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Joyce's Criticism of Sexism and Anti-Semitism Through the Use of Bloom's "Femininity" in Ulysses

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Joyce's Criticism of Sexism and Anti-Semitism Through the Use of Bloom's "Femininity" in *Ulysses*

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Abstract

This essay analyzes why James Joyce's Leopold Bloom, a Jewish fictional character in *Ulysses*, is presented as a "feminine" cuckold and examines the nature of Joyce's intentions in such depiction. The discussion is underpinned by anti-Semitic and misogynistic sources that Joyce most likely used in his construction of Bloom's identity, such as Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*, Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Charles Kingsley's concept of "Christian manliness," and Max Nordau's *Degeneration*. Despite the offensive origins of these sources, the essay seeks to establish that Joyce did not use them with ill intent. Joyce instead attempted to invert the anti-Semitic and misogynistic ideas found in these texts by arguing for a societal acceptance of sexual fluidity, androgyny, and a new kind of marital union in *Ulysses*. The analysis also explores the Blooms' marriage and how Joyce's description of Bloom does not and should not strip Bloom of his dignity: through Bloom's "femininity," Joyce subverts themes of toxic masculinity and renounces the perpetuation of violence, bigotry, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and strict societal dichotomy of gender.

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James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a complex literary work that contains multiple layers of meaning. At first, the text may appear as being exclusively and strictly anti-Semitic, which is arguably an incorrect way of viewing *Ulysses*; such reading strips it of its depth and intricate, uncanny beauty. However, it would also be wrong to not acknowledge how Joyce plays into reductive anti-Semitic stereotypes and infuses *Ulysses* with highly offensive assumptions, language, and implications. This paper explores the reason behind why Joyce uses discriminatory sources like that of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*, Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, and Max Nordau's *Degeneration* in his creation of *Ulysses*, and specifically in the construction of a fictional identity of one of its protagonists, Leopold Bloom. Despite Joyce feminizing Bloom, he does not do it to insult the Jewish community; instead, Joyce inverts the ideas found in these controversial writings to question gender norms and ideas of traditional marriage and masculinity. Ultimately, he asserts that Bloom represents love and freedom, while the people who subject his femininity or him being a Jew to mockery embody violence, which contributes to the perpetuation of a hostile society.

It is important to acknowledge that James Joyce not only harbored anti-Semitic sentiment throughout *Ulysess*, but also viewed Eastern European Jews, in particular, as possibly "comic" as well as "threatening" (Steinberg 83) due to society's anti-Semitic distinction of Jews from various parts of the world. In the beginning of the twentieth century, society liked to think of Jews as

either “white Jews,” meaning assimilated, or “dirty Jews,” non-assimilated (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 268). “Dirty Jews” were from Eastern Europe and some of them spoke Yiddish; they had recently escaped the Russian pogroms of the 1870s and still had to integrate into a homogeneous society (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 268). One-way assimilation, or the expectation of newly arrived immigrants to let go of their native tongue and tradition and instead to conform to a new culture, was highly encouraged if not demanded—such demand was out of ignorance, xenophobia, and a blunt rejection of cultural pluralism. Most people discriminated against kaftan-wearing Hasidic Jews from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, or Belarus, and to complicate matters even further, already assimilated Jews were “not likely to be sympathetic to Eastern European Jews” either (Steinberg 80). Joyce did not think of himself as an anti-Semite because he “had many Jewish friends” (Steinberg 64); however, Joyce didn’t have friends who were “born and acculturated in Eastern Europe” (Steinberg 80) and was mostly well-acquainted with “assimilated, middle-class Jews” (Steinberg 79). This only contributed to his offensive depiction of Eastern European Jews in *Ulysses*—specifically of Jewish merchants on the street and of Bloom’s grandfather who was from Hungary. Joyce also famously made an anti-Semitic joke while conversing with Ottocaro Weiss, who was one of Joyce’s best friends and a Jew. Joyce said that “a warship with a captain named Kanalgitter and his aide named Captain Afterduft would be the funniest thing the old Mediterranean has ever seen” (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 267). For reference, a “Kanalgitter” means “the grating in a sidewalk through which sewer-gas vents from the sewer mains below” (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 267). Joyce was trying to say that a “human ‘Kanalgitter’ would vent an ‘Afterduft,’” or an “odor [that] com[es] from the be-

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hind'" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 267). Such a statement "play[s] on the alleged uncleanliness of Eastern European Jews" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 267) and is deeply derogatory. While Joyce had a problematic, unsettling perception of Eastern European Jews, as this paper progresses, it will assert that Joyce had good intentions at the end, even while some of his execution remains to be questionable and offensive.

