's journey and Joyce's schema, which lists "Ulysses" as a person present in every chapter featuring Bloom, link Bloom to Odysseus ("Linati"). *Ulysses* tells the story of

Bloom just as *The Odyssey* tells the story of Odysseus; thus the titular character allusion refers to Bloom. Despite the numerous clues which support this reading, the character allusion lacks explanation and thus allows the reader to determine the significance of *Ulysses*'s title.

Like Joyce, Mazzucchelli connects his characters to ancient Greek characters without stating the connection. Chapter Eighteen of *Asterios Polyp* visually likens Asterios to Orpheus, but the textual character allusion 60 pages earlier encourages readers to imagine this likeness before its reveal. The textual allusion to Orpheus appears without explanatory context, meaning readers may infer the allusion in multiple ways. They may interpret Willy—the director of *Orpheus (Underground),* the creator of the play's name, and the first character to iterate the allusion—as Orpheus. Hana, because of her role as the set and costume designer of *Orpheus (Underground),* may also represent Orpheus. Readers may identify Asterios as Orpheus early on, but Eurydice—who Hana represents in Chapter Eighteen—may be associated with Ignazio due to his death and Asterios's desire to revive him. Although Mazzucchelli visually supports the reading of Asterios as Orpheus and Hana as Eurydice, readers may draw a variety of conclusions. Unexplained character allusions stimulate readers' imagination by placing two texts together without a set connection.

Many authors employ character allusions using a different method: they borrow the name of a hypotextual character and implement it into the name of their own character. Biblical names are often recycled to connect a modern character and their story to a Biblical character. Some writers fully integrate a character's name while others only use part of it. Joyce names the protagonist of *A Portrait of the Artist as a*

*Young Man* Stephen Dedalus rather than Stephen Daedalus. In *The Crying of Lot 49*, Thomas Pynchon alludes to Oedipus Rex through the name of his protagonist, Oedipa Maas. These changes in spelling highlight that Dedalus and Oedipa are similar but not equivalent to their hypotextual counterparts. In his analysis of Pynchon's novel, J. Kerry Grant questions whether Oedipa's name is used to compare her to Oedipus or ironically contrast the two characters. While referencing Robert D. Newman, Grant observes "that the 'generally symbolic associations' that accumulate around Oedipa's name are 'simultaneously deflated by the ordinariness of her suburban existence'" (3). Pynchon clearly establishes a link between Oedipus and Oedipa through character allusion, but the novel's content questions whether Oedipa's story matches or opposes the Oedipus myth.

**Content Allusions**

Content allusions occur when the events of one text imitate or recall the events of another. *The Crying of Lot 49* alludes to the Oedipus myth by engaging Oedipa in a search for truth. Pynchon highlights the content allusion through Oedipa's character allusion. *Ulysses* similarly uses its title to label its content allusions to *The Odyssey*. The visual allusions to Orpheus in Chapter Eighteen of *Asterios Polyp* are recognizable because they also function as content allusions, with Asterios's descent into Hades imitating Orpheus's journey (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Asterios descending into the Underworld. From *Asterios Polyp* ([246]). Waiting to cross the River Styx with a lyre in hand, Asterios visually alludes to the Orpheus myth.

*The Crying of Lot 49*, *Ulysses*, and *Asterios Polyp* couple their content allusions with labels and character allusions—all these allusions, however, remain unexplained. *Fun Home*, on the other hand, spells out its content allusions by describing how Bechdel both resembles and differs from Odysseus and Icarus. As with all allusions, however, content allusions may lack explanation and leave the work of identifying the allusion for the reader. Authors use a variety of methods to highlight their allusions, but part of the audience will always miss allusions because they require knowledge outside the hypertext. This, however, is one reason allusions are so effective. The experience of reading depends on allusions: they influence the reader only if identified by the reader, and readers may interpret what they find in a multitude of ways. Allusions place hypertexts and hypotexts within a single conversation, but the reader determines how allusions influence the conversation.

# Chapter 3: Allusions to Polyphemus

## Polyphemus in *Asterios Polyp*

Mazzucchelli alludes to Polyphemus throughout *Asterios Polyp*, although these allusions may not be evident to all readers. Asterios's last name, Polyp, constitutes the first half of Polyphemus's name, producing a character allusion which distorts the Cyclops's name without fully integrating it. However, Asterios's family name was originally twice as long. When Asterios's father moved from Greece to America, "an exasperated Ellis Island official…cut the family name in half, leaving only the first five letters" (Mazzucchelli [20]). Although "half" might be an approximation, this suggests that the family name originally consisted of ten letters, like "Polyphemus." The complete family name never appears during the graphic novel, preventing some readers from recognizing that the name alludes to Polyphemus. By leaving the family name ambiguous, however, Mazzucchelli allows readers to fill in the missing five letters and imagine whether or not the name derives from Polyphemus. Readers may substitute "Polyphemus" for a variety of names or words; Mazzucchelli encourages this imaginative form of reading when using the word "polyphonic" ([219]). Mazzucchelli employs multiple meanings by borrowing from "Polyphemus" rather than copying it, producing a character allusion but not restricting "Polyp" to that single allusion.

In addition to this text-based character allusion, Mazzucchelli visually alludes to Polyphemus by drawing Asterios as a Cyclops. Of the 636 drawings of Asterios where one or more of his eyes are visible, 22 contain both eyes. While other characters exhibit two eyes on a much more regular basis, Asterios almost always possesses only one eye. Mazzucchelli manipulates the angles of his panels to turn Asterios into a visual

Cyclops, giving the protagonist two eyes in the plot but one eye in the presentation of that plot.

