

IRISH TRIANGLES

GENDER AND NATIONALISM IN JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*.



THE RIVALS.

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On the cover: John Tenniel: "The Rivals." From *Punch*, published 13 August 1881.

Oppsummering på norsk:

Denne oppgaven tar for seg kjønn og nasjonalitet i *Ulysses* av James Joyce. I første kapittel tar jeg for meg allegoriske representasjoner av Irland og irske myter som fremstiller landet i form av en kvinne. Dette er knyttet spesielt til britisk imperialistisk ideologi som fremhever Irland som kvinnelig og hermed uskikket til å styre seg selv. Jeg knytter dette til Molly Bloom i *Ulysses*, som deler mange likheter med disse gudinnene i irsk mytologi.

Andre kapittel forsøker å vise hvordan Stephen Dedalus kan forstås som *Ulysses'* forfatter, og jeg prøver å vise hvordan hans besettelse med en kvinnelig fremstilling av Irland kan lede opp mot skapelsen av Molly Bloom, og hennes ektemann Leopold Bloom. I motsetning til tidligere fremstillinger av Irland, som tydelig fremstilles som skapt av Stephen, eksisterer imidlertid Molly i romanens "virkelige" verden. At Mollys verden sammenfaller med den virkelige verden i romanen, tar jeg som et tegn på at Molly, i likhet med resten av romanen, er skapt av en mer moden Stephen. Denne modenheten gjenspeiles også i den mer moderate fremstillingen av Molly som kvinne sammenliknet med de tidligere demoniske representasjonene av Irland i Stephens bevissthet.

Tredje kapittel tar for seg Leopold Bloom, hovedpersonen i *Ulysses*. Jeg har tidligere hevdet at han tilsvarer en mytisk konge i irsk mytologi og at han her fremstilles som en slag nasjonal Messias-figur som undergraver den ideologiske diskursen til Det britiske imperiet, og slik triumferer over den. Denne seieren er også en seier over Mollys elsker Blazes Boylan, som jeg argumenter for at kan assosieres med Det britiske imperiet i denne romanen. Dermed kan Blooms reise tilbake til sitt hjem i Eccles Street og Molly muligens forstås både som en ekteskapelig gjenforening og en nasjonal frigjøring.

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INTRODUCTION

Fondling,' she saith, 'since I have hemmed thee here
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer.
Feed where thou wilt, on mountains or in dale;
Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.
– From “Venus and Adonis” by William Shakespeare.

The following exchange is from a scene rather early on in Monty Python’s famous film from 1978, *Life of Brian*. In it, the title character Brian, a Jew living in the Judea of the New Testament, learns from his mother that his father is in fact not Jewish at all, but a Roman Centurion called Naughtius Maximus.

Brian: You mean you were raped?
Mother: Well, at first, yes.

This scene has sprung to my mind several times while I have been writing these last months, and it has done so, I believe, with good reason. Not only does this episode, like Joyce’s *Ulysses*, touch on problematic issues such as nationality, ethnicity and parentage. It also engages, in its own playful way, with the relations between empire and nation state. Later on in the film the racial half-breed is hailed as a new national Messiah, which also seems to correspond to *Ulysses*. Furthermore, the quotation evokes, at least to me, the saying *Coactus volui*, or “Having been forced, I was willing,” which is quoted twice in *Ulysses*. The saying is first spoken through the mouth of the character Cashel Boyle O’Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell in 10.1112¹ and then uttered by Virag in one of

¹ In my thesis, quotations from *Ulysses* will be referred to by chapter and line number whereas other books by Joyce will be referred to by title and page number. Concerning books by other writers, I will cite the name of the writer and the page number in the

Bloom's dream sequences in 15.2553. The actual quote hails, according to R. J. Short, from Justinian's *Digest* and deals with Roman rights of inheritance (see Gifford, 282). However, the meaning it conveys in *Ulysses* becomes very different.

Firstly, the sentence can be read politically, as a comment about imperialism. Cashel Boyle O'Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell is based on the famous Dublin eccentric "Endymion" Farrell, who had a correspondingly lengthy name, but in *Ulysses* his name is partly changed by Joyce to suggest Catholicism and Irishness (Culleton, 46-47). Furthermore, the sentence is spoken in the middle of Merrion Square, close to Wilde's childhood home and overlooking Duke's lawn. In these Anglo-Irish surroundings, complete with architecture from the Georgian period – a highpoint for the Protestant Ascendancy – this sentence spoken from the mouth of a Catholic-Irish outsider seems to be a comment on the British colonisation (or semi-colonisation²) of Ireland. Andrew Gibson elaborates this in his book *Joyce's Revenge*. Gibson, who reads the entire *Ulysses* as Joyce's Celtic revenge on the English and Anglo-Irish, shows how the first word in *Coactus Volui* (the whole phrase of which he translates as "Coerced, I was willing") refers the British and "the British policies of coercion and the 'emergency legislation' of Coercion Acts restricting political and civil liberties to which Ireland was subjected repeatedly in the nineteenth century" (Gibson, 84). Gibson also reads the Latin quotation as a reference to those "gratefully oppressed" Irish (see *Dubliners*, 35; Cheng, 105) who accept, or even celebrate, the Imperial British rule. The quotation then indicates that although the Irish were forced to submit to the British Imperial rule, they

reference. When I use more than one text by the same writer, I will specify by adding the year the text in question was published.

² See Attridge and Howes' *Semicolonial Joyce*, 1-4. In this thesis I will refer to Ireland – for want of a better term – as a colony as well as referring to *Ulysses* as a novel. Still, I acknowledge that both these terms are not precise. For a more thorough discussion on these very Joycean linguistic problems, see the conclusion of this thesis.

still did so willingly. This is a notion that appears in several guises in Joyce's works, also within *Ulysses*, and as such will be explored further as the thesis progresses.