In addition to Joyce reflecting prejudices of the culture in which he lived through *Ulysses*, he also borrows the preconceived anti-Semitic bias within the literature that he was reading and that other contemporary writers held, which highlights how the modern-day society has progressed and became more aware of xenophobia and anti-Semitism. There are both literary and real-life instances (e.g., the offensive "Kanalgitter" joke) of when Joyce was anti-Semitic. For example, in "Nestor," Joyce describes the Jewish merchants as "gold skinned men quoting prices on their gemmed fingers," who "gabble" like "geese," who are "uncouth," meaning lacking good manners, and who wear "maladroit silk hats" (Joyce 28). The "maladroit silk hats" most likely refer to a spodik or a shtreimel, both of which are fur hats that originated in Hasidic Ashkenazi Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and are usually worn for special occasions like Shabbat. Bloom's grandfather, whose last name is Virag (meaning "flower" in Hungarian) and who was born in Hungary is also described as different from others; Hungarian Jews were viewed in a similar fashion as Eastern European Jews. Bloom's grandfather has a "yellow parrotbeak [that] gabbles nasally," he "gobbles gluttonously," and he "laughs in a rich feminine key" (Joyce 420). Joyce is "a writer [who] reflects the world in which he live[d in, so as] the beliefs of his times" (Steinberg 82). It is important to note, however, that the majority of expressed derogatory lan-

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guage in *Ulysses* comes from Mr. Deasy, Citizen, and anti-Semitic, radically nationalistic individuals who not only serve as narrators of certain chapters but represent the opinion of a larger Dublin populace of the early twentieth century. Joyce also criticizes—and in some way, mocks—these characters who mock the Jews. While I do not think that Joyce was an anti-Semite, he did indulge in crude, discriminatory humor without being aware of potential consequences. Crude humor fosters and propagates hurtful biases, myths, and assumptions. The Holocaust "had not yet taught [Joyce or the society that he was living in] the terrible complicity and responsibility inherent in what they apparently thought of as casual humor" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 268). By engaging in such humor, Joyce also reflects "the prejudices of many of his intellectual and artistic peers (Wyndham Lewis, T . S. Eliot, Ezra Pound…[and] Virginia Woolf)" (Steinberg 82). In addition to living in a society that enjoyed laughing at Jews, Joyce's family was no better; his younger brother, Stanislaus Joyce, equated women to "cowards" and stated that "they have the mind of Jews" (Steinberg 70). To put it another way, "misogyny and anti-Semitism went hand in hand in the Dublin of Joyce's youth" (Steinberg 70).

Because Joyce feminizes Bloom, it is critical to examine the history of the connection between Jewish males and women in general, considering that this socially constructed interconnectedness can potentially go back to Paul the Apostle's letters, which represent the beginnings of Christianity. In the First Epistle to Timothy, which is admittedly rumored by many scholars as pseudepigraphic, Paul writes: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Timothy 2:11-14). Here particular emphasis is placed on how women

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cannot hold "authority" over men and how they must be "quiet"; furthermore, it was a woman that was "deceived" first and who became a "sinner," not a smart man. The relationship between a man and a woman is not the only binary relationship that Paul builds. Paul also constructs "oppositional relationships between external and internal realities: Jewish-Christian, Old Testament-New Testament, [and] Letter-Spirit" (Steinberg 67). Such sentiment is reflected in Mr. Deasy's speech. Mr. Deasy says that "England is in the hands of the Jews" and that "they are the signs of nation's decay" (Joyce 28); not too soon after that statement, Mr. Deasy remarks that it is "a woman [that] brought sin into the world" (Joyce 29). Mr. Deasy demonstrates how the Jewish-Christian and man-woman binaries still hold control over the Dublin society, and Joyce illustrates that the Paulian system of binary often produces both anti-Semitism and misogyny. Joyce is critical of such conduct, which will later manifest itself into explicit violence and hatred in Citizen—another anti-Semitic character who represents a closed-mindedness against which Joyce is implicitly advocating.