By the end of the comic book, however, Asterios possesses only one eye physically rather than through visual angles. A drunk man smashes Asterios's left eye with a beer bottle, permanently blinding Asterios's eye and forcing him to wear an eyepatch. Mazzucchelli emphasizes Asterios's role as a literal Cyclops by more frequently illustrating Asterios with two eyes. Before being blinded, Asterios is drawn with two eyes 2.2 percent of the time; afterwards, both eyes are visible 10.1 percent of the time. Despite exhibiting both eyes five times more often than before the attack, Asterios technically possesses one eye in the story's conclusion. Whether he's drawn from the side or drawn with an eyepatch, Asterios visually represents Polyphemus throughout the graphic novel.

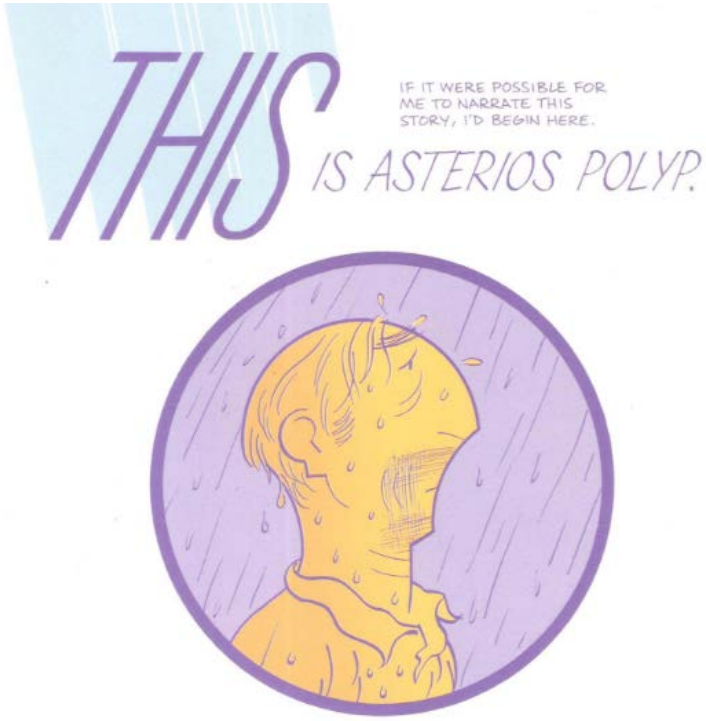


Figure 4: One-eyed Asterios. From *Asterios Polyp* ([16]).

In its first narrated page, *Asterios Polyp* combines textual character allusion in Asterios's name with visual allusion in a one-eyed drawing of Asterios.

To guide readers into recognizing his allusions to Polyphemus, Mazzucchelli couples them from the beginning. The book's jacket presents two pictures of Asterios with only one eye: the front cover views Asterios's left side while the back cover views his right side. This continues into the interior paratextual contents: a one-eyed Asterios accompanies the interior title page as well. Within the story itself, the first image of Asterios displays both eyes; when his name is introduced, however, he's portrayed in a massive, one-eyed picture (Figure 4). Through the juxtaposition of "Polyp" and one-eyed diagrams of Asterios, these pages combine character allusion with visual allusion. Mazzucchelli ends with a significant content allusion by violently blinding Asterios as Odysseus blinds Polyphemus.

**Polyphemus Coupled with Other Allusions in *Asterios Polyp***

*Asterios Polyp* utilizes a significant number of allusions from a variety of texts, but there are certain allusions that complement the Polyphemus allusions. The most significantly related allusions are those involving Odysseus due to Polyphemus's and Odysseus's interactions in *The Odyssey*. I will discuss those allusions and their significance in further detail in Chapter 4. In this chapter, though, I will point out other allusions which also contribute to the Polyphemus allusion.

Because of its textual and visual juxtaposition with "Polyp," "Asterios" pairs well with the Polyphemus allusion. Stemming from Greek mythology like Polyphemus, "Asterios" recalls the Minotaur, referred to as Asterion or Asterius. The Minotaur, like the Cyclops, possesses both human and inhuman characteristics: Asterion is half-man and half-bull, while Polyphemus resembles a man except for his giant size and singular

eye. By combining the Minotaur with the Cyclops, Mazzucchelli highlights the lack of humanity in both Asterion and Polyphemus and extends these monstrous characteristics to his protagonist. Each name bears monstrous implications, but the two together highlight Asterios's cold personality and his limited sympathy.

"Polyp" incorporates multiple allusions outside of Polyphemus, including additional ancient Greek monsters. By avoiding stating Polyphemus's full name, Mazzucchelli incites interpretations of "Polyp" as both a prefix and word. The word "polyp," according to the Oxford English Dictionary, refers to "a cephalopod with eight or ten tentacles" or "any of various aquatic sessile invertebrates…which have a mouth surrounded by tentacles and are either solitary or colonial in organization" ("Polyp"). These definitions evoke Scylla and Charybdis, two monsters inhabiting opposite cliffs of a channel which Odysseus must pass through to return home; the former snatches men with her tentacle-like heads while the latter resides in the water and pulls ships into her mouth. Although Asterios never visually resembles a bull or a creature with tentacles, his name recalls the Minotaur, Scylla, and Charybdis, emphasizing his role as a monster.