Gibson fails, however, to mention the other context in *Ulysses* where this quotation turns up – a context which is just as revealing. In one of Bloom's dream sequences, and in a language that almost seems to anticipate *Finnegans Wake*, Virag gives what is unmistakably a description of a sexual intercourse: "Woman, undoing with sweet pudor her belt of rushrope, offers her allmoist yoni to man's lingam. (...) Man loves her yoni fiercely with big lingam, the stiff one. (*he cries*) *Coactus volui*" (15.2549-50, 2552-3). This context bestows *Coactus volui* with a meaning that aligns it further with the quotation from *Life of Brian*. Crucially, however, the echo of Cashel Boyle O'Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell does not disappear. Read together, these quotations suggest that British colonisation is a form of rape, but also that the victim, like Brian's mother in the Monty Python film, gave her consent to being raped by the coloniser. I believe the deployment of these two Latin words, in these specific settings, manages to do three things that are of importance to this thesis. Firstly, they succinctly manage to encapsulate the major theme of historical guilt obtained by the Irish through their assistance and acceptance of their own colonisation by the British. Secondly, they show how this narrative of Irish political self-betrayal is reiterated and reworked through sexual imagery. Thirdly, the repetition itself is of importance, as it defies realistic motivation; Bloom, who repeats the utterance, could not possibly have heard Farrell's original utterance. This is a testament to the fact that any attempt to read the book on purely realistic terms is problematic. More importantly, in this context, the repetition might indicate that the novel is shaped – in a deliberately staged manner – through an overarching narrative consciousness.

The chief aim of this thesis is to provide a new gender-oriented reading of *Ulysses* as a decidedly nationalist novel (building, in the process, on a host of relatively recent political readings of the text). The thematic focus on politics will be facilitated and supplemented by my approaching *Ulysses* as a – to quote Margaret MacBride – “*autological* novel” (MacBride, 30), a novel which narrates the story of its own conception. Reading the novel from the perspective of Stephen Dedalus – the assumed author of *Ulysses* – I will show how that novel incorporates and redefines parts of Irish mythology on the one hand and British imperialist ideological discourse related to sex and gender on the other. The latter discourse typically represents the Anglo-Saxon as male and active, and the Irish as female and passive. This is a part of a discourse that was pervasive – although there clearly also were exceptions – in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, and which arguably also existed in the predominantly Anglo-Irish Literary Revival. At any rate, this discourse was linked to an ideological justification of the British imperial presence in Ireland, and such imperial justification became more pressing as the late 1800s saw a rise of Irish nationalism with calls for Home Rule and Land Reform and, later, independence. In this thesis, I will suggest that this ideological discourse is mirrored in personal conflicts and relationships in the book. First and foremost, I will attempt to show how Stephen Dedalus’ obsession with the adulterous Mother Ireland; the sacral, cuckolded Irish king; and an Irish usurper connected to Britain are reshaped into the relational dynamics involving the characters Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom, and her lover Blazes Boylan.

Ulysses by James Joyce (1882-1941), written between 1914 and 1921 and published in Paris the following year, is considered not only Joyce’s crowning achievement as an author, but also one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century. The action takes place during a single day, June 16, 1904, in Joyce’s home city, Dublin,

which in 1904 was still a part of the British Empire. The novel follows the middle-aged Leopold Bloom, an Irish-Jewish canvasser, whose wife, Molly, is having an affair with her manager Blazes Boylan. It also features prominently the young poet Stephen Dedalus, a character based to a large extent on Joyce himself. Stephen Dedalus was also the protagonist of an earlier novel by Joyce, the semiautobiographical *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, published in 1914. The latter novel ends roughly a year before the events in *Ulysses* take place. Between the action of *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, Stephen has experienced the loss of his mother.

The novel is famous for its numerous allusions to Homer's *Odyssey*. These are suggested in the title – “Ulysses” is the Latin name for “Odysseus” – but more clearly revealed in two schemata – the Gilbert and the Linati schema – produced by Joyce, which, although not entirely similar, confer the same titles to the eighteen chapters of the novel, titles which correspond to episodes from the *Odyssey*. In the same vein, characters in *Ulysses* can be matched against characters in Homer's epic: For instance, Leopold Bloom can be identified with Odysseus; Stephen Dedalus with his son Telemachus; and Molly Bloom with Odysseus's wife, Penelope. However, the correspondences are often more playful than literal, and critical and literary interest in the similarities between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses* have sometimes overshadowed more important concerns in the latter work. As Hugh Kenner claimed, the object of reading the book is not to reconstruct the schema, just as “the aim in eating a dinner is not to reconstitute the recipe” (quoted in Kiberd 1992, xxiv).

Ulysses starts off using Joyce's stream-of-consciousness narration – the perspective alternating between Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus – becoming gradually more experimental as the novel progresses. The second half of *Ulysses* contains a great number of different narrative perspectives and styles – the changes

usually coinciding with the beginning of a new chapter – and the novel becomes increasingly playful and comic. This experimentation has contributed to *Ulysses*'s status as a classic of modernist literature. However, although Joyce relied on the support of modernists such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound for establishing a critical reputation early in his career, the Irishman's relationship to the modernist movement has been the subject of some debate. Opposing the early assessments of Eliot and Pound, Christopher Butler has for instance argued that although Joyce would apply experimental techniques usually associated with modernism in *Ulysses*, he found the ideology of avant-garde movements, manifested in inflated claims of "destruction of the past" or "simultaneity," "irrelevant to his purposes" (Butler, 76).

The criticism and understanding of *Ulysses* have gone through a number of phases. Many early readers, including Virginia Woolf and Carl Jung, were deeply sceptical, even dismissive, of the novel. Among other things, they reacted adversely to its obscurity and perceived coarseness. Some references to sexuality in *Ulysses*, very scarce by today's standards, made it infamous and the subject of a lawsuit in the United States in 1921. Hence, *Ulysses* was first published in its complete form in Paris, France, by the American expatriate Sylvia Beach, proprietress of the Parisian bookstore Shakespeare and Company. The novel remained banned in both the United Kingdom and the United States on grounds of obscenity for several years to come.

Luckily, *Ulysses* also had its early supporters, such as the already mentioned poet-critics Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. Furthermore, in the thirties, two books about *Ulysses*, both written by acquaintances of Joyce in concordance with his wishes, prepared the ground for a better understanding of the novel. One was Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (1930), which focused primarily on the symbolic aspects of the novel. The other was Frank Budgen's *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934). The latter

had a more biographical and less theoretical approach than Gilbert's study, and tended to stress the novel's realism. What both these books insisted on, however, was that the novel was fairly apolitical, and did not take a stand with regard to the events taking place in Ireland before and during the writing of *Ulysses*. The latter events included the Easter Rising of 1916, a quixotic rebellion by a group of Irish nationalists, which nonetheless proved decisive for shifting the sympathy of the Irish populace towards national independence from the British Empire. This rebellion again led to the Irish War of Independence, which began in 1919 and ended with the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, paving the way for the establishment of an Irish Free State, founded the following year.