The idea of Paulian dichotomy in relation to women and Jews is further examined by Joan Young Gregg in her book-length study *Devils, Women, and Jews*. According to Erwin Steinberg, Gregg argues that both women and Jews were viewed as "the spiritual inferiors of the Christian male" (Steinberg 68). In chapter fifteen of *Ulysses*, "Circe," John Alexander Dowie, who was a Scottish-Australian self-proclaimed healer, businessman, and minister, and also considered by many as a charlatan, calls Bloom "a disgrace to Christian men" (Joyce 401), which indicates Joyce's criticism of how sometimes, society elevates both men and Christians above women and Jews. As claimed by Steinberg, Gregg writes that the "femaleness" in "the metaphor of Jew as woman" "implie[s] wantonness … all of which fuse[s] in condemning both women and Jews as

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seducers of the soul" (Steinberg 69). The idea of "wantonness" is ambiguous due to the word's definition. "Wantonness" implies both willful cruelty and the action of being unrestrained or reckless in one's act of freedom. Bloom's wantonness is manifested in a variety of ways: his sexual liberation in "Circe," his freedom of thought and social commentary in "Cyclops" and "Ithaca," and his agnosticism. Society associates Bloom's wantonness as coming "from the roots of hell" (Joyce 401) and his freedom-loving self as a threat "to overthrow [their] holy faith" (Joyce 400). Thus, Bloom becomes harmful to the binary construction because he does not neatly fit into the categories of male or female, which undermines the strict classification system of *two* genders and collapses the suggestion observed in Paulian dichotomy.

The Paulian system of binary is not the only ingrained convention that Joyce criticizes in relation to Jews, women, and male Jews exhibiting femininity. Joyce also subverts Charles Kingsley's "Christian manliness" and criticizes the Dublin society for multiple reasons: primarily its focus on hypermasculinity and its justification of a "homicide" of a Jewish man who experiences menstruation-like symptoms (Joyce 277). Kingsley was an Anglican minister who advocated for "a virile and distinctly heterosexual manliness," detested the worship of the Virgin Mary, and "exhorted his followers to go not to the Mother but to the Son—not to the indulgent Virgin, but to the strong man, Christ Jesus" (Schwarze 118). Hence, Kingsley's views seemingly rest on the Paulian system of binary. Kingsleyan masculinity first occurred in England; it did not originate in Ireland, but it certainly infiltrated it to a great extent. In the nineteenth century, England began to lose its colonialist power, and many Englishmen began to equate its "diminishing nationhood" with a "disintegrating manhood" (Schwarze 116). To "reconstruct [its] 'manhood,'" England "self-consciously" constructed a masculinist movement, where Kingsley gave colonized nations a "sub-

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human status" (Schwarze 118) and started to equate Gaels to "chimpanzees" (Schwarze 119). Kingsleyan ideology rests on always having this *other* group—whether it's Gaels, Jews, or women—which becomes a scapegoat and as a result, elevates the domineering group—in this case, the English. In 1860, Ireland adopted this masculinist ideology, despite it being the ideology that discriminated against them in the first place. The Irish equated "sturdy, rugged maleness with nationhood" and "the recovery of 'manhood'" (Schwarze 121). Joyce explicitly infuses *Ulysses* with Kingsleyan masculinity: Citizen is described as a "broadshouldered deepchested stronglimbed … deepvoiced … hairylegged" (Joyce 243) man who wants to "put force against force" (Joyce 270), Boylan is "a magnificent specimen of manhood" (Joyce 532), and Gerty MacDowell wants "a man among men" who would "take her in his sheltering arms" (Joyce 288). Meanwhile, Bloom becomes a scapegoat, who can be blamed for Ireland's disintegrating manhood. Joyce equates Citizen to a Cyclops whose "formidable heart" causes "walls of the cave to vibrate and tremble" (Joyce 243) and who is analogous to the Cyclopes who eat people in *The Odyssey*; this comparison reflects Joyce's negative opinion of Kingsley's masculinity and its influence on the Irish society. Furthermore, Joyce suggests that the Irish shouldn't support this erroneous, unjust ideology, considering that it labels them as, ironically, inferior. The idea of Christian masculinity, which generates anti-Semitic claims in the converse of hostile nationalistic characters throughout *Ulysses*, is not only illogical because of its origin, but also demonstrates Joyce's denunciation of one of the main causes of societal ridicule of the effeminate male Jew figure.