In addition to its function as a word, "Polyp" highlights "poly," a prefix meaning "'many, much'…where *many* variously connotes 'two or more', 'three or more', 'several', or 'a large number'" ("Poly-"). Polyphemus's name fully incorporates this prefix: the Cyclops's name means "many-voiced" (Harper). Through the missing "voice," Mazzucchelli emphasizes the significant absence in Asterios's life: his identical brother. Ignazio, who died in the womb while Asterios survived, would have possessed the same looks and voice as Asterios. Thus the world lacks the many voices

of Asterios; by keeping "poly" in Asterios's last name, Mazzucchelli ironically acknowledges that only one twin lives. He distinguishes this absence through the Cyclops. In his dreams, left-handed Asterios imagines Ignazio to be right-handed. Asterios thus imagines himself and Ignazio as a two-sided coin, which Mazzucchelli emphasizes by drawing the two characters as Cyclopes. While Asterios occasionally possesses two eyes, Ignazio is always drawn with only one eye. Ignazio represents Asterios's missing eye and missing half. Asterios lacks half of his family name, half of his family, and—if Ignazio and Asterios embody a collective whole as their one-eyed drawings suggest—half of himself.


Figure 5: Unique individual experiences conveyed through color. From *Asterios Polyp* ([219]). Asterios, Hana, and Willy listen to the composer of *Orpheus (Underground)* describe his composition. Because of their differing views of the world, the three characters inhabit worlds with different color palettes. Mazzucchelli associates Asterios with blue, Hana with red, and Willy with brown.

Mazzucchelli further ironizes Asterios's name through the word "polyphonic." When describing the musical design of *Orpheus (Underground)*, the play's composer

says: “In a cacophony of information, each listener, by focusing on certain tones and phrases, can become an active participant in creating a unique, unique polyphonic experience” (Mazzucchelli [219]). The quote is accompanied by three different perspectives surrounding the speaker: Asterios lives in a largely blue panel, Hana in a red panel, and Willy in a brown panel (Figure 5). Every character in *Asterios Polyp* possesses a unique style of text and speech balloon, further separating the characters and their perspectives. The individual experiences shown and discussed both adhere to and contradict the definition of “polyphonic,” which means: “Producing, capable of producing, or involving the production of many sounds or voices; many-voiced” (“Polyphonic”). “Polyphonic” applies to the music of *Orpheus (Underground),* since the composer plans on playing multiple types of music at once. The multitude of individual interpretations also fits many definitions, since many perspectives will simultaneously occur. However, these perspectives lack sound. By drawing these “polyphonic” experiences rather than voicing them, Mazzucchelli highlights the separation of individuals. Thus each individual possesses and hears only one voice, preventing a communal, polyphonic experience. Because “polyphonic” possesses ten letters and thus may function as Asterios’s original family name, his current last name—Polyp—severs Asterios from a polyphonic lifestyle. Like Polyphemus in his cave, Asterios sacrifices community for individualism and lacks sympathy for others’ perspectives of the world.

**How Polyphemus Contributes to the Reading of *Asterios Polyp***

Through allusions to multiple Greek monsters and particularly to Polyphemus, *Asterios Polyp* supports an antagonistic viewing of Asterios. While he gains more noble qualities by the end of the graphic novel, Asterios is an antihero in the past narrative. His selfish faith in himself over others and his inability to listen to others' perspectives leads to his and Hana's divorce. He acknowledges this by the end of the story: when Ursula asks what happened to his marriage, Asterios answers: "I broke it" (Mazzucchelli [301]). With only one eye and an individualistic—rather than polyphonic—perspective, Asterios fails to notice Hana's distress or appreciate her. The character allusion to Polyphemus shows his role as a monster, reinforcing his faults and Hana's purity.

By finally admitting that he caused the divorce, however, Asterios demonstrates his changed personality and widened perspective. While Asterios reveals his growth through his words and actions, Mazzucchelli reinforces this change through allusion. Although a drunk physically blinds Asterios, Asterios symbolically blinds himself by murdering Ignazio in a dream. Ignazio previously represents a more successful version of Asterios, but in this dream he recalls a personal history which perfectly matches Asterios's life. Ignazio lists and embodies Asterios's flaws. Thus by killing Ignazio, Asterios internally destroys his past, along with the undesirable qualities which ruined his past. In the process of murdering himself, Asterios loses his left eye. He replaces right-handed Ignazio, giving birth to a new persona and leaving behind his past self. Mazzucchelli inverts the character and visual allusions to Polyphemus through this content allusion, where Asterios symbolically blinds himself as Odysseus blinds

Polyphemus. Through allusions to Odysseus, Mazzucchelli demonstrates Asterios's transition from a self-absorbed monster into a hero who eliminates his faults.

Asterios's violent attack against himself also recalls the story of Oedipus. Oedipus and his wife respectively punish themselves after discovering she is Oedipus's mother: she kills herself while he stabs his eyes. Both Oedipus and Asterios witness the results of their flaws—both lose their wives by focusing on themselves rather than listening to others—and subsequently blind themselves. Through their suffering, though, both characters gain insight and thus sacrifice a part of themselves to better themselves. Like the blind prophet Teiresias who sees the future, their blindness leads to humility and replaces selfishness with appreciation for the world. While the loss of Polyphemus's eye incapacitates the Cyclops, Asterios benefits from his loss of self and ultimately makes amends with Hana.

**Polyphemus in *Ulysses***

*Ulysses* never directly alludes to Polyphemus through character allusion, but the "Cyclops" chapter alludes to Odysseus's journey into his cave. In this episode of *Ulysses*, Bloom enters a bar dominated by a man referred to as "the citizen," who advocates Irish nationalism while Bloom questions the hostile views of nationalists and instead sues for global peace. Enraged by Bloom's contention, the citizen curses Bloom and tries to murder him as he exits the bar. The chapter's title and contents thoroughly reference Polyphemus, but the exclusion of Polyphemus distinguishes *Ulysses* from *The Odyssey*. Rather than solidifying the connection between Polyphemus and the

"Cyclops" chapter, Joyce keeps his allusion open-ended as Mazzucchelli does by using "Polyp" rather than "Polyphemus."

