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Nationalism and the Rationalization of Violence in Joyce's *Ulysses*, the "Cyclops" Episode

Camelia Raghinaru
Concordia University, Irvine

Abstract

In distancing himself from Western brutality in its religious and nationalistic forms, Joyce also registered his exasperation with Irish nationalism. Resentful nationalistic impotence structures the narrative core of the "Cyclops" episode in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The impotence underlying the resentment stems from the inability to create an independent subject through any other terms than those of the master, given that postcolonial revivalist movements emulate the imperial subject. This essay dwells on the connection between impotent, resentful nationalism and its manifest violence. On one hand, I consider the stereotype of the "fighting Irish" as emblematic of instinctual, yet rationalized, violence. On the other hand, I emphasize the ultimate impotence of the realization of this instinct in its primitive, despotic form, as well as its sublimation in nationalist movements. The second essay from Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* provides the theoretical tool with which I examine the parallels between the emerging narratives of rationalization and nationalism. Assuming that nationalism sublimates instinctual aggression, it also succeeds in perpetuating its aim—that of exercising the primal aggression upon which it is premised. Moreover, assuming that nationalism purports to advance the aims of the social contract between community and individual—viz., protecting the individual from aggression—it fails by the very mechanism by which it is supposed to function.

[Key words: James Joyce, *Ulysses*, "Cyclops," Irish nationalism, ideology, morality, coercion, cruelty, reason, violence, Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, resentment, rationalization, impotence, resistance, racial purity, modernity]

Biographical accounts records James Joyce's concern with religion and politics as sources of violence in the West. In his review of H. Fielding-Hall's *The Soul of a People*, titled "A Suave Philosophy" and published in the *Daily Express* on February 6, 1903, Joyce claims that the relationship between religion, politics and violence is indigenous to the West (Davison, 1996, p. 89):

Our civilization, bequeathed to us by fierce adventurers, eaters of meat and hunters, is so full of hurry and combat, so busy about many things which perhaps are of no importance, that it cannot but see something feeble in a civilization which smiles as it refuses to make the battlefield the test of excellence (Joyce quoted in Davison, 1996, p. 89).

In distancing himself from Western brutality in its religious and nationalistic forms, Joyce also registered his "apparent exasperation with nationalist laments, [stating] that he cannot understand 'the purpose of bitter invective against the English despoiler, the

disdain for the vast Anglo-Saxon civilisation, even though it is almost entirely a materialistic civilisation” (Joyce quoted in Davison, 1996, p. 89). In a similar context, Joyce referred to Ireland as “a country destined by God to be the everlasting caricature of the serious world” and claimed “that it is rather naive to heap insults on England for her misdeeds in Ireland” (Joyce quoted in Nolan, 1995, p. 129). As Andrew Gibson (2006) documents,

Political schism and stagnation, decline and despair in the wake of Parnell, the rise of Irish cultural nationalism as exemplified in the Gaelic Revival, the cultural ‘last stand’ of the Anglo-Irish: these were the three most important features of the culture in which Joyce grew into adolescence. (p. 30-31)

Indirectly, Joyce seemed to indicate that the resentful side of nationalism stems from its impotence to measure up to its postcolonial ideal.

Resentful impotence structures the narrative core of the “Cyclops” episode in Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Diana Perez Garcia (2002) emphasizes the violence in the Citizen’s threat to annihilate Bloom in order to underscore the ultimate deflation and impotence of the speaker’s words. Overly inflated verbal violence is followed by the deflation resulting from its impossibility of ever being matched by the act itself. Edna Duffy (1994) has pointed out that postcolonial nationalistic violence reinvents the “primitive” and the “despotic” (p. 35) dimension of the previous colonial order while betraying, in the process, a “stifled resentment . . . in its attempt to delineate a folk tradition that will outdo the elite art of the colonist culture” (p. 101). The impotence underlying the resentment operates on several levels. First, it stems from the inability to create an independent subject through any other terms than those of the master, given that postcolonial revivalist movements “emulated imperial glorifications of the subject” (p. 101). Second, it lingers in the doubt that nationalism’s work in the colony can indeed successfully recapture the “romantic and atavistic view of Irish history” (Watson, 1987, p. 46). This atavism relies on its dark and violent cults of redeeming blood-sacrifices and the dynamic power of myth and legend to lift the patriotic heart into “that world of selfless passion in which heroic deeds are possible” (p. 45). Third, it questions whether the colonial administration can indeed “protect the natives from their own proclivity to violence” (Duffy, 1994, p. 35).