Apart from Kingsley, in his writing of *Ulysses*, Joyce most likely used another anti-Semitic source, Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*, the 1903 bestseller "that joined misogyny and anti-Semitism" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 268). However, he did not use it to propagate

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anti-Semitism, but to instead reframe Weininger's pseudo-scientific theory of sexual intermediacy to normalize and support a wide range of sexual behaviors and sexual orientations. Weininger wrote that "maleness and femaleness" (Weininger 22) exist in the "Idioplasm" (Weininger 16); a human being is formed according to their amounts of "Arrhenoplasm (male plasm)" or "Thelyplasm (female plasm)" (Weininger 16) within. According to Weininger, due to the varying amounts of these plasms, there are "unwomanly women, man-like women, and unmanly, womanish, woman-like men" (Weininger 2). Weininger also "cast women and the female plasm itself as dangers to masculine being" and began to identify Judaism with femininity (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 268). Weininger thought that Jewish men were "suffering from effeminacy as if from a disease" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 269). In the "Circe" episode, Dr. Dixon diagnoses Bloom as being a "womanly man" (Joyce 403), which is "a phrase directly from *Sex and Character*" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 269). Weininger also characterized Jews as "physically lazy," "given to narcissism," "adaptable," "compliant," "unqualified for metaphysics," and only "comfortable with atheistic empiricism" (Byrnes, "Weiningerian Sex Comedy" 273). Bloom works for the press and is agnostic, scientific, and very compliant to both Molly and Bello. Joyce is not using Weininger's gendered plasms to undermine Bloom's persona or ridicule him for not being *masculine enough*; instead, Bloom embodies a "truly androgynous synthesis of masculinity and femininity" (Boone 81), which implies Bloom's desire to break out of the constraints of a society traditionally segregated by sex. Joyce makes a comment on the society's repression of its desires and attempts to normalize sexual submission in men. Martha wishes to "punish" the "naughty boy" (Joyce 63), Bloom; Bloom "desiderate[s]" an "exuberant female" who would establish her sexual "domination" (Joyce 430) over him and he also promises "never to disobey"

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(Joyce 433). Joyce illustrates how men should not be ashamed to be sexually submissive if it brings them pleasure; society must not make fun of men who enjoy being playfully "punish[ed]" for being "naughty." Bloom, both subconsciously and consciously, likes to be sexually submissive. In real life, Martha writes him letters where she talks about playfully punishing Bloom, and during Bloom's hallucination in "Circe," many ideas of sexual nature are revealed to the reader: one of which is where Bloom transforms into a "good girly" (Joyce 434), while Bella Cohen, "a massive whoremistress" with a "sprouting moustache" (Joyce 429) "umann[s]" Bloom (Joyce 436) and then "slaps her [Bloom's] face" (Joyce 435). In this state of hallucination, Bella Cohen becomes Bello and Bloom not only gets "unmanned," but his pronoun becomes "her." To a twentieth century audience, such a non-binary gender dynamic is something that is frankly unheard of. Joyce views sexual expression—whether through sexual orientation, kinks, fetishes, or fantasies—as an expression of freedom. The opposite applies to women too; Joyce advocates for women being sexually dominant if it brings them pleasure, and social judgments shall not stop people from being themselves and experiencing satisfaction. On a similar note, there is a light sentiment throughout *Ulysses* that Bloom may be a "queer kind of chap" (Joyce 444) who would potentially "lust" (Joyce 179) over Stephen or enjoy gay anal sex when Bello tells Bloom that he was "a nicelooking Miriam when [he] clipped off [his] backgate hairs and lay swooning … across the bed" (Joyce 536). Joyce uses Weininger's anti-Semitic and misogynistic ideas to push for his own very different agenda: to suggest that Bloom's femininity transcends the restrictive gender dichotomy of Dublin society and that Bloom's "firm full masculine feminine passive active hand" (Joyce 551) rightfully overpowers and overcomes Citizen's hypermasculinity and anti-Semitism.