Seeing these events as irrelevant to *Ulysses*, Stuart Gilbert insisted that there "has been a tendency to overemphasize the Irish element in Joyce's work" (87), claiming that the novel was set in Dublin merely because of Joyce's background and that the author's vision would be retained even if Dublin were substituted with an English city. In a similar vein, Budgen argued that Joyce represented the British Empire and the Catholic Church in fairly positive light, claiming that they are "the static forces of Church and State, restraining the destructive forces of wandering anarchic individualism" (Budgen, 123). In these accounts, Joyce was in other words presented as a strictly cosmopolitan and anti-political writer, repudiating what was perceived as political parochialism and concerning himself instead with attaining – as Ezra Pound put it – "an international standard in prose writing" (67). This view of Joyce proved to be prevalent in the first fifty years of Joyce criticism, not least because of Joyce himself, who often would speak derogatorily of Ireland and Irish nationalism. For instance, according to Joyce's biographer Richard Ellmann, Joyce once said that if there were to be an independent Irish state, he would declare himself "its first enemy" (Ellmann 1982, 399). Moreover,

the fact that Joyce remained an expatriate for the rest of his life certainly also influenced the view of him as an anti-nationalist.

About thirty years ago, however, the tide started to change. Richard Ellmann's *The Consciousness of Joyce* (1977) and Dominic Manganiello's *Joyce's Politics* (1980) both went against previously conceived notions, and argued that Joyce held nationalist sympathies, albeit moderate ones, and that these were reflected in his fiction. By then, the textual evidence found in *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, edited by Ellmann and Ellsworth Mason, published in 1959, was proving hard to overlook. This collection contained a number of articles and lectures by Joyce, the majority of which stemmed from about the turn of the century to the outbreak of the First World War, and many of which were unequivocal in their support of Irish nationalism.

Among the politically related themes that Dominic Manganiello brings up in his study, there is one that will have particular prominence in my thesis, namely the theme of Irish betrayal in Joyce's works. According to Manganiello, this theme takes its origin from "*the political event of his youth*" (8): the Parnell crisis of 1890, which Manganiello called "the pivot from which Joyce viewed the rest of Irish history" (ibid.). More specifically, the Parnell crisis refers to the events that caused the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and main Home Rule and Land Reform advocate, Charles Stewart Parnell, to lose the support of a majority of his party. This occurred after it was disclosed that Parnell had had a long-term affair with Katherine O'Shea, estranged wife of Irish MP William O'Shea. The split of the party led to a weakened Irish presence in the British Parliament for years to come, killing any chance for Home Rule in the process. For an anticlerical nationalist such as Joyce's father – who supported Parnell and whose political affinities at least in part were passed on to his son – the split was seen as the nadir of the Catholic Church's influence on Irish politics. Moreover, the Parnellites also

saw the decision as a flat-out betrayal of the Irish cause by both the MPs who broke out of the party and that part of the Irish population that sided with them. In Joyce's works, these events are most directly commemorated in a short story from *Dubliners*, "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," the title of which refers to the day of Parnell's death in 1891 and the room in which the meeting leading up to the split of Parnell's party took place. Furthermore, the disrupting effect that the Parnell crisis could have on Irish families is memorably depicted in the Christmas dinner scene in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which culminates in a harsh verbal dispute between Stephen Dedalus' father – modelled on Joyce's father – and the pious, anti-Parnellite Dante Riordan. This scene, which is of some importance to the main argument of this thesis, will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

The rise of critical movements such as Postcolonialism and New Historicism in the eighties and nineties led to a new wave of Joyce studies relating his works to politics and imperialism. Enda Duffy's *The Subaltern Ulysses* (1994) is a consistent effort to relate *Ulysses* directly to the events taking place in Ireland at the time of its writing, and presents *Ulysses* as "the book on Irish postcolonial independence" (3) and "the first postcolonial novel" (68). Almost simultaneously, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (1995) by Emer Nolan did something similar with Joyce's entire authorship, claiming among other things that "*Ulysses* powerfully suggests Joyce's hostility to British colonial rule in Ireland" (57). Nolan, like Duffy, counters the previously "presumed certainty of his unsympathetic representation of Irish separatist nationalism" (xi). Instead, she argues that "Joycean modernism and Irish nationalism can be understood as significantly analogous discourses" (xii). By for instance showing similarities between Joyce's critical writings and the arguments of the Citizen in "Cyclops" (97-116), she concludes that *Ulysses* is essentially a pro-nationalist text. In a similar vein, Declan Kiberd, in his

Inventing Ireland (1995), argues that Joyce attempted, from a post-colonial exile, to create a vision of 'pristine' post-colonial Ireland that was not defined and understood in relation to England, the country from which the Revivalist search for Irishness originally hailed (337). Joyce's dislike of the English influence is taken even further in Len Platt's *Joyce and the Anglo-Irish* (1998) and Andrew Gibson's *Joyce's Revenge* (2002), both of which present *Ulysses* as an attack on the Anglo-Irish Literary Revival. Gibson also claims that Joyce, intent on liberating Ireland from English influence, conflates England and Anglo-Ireland throughout *Ulysses* (27).