This essay dwells on the connection between impotent, resentful nationalism and its manifest violence. On one hand, I consider the stereotype of the “fighting Irish” (embodied in the “Cyclops” by the Citizen’s throwing the biscuit box at Jewish Bloom) as emblematic of instinctual, yet rationalized, violence —particularly as premised on the necessity for a “periodic blood-sacrifice to keep alive the National Spirit” (Watson, 1987, p. 46). On the other hand, I emphasize the ultimate impotence of the realization of this instinct in its primitive, despotic form, as well as its sublimation in nationalist movements. The second essay from Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morality* provides the theoretical tool with which I examine the parallels between the emerging narratives of rationalization and nationalism. I claim that the “Cyclops’s” failure as a nationalistic discourse is predicated upon its success in the same vein. Assuming that nationalism

sublimates instinctual aggression, it also succeeds in perpetuating its aim—that of exercising the primal aggression upon which it is premised. On the other hand, assuming that nationalism purports to advance the aims of the social contract between community and individual—viz., protecting the individual from aggression—it fails by the very mechanism by which it is supposed to function. Duffy (1994) posits the failure as postcolonial interpellation of the subject. In her view, nationalism works in the colony to imaginatively reinvent the “primitive” or “despotic” modes of production that are likely to have long been torn apart and marginalized by the colonial administration, but merely to offer them as so much spectacle through which the masses can be interpellated to the cause of the newly invented nation. (p. 35)

The spectacle of impotent violence is best showcased in the Citizen's performative threat against Bloom. His recourse to open violence, following a series of verbal assaults and racial insinuations, conveys the colonial import of his violent nationalism. The double-jointed politics prevents the formation of a homogenous community integrating multiple postcolonial identities into a collective dynamic. It also insists on imagining an elusive and illusionary conformity, “supposedly generated as if by magic in the glorious moment of independence” (Duffy, 1994, p. 128).

The failure to integrate differences stems not only from an inability to comprehend the perverse inner-workings of nationalism in postcolonial cultures but also from an ostensible unwillingness to subvert these mechanisms. Nietzsche argues that modernity emerges from the sublimation of violence through reason and rationalization. Consequently, in its postcolonial form, the nationalism of the “Cyclops” (represented not only through the Citizen's open recourse to aggression, but also through the nameless narrator's hate-speech against Bloom and the many overt and covert hints of violence interspersed through the narrative) must perforce perpetuate its own existence out of a more primal claim than the national-identitarian one—that of the primeval instinct of cruelty founding the *ab-original* community:

“The Cyclopean giant who threatens the Dublin Ulysses is not something real in the situation of the country or its inhabitants: the danger comes from the swollen dreams and illusions which are the compensation for pointless and trivial lives, and from the giant hatreds and prejudices which originate in such dreams and give rise to blind nationalism, religious intolerance, anti-Semitism and all the other symptoms of spiritual poverty and frustration.” (Peake, 1977, p. 235)

In the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche constructs a narrative of resentment in which cruelty (i.e., the practice of the prohibited) is rationalized as a social contract between the individual and the community. “Bad consciousness” initiates the development of reason and rationality as tools, masks, or excuses that veil the great historical performance of the instinct of aggression and cruelty (powerful drives recognized by Nietzsche and Freud) that, in their rationalized form, become fundamental to the development of modernity (and, I would argue, to that of modern nationalism). Rationalization develops as a sly move: that of indulging in cruelty, a violation of the moral code, while exercising the otherwise prohibited, yet subversively

encouraged instinct. The master race, paradoxically, prohibits violence, while also prescribing it as a virtue. According to Nietzsche (1887/1989), the rationalization of cruelty precedes guilt and resentment because it is connected to the individual's awareness of his cruelty as "proud consciousness" (p. 59)—a driving instinct synonymous with the life-force. The institutionalization of promise forms the basis of this contract, accomplished through the blood and gore, torture and penances accompanying the enforcement of the penal code.