Through inverting Weininger's ideas, Joyce continues to demonstrate his support for non-heterosexuality and androgyny and his disapproval of a highly and voluntarily repressed society—both sexually and culturally. Joyce depicts a Jewish man's genitalia in an androgynous fashion, which undermines Bloom's manhood: his "limp father of thousands" (Joyce 71) is floating in water. However, the idea of being fixated on one's manhood, as a source of pride and a way of establishing dominance over others, is being ridiculed by Joyce in the first place, considering the history of Kingsleyan masculinity. In other words, Joyce does not insult Bloom's penis or undermine Bloom's ego. Joyce does quite the opposite: through Bloom's "languid" "flower" (Joyce 71), Joyce celebrates fluidity and ambiguity, not constraint, convention, or a rigid adherence to the social construction of masculinity, a term that in no way represents universal agreement with its connotation. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, "manliness" connoted a "blend of compassion and courage, gentleness and strength, self-control and native purity" and it "was applied androgynously to both women and men" (Schwarze 117). In a matter of less than a century, with Kingsley's influence, it quickly adopted a new meaning in the Western world. Citizen, who is an anti-Semite, calls Bloom "a fellow that's neither fish nor flesh" (Joyce 263), and he is someone who does not have what Bloom has: being in tune with one's true nature, having compassion and intuition, and embracing the freedom of holding an individual viewpoint or having a desire that contradicts that of the majority. Citizen is afraid of judgment; he is afraid to carry the socially constructed burden of guilt in enjoying one's body, afraid to be considered feminine, afraid to challenge authority and traditional codes, and afraid to be free. Citizen is closed-minded and represents views of a lot of people who lived in Dublin at the time. While the society is anti-Semitic and trapped within its own falsely constructed convention, Bloom's feminized penis illustrates

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sexual liberation, liberty, and the act of being unashamed to truly live. Buck Mulligan's comment becomes an epitome of sexual repression: he mockingly says that the "wandering jew," Bloom, has "looked upon [Stephen] to lust after [him]," while Stephen immediately thinks of Mulligan as someone who has "the manner of Oxenford" (Joyce 179), which suggests Mulligan's "homosexual preoccupation" (Gifford and Seidman 255). Mulligan could embody internalized homophobia and also represent larger societal views of his time. Unlike most people in Bloom's social circle, Bloom is more or less comfortable with his own "bisexual[ity]" (Joyce 402), yet there are still some instances where Bloom tries to be more masculine. For example, Bloom has a book titled *Physical Strength and How to Obtain It* by Eugen Sandow (Joyce 582). However, it is interesting to note that Bloom acknowledges that Molly may also express latent queerness with no judgment whatsoever: he says that Molly had "girl friends at school" who had "arms round each other's necks … kissing and whispering secrets" (Joyce 302). Bloom thinks that everyone is deserving of love. He says that "every bullet has its bullet" (Joyce 305), meaning every person has a person waiting for them.

Joyce uses two other offensive sources, authored by Bénédict Morel and Max Nordau, in *Ulysses*, but not in order to insult Jews; instead, he twists the authors' theory of degeneration to imply that it's those who are violent, unkind, and ignorant that are *degenerating*, not Bloom. Theory of degeneracy "permitted an easy transition from the rigor of medical diagnosis to the rhetoric of moral and political diatribe" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 308), ultimately becoming another excuse for anti-Semitism and misogyny. The theory of degeneration was created by Bénédict Morel in 1857. Morel argued that "nervous ailments [run] in families" and that "degen-

