James Joyce Journal
23.2 (December 2017): 89-116

"What the hell is he?" Double Agency in *Ulysses*

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When thinking of the term "double agent," the most common definition of an individual with loyalties to two opposing governments or philosophies at the same time comes to mind. This definition, like all definitions, restricts: the term can only apply to a particular type of individual, and, when discussing fiction, to a particular genre. One can only see the double agent as a figure in spy fiction, when the actual core of double agency exists throughout fiction at large—especially in *Ulysses*. I posit that the double agent also operates as more than a professional spy who is paid by two governments: he (or she) is also an individual who either believes or takes advantage of the fact that loyalty can exist to two or more opposing sides. This expanded definition allows for critical attention to both literal double agents and individuals with fractured identities. The double agent is both friend and foe, and the agent must interrogate the borders of both national and individual identity, as espionage increasingly collapses the boundaries between the individual and the political environment. *Ulysses*, then, deals specifically with fractured identity and creates double agents, both literal and metaphorical. The double agent becomes a

microcosm for the confusion of the self with loyalty to a nation or nations. The double agent thus exceeds the limits of any formulaic plotline for the spy fiction genre and can apply to high modernist novels such as *Ulysses* by revealing a character's reaction to the demands of national identity. Bloom and the other characters increasingly become double agents in order to navigate between opposing forces that influence the construction of self.

I propose that double agency emerges from the clash between Bloom's Jewish associations and Irish nationalism before 1922. This clash reaches its climax in the "Cyclops" episode, when Bloom enters Barney Kiernan's and confronts the Citizen and his group of Irish nationalists. Bloom does not drink in the pub, but he does get into a discussion about what a nation is, and he asserts his Irish identity in the process. However, he is rejected by many in the group. While Bloom attempts to meld Jewishness with Irishness within the episode, he is ultimately not welcomed by the Irish because Bloom's Irishness would expose the double agency of the Citizen and the other nationalists. Bloom leaves temporarily to search for Martin Cunningham, and the group remains to discuss Bloom's identity, insisting that Bloom must be restricted to a single national and cultural identity. If Bloom's assumed Jewishness fits within the imagined community of Ireland, then the nationalists' own Irishness would become less clearly demarcated; for Bloom's assertion challenges a basic element of Irish exclusionary rules—that a Jew is not an Irishman. Without a coherent Irish identity, independence from Britain could be questioned, and so Bloom's double agency is seen as a threat to Irish independence as well as identity. When he returns, he has a final confrontation with the Citizen, in which he connects Jewishness further to Catholicism by noting many famous thinkers' Jewish identities, culminating with Christ himself. Judaism's connection to both Irish nationalism and Catholicism upsets the Citizen so much that Bloom must be escorted out of the tavern.

In addition to narrating this conflict between Jewishness and Irish nationalism, this episode raises the problem of espionage and reflects this concern in the narrative style of "Cyclops." The episode's complex narration destabilizes the plot

and heightens paranoia. First there is an unknown narrator, a character who has not appeared earlier in *Ulysses*, and who has connections to the police and other government officials. His anonymity, his suspicious connections, and mysterious purpose are all conducive to paranoia in an observer (or the reader) and make him seem paranoid himself. The episode is also interpolated by what I will call the "gigantism sections"[1)]—interpolations that cannot be considered "narratorial" in any meaningful sense of the word: while they are sometimes tangentially related to the story the unknown narrator is telling, they also sport a variety of different styles and voices. The combination of variant voices in "Cyclops" also produces paranoia, if only by thwarting the reader's expectations. As noted above, the unknown narrator is a suspicious character in the episode due to his ambiguous work history and tenuous connection to police officials. Espionage is also hinted in Martin Cunningham's connection to the "castle," home of the Anglo-Irish official government, which puts him at odds with the Irish nationalists in the pub. The episode centers on double agency by associating Bloom's split subjectivity (as Irishman and Jew) with the conflicting overlap between Irish nationalism and the Anglo-Irish government. In this context, Bloom's status as an outsider works as a foil for Irishness, and his double agency, as shall be seen, evokes paranoia about Irishness. Double agency thus offers an explanatory model for looking at nationalism in this episode: set readings of the episode with regard to content and style are always troubled by the interpolations, which destabilize identity by distorting or altering the realism in the text—and possibly narration itself. Espionage, paranoia, and double agency are reflected and induced in the very style(s) of the episode.

Much has been written about Joyce and *Ulysses* with regard to national identity, especially in relating Joyce and his characters to Ireland and Irish identity. Emer Nolan's *James Joyce and Nationalism* explores Joyce and his ties to Ireland and

1) See Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's "Ulysses": A Study* (New York: Vintage, 1952), p. 30. In the Gilbert schema, the Technic for "Cyclops" is "Gigantism." Subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text.

the complicated and complex relationship between the two. Nolan argues that

> Nationalism seeks to recreate a sense of traditional community within contemporary mass culture: modernist writing exploits the relentless energy of commercial civilization, but it may also record or lament the progressive abolition of local difference in the modern world. In these terms, Joycean modernism and Irish nationalism can be understood as significantly analogous discourses, and the common perception of them as unrelated and antagonistic begins to break down.[2)]

Willard Potts also takes up Joyce's relationship to Ireland, discussing how Joyce navigates between the Irish attempt at unification for independence and the religious question that divides Ireland—an element that some Protestant writers like Elizabeth Bowen and William Butler Yeats were keenly aware of.[3)] Nationalism in Joyce figures in the work of a number of critics,[4)] and that discussion necessarily includes attention to Joyce's ambivalent position: for while he was Irish, he lived in mainland Europe for much of his adult life. Joyce's cosmopolitanism is then transferred to the protagonists of *Ulysses*, namely Stephen and Bloom. Connections

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2) See Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. xii. Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

3) See Willard Potts, *Joyce and the Two Irelands* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2000). Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text. Potts notes, "Protestant Elizabeth Bowen felt a similar division between the two cultures. Of Catholics, she says, 'they were, simply, "the others", whose world lay alongside ours but never touched'" (6).