However, the split between the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic Irish was for Joyce not mainly one of race, but of an attitude towards the British Empire. Joyce's criticism of both the predominantly Anglo-Irish Revivalist and of a number of Gaelic nationalists were that their visions of Ireland were strongly influenced by British discursive formations. For Yeats and the Revivalists, a critic such as Matthew Arnold was an immense influence (see Watson, 40-6), whereas in the Irish irreconcilables Joyce saw nothing but "a point-for-point contradiction of English Tory thinking" (Kiberd 1995, 335). On the other hand, Joyce's foremost political hero, Charles Stewart Parnell, had, as Joyce himself freely admitted, "not a single drop of Celtic blood" in his veins (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, 115).³

My own thesis can be situated within the context of this later wave of political Joyce readings. I will read *Ulysses* as a novel that persistently and forcefully goes against British imperialism – as well as the Irish who reproduce British discursive formations – and which embraces the Irish nationalist struggle. Once established, these positions will

³ It should perhaps be pointed out that Joyce was strongly influenced by the R. Barry O'Brian strand of Parnellism, which played down the Parnell that defended the British Empire and that was at ease with the idea of dominion status for Ireland. Instead, O'Brian emphasised Parnell's "aversion to England" and the "forging" or "reawakening" of the Irish race (see Gibson, 4-6).

be coupled with a reading of *Ulysses* as an autological novel, in other words a novel that in a self-reflexive manner dramatises its own conception. Here I am aligned with Margaret MacBride, who in her 2001 study *Ulysses and the Metamorphosis of Stephen Dedalus* argues with great conviction that *Ulysses* in fact is a novel being narrated by Stephen Dedalus, and that crucially, he in a way becomes the creator of Leopold Bloom and Molly Bloom (MacBride, 12). Consequently, I suggest that the similarities between the novel itself and for instance Stephen's theory on Hamlet – which, like *Ulysses*, is centred around a love triangle – are not, as earlier critics perceived, ironic or unconscious, but instead indicate that the Hamlet theory is in fact an early “draft” of the novel itself.

The love triangle is by itself a politically charged discursive formation, and is a recurring trope in the novel. In this thesis, I will suggest that the triangle consisting of Bloom, Molly, and Boylan is influenced by how Irish-British relations often were imagined as a *ménage a trois* where a British imperialist and an Irish nationalist are fighting over a female incarnation of Ireland. This is for instance very common in late nineteenth and early twentieth century newspaper caricatures. Stephen's ultimate Mother Ireland, Molly, also owes something to the identification of Ireland with an earth mother or goddess – the most important being the Sovereignty goddess – which in later times was manifested in figures such as Kathleen Ni Houlihan or the Dark Rosaleen. Their relevance to *Ulysses* has been explored for instance in *The Irish Ulysses* by Maria Tymoczko. This mythic connection to Molly also allows for Bloom to be identified as a sacral king, an Irish ruler symbolically married to Sovereignty, and on whose righteousness the fertility and well-being of the goddess depended.

The thesis will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will supply a detailed description of the background for the personified representations of Ireland as

woman, tracing these representations through both the discourses of British imperialism and Irish nationalism, and suggesting a connection between the two. A particular emphasis will be given to representations of the often sexualised relationship between Ireland and Britain. This was widespread in the political imagery of this time, but was also in evidence – due to the number of British soldiers in Ireland – on the streets at Dublin in beginning of the twentieth century (as British soldiers accompanying young Irish women was a common sight). In this chapter I will nevertheless argue for the need to see Stephen Dedalus as an independent figure not readily identifiable with Joyce – at least not the Joyce of 1914 and onwards – and argue for the possibility of seeing *Ulysses* as created by Stephen Dedalus.

The second chapter of the thesis will be devoted mainly to Stephen and his imaginary Mother Ireland. Here I will go back to the novel preceding *Ulysses*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and present the gestation of Stephen's misogynist views, which are connected to politics generally and Parnell specifically. I justify this temporary shift in focus away from *Ulysses* in the belief that any understanding of the development of the character and consciousness of Stephen – who presumably produces *Ulysses* – is incomplete without *Portrait* as a frame of reference. From the beginning of *Portrait*, and throughout *Ulysses*, Stephen constantly imagines Ireland as an adulterous woman. The first embodiment of this adulterous Mother Ireland becomes Dante Riordan, the anti-Parnellite Catholic who Stephen's father brands as a "spoiled nun" (*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 34). Later, Stephen attributes similar characteristics to a woman in the Ballyhoura Hills; the milk woman in the "Telemachus" episode; Gertrude in *Hamlet*; Anne Shakespeare, and others. A special emphasis will be given to Stephen's – in this context often overlooked – "Parable of the Plums," which I believe demonstrates how Stephen (at this stage in his life) is influenced by British imperialist discourse, and

shows how Stephen sees the feminine quality of Ireland as rendering national emancipation impossible. I will show how all these elements lead up to the artistic creation of Molly and Bloom, with Molly emerging as Stephen's ultimate female incarnation of Ireland, and Bloom as its emancipator and returning king.

The implications of Bloom's role will be made clearer in the third chapter, where it is shown how he challenges imperial discursive formations. I argue that his return to Molly and Eccles Street might signify a potential reunion between the mythic sacral king and the Sovereignty, and possibly also national emancipation. I will moreover suggest a connection between Boylan and anglicised Irish usurper Buck Mulligan, and postulate that the relationship between Bloom and Boylan signifies a reimagining (on Stephen's part) of the relationship between Stephen and Mulligan. This dichotomous conflict between the two pairs is also politically charged, as the anti-British, nationalistic characters Stephen and Bloom are contrasted to the Anglo-Irish Mulligan, and by extension, Boylan, the latter two both being in various ways connected to the British Empire. This chapter will go on to suggest how Bloom – mainly through his erratic and circular movements through Dublin – can be understood as circumventing the rectilinear, phallic constructions associated with imperialism.

Finally, in the conclusion I will include critical reflections, addressing some of the potentially more precarious aspects of this thesis. Bloom's ostensible attraction to extramarital affairs and Joyce's scepticism towards the concept of marriage will for instance be discussed as possible contradictions to the main positions and findings of my work. I will also suggest ideas for how the themes I engage with in this thesis might be explored further.

1.

ACTS OF UNION

Molly Bloom, Kathleen Ni Houlihan, and the Joycean triangle.

It is an act of union between man and woman.

- From *Exiles* by James Joyce.

I caress

The heaving province where our past has grown.

I am the tall kingdom over your shoulder

That you would neither cajole nor ignore.

- From "Act of Union" by Seamus Heaney.

It's symbolic of our struggle against oppression.

- From *Life of Brian*.