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eration intensifies from one generation to the next" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 306). According to Morel, the second generation was prone to "hysteria," the third generation fell "prey to manias and insanity," and the fourth generation "[was] likely to be weak, sterile, dwarfish, and imbecillic" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 307). Bloom thinks of his deceased son, Rudy, as having a "dwarf's face" and a "[d]warf's body, weak as putty" (Joyce 79). Bloom feels "biological guilt for Rudy's pathology" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 321) because he says that if a child is not "healthy," it is "from the man," not "the mother" (Joyce 79). In the same section, Bloom's late father, Rudolph, who took his own life, is discussed by other men in the carriage; instead of expressing his condolences to Bloom, Mr. Power says that "the worst of all … is the man who takes his own life" and a man who does that is "a coward" (Joyce 79). Martin Cunningham adds to Mr. Power's thought and suggests that someone would take their own life only out of "temporary insanity" (Joyce 79). Both men are inconsiderate and reference the theory of degeneration, considering Morel's sentiment that *degenerating* generations develop insanity, mania, and hysteria, and according to Cunningham, insanity was the reason for Bloom's father's suicide. Nordau was a physician who further advanced the theory of degeneration and published *Degeneration* in 1895, declaring that "the degenerate is egotistical, impulsive and emotional, easily exhilarated and dejected by turns" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 308). According to Nordau, a degenerate was someone who "embraces pessimistic philosophies," is "torpid," experiences "hysterical delirium," and "inhabits a twilight mood of logical incoherence and random impressionability" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 308). All these characteristics are not only greatly reminiscent of Bloom, but it is important to note that these are all of the characteristics for what he is being discriminated against in the first place, aside from being a Jew—yet many believed

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that he had these characteristics because he was a Jew. By 1914, degeneration theory lost its medical legitimacy and became “humoral psychology,” “available for comic exploitation” (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 322). While Joyce’s anti-Semitic portrayal of Bloom’s degeneration was meant to be comic, Joyce also ridiculed those who genuinely believed in this hateful theory. Joyce was trying to invert the theory of degeneration and criticize those who were discriminating against others on the basis of degeneration. It is debatable what “insanity” exactly is, and those individuals who placed Jews and women into categories such as insane, emotional, hysterically delirious, sinful, inferior, or degenerate could have very well been morally degenerating themselves.

As earlier established, the theory of degeneration infiltrated the Irish society to a great extent; despite Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Jean-Martin Charcot further adding to its anti-Semitic, homophobic, and misogynistic implications through their discourse, Joyce used their ideas to advocate for the acceptance of sexual fluidity through Bloom’s many sexual fetishes. In 1886, an Austro-German psychiatrist, Krafft-Ebing, published *Psychopathia Sexualis.* Bloom’s “kinks derive from Krafft-Ebing’s degenerate” (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 310)—“kinks” like “paraesthesia” (sadism, fetishism, and masochism), “anaesthesia sexualis” (loss of sexual feeling), “antipathetic sexual instinct” (homosexuality), and “antipathetic psychosis” (sex change). The names of all these terms were coined by Krafft-Ebing. Bloom masturbates in public in “Nausicaa,” has not completed a “carnal intercourse” for a “period of 10 years, 5 months, and 18 days” (Joyce 605), and “bears eight male yellow and white children” (Joyce 403) in “Circe.” He also likes “spanking” (Joyce 382), engaging in “chronic exhibitionism” (Joyce 402), and seeing “glimpses of lingeries” (Joyce 417), which to the twentieth-century public makes his behavior align with Krafft-