4) See, for example, edited collections like Colin MacCabe's *James Joyce: New Perspectives* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983); Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes's *Semicolonial Joyce* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and John Brannigan, Geoff Ward, and Julian Wolfreys eds., *Re: Joyce – Text/ Culture/ Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1998). For book-length treatments, see Vincent Cheng's *James Joyce, Race, and Colonialism* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 2004); Andras Ungar's *Joyce's "Ulysses" as National Epic: Epic Mimesis and the Political History of the Nation State* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002); Enda Duffy, *The Subaltern "Ulysses"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

between Joyce's life and his characters are developed in works like John McCourt's *The Years of Bloom* and *James Joyce: A Passionate Exile*.[5] Yet the connections, specifically, between Joyce, his characters, and nationalism developed in the criticism overlook the pertinent differences between Joyce's experiences and his characters'—especially in regard to Bloom's experience and his Jewishness.

Bloom's Jewish identity is hotly contested by critics like Neil Davison and Ira Nadel. Davison, in his *James Joyce, "Ulysses," and the Construction of Jewish Identity*, writes: "While *fin-de-siècle* discourse about 'the Jew' informs Bloom's character throughout the text, within the framework of Judaic law, he cannot be considered *Halachically* Jewish" (1).[6] While not technically Jewish from a Judaic perspective, Davison still argues that Bloom accepts his own version of Judaism, one that includes Bloom's Irish identity.[7] Ira Nadel argues that Joyce himself identified with Jews because of his position as an outsider in Trieste and other European cities. The main argument of Nadel's *Joyce and the Jews* is that "Joyce's Judaism is textual, his Jewishness cultural. In the understanding of language and its special status in a text, he emulates Rabbinic scholars and Talmudic students; in his appreciation and imitation of Jewish social habits and values, he emulates the behaviour of his many Jewish friends" (9).[8] There is a complicated mixture here of scholastic and cultural or ethnic Judaism in this assessment, and this conglomeration of types of Jewishness, though clearly not mutually exclusive,

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5) John McCourt, *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste, 1904-1920* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2000), and *James Joyce: A Passionate Exile* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999). Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

6) Davison points out that to be "Halachically" Jewish is to be a Jew as defined in "the third phase of historic Judaism, the Talmudic or Rabbinic tradition" (243, n. 2). Ultimately, "Bloom would not be considered a Jew because his mother was apparently not born of a Jewish woman and never converted to Judaism, and because he was never allowed to enter 'the covenant' through ritual circumcision" (243, n. 2).

7) See Davison, *James Joyce, "Ulysses," and the Construction of Jewish Identity*, p. 12.

8) This recalls both Stevie Smith's and Pompey's Jewish acquaintances, friends Smith lost when she published *Novel on Yellow Paper*. See Romana Huk, *Stevie Smith: Between the Lines* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 75.

complicates any definitive reading of Bloom as either Jewish or not; he is not necessarily Jewish—nor is he necessarily a gentile. He does not neatly fall into any single category. Although acknowledging the complexity of an identification in this context, Nadel argues that Bloom is ultimately, "paradoxically" Jewish:

> The complex syntax of Bloom's thought embeds an essential divorce from his identity as a Jew at the same time as it reveals an ineluctable anxiety over his Jewishness. The language and thought simultaneously affirm and deny the paradox of what others in Dublin, and Bloom himself, cannot overlook—that despite his Protestant past and Catholic present, he is forever a Jew. (13)

Both Nadel's and Davison's arguments point to the intricate nature of Bloom's Jewish identity and its connection to Joyce himself, offering two different readings (Bloom as Jewish and as not), while qualifying these interpretations precisely because of the complexity of Bloom's portrayal in *Ulysses*. Bloom's fluid identity is acknowledged by both critics, and his Jewishness—whether Rabbinical or cultural—is the locus of this fluid identity.

The "Cyclops" episode begins with a new narrator who is immediately suspect, rendering the tone of the entire episode suspicious. After "Sirens," which takes place at the Ormond Hotel and involves singing, "Cyclops" begins with a voice not previously encountered, talking about characters who have not been introduced. It begins, "I was just passing the time of day with old Troy of the D. M. P. at the corner of Arbour hill there and damned but a bloody sweep came along and he near drove his gear into my eye. I turned around to let him have the weight of my tongue when who should I see dodging along Stony Batter only Joe Hynes."[9] It is unclear who this "I" is, and while there has been much discussion concerning this new narrator of *Ulysses*, no definitive answers as to his identity have been reached.[10] Anthony Burgess, in *ReJoyce*, says of the narrator: "The straight

9) See James Joyce *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage, 1993), episode 12, lines 1-5. Subsequent citations for *Ulysses* will occur parenthetically in the text with episode and line numbers.

narrative, as opposed to the gigantesque commentary, is put into the mouth of an anonymous Dubliner with no literary pretensions—indeed, no pretensions at all except to the unlimited imbibing of other men's beer-treats. Anonymity and pseudonymity are appropriate to a chapter in which Bloom ceases to be Odysseus and becomes No-man."[11] Declan Kiberd, in *Ulysses and Us*, asks the more specific question, "[w]ho is the nameless narrator?," to which he answers:

> A collector of bad debts and someone, therefore, with many connections in the Dublin Castle regime. In a city of chronic borrowers, he is a busy man and his calling leaves him impartially suspicious of all around him. He is never properly introduced, but his garrulous tone assumes treacherous intimacy with his listeners from the outset. . . . The malicious narrator is tolerated by the other drinkers, who have reason to fear his sharp tongue and possible future power over them.[12]

As Kiberd points out, the narrator is paranoid and produces paranoia in both the reader and the characters in the novel. The connections between the narrator's occupation as debt collector and the government are also noted by Kiberd, and those give the anonymous narrator power over the others. The narrator indicates in the first sentence that he is spending time with "Troy of the D. M. P.," or the Dublin Metropolitan Police.[13] The narrator's connection with the police is itself

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10) See Leah Culligan Flack, "'Cyclops,' Censorship, and Joyce's Monster Audiences," *James Joyce Quarterly* 48.3 (Spring 2011): 430. She writes: "What is notable in this opening—in addition to its wealth of Homeric allusions and the perplexing anonymity of its irreverent narrator—is the quality of the narrator's crude vernacular and the presence of what Joyce called in a letter to Frank Budgen his narrator's 'favourite adjective'" (430).