The personification of a country has often been attempted throughout modern history. Arguably the most famous personification of this kind was created by French revolutionaries in need of an emblem for their new republic. Based on former representations of Liberty, they produced Marianne, the Republic of France incarnated as a tall, strong, beautiful woman, adorned with the tricolour cockade and a Phrygian cap. The reason why a woman – rather than a man – was chosen as a personification of the new France was, according to Maurice Agulhon, to symbolise a breaking with the *Ancien Régime* to which, of course, the king, traditionally had "lent France his face" (13-4). Furthermore, the difference probably has a linguistic motivation as well. In French, "the republic" is a feminine noun, *la république*, whereas *le royaume*, "the kingdom", is masculine.

On a more theoretical note, we might understand Marianne as a variant of what Bourdieu calls an *objectified representation*. By that he means "things (emblems, flags, badges, etc.) or acts, self-interested strategies of symbolic manipulation which aim at

determining the (mental) representation that other people may form of these properties and their bearers” (Bourdieu, 220-1). Objectified representations seek in other words to influence the way other people perceive a specific (concrete or abstract) entity. As an objectified or, perhaps even more precisely, personified representation, Marianne serves as a tangible, positive, *republican* image of France opposed to the image of the king in the *Ancien Régime*, and we can relate this to what Bourdieu calls “the struggle over representation” (221). These personifications are thus political, as they seek, to “manipulate mental images” (ibid), in a sense to confine – for political benefit – the (mental) signified by the deployment of one political signifier of strategic importance. These images can then be said to correspond to Louis Althusser’s use of Lacan’s term “imaginary,” understood as a mental representation produced through ideology (see Althusser, 162-3).

Like the French, the Irish nationalists in the nineteenth century created a personified representation of their country, drawing on a number of historical precedents. Given names such as the Poor Old Woman, Shan van Vocht, Mother Ireland and Kathleen Ni Houlihan, we find this character in literary texts connected to the Irish literary revival, like the one-act-play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* by William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory, first performed in 1902. The play ends with Cathleen Ni Houlihan making a young man leave his bride-to-be in order to join the struggle for Irish nationalism, and its nationalistic pathos made it an immense success in Dublin.¹ Yeats and Gregory’s play remained a literary benchmark for years to come, and it also resonates strongly in

¹ It should be pointed out that such depictions of women did not necessarily meet with universal praise in Ireland. For instance, the staging of Yeats’ play *The Countess Cathleen*, from 1892, was met with riots for its portrayal of a woman in the role of a national martyr.

Joyce's works. For instance, there are several obvious references and allusions to the play – as well as the mythic figure in the title role – in *Ulysses*.

Such nationalistic representations relied on a rich tradition within Irish mythology of female figures and goddesses. The most important and distinctive of these, both within Irish mythology and in terms of influence on the later Irish Literary Revival, was the Sovereignty goddess. This deity was seen as a personification of the territorial possessions of the ancient rulers in Ireland, and her union with the rightful king was thought to result in the fertility and prosperity of the land. Importantly, this union with the sacral king was signalled, according to Maria Tymoczko, “by her metamorphosis from hag to beautiful young girl” (97). Tymoczko argues that the Sovereignty goddess serves as an archetype for a number of figures throughout Irish literary history. For instance, in the *aisling* poems (*aisling* meaning “dream” or “vision”) in the eighteenth century, the poet has a vision of a beautiful woman who comes to appeal or lament to him. This woman is identifiable with Ireland and her misery is associated with Ireland's political bondage. Furthermore, she is often portrayed as languishing for her rightful spouse, whom at this period is associated with the exiled Stuart line (Tymoczko, 101). Another example is the “Dark Rosaleen,” an incarnation of Ireland as a beautiful young girl, best known from the poem “Dark Rosaleen,” by James Clarence Mangan from 1837, a free translation of the Irish folk poem “Roísín Dubh.”

Yeats and Gregory's play, however, relates even more directly to the tradition of presenting Ireland as a hag. The most important predecessor to this play – alongside the Kathleen Ni Houlihan-figure that like Dark Rosaleen was best known through poems by Mangan – was the figure of Shan Van Vocht. The latter name is an Anglicisation of *an seanbhean bhocht*, meaning “Poor Old Woman” in Irish, and the figure appeared in Irish folk song celebrating the French landing in 1796 (Tymoczko, 104). In Yeats and Lady

Gregory's play, however, the figures of Shan Van Vocht and Kathleen Ni Houlihan are fused. When the old woman is asked what her name is, she replies: "Some call me the Poor Old Woman, and there are some that call me Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan" (Yeats and Gregory, 91).

Molly Bloom is often seen as a successor to these literary archetypes. She has in a number of essays been connected to Irish goddesses, particularly the Sovereignty goddess, through fertility and sexuality. Tymoczko points out that her breasts are admired and often discussed among the men in Dublin, and this interest in "Marion of the Bountiful Bosoms" (12.1006-7) can be related to "the importance of milk in Irish culture and to the Irish interest in the goddesses' paps" (115). Molly admits herself that she has a "great breast of milk with Milly enough for two" (18.570-1) and she recalls Bloom wanting to milk her into the tea (18.578). Moreover, she menstruates every three weeks (18.1151), and Bonnie Kime Scott notes that Molly intends to give Bloom eggs for breakfast, another symbol of fertility (181). This is of course in addition to the rather famous seedcake "warm and chewed" (8.907) which Molly gives Bloom on Howth Head.

All in all, Tymoczko provides a convincing line of argument for Molly's connection to Irish goddesses. Alongside the Sovereignty goddess, Tymoczko connects Molly to river goddesses through her urination, menstruation, and the river-like quality of her soliloquy (111-2) and war goddesses through her father and soldier boyfriends (114-5). However, Tymoczko freely admits that "many aspects of Molly's character and position in the narrative will be set aside" in her analysis (96). One of these aspects, surely, is Molly's role as an adulteress and her relationship to Boylan. To claim that she cuckolds Bloom because she is "queenly and impervious" (Tymoczko, 117) and "sexuality is of Molly's essence" (ibid., 113) is simply not sufficient to contextualise this relationship. In fact, I will postulate that this adulterous aspect of Molly's character cannot be

understood by reference to myth alone. Instead, we need to see it related to the story of colonisation of Ireland, a story that in Joyce's works are repeatedly portrayed as a story of betrayal. This again is deeply connected with Stephen's image of Mother Ireland.