The numerous content allusions within the chapter certainly establish Bloom as Odysseus—as the rest of the novel has also established—and the citizen as the Cyclops. Bloom enters a bar dominated by the citizen, engages in an argument with him, and leaves while shouting back at him. The allusion culminates in the citizen throwing an empty biscuit tin at Bloom as Polyphemus threw boulders at Odysseus. Constantly antagonizing Bloom and questioning his citizenship throughout the chapter, the citizen drives Bloom from the bar but fails to denounce Bloom's status as an Irishman or, like Polyphemus, kill him.

Joyce uses visual allusions to support this reading. The biscuit tin, despite its small size and ineffectiveness in harming Bloom, is accompanied by an ironic description of massive destruction, causing a "catastrophe [that] was terrific and instantaneous in its effect," producing "shocks throughout Dublin like an "earthquake" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 281). Through ironic metaphorical comparison, the biscuit tin visually imitates Polyphemus's boulders smashing into the ocean. Bloom also embodies a visual allusion when the citizen describes him as "a wolf in sheep's clothing" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 277). Recalling the scene where Odysseus and his crew escape Polyphemus's cave by tying themselves to the Cyclops's sheep, Joyce transforms this common saying into a significant visual allusion to *The Odyssey*.

These images depict the citizen as Polyphemus and Bloom as Odysseus, but the chapter engages multiple images which connect other people or objects to the Cyclops. The citizen's dog particularly imitates Polyphemus, acting as violent and "savage" as

the monster of *The Odyssey* (Homer 9.298). Described as a bloodthirsty beast whose life revolves around food, the dog desires "to tear him [Bloom] limb from limb" just as Polyphemus ignores social conventions and consumes Odysseus's crew without extensive conversation or friendly interaction (Joyce, *Ulysses* 282). The chapter ends with the dog chasing after Bloom like Polyphemus pursuing Odysseus.

Additional similes and statements connect the chapter's narrator to Cyclopes, such as when he internally says: "Give us your blessing. Not as much as would blind your eye" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 277). This is the only chapter narrated by this unnamed character, suggesting the title "Cyclops" may refer to the narrator just as "Penelope"—the only chapter narrated by Molly—alludes to Bloom's wife. The narrator accuses Bloom as often as the citizen. Every character within the bar mistreats Bloom; thus everybody in the chapter acts like Polyphemus. Even the kinder characters fail to speak of Bloom without insulting him, recalling Polyphemus's cruel "hospitality" to Odysseus: "I'll eat all your companions before you / and have you at the end—my gift to you, / since you're my guest" (Homer 9.490-492). By only obliquely alluding to Polyphemus, Joyce allows any and all characters to embody the role of the Cyclops.

This ambiguous assignment of the "Cyclops" allusion suggests Ireland to be overrun with cruel, greedy, and narrow-minded Cyclopes. Every character in the pub except Bloom readily drinks alcohol, evoking Polyphemus's mistake of consuming the wine offered by Odysseus. Joyce critiques Irishmen's drunkenness often, particularly when stating: "Ireland sober is Ireland free" (*Ulysses* 255). Odysseus's men gain freedom through their soberness, whereas Polyphemus loses an eye due to his intoxicated state. The drunk Irishmen, particularly the citizen and narrator, iterate Irish

nationalism and take pride in their drinking habits. In this particular bar, Irish nationalists express violent, unfriendly, and alcoholic behaviors as Polyphemus does in *The Odyssey*.

Joyce supports this critical reading of Ireland by imitating the style of Homer throughout the "Cyclops" chapter. The chapter's language and long lists resemble Homer and his descriptions of sacrificed animals and weapons, such as: "At the sound of the sacring bell, headed by a crucifer with acolytes, thurifers, boatbearers, readers, ostiarii, deacons and subdeacons, the blessed company drew nigh" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 277). Through its lists and inclusion of food and drink, the chapter resembles *The Odyssey* and particularly the island of the Cyclopes, where Odysseus's crew both consume large amounts of food and are consumed. Joyce's stylistic imitation of Homer indicates that the island of Ireland, like the island of the Cyclopes, contains bloodthirsty citizens who share an island yet treat each other and their guests with hostility.

**Polyphemus Coupled with Other Allusions in *Ulysses***

The Cyclopes, despite sharing a race and island, live separately: "Each one of them / makes laws for all his own wives and children, / and they shun all dealings with each other" (Homer 9.149-151). Joyce's characters within "Cyclops" act similarly by neglecting all religions but their own. Much of the controversy between Bloom and the citizen revolves around religion. Bloom defends himself and all other Jews while the Catholic Irishmen condemn Judaism and often insult or stereotype Bloom according to his religion.

This dichotomy between Catholicism and Judaism is addressed through allusions to both Cyclopes and Christ. Rather than stating his name as Odysseus does in *The Odyssey*, Bloom defends himself and his religion through Christ's name, saying: "Your God was a jew. Christ was a jew like me" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 280). Joyce thus advances his comparison between Bloom and Christ (see "Direct Linguistic Allusions") while also associating Judaism with truth. Odysseus initially lies about his name but later reveals the truth, inciting Polyphemus's rage as Bloom provokes the citizen. However, the citizen complicates Bloom's use of Christ as authority in swearing by Him: "By Jesus, I'll crucify him" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 280). While the citizen equates Bloom and Christ through the image of crucifixion, he despises Bloom's association with Christ. The citizen condemns Bloom "for using the holy name," yet he uses it just like Bloom (Joyce, *Ulysses* 280). With one man referring to "Christ" and the other to "Jesus," the two characters highlight the minuscule yet socially significant distinctions between Judaism and Catholicism.