11) See Anthony Burgess, *ReJoyce* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), p. 144. Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

12) See Declan Kiberd, *"Ulysses" and Us: The Art of Everyday Life in Joyce's Masterpiece* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), p. 182. Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

13) See Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated* (Berkeley, CA: University of

suspect because Troy is unknown; it is even uncertain whether or not Troy is still in the police force. When the narrator encounters Hynes, Hynes asks: "Who's the old ballocks you were talking to? Old Troy, says I, was in the force" (*U* 12.8-9). Hynes's suspicion prompts the admission that Troy may not be a current police officer, but this revelation does not shed further light on Troy's identity.[14] The paranoia that the narrator induces is often lost in scholarly treatment of the episode.[15] Because of the anonymity, neither readers nor characters can ascertain his identity, prompting the thought that the unknown narrator might be literally a double agent.

The narrator not only creates double agents out of himself and the other characters, but he connects Jewishness to Irish nationalism in his treatment of Moses Herzog. In the first page of "Cyclops" the narrator tells Hynes that he has been getting information from Troy concerning "[a]n old plumber named Geraghty" so that he can collect Geraghty's debt to Herzog (*U* 12.20). Hynes only learns of the narrator's job now: "That the lay you're on now? says Joe" (*U* 12.23). Hynes appears at first to be a friend of the narrator, but he does not know of the narrator's new position as debt collector. The way Hynes asks also indicates the dubious

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California Press, 2008), p. 314. As Gifford notes, it is unclear who "Troy" is—he may even be fictional—which adds another level of suspicion, and therefore paranoia, to the conversation and the episode. Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

14) Ibid. Gifford defines Troy thus: "An unidentified, possibly fictional, former inspector (now retired?) in the Dublin Metropolitan Police." The parenthetical question suggests the suspicious nature of the narrator and his acquaintances.

15) See, for example, Marianna Gula, *A Tale of a Pub: Re-Reading the "Cyclops" Episode of James Joyce's "Ulysses" in the Context of Irish Cultural Nationalism* (Debrecen: Debrecen University Press, 2012). Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text. Gula argues that "the dense texture of the 'Cyclops' episode functions as a heterogeneous site of ironic counter discourses challenging discursive formations drawing on the two basic aspirations of diversive cultural nationalist projects—creating a homogenous communal identity and representing the temporality of the nation in organicist terms as a teleological development" (2-3). However, just like Burgess and Kiberd, Gula accepts the unnamed narrator's narration and contrasts it with the gigantism sections of Cyclops, rather than acknowledging the suspiciousness of the narrator and how that inflects the episode.

nature of the narrator's occupation, as Gifford notes, "lay" is "[s]lang for occupation (especially a criminal one)" (315). Uncertainty and paranoia of the narrator are thus tied immediately to his occupation as a debt collector, one of the lowest positions in Irish society.[16] Yet he is also connected to the police (albeit ambiguously) and by extension the government. It is in the narrator's response to Hynes's question that he links Jewishness to Irishness:

> How are the mighty fallen! Collector of bad and doubtful debts. But that's the most notorious bloody robber you'd meet in a day's walk and the face on him all pockmarks would hold a shower of rain. *Tell him, says he, I dare him, says he, and I double dare him to send you round here again or if he does, says he, I'll have him summonsed up before the court, so I will, for trading without a licence*. And he after stuffing himself till he's fit to burst. Jesus, I had to laugh at the little jewy getting his shirt out. *He drink me my teas. He eat me my sugars. Because he no pay me my moneys?* (*U* 12.24-32)

There are two elements of the passage that I want to highlight: the first is the low position of the narrator and the second is his double agency with regard to Jewishness and Irishness. It is unclear exactly what the narrator used to do, but his admission that he has "fallen," which, as Gifford points out, connects him to the Israelites in the Old Testament, stresses the low position this Irishman occupies, a position akin to foreigners.[17] The Biblical connection underlines this duality, or double agency, in that Irishness is spoken of in terms of Jewishness: the Irishman being fallen is like the Jew who was fallen. The overlap is accentuated when the Irish narrator turns out to be working for a Jewish immigrant. The narrator's double agency is apparent particularly in his navigation between these two seemingly opposed ideologies: the narrator is critical of Geraghty, who is cheating by not paying a man even though he is "stuffing himself till he's fit to burst," but Herzog is also a comic figure who makes the narrator laugh, and so the narrator is not

16) See Gifford, p. 316.

17) Ibid., p. 315. Gifford quotes II Samuel 1:19: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how all the mighty are fallen!"

aligned with Herzog because the immigrant's suffering is insignificant. Not only is Herzog's complaint trivialized, but the anti-Semitic language further separates the narrator and highlights the diametrically opposed positions that he upholds at once, throwing into relief his split subjectivity and role as a double agent.