The narrative of rationalized cruelty begins with a strange paradox in nature: the breeding of "an animal *with the right to make promises*" (p. 57), an emancipated, rational beast; or, if not truly rational, at least wearing a rational mask behind which the pre-rational instinct of aggression lurks unrestricted. By its nature, the act of making a promise places the individual in an unprecedented relation to nature and himself. In the process of overcoming forgetfulness, s/he acquires a memory (rather spectacularly, through pain and suffering) that enables the institutionalization of promise as a social act. Insofar as making and keeping a promise presupposes treating the future as if it were present, "[ordaining] the future in advance" (p. 58), thinking causally, "anticipating distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present" (p. 58), the act of promising is an act of will and reason: it bridges the gap between the moment of desire and the act of satisfying that desire. The promise made under coercion and fear of punishment is, however, the unripe fruit of free will, which will not mature until the individual rebels against the social straight-jacketing of the community at large and emerges as supra-moral.

The sovereign individual, whose ability to make a promise transcends the tyrannical morality of the herd and becomes a measure of his own value against everyone else's, is aware of his own independence; of his own power over, and freedom from, the hard necessities of nature, circumstance, fatality and accident; and of his right to make a promise for which he stands as his own guarantor. In opposition to the "short-willed and unreliable" (p. 61) creatures of coercion, he develops a conscience of his own privilege, of his "unlikeness to like," of the value granted by his own unbreakable, "protracted will" (p. 59), of the fact that he inspires trust in his peers and fear and reverence in his inferiors, whom he despises—finally, the awareness that he is "mankind come to completion" (p. 59). Nationalism banks on the emergence of the supra-moral national conscience, whose ability to profess the right to power places it in the unique position to demand obedience.

The nationalistic claim to rule by justice founds a hegemonic rule of coercion. The penal code works by extracting a promise of obedience from the community in exchange for protection. The mere making of a promise under coercion is a requirement of conduct, an obligation by which the masses are reduced to uniformity in obedience to the law. Under this privilege, the individual who has the right to make a promise also earns the right to use a "rod [against] the liar who breaks his word even at the moment he utters it" (p. 60). The master becomes the wielder of the implements of torture under the penal code. Liberated from morality, he channels his will to power against the "mob-instinct and brutal coarseness" (p. 62) of his inferiors. Torture, stoning, castration, flaying—all the popular means of terror that formerly attended all promises and

pledges—constitute the cure of “bad memory” during the painful process of customizing the herd’s morality. Apparently a civilizing task in the hands of the legislators, memorization through pain reasserts cruelty as a life-force. The law becomes the outer shell of a system based on, functioning on, and perpetuating the manifestations of the instinct of violence. As Duffy (1994) points out, the “false promise” distinguishes between two types of alienation: individual and communal (p. 27). The collective conscience is alienated from the law that serves the interests of the powerful over the weak. The individual subject turns against him/herself (through enforced obedience and the ensuing guilt) and the community as the locus of coercion. The rebellious subject has recourse to only one outlet against the tyranny of the moral law: to reinforce the very law against which s/he rebels.

An alternative reading of nationalism as a system of credit and debt places the hegemonic power in the position of “collector of bad and doubtful debts” (similarly to the narrator of the “Cyclops”). Through a master move, Nietzsche (1887/1989) traces the development of law and punishment to the bartering system and its basic unit—value, which the legislator will use in the economy of rationalizing cruelty. The masters, the first individuals to have a conception of their own value, become the first creditors—appraisers of value, calculators of risk, premeditators of the future. As breakers of the original “I will not,” they become the first legislators. As agents of free will, their reasoning is no longer subject to the calculated “mastery of the affects” ([p. 62] a necessity for the slaves of morality); they rebel against the social order and use their power to enforce it in their turn. Thus, value as the measuring of one’s power against another’s becomes the root of civilization, thinking, and the feeling of superiority of man to animal, master to slave: man is the “creature that measures values . . . the ‘valuing animal as such’” (p. 70). The social contract between creditor and debtor anticipates the earliest canon of justice. A new type of reasoning institutionalizes the instinct of cruelty.