Despite their representations of different religions, Bloom and the citizen treat this religious separation very differently. Bloom seeks unity and a single truth by identifying the citizen's God as his God. The citizen, on the other hand, desires segregation through violent means, seeking Bloom's crucifixion while calling upon the Lord to witness this murder. Polyphemus and *The Odyssey* complement this scene because Odysseus, like Bloom, desires harmony when entering the Cyclops's cave. Both the citizen and Polyphemus, however, mistreat their guests and shun their beliefs. Polyphemus dismisses the gods yet prays to Poseidon, requesting Poseidon to kill Odysseus while trying to kill Odysseus himself. The citizen calls upon Christ in an

ironically similar way, for his use of the Lord's name functions more as a curse than a prayer. He uses Christ's name in vain but condemns Bloom of the same crime, illuminating the hypocrisies and unreasonable hostilities of religion. While Odysseus and Polyphemus possess different religious beliefs, both call upon the gods for assistance; Judaism and Catholicism similarly vary in practice and belief yet worship the same God.

**How Polyphemus Contributes to the Reading of *Ulysses***

With a stylistic imitation that pervades all of "Cyclops," the chapter illustrates how all narrow-minded nationalist Irishmen may be viewed as Cyclopes. The content allusions and visual allusions which connect the citizen to Polyphemus support this argument and reference the dynamic between Odysseus and Polyphemus. By alluding to Polyphemus and all Cyclopes, Joyce highlights the monstrous actions performed within the chapter. The narrator restricts readers to his prejudiced perspective, which constantly insults and criticizes Bloom. Through his use of "I" and "you," the narrator forces readers to identify with him. The allusions to Polyphemus reveal the lack of humanity within the narrator, the citizen, and the other characters who antagonize Bloom. While Odysseus and Bloom offer conciliation between two separate groups, the narrow-minded antagonists reject tolerance. Bloom recognizes that Jews and Catholics share certain beliefs, but the citizen only acknowledges one religion just as the one-eyed Cyclops worships only one of numerous, equally powerful gods.

## Chapter 4: How Allusions Affect *The Odyssey* and Its Hypertexts

### Polyphemus and Odysseus in *The Odyssey*

Polyphemus significantly influences *The Odyssey* because his curse instigates the central conflict of the story. Praying to his father, the Cyclops asks of Poseidon:

> Grant that Odysseus, sacker of cities,
> a man from Ithaca, Laertes' son,
> never gets back home. If it's his destiny
> to see his friends and reach his native land
> and well-built house, may he get back late
> and in distress, after all his comrades
> have been killed, and in someone else's ship.
> And may he find troubles in his house (Homer 9.695-705).

This prayer summarizes the plot of *The Odyssey* from that point on and thus frames Polyphemus and his father as the central antagonists of the epic poem. However, Homer calls attention to how easily Odysseus could have prevented this curse. Narrating the story of Polyphemus many years after leaving the Cyclopes' island, Odysseus recounts that he mocked the Cyclops and told the monster his name even though his "comrades cautioned [him] from every side" (Homer 9.650). While Odysseus previously foiled Polyphemus by claiming to be named "Nobody," he abandons his cunning and safety by revealing his name. This enables Polyphemus to deliver his curse, causing the gods to disrupt Odysseus's journey home.

Despite Polyphemus's and Odysseus's contributions to the creation of the curse, the fulfillment of the curse seems separate from these two characters. Odysseus takes appropriate caution when he hears prophecies foretelling the contents of the curse, but his crew disregard the prophecies and cause their own deaths. Despite their "oath" to avoid Helios's cattle, the crew consume the animals and induce Zeus's wrath (Homer 12.397). The crew, however, are driven to such action because "Zeus stirred up a nasty

wind / and an amazing storm" which prevents them from leaving Helios's island (Homer 12.409-410). Later, Zeus avenges the cattle of Helios by destroying Odysseus's ship and killing his crew. Thus Zeus fulfills much of the curse, prompting readers to ask whether the crew, Odysseus, or even Polyphemus are to blame or whether the gods always intended to inflict havoc upon Odysseus.

**Polyphemus and Odysseus in *Asterios Polyp***

Although his name alludes to Greek monsters and his illustrations allude to Polyphemus, Asterios also resembles Odysseus. This relationship develops primarily through content allusions. Like *The Odyssey*, *Asterios Polyp* tells the journey of a man returning to his lover. Both protagonists abandon this journey for seven years—Odysseus remains on Calypso's island while Asterios resides in a Manhattan apartment—but eventually reach their lover after many obstacles.

The most obvious allusions to Odysseus in *Asterios Polyp*, though, are visual. While Odysseus does not descend into Hades like Asterios and Asterios does not speak to the dead, both men see the shades of their mothers and friends. Mazzucchelli employs visual, character, and content allusions to the Sirens by showing Asterios tied to the mast of a ship at sea saying: "Sing sweet, O Siren!" ([39]). These allusions only occur within symbolic rather than diegetic moments of *Asterios Polyp*; Asterios does not physically listen to the Sirens or see the souls of the Underworld, but Mazzucchelli compares Asterios's real-world actions to these scenes from *The Odyssey*.

Referencing both Odysseus and Polyphemus, Asterios complicates the distinction between these two characters. This mergence emphasizes Asterios's roles as

both antihero and hero. Despite Asterios's monstrous actions, he nonetheless exhibits noble qualities which cause Hana to fall in love with and accept him at the graphic novel's end. Though he grows into a better person, Asterios cannot completely change; at the novel's end, Asterios is drawn more frequently with two eyes but still resembles a Cyclops more often than not.

The inclusion of allusions to both Odysseus and Polyphemus adds depth to Asterios as well as Odysseus. Asterios is the accumulation of multiple allusions and thus a combination of good and evil, but this dichotomy questions whether Polyphemus and Odysseus should be considered entirely separate entities. They of course embody two physically different characters, but the monstrous Cyclops and the Greek hero both cause the curse of *The Odyssey*. Uniting under a single literary purpose, the two characters may be viewed as equal contributors to Odysseus's suffering.