Ebing's writing on "kinks"—all being portrayed in a harmful and negative light. Besides Krafft-Ebing, thanks to whom anti-Semitism and a strong prejudice toward non-heterosexual individuals were fostered among Dublin society, Charcot—who was a French psychiatrist under whom Krafft-Ebing and Nordau interned—declared that "Jews had so weakened their nervous systems through inbreeding" that they became "susceptible to hysteria" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 309). By the end of "Ithaca," Molly becomes a "Gea-Tellus," or the Greek primordial deity Gaea (the personification of Mother Earth), "fulfilled, recumbent, big with seed" and Bloom transforms into "the manchild in [her] womb" (Joyce 606); such characterization can be interpreted as an act of "inbreeding" or metaphorical incest. Joyce, however, wasn't taking Krafft-Ebing or Charcot's pseudo-science seriously. He was, instead, most likely ridiculing it by writing "Circe." "Circe" was meant to be both humorous and, through Joyce's references to Krafft-Ebing and Charcot, ironically celebratory of sexually submissive men, sexually dominant women, sadomasochism, fantasy, *pleasant* humiliation, sexual compliance as a form of therapeutic escape, and sex in general. In "Circe," Joyce presents sexual practices and the act of gender bending in a both positive and assertive way. He demonstrates that traditional gender role beliefs, codes, and stereotyping are oppressive to the individual and that *true* freedom lies in the acceptance of one's *true* identity, parts of which are often expressed through sex. Sex, thus, becomes a way to escape convention and embrace *kinks* and freedom of choice and thought. Joyce suggests that Bloom, a Jew and a "womanly man" (Joyce 403), is not a degenerate like the Dublin society thought; he is instead a person who permits himself to love, to indulge, to orgasm, and to experience desire in a society that discriminates against diversity and pleasure.

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However, the question about Bloom's "cuckold" (Joyce 384) status and Joyce's demonstration of Bloom's inability to sexually satisfy his wife still stands. By making Bloom a cuckold, Joyce transcends the very concept of a traditional marriage union and demonstrates a new kind of love between a Jewish man and his wife—a kind of love that's altruistic, abstract, and beyond sexual ownership or possession. Bloom is well aware that Molly started sleeping with Blazes Boylan, and Molly is well aware that Bloom knows. Their marriage is not rooted in physical pleasure. They both receive physical pleasure outside their marriage (whether through masturbation or having sex with other people). However, they still love one another. Bloom does think of "divorce," but immediately undermines that thought with "not now" (Joyce 603). Admittedly, he does feel "envy [and] jealousy" (Joyce 602) because his wife is having sex with another man; yet this thought also gets instantly shut down because his feelings of "abnegation [and] equanimity" (Joyce 602) take over. Bloom experiences an abnegation, or a renunciation, of jealousy, and replaces "infantile demands of sexual ownership" and "amorous betrayal" (Joyce 602) with equanimity, or composure and serenity amid socially constructed demands of how a monogamous heterosexual relationship should look like. Molly's sexual relationship with Boylan frees her from "erotic frustration and conjugal resentment" and instead, "allows her to relate to her husband as an individual whom she loves and wants to protect" (Henke 331). Their love transforms and Molly's love for Bloom becomes reminiscent of a primordial mother's love, or, "Amor matris," which "may be the only true thing in life" (Joyce 170)—at least according to Stephen. Bloom and Molly's relationship becomes "the closest thing on earth to divine beneficence" (Henke 332) because their mother-son-like relationship is based on something along the lines of maternal affection and deep, true love that doesn't expect anything in return—no expectation or benefit. They

both overcame the desire for possession within their marriage and their love is rooted in an abstract realm, arguably more pure, honest, and loving than that of a sex-based relationship. Joyce depicts a Jewish man who is able to overcome conventional archetypes of patriarchy and the desire to control a woman, which morally elevates him among a society that objectifies women and strives for a strictly homogenous society where all *others* are not accepted—Jews, women, and non-heterosexual and non-binary individuals.

Because Joyce presents in *Ulysses* a womanly man, Bloom, and a manly woman, Molly, he disrupts the strict societal dichotomy of gender and ultimately makes his reader question why society considers a man's femininity to be an insult to his manhood, identity, and ego in the first place. In "Circe," Bloom develops a "vulva" (Joyce 440), wants "to be a mother" (Joyce 403), describes how femininity "fills [him] full" (Joyce 450), and experiences menstruation-like symptoms of his "monthly," such as "brainfogfag" or "awful cramp[s]" (Joyce 356). Molly imagines being "like a man" (Joyce 633) and having a penis "for a change just to try" (Joyce 638) "[getting] up on a lovely woman" (Joyce 633) "with that thing" (Joyce 638). Joyce disrupts the notion that "femaleness" and "maleness" are mutually exclusive, and that someone's "maleness" depends on or requires having a penis. Similarly, Molly, a woman, desires to have a penis and engage in sexual activity with a woman; her "femaleness" does not depend on having a vagina. The two categories of "femaleness" and "maleness" (so as femininity and masculinity) break down. In fact, there are no longer strictly feminine or masculine characters in *Ulysses* who also do not happen to be anti-Semitic or sexist. Joyce also emphasizes how society hurtfully, systemically, and systematically assumes that if a man is feminine or womanly, he is weak; such a thought process forms out of