Punishment in the hegemonic system does not originate as a matter of requital for wrongful deeds, but as the legalization of the instinct of cruelty. The legal system becomes a system of propagating violence. Reason develops as the rationalization of sadomasochism, of cruelty as pleasure (on the opposite end of the spectrum from cruelty as mental torture—the work of the ascetic priest). Punishment as pure pleasure, with no compensatory value, is the gratuitous expression of “*faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire*,” the “enjoyment of violation” (p. 65). Transgression is the prerogative of the master, the supra-moral individual. Punishment, therefore, institutes the legal permission to commit a violation. It allows the creditor to make a promise s/he does not have to keep (if the contractual promise is that one will not commit acts of aggression against the community). It absolves the creditor from responsibility and conscience, from the obligations of the penal code instilled in memory through the original pain; it exculpates the creditor for the guilt for which the debtor has to pay. Thus, the creditor, who was once the lawbreaker, becomes the lawgiver. The law, therefore, perpetuates itself not only in matters of injustice and violence, but also in the recreation of that original matrix through which debtors become creditors and creditors debtors, and by means of which the first supra-moral individuals arose from the midst of the moral herd.

This inversion of status, a veritable saturnalia (the lower the social rank of the creditor, the greater the pleasure of inflicting pain), is part of a greater festival of cruelty—an authentic spectacle of violence. Duffy (1994) attributes a similarly perverse characteristic to the mechanism of the ideology of nationalism. In consolidating its hegemony, the state interpellates the new citizen just as actively as the old colonial native was recruited to the struggle for independence:

As an ideology, a force by which the subject is convinced of the naturalness of her position, nationalism, despite its role as the vehicle of the new state, turns out invariably to have been always already a discourse of the former imperial culture, the very culture it would overcome. (p. 33)

Even though the law (as supreme valuating power) determines what counts as just or unjust, it also creates these values by virtue of its access to violence and the imposition and dispensation of suffering at will. Paradoxically, violence, the currency of the justice system, is an offense within that same system. Injury, assault, exploitation, destruction (justified as operational forces) are unjust when performed as acts of transgression against the law. The law restricts the will to life of the lesser powers, but only to create and enhance that of the greater ones. In the context of the “continuous sign-chain” (p. 77) of interpretations succeeding and alternating each other at random, the law is a succession of “processes of subduing . . . the resistances [it] encounters” (p. 78). The law of violence, therefore, plays the role of will to power in its treatment of the debtor’s suffering as expendable in order to advance a “single *stronger* species of man” (p. 78) able to measure, value, and control the infliction of violence.

Tension underscores the development of legal and moral instances at the heart of nationalism. According to Duffy (1994), nationalism is as schizophrenic and internally conflicted as the anarchic master-sovereign and law-giver in Nietzsche’s argument. Built upon a paradox—promising protection against violence, yet perpetuating the violence through its claims to purity—nationalist postcolonialism completes the work of the colonial oppressors. The logic of violence perpetuates the “continuous sign-chains” of justice premised upon violence. Duffy (1994) argues that the contradiction structuring nationalism stands in its impotence to achieve real solidarity within the community, whether it infiltrates it from the right or left:

Contemporary debate on Irish cultural nationalism is also often couched in either of these terms: conservatives’ horror at the bloodlust and enduring violence of Irish nationalism alternating with progressives’ regret that that nationalism has been stunted and never fully realized because of such intervening ideologies as religious chauvinism. (p. 32-33)

The function of the law is anti-democratic. It precludes “misarchism” (Nietzsche, 1887/1989, p. 78) by imposing a rule of the powerful, even as it pretends to stave off these very instincts of aggression. Legal punishment achieves everything but the inhibition of violence in the criminal and the community. In fact, when executed by the justice system, punishment strengthens resistance and rebellion. When modeled by the justice system, the violence once perpetrated by the criminal against the community is now justified,

rationalized, and not reprehensible anymore. Paradoxically, the justice system perpetuates violence and criminality, since it increases prudence, astuteness, and criminality in the accused, instead of guilt and repentance. The narrative comes full circle. From the initial paradox of the individual's promise as social contract (according to which he would not resort to violence against the community) to the institutional promise as legal contract (according to which the law will protect the individual from physical aggression and violence), the strain of reason breaks under the pressure of instinct, and the law turns to punishment in the name of protection. The narrative of reason thus subverted by instinct serves to illustrate Nietzsche's critique of modernity (and Joyce's of nationalism) as irrational, and its claim to enlightened rationality as mendacious.