Many readers might view Odysseus as innocent: Polyphemus kills members of his crew, so he avenges them. Polyphemus's curse disrupts this balance. *Asterios Polyp*, however, points out how thoroughly Asterios's and Odysseus's selfishness contribute to their downfalls. When recounting a life equivalent to that of Asterios's, Ignazio states: "I came to see that hubris had led me to challenge the gods themselves" (Mazzucchelli [293]). This statement recalls that Odysseus doesn't merely give away his name but also challenges the gods. When Polyphemus claims his father may cure his blindness if the god so chooses, Odysseus responds: "I am confident / not even the great Shaker of the Earth [Poseidon] / will fix your eye" (Homer 9.690-692). The Cyclops then asks Poseidon to curse Odysseus, creating balance. Odysseus insults Poseidon, and Poseidon punishes him for it. Because this conflict rests between Poseidon and Odysseus,

Polyphemus has little involvement in and potentially little contribution to Odysseus's suffering. *Asterios Polyp* offers a new viewing of its hypotext by combining Odysseus and Polyphemus into one human character, suggesting Odysseus may be fully responsible for the curse while Polyphemus merely iterates it.

Mazzucchelli further questions both Asterios's and Odysseus's purity through the death of Ignazio. Although Ignazio represents Asterios both as a figment of Asterios's imagination and a visual clone, the twins act very differently. Asterios briefly admits that he caused his divorce, but Ignazio fully describes his excessive, harmful pride. Instead of acknowledging the extent of his monstrosity, Asterios murders Ignazio to end the latter's critical analysis of the former's actions. Asterios suppresses his evils and refuses to accept them. He silences accusations against him, which may prompt readers to question whether Odysseus would act similarly if accused of evil. Other characters in *The Odyssey* praise Odysseus as a virtuous hero, and—based on his requests to hear stories of himself at the Phaeacians' court—Odysseus enjoys being praised. When recounting his own story, Odysseus fails to acknowledge his mistakes. He describes Polyphemus with hostility and himself and his crew with pity; despite the fulfillment of the Cyclops's curse, Odysseus never admits Polyphemus's triumph or his own contribution to the curse. Neither Odysseus nor Asterios express extensive humility or self-deprecation, revealing both characters to be narcissistic and largely unaware of their faults.

*Asterios Polyp* expands upon its hypotext beyond Odysseus and Polyphemus. The comic book begins with lightning, alluding to Zeus and his multiple, catastrophic storms within *The Odyssey*. By implementing only a single storm, Mazzucchelli

condenses Zeus into a single storm and highlights Zeus's nature. Zeus harms but also helps Odysseus. His storms force the crew to eat Helios's cattle and later destroy the crew; outside of these storms, however, Zeus assists Odysseus in his journey. The Greek god commands Calypso to free Odysseus so he may return home. A single lightning bolt destroys Asterios's home but also drives him away from that home, leading him to find Hana. Lightning and its wielder, Zeus, separate Asterios and Odysseus from home but also enable them to return home.

The lightning bolt in *Asterios Polyp* also challenges Asterios's and particularly Odysseus's agency. Asterios only chooses to return to Hana after lightning destroys his apartment, but this option was available to him before the lightning. This suggests Odysseus too may have chosen to stay with Calypso prior to Zeus's intervention. Although Homer's narrator depicts Odysseus as a man "full of sorrow" who "slept beside her [Calypso] in the hollow cave, / as he was forced to do—not of his own free will," Calypso reveals he has always possessed the means to escape her island (Homer 5.102, 5.193-194). After receiving Zeus's command, Calypso commands Odysseus to "make a raft" without her assistance (Homer 5.204). Despite Calypso's absence, Odysseus builds a ship and successfully escapes her island, showing he could have left at any time. As the most "cunning" and "resourceful" Greek hero, Odysseus likely could have persuaded or tricked Calypso into freeing him as he does with Circe and Polyphemus (Homer 5.228, 5.254). Instead, he remains with Calypso for seven years as Asterios remains in Manhattan for seven years.

Because of how closely Asterios's and Odysseus's actions and personalities intertwine, the two characters offer insight into each other's stories. *Asterios Polyp*'s

allusions to *The Odyssey* place the two works side-by-side, allowing each to contribute to the other. The references in *Asterios Polyp* to Polyphemus reveal Odysseus's similarity to the Cyclops, while the original separation of the two characters questions whether Asterios may overcome his monstrous characteristics. Both texts influence each other, showing that allusions complicate hypertexts and their hypotexts rather than uncreatively borrowing from hypotexts.

**Polyphemus and Odysseus in *Ulysses***

*Ulysses*, like *Asterios Polyp*, both compares and contrasts itself with *The Odyssey* through its allusions to the epic poem. The title of *Ulysses* establishes Bloom's day as a journey of equal scope and importance as that of Odysseus. By juxtaposing these two stories, however, Joyce simultaneously emphasizes how inferior Bloom's everyday lifestyle is to ancient Greek tales. The sailor of "Eumaeus" highlights this contrast through his tall tales of adventure and grandeur at sea. Because these stories are fictional, though, the sailor also reveals that the days of epic storytelling have dissipated. Thus *Ulysses* depicts a realistic world where Bloom functions as an everyday hero.

Joyce keeps his novel grounded in the real world by constantly alluding to people and historical events from the world in which the novel is published. When the citizen throws his biscuit tin at Bloom, the narrator observes that "there is no record extant of a similar seismic disturbance in our island since the earthquake of 1534, the year of the rebellion of Silken Thomas" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 281). Rather than solely

alluding to ancient Greek myths, Joyce references Irish history to compare Bloom's journey to more relatable and realistic events.