In the "Cyclops" chapter of *Ulysses* we find the deeply nationalistic Citizen claiming that Ireland itself is to blame for the British presence: "The strangers, says the Citizen. Our own fault. We let them come in. We brought them in. The adulteress and her paramour brought the Saxon robbers here" (12.1156-8). He goes on to state that "(a) dishonoured wife (...) that's what's the cause of all our misfortunes"(12.1163-1164). For the Citizen, Irish colonialism originates in other words with an adulterous wife. Moreover, he is by no means the only character in *Ulysses* with such views. For instance, the theme of the Irish adulteress has already been evoked by the "West-Briton" Mr. Deasy in chapter 2 ("Nestor"), where adultery, in a highly tendentious reading of history, is represented as the origin of Ireland's (colonial) woes:

A woman brought sin into the world. For a woman who was no better than she should be, Helen, the runaway wife of Menelaus, ten years the Greeks made war on Troy. A faithless wife first brought the strangers to our shore here, MacMurrough's wife and her leman, O'Rourke, prince of Breffni. A woman too brought Parnell low. (2.390-394)²

Crucially, both these passages contain references to the play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. The strangers that the Citizen refers to in 12.1156 are the "strangers in our house," a

² As Gifford points out (39), this is a very muddled account of history. Deasy mixes Tiernan O'Rourke, Prince of Breffni and East Meath (c. 1124-1172) with Dermot MacMurrough, king of Leinster (1135-71). It was MacMurrough who in 1152 infamously eloped with O'Rourke's wife Devorgilla, making the latter prince perhaps the most famous cuckold in Irish history. It was also MacMurrough who initiated the first Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. This happened as he, after being deposed in 1167, got reinstated on his throne with the help of the Anglo-Norman king Henry II in 1169. The latter's forces then gradually gained control over the island. What role, if any, the Irish adulteress Devorgilla actually had in the colonisation of Ireland seems however uncertain at best.

formulation he also uses five lines earlier (12.1151), and which is a direct quotation from Yeats and Gregory's play (88). In both cases, the "strangers" in question obviously refer to the British. In Deasy's speech, the connection to Yeats and Gregory's play is found in the reference to Helen. The title role in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* had originally been played – to great success – by Maude Gonne, considered by Yeats, among others, to be the most beautiful woman of her time. In fact, she was considered the modern Helen of Troy, a figure to whom Yeats repeatedly compared Gonne in poems like "No Second Troy" and "Among School Children." Thus, although it is elusive in these passages, there is a clear connection between Kathleen Ni Houlihan and Irish and female betrayers.

However sceptically one might regard the historical validity of these specific views, Irish betrayal is unquestionably a theme that deeply preoccupied Joyce. In fact, it appears that he, one time and another, was disposed to align partially with the views expressed by the Citizen and Mr. Deasy. In his much-quoted lecture "Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages," given in Trieste in 1907, the historical faithlessness of the Irish is addressed in great length. Joyce adumbrates a history of Ireland where the blame for the English occupation is to a great part laid on the Irish themselves:

(T)he fact is that the English came to Ireland following the repeated requests of a native king, without, it seems, much wanting to and without the sanction of their monarch(...). They disembarked on the southern coast, numbering 700 men, a gang of adventurers against a people. They were met by certain native tribes and, less than a year later, the English King Henry II noisily celebrated Christmas in the city of Dublin. (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, 115)

Emer Nolan has already proved how, contrary to the views of earlier Joyceans, the political views of the Citizen actually coincide in some respects with those of Joyce (see Nolan 97-116), and we see this clearly enough here. The theme of Irish treason

continues in Joyce's lecture as he goes on to argue that the Act of Union, passed in Dublin, constitutes another Irish treason:

Moreover, the parliamentary union of the two countries was not passed in Westminster, but in Dublin, by a parliament elected by the people of Ireland – a corrupted parliament goaded by the huge sums from the English Prime Minister's agent – but an Irish parliament none the less. (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, 115-6)

The statement that the Irish Parliament that passed the Act of Union was "elected by the people of Ireland" can hardly be seen as correct, since all of its members were – as Manganiello points out that Joyce would have known (11) – Protestant. In other words, confusing or falsifying history is another trait that the Citizen and Mr. Deasy share with their creator.

The theme of Irish betrayal is also evident in Joyce's writings on Parnell. We are most strikingly reminded of this in his short story "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" from *Dubliners*, where the Irish, having rejected their "uncrowned king" Parnell, end up with a much more flagrant adulterer in the form of King Edward VII (see *Dubliners*, 129). He is even more explicit in his article "The Shade of Parnell," where he writes that the Irish "did not throw (Parnell) to the English wolves, they tore him apart themselves" (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, 196). This article was written in 1912, at the same time as he wrote *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and a few years before he embarked on *Ulysses*.

Joyce was also at times inclined to see the history of Irish betrayal as potentially impeding the validity of the Irish fight for freedom. In "Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages," he says that the role the Irish had in their own colonisation must first be "properly explained," before the country "has even the most elementary right to expect one of its sons to change his position from that of detached observer to convinced

nationalist" (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, 116). But before I proceed further into Joyce's fiction, I will address another female representation of Ireland.

Like Kathleen Ni Houlihan and Dark Rosaleen, this personification of Ireland was particularly widespread in the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries, although it also was part of a long tradition, reaching back to the late Elizabethan era (Curtis 1997, 157). Here, too, Ireland was regarded as feminine, however not in the sense of nationalist mother, but instead as a helpless young girl, serving as a contrast to the natural masculine authority of imperial Britain. This feminine image of Ireland, often called Hibernia or Erin, is related to the ideology used by British imperialists for justifying the subjection of the neighbour island. It presents the Irish as incapable of self-rule, unlike the virile and male Anglo-Saxon conqueror. In his analysis of imperial discourse in *Anglo-Saxons and Celts; A Study in Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England*, L. P. Curtis jr. argues that these views were widespread in Victorian Britain. Curtis says:

The theme of Celtic femininity (...) appears repeatedly in Victorian literature along with the implied assumption that the Anglo-Saxons embodied entirely masculine or virile qualities. (...) Renan emphasized the feminine nature of the Celt; and Arnold believed that the sensibility of Celtic nature, 'its nervous exaltation,' had a feminine quality. Contrasts were drawn between the soft Irish Celts of the south and west of Ireland and the 'masculine' Scotch-Irish race of Ulster. On a trip to the Netherlands in 1882, Lady Gregory met an Anglo-Irishman who told her that Europe was divided into two sexes, the male and the female countries. The latter included Italy and the Celtic countries, which had the 'soft, pleasing quality and charm of a woman, but no capacity for self-government.' It was up to the male countries – England among them – to take the female countries by the hand (Curtis 1968, 61).