Nationalism perpetuates resentment as the precondition for national purity, in a logic that finds its roots in the colonial vision. The mechanism of the law as an "outer shell of violence" is at work in the "hegemonic strategies exerted by the empire through its state apparatus of police, courts and informers upon its Irish subjects, even if some of them professed to disavow that power" (Duffy, 1994, p. 121). For Duffy (1994), the rationalism implicit in a postcolonial vision of an independent Ireland hypostasizes a resentment that goes deeper than mere "chauvinist nationalism" or "rationalist liberalism." It is the resentment that structures the sovereign subject in his or her calculating, premeditating, law-giving, supra-moral and supra-legal dimension. For Duffy (1994), postcolonial subjectivity stems from the impossibility of the struggle between two versions of colonialism: "The final staged fight between Bloom and the Citizen becomes the text's desperate effort to pitch the two versions of the colonial stereotype against each other in order to envision some form of postcolonial subjectivity to come" (p. 121). A future nation built on the "shrill resentment of Britain" (p. 31) is nothing more than "a way of imagining community that has been borrowed by the colonized people from their colonial masters" (p. 31). In *James Joyce and Nationalism* Emer Nolan (1995) reinforces the idea that the violence at the heart of Irish nationalism is not a matter of accident, but rather a representation of Irish history that intends to connote "more than aberrant, unrepresentative and cruel acts, and indeed symbolize the persistence of a tradition once more at the forefront" (p. 124). In the same vein, Watson makes the case that, indeed, far from accidental, violence at the heart of Irish nationalism can be traced back to a mythological and teleological pattern that employed undertones of the predestinated august nation and the apocalyptic during the Irish Revivalist movements. With its "dismal record of oppression, abortive rebellions, betrayals, poverty, and cultural deprivations" (p. 51), Irish nationalism developed compensatory myths, "powerfully teleological, even apocalyptic" (p. 51), that "[enshrined] the cult of sacrifice" and provided a sublimating and transfiguring narrative that rationalized the "frightening bloodlust" (p. 51). The "Cyclops" ridicules the succession of inflated and deflated optimism in the ongoing dialectic of nationalism as the "enabling fiction of sudden metamorphosis" (p. 52) and the "unholy alliance of romanticism, nationalism and aestheticized history" (p. 52).

Two opposing forces—enforcing and subverting the dialectic of nationalism—form the core of the exchange between Bloom and his interlocutors in Barney Kiernan's tavern.

For John Wyse, Bloom's solution—"Love, the opposite of hatred" (Joyce, 1922/1984, p. 717) is the answer to be avoided, not desired, in the polarizing discourse of nationalism. To Bloom's pertinent remark that racial violence engenders increased violence (in the name of which the Jews are "Robbed. . . . Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. . . . sold by auction in Morocco like slaves or cattle" [Joyce, 1922/1984, p. 717]) John Wyse counters with the endorsement of renewed use of force: "Stand up to it then with force like men" (p. 717). Bloom's reply equates force with hatred and emphasizes the impotence of resistance: "But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life" (p. 717). In the dichotomous ideology of racial purity vs. impurity, "love," of course, is of "no use" either, because its incorporation in the system would undo the very aims for which the system implicitly strives: to perpetuate purity, and thus, implicitly, the violence of discriminating and separating the pure from the impure. Bloom's view subverts the polarization that the Citizen reinforces. Bloom's affirmation of love as the universal life-principle (The Savior, after all, was a Jew, and yet the Citizen claims him as his God.) triggers the Citizen's affirmation of hatred as life-principle in the name of the same universal: "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" (p. 737). Thus, persecution is fueled by the same logic that should quench it: "Persecution, says he, all the history of the world is full of it. Perpetuating national hatred among nations" (p. 713). Racial and nationalistic purity define their identity against, and not within, difference; through exclusion, not inclusion. In maintaining his ideal of national and racial purity, the Citizen poses an implicit question, still unanswered within the postcolonial movement: What is the nucleus of a nation founded *not* on the exclusion of differences, but on their incorporation? The narrator's attempt to tease its implications is lost in unproductive ambiguity and reductive triviality, as much a totalization as the nationalistic reductiveness to force: "Love loves to love love" (p. 717). The universalizing gesture dissolves into sentimental incomprehensibility: "everybody loves somebody but God loves everybody" (p. 717).