The comparison to Silken Thomas's rebellion highlights the citizen's dislike of foreigners but ironically equates rebellion to destruction. Producing a "disturbance" across Ireland, both Thomas and the citizen cause unrest and harm to themselves and others (Joyce, *Ulysses* 281). This highlights the citizen's—as well as Polyphemus's—violence and danger to all beings, including themselves. Polyphemus could have avoided blindness, but his choice to murder his guests leads to violence against all parties. The citizen also becomes blind through his pursuit of Bloom outside his bar, where "the sun was in his eyes" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 281). Both Polyphemus and the citizen acquire blindness through their violent actions.

Nonetheless, both antagonists are incompetent in executing violence. The allusion to Silken Thomas illustrates this: Thomas was hung after what Gifford and Seidman consider "a quixotic revolt, because his power was limited and he had no powder and shot, at that time modern and necessary military supplies" (59-60). Although the citizen desires Bloom's death, his method is ineffectual and mocked by "all the populace shouting and laughing and the old tinbox clattering along the street" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 281). The following, contrasting description—which imitates Homer's epic poetry—highlights the weakness of the citizen compared to ancient Greek monsters. However, the citizen's allusive connection to Polyphemus causes the Cyclops to share his weakness. Although he lifts boulders and creates massive waves, Polyphemus fails to kill Odysseus. He always misses his target and requires his father to avenge him. Through his dependence on Poseidon, Polyphemus lacks a substantial role

in Odysseus's downfall. While Polyphemus's curse may harm Odysseus, his words seem insignificant when compared to the destructive forces of Poseidon and Zeus. His curse predicts rather than produces Odysseus's suffering. The citizen's and the Cyclops's failed attacks raise doubt about their influence over Bloom and Odysseus, particularly since both protagonists escape unscathed.

Because they escape, however, Odysseus and Bloom represent unwelcome invaders. While the citizen and Polyphemus embody the role of Irishman Silken Thomas, Bloom and Odysseus symbolize foreigners against whom the natives rebel. Silken Thomas rebels against the English, who rule Ireland to the displeasure of the citizen and the other characters of "Cyclops," and dies because of it. The rebel's failure to expel an unwanted colonial force casts a sympathetic light on Polyphemus and the citizen. Polyphemus discovers invaders in his home and battles them, causing him to suffer as Silken Thomas suffers. Bloom and Odysseus assume authority and violate the inhabitants of Ireland and the Cyclopes' island, with Bloom upsetting Catholic beliefs while Odysseus steals Polyphemus's food and blinds him.

Bloom both adheres to and defies his role as invader through his identification with Christ. Christ usurps the authority of the Roman Empire despite His death, as evident by His resurrection. Bloom and Odysseus similarly overthrow native systems despite the former's differences from "a man" and the latter's appearance as "a puny, good-for-nothing weakling" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 277; Homer 9.678). Because the citizen worships Christ, however, Bloom's connection to Christ emphasizes his status as an Irishman. The citizen and Bloom share nationality and faith in God, yet the citizen seeks to crucify Bloom as the Romans crucified Christ.

The visual allusion to crucifixion and character allusion to Christ present the dichotomy of sacrifice. Bloom sacrifices himself and his social status by arguing against the denizens of the bar. Like Christ, he defies an orthodox system and presses for peaceful interactions between nations and religions. This allusion to sacrifice questions what Odysseus gains through the sacrifice of his name. Christ and Bloom defend others, yet Odysseus only defends himself. All three characters suffer, but Christ and Bloom benefit a group while Odysseus causes the destruction of his crew.

Bloom advocates peace not only in the bar of "Cyclops" but also in his forgiveness of Molly and her suitors in "Ithaca." Rather than preventing Blazes Boylan from sleeping with Molly, Bloom allows their affair within his house and explores Dublin rather than returning home. Bloom's allowance of the affair recalls that Odysseus sleeps with Calypso rather than persuading Calypso to release him so he may return to Ithaca and defeat Penelope's suitors. By choosing to stay away from Molly despite the approaching suitor, Bloom's behavior suggests that Odysseus at least in part chose to remain with Calypso.

*Ulysses* thus influences how its readers view Odysseus. By using *The Odyssey* as a hypotext, Joyce draws attention to how Bloom both resembles and deviates from Odysseus. In Bloom's defense of all Jews and Odysseus's selfish boast, *Ulysses* and *The Odyssey* distinguish their characters as two very different men. Their journeys differ in content and scope, but both heroes face dangers prevalent to their respective worlds. Surrounded by Cyclopes and seductive suitors, Bloom and Odysseus must struggle against fatal dangers and social acceptance to return home.

# Chapter 5: Conclusion

As I've highlighted in the previous chapter and throughout my thesis, allusions present a variety of readings. By juxtaposing two different texts, allusions simultaneously compare and contrast these texts. Allusions always establish at least some similarity between hypotext and hypertext, but the differences between works may raise questions about the extent to which they relate to one another. Because of their additive and reflexive nature, allusions produce three dichotomous relationships between hypertext and hypotext: incomplete representation, unstated connection, and expansion of meaning.