Such stereotypical representations are commonplace in Victorian colonial discourse, which was used to justify British conquest and rule. As Kiberd says: "Victorian imperialists attributed to the Irish all those emotions and impulses which a harsh

mercantile code had led them to suppress in themselves” (Kiberd 1995, 30). Thus, if the English were adult and manly, the Irish must be childish and feminine, and so on.³

However, the bestowal of a colony with feminine traits is in no way an exclusively English-Irish phenomenon. According to post-colonial scholars such as Edward Said, it is actually a quite prevalent imperialist view. Said argues that imperial conquest is often constructed as sexual conquest, where the imperialist conqueror is male and the conquered correspondingly female. In his seminal study *Orientalism*, Said writes that the relation between the Middle East and the West is very often defined as sexual and that “the association between the Orient and sex is remarkably persistent” (309).⁴ However, one could still argue that Ireland remained in a somewhat different position to Britain

³ It should perhaps be pointed out that anti-English arguments of this kind tend to crop up in relation to Joyce, which seems to be caused by the fact that he, as Vincent Cheng says, “wrote insistently from the perspective of a colonial subject of an oppressive empire” (i). It follows then that *Ulysses* gives a strongly partisan representation of British rule in Ireland, where the most unsympathetic aspects of the British presence in Ireland are highlighted. This also influences my thesis: As I will be attempting to find historical precedents to the British imperial discourse as it is presented in *Ulysses*, there will be a tendency in my thesis to emphasise the most chauvinistic aspects of this discourse. Moreover, although I have used historical sources to buttress my argument, my intention has not been to use the material to validate the historical truth of Joyce’s representation of British rule in Ireland, but rather to contextualise Joyce’s fiction in historical terms.

⁴ Although obviously geographically far removed from the Orient, Ireland has historically often been connected to the East. In *Irish Orientalism*, Joseph Lennon shows how this connection is originally based on pseudo-historical claims that Irish culture has its origins in the Orient, made in studies such as Charles Vallancey’s *Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language* (1772). In this book, which James Joyce cites in his 1907 lecture “Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages,” the author identifies Irish with the language of the Phoenicians. Although such claims lack historical credence, the connection between Ireland and the Orient remained a powerful one as it, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “came to signify the dynamics of Ireland within the British Empire” (Lennon, 2). This connection between the Orient and Ireland could, according to Lennon, serve to fuel Irish nationalism, offering “a strategy for the survival and resurgence of Irish culture” (Lennon, xvii). However, it was a two-edged sword, as it also could serve as a tool for the British Empire in the act of simplifying the imperial discourse concerning the colonies, creating a representation of the collective “otherness” of the colonised in respect to their assumed inherent incapability of self-rule (Lennon, *ibid.*).

than Britain's other overseas possessions in this respect. This is because of the unique, close, and much older, relationship between the two islands, which, at least for the British imperialists, seems to have made the male/female mentality particularly persistent. This is of course also complicated by the fact that the Irish reproduced a corresponding female image themselves. Moreover, Matthew Arnold's stereotypical image of the Celt proved enormously influential with Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival (Watson, 41), although Yeats later would deny this. Joyce, however, knew better, but also acknowledged that he himself could not completely escape such discursive formations. Notwithstanding, this adoption of an originally British understanding of Ireland would be a cornerstone in Joyce's fierce attacks on the Revivalists in *Ulysses*, as I will show in chapter 3.

At any rate, the images of the female personification of Ireland in this colonial context are perhaps most clearly, and famously, represented in the illustrations in the satirical magazine *Punch*, with John Tenniel as chief illustrator. By the turn of the century, *Punch* was well known for its antagonism towards Irish nationalism and its anti-Irish caricatures are mentioned in *Stephen Hero* (65). In the *Punch* version of Ireland, Hibernia or Erin is portrayed as particularly weak and defenceless, constantly in need of assistance from Britain (see Curtis 1997, 25, 41 for examples). Importantly, this "intensely feminine symbol of Ireland" (ibid, 31) was especially widespread among English cartoonists in the Edwardian era, corresponding roughly to the decade before Joyce started the writing of *Ulysses* (ibid, 57).

In *Punch*, Hibernia was persistently being portrayed as threatened by her ape-like and brutal countrymen, and being rescued by a St. George-like British figure, or sometimes Hibernia's masculine, warlike sister Britannica. This was a constant feature of the *Punch* representations throughout the Victorian age, and into the twentieth

century. According to Curtis, Tenniel and his colleagues “leaned heavily on the traditional theme of Beauty (Hibernia or Erin) being rescued from the clutches of the Beast (Fenianism) by a handsome Prince or St. George (Law and Order)” (ibid, 37). In such portrayal a pattern is established that will be a recurrent theme in this thesis, namely that of a triangle consisting of a male Irish nationalist, a female Ireland and a male British imperialist. The threatening presence, from which Hibernia needed rescuing, was increasingly from the 1860s identified with the Fenian movement and Irish nationalism. This change was particularly pronounced after the Fenian risings in 1867, and the subsequent Clerkenwell Gaol explosion, where a number of innocent people were killed in an unsuccessful attempt to free an arrested Fenian leader.