While the unknown narrator is suspect because of his position in Irish society and his racial allegiances, the gigantism section that interrupts the plot at the start of the episode also heightens paranoia by breaking up the narration and destabilizing identity. Just as the unknown narrator confuses critics, there is even more of an enigma in the interpolations in the episode, which interrupt the plot of "Cyclops" and raise questions about the relevance or importance of what is happening.[18] The first such interruption occurs directly after the passage quoted above. The first gigantism section begins: "For nonperishable goods bought of Moses Herzog, of 13 Saint Kevin's parade in the city of Dublin, Wood quay ward, merchant, hereinafter called the vendor, and sold and delivered to Michael E. Geraghty" (*U* 12.33-36). The legal language of the interpolation seems to be influenced by Geraghty's threat to send a summons to Herzog for selling without a license, but the passage is actually a contract that includes the "heirs, successors, trustees and assigns" of both the purchaser and the seller (*U* 12.49-50). The contract appears to gloss the agreement between Geraghty and Herzog, but it is does not seem likely that such an agreement exists since Herzog is selling tea and sugar

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18) The gigantism sections often fall into the type of narrative disruption that some critics would call the work of "the arranger." The term was first coined by David Hayman in his *"Ulysses": The Mechanics of Meaning* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 84. Hayman defines the arranger as "a figure or a presence that can be identified neither with the author nor with his narrators, but that exercises an increasing degree of overt control over increasingly challenging materials" (84). For more about the scholarly debate surrounding the arranger, see John Somer, "The Self-Reflexive Arranger in the Initial Style of *Joyce's "Ulysses," The James Joyce Quarterly* 31.2 (Winter 1994): 65-79; see especially pp. 65-66. While the arranger is not central to my point here, it furthers the argument that the style belongs to another voice or narrator, and the confusing nature of the interpolation disrupts the narrative and causes paranoia in the reader.

illegally. Thus the interpolation destabilizes the narrative by being tangentially related to the plot but also providing no information to advance that plot. This gigantism section calls into question the unknown narrator's own version of events; one must ask whether the unknown narrator is telling the truth if the language of the contract implies that, contrary to the unknown narrator's version, there exists some legality in the dealing between Geraghty and Herzog. In other words, the gigantism sections skew the narrative sections in a way that calls into question what is actually occurring in the episode; this instability produces a growing sense of paranoia.[19] So it is not a second story that the gigantism sections provide; nor do the interpolations shed light on the plot as told by the unknown narrator. Instead, the interpolations act as confusing disruptions that call into question the very nature of narrative, leading to destabilization also of the characters' identities.

Both the primary narrative and the gigantism sections are integral to understanding the paranoia that the figure of the Jew brings out in the characters because the style of the episode calls attention to the way all the characters—not just Bloom—operate as double agents. There is tension between the unknown narrator's tale and the interpolations, and this tension destabilizes identity and thus produces paranoia. In other words, the gigantism sections work against the plot of the episode and are structured in such a way that cause one to doubt the tale itself. By destabilizing the narration with legal contracts and other non-narrative elements, stable identity for the characters is also undermined. The characters' identities become fluid when a gigantism section works against what the unknown narrator relates. This tension is relieved by the comic moments, such as when the anti-Semitic narrator is working for a Jewish immigrant at the beginning of the episode, or at the end where the gigantism section heightens Bloom's escape from the Citizen and Barney Kiernan's. However, despite the celebration of split

19) While many critics in their discussion of "Cyclops" do not delve too deeply into the interpolations, Marianna Gula finds the interpolations key in understanding the episode, especially the list of saints. See *A Tale of a Pub: Re-Reading the "Cyclops" Episode of James Joyce's "Ulysses" in the Context of Irish Cultural Nationalism*, p. 92.

subjectivity and double agency these narrative techniques seem to demonstrate, paranoia and hostility persist. Bloom's interaction with the characters in the pub in "Cyclops" displays this paranoia at the same time that it celebrates Bloom's fluid identity.

Bloom's double agency is seen most clearly during the discussion of the definition of "nation"; it is at this moment that his outsider status and his self-defined Irishness highlight the paranoia of double agency. In Barney Kiernan's, Bloom confronts the Citizen and other Irishmen who have a strict view (though not explicitly defined by them) of national identity as an imagined community of "pure Irishmen," a purity that does not and cannot exist. This assumption has its problems, but, at the very least, their nationalism clearly does not include Jews. Their exclusion of Jewish people becomes pronounced when they discuss the idea of nation:

> —Persecution, says [Bloom], all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations.
> —But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.
> —Yes, says Bloom.
> —What is it? Says John Wyse.
> —A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.
> —By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years. (*U* 12.1417-25)

Bloom's definition of nation is similar to Stalin's: a descriptive definition that misses much of the complexity of the word.[20] The nation is not an imagined community for Bloom, but neither is it for the Irish nationalists in the pub. Their notion of nation, Bloom suggests, is founded upon persecution, which produces paranoia in peoples that are subjected. Bloom is using persecution as a means to connect Irish nationalism with Jewish identity; while he says that it is prevalent throughout history, he is implicitly referring more specifically to the Jews.[21] John

20) See Joseph Stalin, *On the National Question* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1942)

Wyse's question "do you know what a nation means?" then, is not a request for a modern definition of the term—a piece of land with borders and citizenship—but a definition that would include a Jewish nation. The question John Wyse asks is intended as an attack on Bloom's perceived Jewishness since John Wyse possibly believes that Jews have no nation, but Bloom's answer also undercuts some of the assumptions the Irish nationalists have about Ireland. Ned Lambert exposes the tenuousness of nation when he humiliates Bloom. By mocking Bloom's definition, Ned exposes the Irish nationalists own strict view of nation; it is telling that Ned can see himself as a nation alone—without even another Irishman—according to Bloom's definition. It also exposes the troubled nature of nationalism, and so Bloom's outsider status exposes the split subjectivity of the Irish nationalists.

But Bloom does not see himself as an outsider, and his identification as Irish exposes the tenuousness of the nationalists' definition. For the nationalists in Barney Kiernan's, who make Ireland an imagined community through abstract and ill-defined rules, the Jew is an outsider who is also foreign. Moses Herzog is shown at the start of the episode as a contrast to Bloom; it is possible that the nationalists see Bloom, because of the Jewishness they attribute to him, as completely foreign as they would view Herzog. However, unlike Herzog, Bloom is Irish and expresses himself to be so to the Irish nationalists:

> So of course everyone had the laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:
> —Or also living in different places.
> —That covers my case, says Joe.
> —What is your nation if I may ask? says the citizen.
> —Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland.
> The citizen said nothing only cleared the spit out of his gullet and, gob, he spat a Red bank oyster out of him right in the corner. (*U* 12.1426-33)

The passage foregrounds the difficulty the nationalists have in clearly separating

