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## **The Keys To: Jacques Derrida as a Proteus Unbound**

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Discourse

Wayne State University Press

Volume 30, Numbers 1 & 2, Winter & Spring 2008

pp. 71-122

ARTICLE

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**In lieu of** an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

### **The Keys To Jacques Derrida as a Proteus Unbound**

*Hélène Cixous (bio)*

*Translated by Peggy Kamuf (bio)*

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In the halfsleep of April 22nd, 2004, the words are pronounced in English

"The Keys to Given." The words recall themselves to me. That's it, I say to myself, I have the keys to *qui et quoi*, who and what. The "Keys"! Obviously. And *de qui*, from whom have they come, these little angels? I finally tell myself it's Bloom who is speaking in my night at 4 o'clock on the morning of June 16th, 1904. I recognize his voice. Confused. He gave the "Keys" to Blazes Boylan, I thought. Yes. That's just like Bloom, giving his *qui*, his who, to the bugger, and god knows he's got plenty of them. There are the "Keys" to the house where Molly is getting ready to replace him in her bed, to which are added all the *qui*, all the *whos* with whom he is hooked up in *Ulysses*. Keys to sex, keys to sexual difference, in the Circe episode, a whole tangled bunch of keys that will turn him into an indefinite form of "life," from the indecisive baby to the whorehouse madam.

Later in quartersleep, I wonder if the addressed "Keys"—"The Keys to"—the "Keys" destined to be lent lost entrusted so as to dispossess one of the ownership of any my-home, if these "Keys" would not more likely or likewise be the "Keys" to Martello tower, the keys **[End Page 71]** that Stephen will see Buck Mulligan take back from him in the Telemachus chapter of *Ulysses*.

So here's a second character who is un-Keyed, disappropriated, delivered into exile, into exdomicile, and by the same token ejected outside the self as return to I, no longer knowing very well who or what to self-be, affected by a trembling of identity right down to the name. The renunciation of Keys, I say to myself, these are the Keys to *Ulysses*. Keys are always to be given lost reclaimed, in vain.

In both cases Keys-given-to-whom-à-*qui*? are objects loaded down with causes and consequences from which two characters—who in appearance at least are "masculine"—separate themselves: a father orphaned of his son, Bloom, a father minus the son, and a son of a father in eclipse, two (figures) aspects of the wandering from island to sea and at sea with wavering wandering hope to end up finding again the breast if not the originary mother.

These two of the abandoned keys, by one as Bloom, one as Stephen, these Key-less ones, a little castrated by some macho types but also by other-cruelties, figures of maternal ghouls or ogresses, spend their time in exile trying to shift an accusation of inexhaustible guilt onto It's not me—it's the other. Yes they are accused of being guilty. Of what? Of everything. Of doing and of not doing, of being and of not being, of having and of not having. Two poor goats burdened with all the sins. Two beings persecuted by death, the vampiric or sublimated image of the dead body, of the mother, the child, the father, two who are haunted by the phantoms of loved ones and who teeter at the edge of the other world on the ramparts of the bay of Dublin.

A little later I am awake looking for "The Keys to." Where? I look for keys throughout *Ulysses*, there are Keys everywhere, I can't find "The Keys to. Given." And yet I was sure—until after sailing around in vain I see myself being carried towards *Finnegans Wake* and that's where they are and have always been, that's where I forgot them, mislaid them, at the finale of *Finn*: finally to find them again in my woman's mememormee, the ultimate whispering of the girlguise dampened by tears of ALP Anna Livia Plurabelle or the river Liffey. "The Keys to. Given" were thus a woman's keys, mother or daughter, sought after, given, keys to what, keys to the book perhaps or to the enigma, or to life, keys...

## The Keys To: Jacques Derrida as a Proteus Unbound

Hélène Cixous  
Translated by Peggy Kamuf

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*Exonum*, 50.1 & 2, Winter & Spring 2008, pp. 71-122.  
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