The dichotomy of incomplete representation develops from a hypotext's inability to fully represent a hypertext and vice versa. *Ulysses* constantly alludes to *The Odyssey* to equate Bloom to Odysseus. Through allusion, Joyce invites readers to view Bloom as both an everyday Dubliner and some kind of hero. Both Odysseus and Bloom display bravery and loyalty in largely cruel, treacherous worlds. The novel's deviation from the epic poem, however, reveals the differences between the two works and their protagonists. Bloom returns to Molly but fails to defeat her suitor, allowing trouble to brew in his house while Odysseus reclaims his home. Odysseus mutilates and defeats Polyphemus while Bloom angers the citizen but fails to change his perspective, and Odysseus suffers as he made Polyphemus suffer while Bloom and the citizen separate without harming each other. Neither Bloom nor Odysseus fully resemble one another: allusions link them and their texts so readers may consider how similar and different the two men are.

Joyce encourages readers to compare *Ulysses* and *The Odyssey*, but his allusions avoid direct connections. Both Joyce and Mazzucchelli disregard similes which state the relationships between hypotext and hypertext. They instead use stylistic imitation and linguistic, character, content, and visual allusions to show rather than tell the audience how different texts relate to one another. Authors may, like Bechdel, state the purpose of their allusions, providing allusions as well as explaining them. *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp*, on the other hand, leave their connections ambiguous. Mazzucchelli may allude to both Odysseus and Polyphemus to show how Asterios overcomes his monstrosity, or Asterios's actions may eternally define him as both hero and monster. Unstated connections elevate interpretation over authorial intent, allowing readers to imagine how texts contribute to one another and how allusions may apply to both hypertexts and their alluded hypotexts.

Without a single, stated connection, Mazzucchelli and Joyce enable engaged readers to determine how allusions expand and shape the meaning of their hypotext and hypertext. Bechdel explains how *Fun Home* both follows and inverts the traditional roles of Icarus and Daedalus, while *Asterios Polyp* and *Ulysses* allow the meaning of allusions to develop in multiple directions. Regardless of the method used to connect texts, allusions always expand upon both their hypertext and their source material.

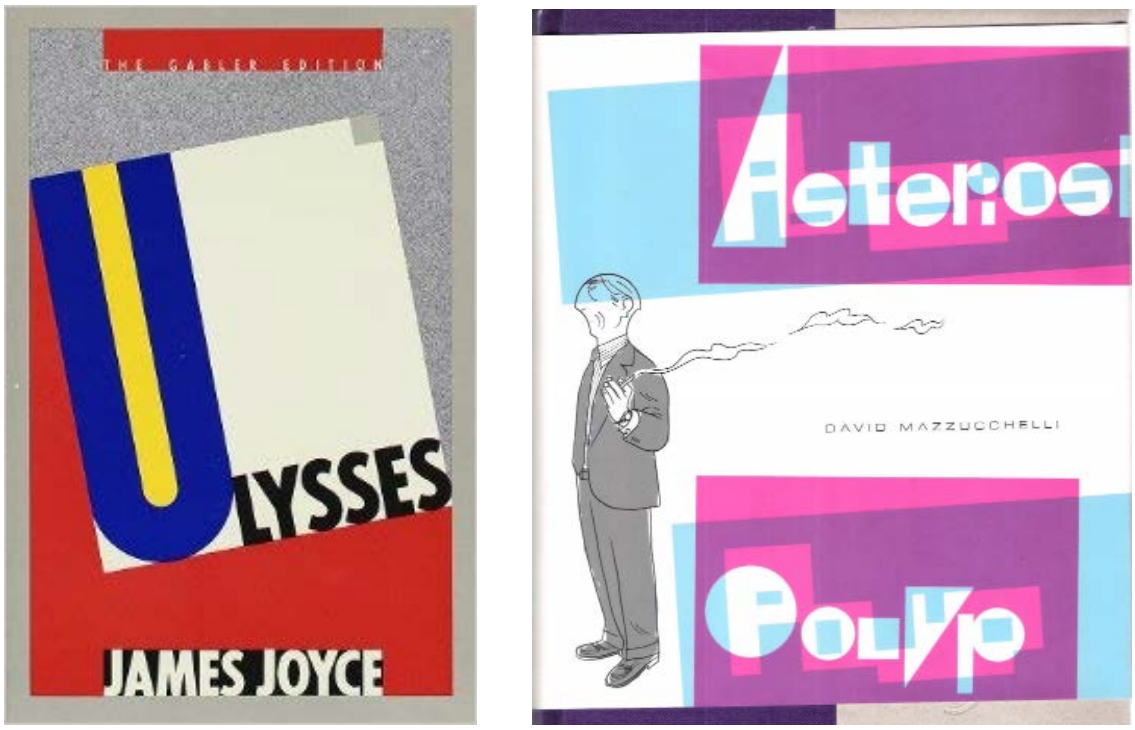


Figure 6: The front covers of *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp*.
Both cover pages exhibit character allusions, and *Asterios Polyp* also includes a visual allusion to Polyphemus.

Allusions complicate the meaning of multiple texts by connecting a modern hypertext to an older hypotext. Some make this connection instantaneously through character, visual, and direct linguistic allusions while stylistic imitation and content allusions build associations through long passages and multiple events. Joyce and Mazzucchelli employ all five types of allusions, using their covers to instantly establish allusions (Figure 6) and their stories for a variety of allusions. *Ulysses* establishes its connection to Odysseus from the start and develops this allusion throughout its contents. *Asterios Polyp* also alludes to *The Odyssey* in its story, but the graphic novel relies more on instantaneous allusions in its cover page. With titular and visual allusions to monsters, *Asterios Polyp* produces images in the reader's mind while *Ulysses*'s title establishes a textual relationship. Both allude to *The Odyssey* and demonstrate how

literature and graphic literature respectively develop allusions. Through variable allusions and mediums which employ these allusions, *The Odyssey* functions as both an independent text and a literary tool. With works like *Ulysses* and *Asterios Polyp* drawing on the characters and events of *The Odyssey*, the ancient Greek text not only survives but continuously develops in the world's expanding bibliotheca.

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