21) See Davison, *James Joyce, "Ulysses," and the Construction of Jewish Identity*, p. 217.

themselves from people they believe to be foreigners. The nationalist's own imagined community of Irishmen does not include Jews because they may be seen as various versions of Herzog. However, with Bloom's assertion that he was born in Ireland, the Citizen's previous view is troubled; while the joke about Bloom's definition of nation still remains, the Citizen's ambiguous reaction to Bloom's Irish identity shows that he cannot vocalize any argument against Bloom's assertion. And so the laughter dies down, leaving a moment of pause in which reflection can occur.[22] The Citizen's silence expresses the confusion that results when the assumed foreignness is not so foreign; while the act of spitting could indicate disgust directed toward Bloom, there can be no direct denial of Bloom's Irishness. Bloom was, after all, born in Ireland just like the Citizen and everyone else in Barney Kiernan's.[23]

On another level, it is not simply the Citizen who must accept Bloom's Irishness, but the narrator as well. The narrator inserts his negative judgment of Bloom in the way he explains that "everyone had the laugh" and that Bloom was trying to "muck out" of his definition, rather than clarifying it. Yet the narrator, who is biased and cannot be trusted, reports Bloom's self-identification as Irish without comment. The narrator leaves soon after this moment, allowing the

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22) The comic nature of this part of "Cyclops" could be compared to the story of Plato and Diogenes of Sipone. See Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. C. D. Yonge, B. A. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853). Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text. As Diogenes Laertius notes, "Plato defined man thus: 'Man is a two-footed, featherless animal,' and was much praised for the definition; so Diogenes plucked a cock and brought it into his school, and said, 'This is Plato's man.' On which account this addition was made to the definition, 'With broad flat nails'" (231). Bloom here is akin to Plato, while John Wyse and Ned Lambert act as the cynic Diogenes. However, with the Irish nationalists tearing down the definition of nation, they are destroying their own cause of Irish independence.

23) Davison writes that Bloom "was born and raised in Ireland, yet his most strongly held beliefs are based on a sense of 'Jewishness' that has been diluted through his father's and his own radical assimilation. He is not a Zionist, but an Irish nationalist who is dogmatically pacifist, a prophet of peaceful coexistence" (218).

gigantism section to contemplate Irish identity through "[t]he muchtreasured and intricately embroidered ancient Irish facecloth attributed to Solomon of Droma and Manus Tomaltach og MacDonogh" (*U* 12.1438-40). Thus the unnamed narrator's silence follows shortly after the Citizen's, possibly indicating that there cannot be an argument against Bloom's Irishness. The lack of argument against Bloom's national identity calls into question the Irish nationalists' identity (including the anonymous narrator), making them similar to the outsider they sought to mock. Thus the episode points to the double agency of each of the characters.[24] This seems like a victory for Bloom, especially since his detractors are silent in response to his Irishness. Rather than producing a moment of common understanding between Bloom and the nationalists, however, it causes growing hostility as the Citizen and those like him try to hold on to the imagined community of Irishness they have created.

When Bloom leaves the group to look for Martin Cunningham, the Irish nationalists discuss Bloom's identity as a means of defining him so that their imagined nationality can remain intact. The Irishmen's silence in response to Bloom's declaration of Irish birth, contradicting their perception of him and their own set views on national identity, cannot be final because it would destroy their notions of their identities, drawing them closer to someone they hate. So to counteract this identification, they attempt to impose an identity on Bloom in his absence:

> So in comes Martin asking where was Bloom.
> —Where is he? says Lenehan. Defrauding widows and orphans.

24) For more on the colonial ambiguity that relates to the identity of the characters, see Enda Duffy, *The Subaltern "Ulysses"* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes, *Semicolonial Joyce* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Leonard Orr, *Joyce, Imperialism, and Postcolonialism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008); and Vincent J. Cheng, "Of Canons, Colonies, and Critics: The Ethics and Politics of Postcolonial Joyce Studies," *Cultural Critique* 35 (Winter, 1996-97): 81-104. Subsequent citations will occur parenthetically in the text.

> —Isn't that a fact, says John Wyse, what I was telling the citizen about Bloom and the Sinn Fein.
> —That's so, says Martin. Or so they allege.
> —Who made those allegations? says Alf.
> —I, says Joe. I'm the alligator.
> —And after all, says John Wyse, why can't a jew love his country like the next fellow?
> —Why not? says J. J. , when he's quite sure which country it is.
> —Is he a jew or a gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler or what the hell is he? says Ned. Or who is he? No offence, Crofton.
> —Who is Junius? says J. J.
> —We don't want him, says Crofter the Orangeman or Presbyterian.
> —He's a perverted jew, says Martin, from a place in Hungary and it was he drew up all the plans according to the Hungarian system. We know that in the castle.
> —Isn't he a cousin of Bloom the dentist? says Jack Power.
> —Not at all, says Martin. Only namesakes. His name was Virag, the father's name that poisoned himself. He changed it by deedpoll, the father did. (*U* 12.1621-41)

This passage is central to understanding how identity works in *Ulysses* as a whole, for it is here that the novel asks fundamental questions about Bloom: "what the hell is he? . . . Or who is he?" The same question is asked twice here, in different ways, so that Bloom both has agency as a human being, as seen in the pronoun "who," and lacks it when he is referred to as a "what." The answers to the question abound in the passage, so Bloom is seen as a scam artist (or gambler) by Lenehan, a patriot by John Wyse, a foreigner by J. J., and a possible Orangeman, Jew, Presbyterian, and Catholic by Ned Lambert. Martin Cunningham suggests that Bloom helped Arthur Griffith with peaceful plans that were taken from Hungary, making Bloom out to be an Irish nationalist to some degree.[25] At this point, there is no definitive

25) See Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, p. 367. Gifford explains that Cunningham is referring to *The Resurrection of Hungary* that Griffith had published in the *United Irishman*. The book not only explains how Hungary received a measure of independence from Austria, but also could be used as an example for Ireland in achieving independence from

answer to Bloom's identity, only a demarcation of who he is not: he is not related to Bloom the dentist. The passage ultimately shows that the group wants a single definition of Bloom, which fails—until the Citizen asserts his opinion.