Bloom's escape from totalization is rendered during his exchange with John Wyse, who challenges Bloom to provide an alternative form of resistance to hatred and persecution. Mark Nunes (1999) registers Joyce's attempt to escape the dialectics of "narrative centrality, totality, and authority" and move toward "a complex interaction between multiple, limited voices: a "rhizome" of narrative encounters." Hugh Kenner (1987) also points out that the rhizomatic structure is obvious in the dichotomy between love and hate for the land. The words, "All wind and piss like a tanyard cat" are aimed at the protagonist of the episode, the Citizen, "incarnation of truculent love of the land, whose talk in the talkative narrator's judgment is nevertheless only talk" (p. 94). Bloom's "love" escapes totalization in a way that the Citizen's "truculent love" and the nameless narrator's totalization of love fail to do. In his attempt to move the nationalistic discourse from the realm of propagandistic tendentiousness into that of subjective evaluation, Bloom refuses to extemporize on love as a political program. In *Joyce, Race, and Empire* Vincet Cheng (1995) makes a similar case against totalization. He argues that by rejecting

the Fenian Celtic Revivalist movement, Joyce rejected the binary structure of racial purity and homogeneity, moving into an "internationalist, multilingual, and multiculturalist perspective" (p. 51). Heterogeneous characteristics of individuals and cultures cannot be forced into a severely demarcated binarism, which is ultimately totalizing, Manichean, mechanical and subverting its own logic:

Instead, such dualisms lead the oppressed group within the dyad also, as we have seen, to reinscribe the same patterns, logic, and distinctions as the dominant group's; to play by the rules and terms of the oppressor, thus reaffirming the values valorized within such dualistic opposition. (p. 53)

Adam Woodruff (1999) reinforces the totalizing aspect of the tavern's nationalistic talk when he asserts that Bloom is allotted a very specific role in the unfolding false narrative: that of the typical Jew who uses his financial cunning to speculate and win at the races, and then avoid buying drinks for everyone (p. 278). The Citizen and the nameless narrator have their own way of rationalizing their violence against Bloom: their narrative couples in one strike the strand of degeneration (i.e., national purity threatened by outside unwholesome elements) and that of betrayal (i.e., Bloom's refusal to acknowledge his supposed gain and buy drinks as political and religious infidelity of outsiders) as explanations of the failure of Irish nationalism:

Cast as the "blot on the landscape" of a nationalist imagination that substitutes the all too familiar tropes of anti-Semitism for the unutterable conditions of its construction, Bloom embodies a decadent complicity and instability that must be expurgated so that a lost "Golden age" of Ireland lamented by the Citizen can be regained. (p. 281)

Woodruff (1999) cites Zizek's view to explain the Citizen's violent antipathy for Bloom. The Citizen might be said to have a doubly hateful relationship with the thing for which Bloom stands. He needs Bloom as the transference-object of his hatred, and in order to maintain the polarity that stabilizes the concept of purity. As long as the impure is present and readily vilified, the Citizen can justify his use of force in the ostensible defense of national purity:

In other words, what appears as the hindrance to society's full identity with itself is actually its positive condition: by transposing onto the Jew the role of the foreign body which introduces in the social organism disintegration and antagonism, the fantasy-image of society *qua* consistent, harmonious whole is rendered possible. (Zizek quoted in Woodruff, 1999, p. 281 [footnote 34])

Scapegoatism as justification for the obvious failure of postcolonial reconstruction of the ideal nation takes the Citizen only so far. Bloom's turning the tables on him (by declaring that "the Savior was a Jew and his father was a Jew. Your God") points out the irrationality of the nationalist rhetoric and the schizophrenia underlying a communal subjectivity premised upon racial purity and the exclusion of difference. Moreover, Woodruff (1999) argues, Bloom is not only a concrete trope of this inaccessible and illusory national utopia to come.

Bloom's expansion of the scope of the 'Jew' [to include the Citizen's Savior and God] provokes such a psychotic reaction because it articulates the truth that, within the framework of the nationalist fantasy, Bloom is the Citizen, in the sense that he has become the support of the Citizen's symbolic existence, the symptom of what he cannot say. (p. 283)