the assumption that femininity implies weakness, making women inferior to men. The very reason why Citizen, for example, laughs at a Jewish man's effeminacy is because of how misogynistic his view of women is; however, that very view of women that he holds came out of the culture in which he was raised and continues to live in. Joyce's feminization of a Jewish man serves as a way for society to reevaluate its view of femininity and realize that femininity does not make anyone inferior to others.

Ultimately, Joyce asserts that Bloom, a feminine man, represents love, while the anti-Semites depicted throughout *Ulysses* illustrate the inherent problem within contemporary society—the problem of perpetual violence, hatred, and bigotry. Despite Bloom saying that he belongs to a "race" that is "hated and persecuted" and that the Jewish community must take back "what belongs to [them] by right," Bloom is explicitly against "force [and] hatred" and says that whatever is "opposite of hatred" "is really life"—and that something is "*Love*" (Joyce 273; emphasis added). Bloom wants a "Union of all, jew, moslem, and gentile" and "mixed races and mixed marriage" (Joyce 400). Unlike the majority of characters in *Ulysses*, Bloom does not discriminate against others. He wants to see a "Union of all"—no matter what their religion or race is. Bloom treats others kindly and respectfully; he "resent[s] violence and intolerance in any shape or form" and he thinks that "it's a patent absurdity … to hate people because they live round the corner" (Joyce 525). Bloom is well beyond his time. Bloom is someone who wants to "amend many social conditions, the product of inequality and avarice and international animosity" (Joyce 571). He loves his wife. They have an untraditional marriage, reminiscent of an open relationship, where they have mutual respect for each other. Bloom does not shame kinks or people's sexual orientations. He does not encourage violence or hypermasculinity and, instead,

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befriends Stephen, in whom he sees his late son. He also has a close bond with his daughter, Milly. Blooms sees that "social conditions" are "the product of inequality" and his answer to "international animosity," "intolerance," and "violence" is "Love." Joyce shows us that because of Bloom's *femininity*, he is able to think beyond the constraints of Kingsleyan masculinity, Morel and Nordau's theory of degeneration, Weininger's theory of sexual intermediacy, and the kink-shaming teachings of Krafft-Ebing and Charcot. Bloom is able to resist and think beyond radical nationalism, xenophobia, and misogyny, unlike most other men depicted in *Ulysses*—men who are "magnificent specimen[s] of manhood" (Joyce 532) and the very epitome of hypermasculinity. Bloom symbolizes "a cultured allroundman" (Joyce 193) who has socially evolved, in comparison to the rest of Dublin populace, into a new kind of an individual who is progressive, in tune with his identity, and unafraid to live. Speaking in Nordau's jargon, in an attempt to reveal Joyce's true intention behind having the main protagonist be a Jewish man, it isn't Bloom who is *degenerating*, but people who hold anti-Semitic, misogynistic, and homophobic views. Bloom "is a great character because of his perversities, not in spite of them" (Byrnes, "Bloom's Sexual Tropes" 322), and Joyce is far from suggesting that Jews are degenerating, as it was earlier established throughout this paper. Joyce's use of anti-Semitic sources, interestingly enough, leads him to question gender roles and attack anti-Semitic ideas and jargon. Joyce urges society and the reader to make a decision for themselves: to either continue reinforcing misogynistic and discriminatory values or to finally wake up from history, or "a nightmare" that history is (Joyce 28), and become more: more accepting, more understanding, more compassionate, more feminine, more unafraid of one's identity, and more unafraid to love.

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