The Citizen's assertion that Bloom is purely a Jew—so much so that he cannot be identified with, even as a man—marks the strongest attempt to define Bloom, but this absolute definition of Bloom's identity is resisted by the episode itself, thereby calling into question the identities of all of the characters and ultimately pointing to their double agency. While the group's various definitions of Bloom drop by the wayside, the Citizen interjects his opinion as final, attempting to provide the definitive definition. "Do you call that a man?" the Citizen asks, questioning Bloom's gender, and then insinuating that Bloom's children were fathered by someone else (*U* 12.1654; 12.1657). Not only does the Citizen question Bloom's virility and gender, but his hatred of Bloom centers on double agency. The Citizen refuses to call Bloom by his legal, Irish name: "A wolf in sheep's clothing, says the citizen. That's what he is. Virag from Hungary! Ahasuerus I call him. Cursed by God" (*U* 12.1666-67). By calling Bloom a "wolf in sheep's clothing," the Citizen calls attention to Bloom's double agency, essentially stating that, while Bloom may look and act Irish, he is really a foreign agent without a homeland, like Ahasuerus.[26] The Citizen attempts to define Bloom as Jewish, but the narrator and the following interpolation contradict this definition, implicating not only Bloom, but also the rest as double agents. After the Citizen suggests Bloom is not the father of his children, the unknown narrator interrupts the conversation to include his own opinion: "Gob, there's a many a true word spoken in jest. One of those mixed middlings he is" (*U* 12.1658-59). The term "mixed middlings" is, as Gifford notes, "[a] translation of the Irish phrase *eadar-mheadhonaich*: 'he is but very indifferent'" (368). While Gifford interprets this to mean that Bloom's sexuality is ambiguous, the term can also be seen as undercutting the definition of Bloom's identity that the Citizen posits.[27] In other words, the Citizen sees Bloom as a

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Britain.

26) See Gifford, p. 368. Ahasuerus is "one of the traditional names for the Wandering Jew."

person who pretends to be part of the group but whose true identity is that of the enemy. The narrator, however, accepts Bloom's double agency by seeing him as a "mixed middling"—both sexually and existentially.

At this point, the unknown narrator also recedes, and the following gigantism section contradicts the Citizen's definition of Bloom. After a call for another round of drinks, there is an ironic call for prayer.[28] In response to this, the narrator disappears, and the interpolation contains a long, religiously themed list, including a list of saints. Marianna Gula explains this particular interpolation as a reflection of the breakdown of Bloom's identity, writing:

> the lengthy list of saints can be related to this dramatisation of the dissolution of Bloom's identity and his stigmatisation as not authentically, originally Irish. Looking into the wider cultural assumptions that loom behind the citizen's utterances identifying Bloom first ironically as a redeemer, then as a contaminating presence, which hinders the redemption of Ireland, highlights the interaction between the list and its narrative context. (92)

Thus, for Gula, the list foregrounds Bloom's lack of identity but ultimately connects the Citizen's definition of Bloom with his perceived status of being Jewish. Leah Culligan Flack, however, sees the interpolation as parodic, Joyce's way of provoking his censors and "monster audience" (qtd. in Flack 436). While Flack discusses the interpolation that disrupts the discussion of the effects of being hanged on the human body, the parodic nature of the interruptions in the narration of

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27) For more on the gendered aspect of the term "mixed middling," see Joseph Allen Boone, "A New Approach to Bloom as 'Womanly Man': The Mixed Middling's Progress in *'Ulysses,'" James Joyce Quarterly* 20.1 (Fall 1982): 67-85. See also Joseph Valente, "'Neither fish nor flesh'; or How 'Cyclops' Stages the Double-Bind of Irish Manhood," *Semicolonial Joyce*, ed. Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 96-127.

28) One of the biases the unknown narrator has against Bloom is that Bloom does not buy drinks for everyone in the pub. He says of Bloom, "Then sloping off with his five quid without putting up a pint of stuff like a man" (U 12.1662-63).

Cyclops can be seen throughout. If the interpolations are meant to be parodic or satiric, then the long list of Irish saints would break down Irish Catholic identity, an identity the Citizen is supposed to have.[29] This satirical quality casts doubt on the narrator's view of Bloom and the others, as we see in several key moments in the passage when the list counteracts the plot. The characters' identities then become problematic, and so suggest a double agency that eventually results in the Irishmen turning against Bloom.

The long list of saints mocks the story the unknown narrator provides, troubling the identity of the drinkers in Barney Kiernan's and exposing, through satire, their double agency. Before the list of saints begins, the Citizen says, "Saint Patrick would want to land again at Ballykinlar and convert us . . . after allowing things like that to contaminate our shores" (*U* 12.1671-72). The Citizen is referring to Bloom, but he does so in a way that ties Catholicism and Irish identity (through Saint Patrick) together. Simply by being in Ireland, Bloom affects the rest of the island, so that Saint Patrick must convert them back to Catholicism and re-establish their imagined community. To this, Martin responds: "Well. . .God bless all here is my prayer" (*U* 12.1673). Martin's response is somewhat ambivalent: the key word being "all." Does Martin include Bloom in "all," or is he approving the Citizen's idea that religiosity is tied to Irish nationalism? The amens of the Citizen and Joe seem to indicate the latter, but Martin ends up helping Bloom escape the wrath of the Citizen at the end of the episode (*U* 12.1674-75). The interpolation begins, and it ultimately problematizes the Citizen's belief of Irish identity. The gigantism section here states, "And 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 of mitred abbots and priors and

29) See also Enda Duffy, *The Subaltern "Ulysses."* Duffy believes that "the two halves of the text, its two styles, must be granted equality because this episode ["Cyclops"] sets the sights of its objectivity at the horizon of 'race'" (110). While I agree with Duffy that the two styles are equally important, I am steering away from a particular discussion of race, rather advancing the argument that the parody of the second narration actually resists the set definitions of Bloom.