The Citizen's attempt to murder Bloom with the biscuit tin box is a parody of Nietzsche's master-creditor. He threatens Bloom with the same kind of violence for which he impugns him. The performative aspect of the altercation between the Citizen and Bloom has its place. The tension spurred by contradictory registers—references to racial lynching against a background of slapstick hilarity—brings to the fore the carnivalesque aspect of "the greater festival of cruelty" that is rationalized violence. The fact that the Citizen is ticked off by a religious taunt is indicative of the way nationalism and religion are conflated in one register and used to justify and reinforce each other. As Davison (1996) points out, "the greater legitimizer of hatred in our culture called religion" (p. 253) gives way, in our century, to "a new terrestrial creed"—the "most enduring, the most seductive, and the bloodiest by far of all the new terrestrial creeds"—Nationalism: "The cult of the Nation proved to be the most effective engine for the mobilization of hatred and destruction the world has ever known" (p. 253). Brian Cosgrove (1999) hails Joyce as the Nietzschean sublime antichrist, the spirit of "sublime wickedness" and "self-assured intellectual malice" come to "redeem us from . . . the great disgust" (p. 203) of the anti-instinctual, anti-animal ideal. I have suggested, however, that in the "Cyclops," rather than endorsing the Nietzschean view of the *Übermensch*, "the comic liberator Joyce" (p. 203) and his Bloomian alter-ego might fulfill a different kind of prophecy. Criticism presents conflicting accounts of Joyce's public approach to the issue of nationalism. Nolan (1995) talks about a "symptomatic ambiguity in Joyce's political thought which has been misleadingly simplified to an idea of impeccable fair-mindedness" (p. 128). He argues that Joyce displayed obvious sympathy for the nationalist case in a lecture delivered in Trieste, though he also felt compelled to point out that Ireland has had a "history of betrayals, of eloquent inactivity, of absurd and narrow belief" (p. 129). Michael Groden (2007) uses biographical information to argue that Joyce was "opposed to nationalisms of any kind and, especially as nationalistic sentiments grew in Ireland, rejected any solution to the war based on nationalism" (p. 130). This was true even when in 1915 Joyce found himself in a politically compromised situation, though he opposed the war on pacifist grounds.

Catholic nationalism as a "commitment to a contemporary ideology of disciplined and continent masculinity propagated and popularized by the social purity leagues" (Mullin, 2003, p. 85) was deployed to cover up class inequality. Joyce's awareness of class and gender inequality "led him to make a significant distinction between bourgeois and insurgent modes of nationalism" (Backus, 2001, p. 119). Joyce was aware of the ways in which bourgeois nationalism was in charge of regulating and regimenting national identity, sexuality, and the body, as Margot Backus (2001) notes (p. 120). "Bourgeois nationalism is represented as perpetuating the very injury—traumatic paralysis—that it seeks to redress. Within such an environment, national identity becomes a stifling burden bearing down upon the individual" (Backus, 2001, p. 120). Joyce's abandonment of the

nationalist and Catholic sentiment would attract him the charge of "irresponsibility" from the antimodernists at the end of the 1930s (Segall, 1993, p. 58). Joyce's responsibility, however, is to the victims of history:

In addition to considering the effects of nationalism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, sexism, and economic exploitation, Joyce seeks to identify the root causes (inner logic) of these cycles of victimage. By exposing the limits and consequences of mastery, he succeeds in laying bare the logic of *victimage*, a word René Girard created to denote both the multiple elements contributing to victimization—violence, victims, victimizers, scapegoats, logic, and cultural contexts—as well as the misrecognition that promotes victimization, namely the majority's misrecognition of victims as guilty of an arbitrary crime and as deserving of their Otherness. Joyce's texts, from *Dubliners* through *Ulysses*, recover victims from the margins and reveal strategies they employ to resist imposed Otherness. (Murphy, 2003, p. 17)

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Camelia Raghinaru completed her Bachelor of Arts in Romanian/English literature from Universitatea Transilvania in June 1999; her Master of Arts in English from the University of Central Arkansas in May 2005; and her PhD in English from the University of Florida in May 2012. Her doctoral dissertation addressed the influence of Walter Benjamin and messianic theology in its secularized form on British modernist literature. She currently teaches literature at Concordia University, Irvine. Her publications include articles on D. H. Lawrence (in *Studies in the Novel*), James Joyce, Virginia Woolf (forthcoming in *Modernists in the Shadow of War: The Centenary Collection*) and Joseph Conrad (forthcoming in *Critical Approaches to Joseph Conrad*), as well as book reviews and shorter pieces in the *James Joyce Literary Review* and the Romanian literary journal *Vatra*.