guardians and monks and friars" (*U* 12.1676-79). Given that the narrator ends his section with a prayer, the religious language of the gigantism section is related but somehow apart from the narrated section. It cannot be determined, for instance, if the party listed in the aforementioned quote is supposed to represent the group in Barney Kiernan's. The gigantism section actually takes the theme of the narrated section, which is how Irish nationalists have sanctified their nationalism, and turns it on its head. The list of saints includes both canonized and fictional saints, while saints like "S. Anonymous and S. Eponymous and S. Pseudonymous and S. Homonymous" caricature the procession by including ridiculous names alongside serious ones (*U* 12.1696-97).[30] Ultimately, this list casts doubt upon the certainty the Citizen and his group have about the sanctity of their nationalism, especially since it cannot easily be determined who is represented in the gigantism section. The fact that the procession reaches "the appointed place, the house of Bernard Kiernan and Co" and prays "that God might bless that house as he had blessed the house of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and make the angels of His light to inhabit therein" (*U* 12.1728-29; 12.1735-37) suggests both that it refers to the group *and* that the group is at least sympathetic or understanding of Jewishness, since Jacob is also known as Israel. The difficulty of this passage, especially when juxtaposed with the unknown narrator's story, troubles the identities of the characters. It unhinges the Irish nationalists from their own imagined community, connecting them to Bloom through its satiric and parodic nuances. In other words, this gigantism section creates a tension with the unknown narrator that points to the Irish nationalists themselves as double agents—just like Bloom.

A scene of triumph ends "Cyclops," one that both celebrates the freeing of double agency while at the same time exhibiting the violence that results from paranoia about the double agent. The triumph is enjoyed only because the political implications of double agency are largely ignored by the narrator; the gigantism sections, however, work against that, acting like the unconscious in Freud's view

30) Those particular names also toy with how names as identifications work in the English language.

of the world. While the episode's stylistic alternations point to the paranoia and the danger that double agency can entail, the narrative sections at the end attempt to negate these, establishing Bloom's double agency as heroic. After the long list of saints, the anonymous narrator returns in time for Bloom's re-entrance into Barney Kiernan's. The episode picks up the pace at this point, alternating narrative and gigantism sections much more quickly. Both the narrator and the Citizen appear to attack Bloom for having money and not buying a round of drinks. The narrator says, "Courthouse my eye and your pockets hanging down with gold and silver. Mean bloody scut. Stand us a drink itself. Devil a sweet fear! There's a jew for you! All for number one" (*U* 12.1759-61). The narrator here highlights Bloom's Jewish identity, agreeing with the Citizen at this point when he, like the Citizen, wants a free drink out of Bloom. The Citizen's command "Don't tell anyone" refers to the supposed fortune Bloom received from gambling, betting on Throwaway the horse (*U* 12.1762). But here, both the Citizen and the narrator are wrong. Enda Duffy explains that "this fracas is highlighted by the Nameless One, and as he is the prime mover of the regimen of accusation, he is the least trustworthy narrator of what occurred. Instead, he is an excellent example of the completely interpellated consciousness: the rhetoric of accusation and deception, beholden to the regime of surveillance, is his highly polished patois" (122). The narrator's inaccuracy spreads throughout the episode, and it is seen in both the minor details and more substantial plot points. For instance, the narrator cannot get Crofton's name right, calling him "Crofter" when the group is trying to decide Bloom's identity and then "Crawford" after the interpolation with the long list of saints (*U* 12.1634; 12.1752). And the narrator is also wrong about Bloom's identity and his possession of money, even though, as Duffy points out in his discussion of the "Nameless One," he is an informant and has access to special information (122). But just as the unknown narrator begins to align himself with the Citizen, his narration is cut off by the gigantism sections, building to the climax of the episode.

As Bloom leaves Barney Kiernan's, his final standoff with the Citizen occurs, and while this moment seems like Bloom's victory over the Citizen, and therefore

a celebration of double agency as a modernist aesthetic of identity, a certain paranoia remains. While both the unknown narrator and the Citizen attempt to separate themselves from Bloom by highlighting his Jewishness, Bloom's final comment to the Citizen ties Catholicism to Jewishness, in effect pointing out the double agency of the Citizen and therefore the other Irish nationalists. After being taunted with "Three cheers for Israel" (*U* 12.1791)—its ironic usage capturing the Citizen's hatred for Jews even while the words literally praise them—Bloom makes a final connection between the identities that the Citizen and the other nationalists were trying to separate throughout the episode: "Mendelssohn was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the Saviour was a jew and his father was a jew. Your God. —He had no father, says Martin. That'll do now. Drive ahead. —Whose God? says the citizen. —Well, his uncle was a jew, says he. Your God was a jew. Christ was a jew like me" (*U* 12.1804-09). Like the Irish lists of saints that appeared in the interpolation before Bloom returns to the pub, Bloom has a list of thinkers, both secular and religious, who were at least racially Jewish if not religiously so. In his use of lists, Bloom echoes the earlier gigantism section, as if uttering the voice of the unconscious, hence also revealing the pervasiveness of double agency. This list, while substantially shorter than the list of saints, exalts Jewish figures in the same way as the list of saints is meant to exalt Irish ones, and at the same time it connects Jewish thinking to Western thought. The double agency of the West is thus brought out in relation to Jewishness: Western thought, both political and religious, is informed by Eastern figures, according to Bloom. Bloom's statement does this not only on a secular level, but also on a spiritual one. By calling the figure worshipped by Christians Jewish, Bloom exposes double agency in the fundamental belief system of many Irish, showing them that their nationalism owes a debt to the groups they ostracize. This tactic is meant, at least in this episode, as a triumphant moment for Bloom: as Duffy points out, it is common for readers to think that Bloom, and in some ways Joyce, "sends up chauvinistic and ignorant Irish nationalism" (109). While Duffy argues against that belief by attributing equal value to the interpolations and the narrative sections, I

argue here that the appearance of victory for Bloom has more subtle repercussions, particularly in exacerbating the paranoia that the nationalists have, not only about Bloom, but also about their own double agency. Paranoia generates hostility towards Bloom.

The triumphant revelation of double agency is not without its perils, which come in the form of hostility toward the double agent from those who do not or cannot accept their own double agency. The Citizen's reaction is a prime example of paranoia. While the end of the episode is comic in how ineffectual the Citizen's anger is in harming Bloom, there remains no resolution between the two antagonists; the problem is, if anything, much worse when Bloom leaves. The comedy is seen again when the Citizen only throws a biscuit box at Bloom instead of something more destructive—and misses. The Citizen's anger itself becomes contradictory and comic: "By Jesus, says he, I'll brain that bloody jewman for using the holy name. By Jesus, I'll crucify him so I will. Give us that biscuitbox here" (*U* 12.1811-12). The Citizen uses "the holy name" in a blasphemous way, similarly to Bloom. The Citizen's desire to "crucify" Bloom is juxtaposed with the crucifixion of Christ, again associating Judaism with Christianity and pointing to the double agency of adherents to either faith. The Citizen's comic anger is related through the unknown narrator's voice and is interrupted by gigantism sections that sardonically introduce "high" language that contrasts with the "low" voice of the narrator. The ridiculousness of the Citizen's actions against Bloom also seem to point to triumph since there are no apparent repercussions for Bloom. However, the Citizen's wrath is not merely a comic foil, but an indication that double agency begets a violent reaction. The Citizen's response to his own double agency is to attack the double agent who pointed out this split subjectivity. The comedy essentially masks the violence, but it is violence nonetheless, and the fact that Bloom escapes and there is no resolution of the conflict means that the potential for further violence remains. In other words, the hostility that results from double agency is real, though seemingly trivialized to the point of unimportance. The episode seems to espouse a celebration of double agency while only subtly noting

its political implications of hostility and violence.

"Cyclops" points to double agency because espionage and paranoia are more pronounced in this episode than in any other. Both the content and the narration highlight double agency. As for content, Enda Duffy summarizes Bloom's situation in "Cyclops" in the following terms:

> Attempting to escape interpellation, literally, by passing it by, Bloon [sic] is trapped in the pub in 'Cyclops,' at the center of such interpellative forces as the watchful eyes and ears of the possible informer, the appropriately named (by the critics) Nameless One, and the not-so-manifestly interpellated figures like the chauvinist Citizen, whose vicious nationalism turns out to be only a more thorough mirroring of the ideology of the ruling power. (129)

In addition, Bloom's situation reveals the paranoia of the entire episode, paranoia that the closing passage's celebration of double agency does not alleviate. The unknown narrator, who shares to some degree the Citizen's views, is also an informant, a speaker the reader encounters only in this episode and then never again. Spying is discussed throughout the episode; all of the characters suffer from some form of paranoia. Stylistically, the interpolations produce paranoia by destabilizing any clear reading of the episode. The lack of names of characters, the Citizen and the "Nameless One," produces a further mystery conducive to paranoia. None of these issues are resolved at the end of the episode, despite the seeming victory Bloom achieves in escaping Barney Kiernan's, saved as he is by the representative of the Anglo-Irish government, Martin Cunningham. Thus, while there appears to be a celebration of double agency, an incorporation of the double agent into the modernist aesthetic, there remain still paranoia and political implications that Joyce and other modernists cannot escape. Some of the ramifications of this paranoia are seen in the rest of *Ulysses* in the various stylistic narrative choices and the lack of resolutions.

The figure of the Jew becomes a locus for paranoia while at the same time commenting on the double agency of Irish nationalism. Bloom's ambiguous Jewish

identity allows him to be a double agent in representing the outsider while at the same time being an Irish nationalist. Of course, for the Citizen and his group of nationalists, which includes the unknown narrator, Bloom cannot play both sides: he is first and foremost a Jew, and any attempt to contradict or destabilize that identity is rejected. Thus the group needs to discuss Bloom's identity; they must know who exactly he is and then label him in order to hate him properly. However, the Irish nationalists cannot categorize Bloom, nor can they identify themselves with any accuracy, and this troubling of individual identity is problematic when a people is trying to gain independence from a colonial oppressor. Yet for Joyce and others, double agency is celebrated as the way identity actually works. Still, this reading of identity is troubled by the style of "Cyclops." The unknown narrator is suspicious in all the ways that make "Cyclops" tricky for the reader: his line of work is unclear (aside from being a debt collector, there seems to be more to the unknown narrator's occupation), his name is unknown, and his relationship with government agencies and the rest of the characters in the episode is ambiguous at best. His story is disrupted by the gigantism sections that provide tangential and confusing information in a manner that produces paranoia by destabilizing the plot of the episode. While these two textual dimensions conspire to show Bloom's victory over the Citizen at the end of the episode, the larger questions of who everyone is and of the paranoia that double agency produces are not resolved. This lack of resolution, and the paranoia of and about the Jewish figure, appears elsewhere throughout modernism. In understanding how double agency works in modernism, we can begin to comprehend how nationalism and identity work in our own times.

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Abstract

"What the hell is he?" Double Agency in *Ulysses*

Omer Kazmi

This paper examines the "Cyclops" episode of Ulysses and how nationalism and Jewishness create a sense of double agency in the episode. Not only Bloom, but also the other characters in Barney Kiernan's, are double agents: their identities blur and commingle with Bloom's presence. The tension between the Irish nationalists in the pub and Bloom's perceived Jewishness highlight that double agency; yet, there is also a tension in the narration itself with the interruptions in the narrative. The narrator too produces paranoia because he is an unknown character who is paranoid himself. The entire episode works to show that paranoia surrounds identity, and any clear definition of national identity—especially for nationalists whose supreme goal is freedom from colonial rule—is troubled. But double agency, the episode suggests, is how identity works.

■ Key words : James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Irish Nationalism, Double Agents, Jewishness

Received Nov. 9, 2017
Reviewed Nov. 22, 2017
Accepted Nov. 28, 2017