The portrayals of Fenians relied heavily on racial stereotypes of the Irish as brutal and underdeveloped savages, and they were often pictured with simian traits.⁵ At any rate, this triadic cast was also deeply sexualised. English cartoonists routinely rendered Erin/Hibernia requiring an English husband, who knew “all about husbandry or land cultivation” (ibid., 157), but also had the ability and strength to protect Hibernia’s virtue faced with the vociferous sexuality of Irish savages, “all those wild Irish wood kerns, whose ‘visage rough and stearne’ signaled evil intentions” (ibid.). Thus Hibernia was a sexual object for both males in the trio. According to Curtis, cartoonists

⁵ The paradoxical practice of portraying the Irish both as feminine and savage, as being both insufficiently virile and too virile, is what Joseph Valente terms the “double bind of Irish manhood.” According to him: “On one side, the British élite could deny the Irish their collective manhood for failing to meet the fundamental standard of virile masculinity, that is, for being insufficiently courageous, powerful, and unyielding in their resistance to colonial rule; on the other side, the British élite could deny the Irish their collective manhood for exceeding the fundamental standard of virile masculinity, for being excessively violent, aggressive and refractory in their resistance to colonial rule” (Valente 2000, 106). This “simianisation” of the Irish Celt will not be discussed further in this paper, but for a thorough analysis of this type of racial stereotyping of the Irish as savages in relation to Joyce, see Vincent Cheng’s *Joyce, Race, and Empire*, particularly pp. 19-57.

fused the Fenian gorilla with the sexual implications of the Perseus myth: “these deliverance cartoons hinted at not only Erin’s ‘defloration’ by her rescuer but also the truly dreadful prospect of intercourse between maiden and simianized dragon – assuming that her saviour did not arrive in time” (ibid., 172). In the late Victorian age, the allegorical-sexual imagery persisted in presentations of the Anglo-Irish relationship in newspaper cartoons even when the aim was not defeat of the simian Fenian. For instance, a number of cartoons made for *Fun*, a competing magazine to *Punch* around the time of Gladstone’s Irish Land Bill, present the British Prime Minister Gladstone as courting a bashful Erin (160,162,163). Thus, although the politics changed, and that even radically, the cartoonists still saw the relationship between Britain and Ireland as corresponding to that between a man and a woman. Further, the portrayal of a sexualised relationship between Britain and Ireland was also widespread on the other side of the Irish Sea. Cartoonists in Irish newspapers favouring Home Rule would place “the shapely figure of Erin or Hibernia in problematic or compromising situations with male figures representing English or imperial authority” (ibid, 157), thus symbolically sexualizing Irish-British relations.

Indeed, the designation of Britain as masculine and Ireland as feminine seems to have been adopted also by the Irish. According to Richard English, Irish nationalist movements like the Fenians believed that Ireland was plagued by a loss of masculinity, or as he puts it: “degeneration of national virility, strength and manhood” (187). Here again we might sense that political power is perceived as gendered and that several of the colonised too saw a close connection between statehood and manhood. Of course, this reflects the values of a patriarchal society, but it is nevertheless also an example of the colonised adopting the values, and discourse, of the coloniser in order to defeat them. We see for instance in the fact that the resuscitation of “national virility” was

closely connected with the goal of ridding the country of foreign (i.e. British) influence (English, 186). Thus, many Irish nationalists believed that in order to gain freedom, the Irish needed to exhibit the same masculinity that the British represented and shed themselves of their feminine-colonial trappings.

All these aspects seem to have had an influence on Joyce as a writer. However, there are other circumstances that could also have contributed to his awareness of gendered representations of the British-Irish relationship. Around the turn of the century, there were a number of protests from Irish nationalists, initiated by Maude Gonne, among others, that objected to young Irish women consorting with British “enemy soldiers” (Gibson, 184). From the onset of the Boer War, as a measure to boost recruiting, British soldiers were no longer forced to sleep in the Barracks.⁶ This made the sight of redcoats walking down O’Connell Street with young Irish women very common. According to Gonne, this proliferate fraternising between Irish women and British soldiers had the inevitable consequence that fights between redcoats and young, local men broke out almost every night (ibid). All this was well known to Joyce, and in *Ulysses* he lets Bloom refer to it directly, with a specific reference to Maud Gonne: “Redcoats. Too showy. That must be why the women go after them. Uniform. Easier to enlist and drill. Maude Gonne’s letter about taking them off O’Connell Street at night: disgrace to our Irish capital” (5.68-71). As Gibson points out (185), this also provides an historical background for the fight between Stephen and Private Carr over an Irish

⁶ Enda Duffy alerts us to an amusing anecdote with regard to this arrangement. On the arrival of a British regiment to Dublin in 1903, Oliver St. John Gogarty, the model for Buck Mulligan, wrote an ostensibly patriotic poem, which praised the valour of the soldiers and expressed pride at the arrival in the city. However, reading the first letter of each line in the poem vertically, a vulgar countermessage became evident: “The whores will be busy.” This caused so much outrage that the paper in which the poem was printed was shut down (Duffy, 140-1).

prostitute in “Circe” (15.4630-730).⁷ Furthermore, I might add that this drunken brawl has obvious political overtones as well, as Stephen is accused of being pro-Boer and of insulting king Edward – who even appears in the scene as a “non-partisan” judge of the fight (15.4458-80).⁸ However, this is only one of several instances where triangles of national and sexual interest clash in the novel, or in Joyce’s works generally.

In fact, I believe the problematic and ambiguous relationship between Ireland and femininity in Joyce’s authorship goes all the way back to *Dubliners*. In the latter collection of short stories, we find several examples of colonial, female suffering or exploitation – such as the title character in “Eveline,” Mrs. Sinico in “A Painful Case,” Maria in “Clay,” the maid in “Two Gallants,” or Polly in “The Boarding House.” There are also several prominent examples of women connected to nationalism and Kathleen Ni Houlihan in Joyce’s early works. In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen’s love interest Emma Clery goes, like Miss Ivors in “The Dead” and Kathleen Kearney in “A Mother,” on a trip “to the Isles of Aran with a Gaelic party” (162). To this group of aspiring or figurative Kathleens, we might certainly also add Gretta Conroy in “The Dead,” who represents an idealised female desired by two men with very different characteristics, but in whom we might also recognise the devouring, fatal aspect of Kathleen Ni Houlihan.

Love triangles are moreover a rather common trait in Joyce’s *oeuvre*. In fact, Joseph Valente argues that in Joyce’s major works, the featured romantic and sexual affiliations take on an almost exclusively triadic cast consisting of “a protagonist of

⁷ I should perhaps also note that according to Joyce-biographer Richard Ellmann, this incident is inspired by two events in Joyce’s life. One is a fight with a soldier over a young Irish girl on June 20, 1904 in St. Stephen’s Green, after which Joyce allegedly was taken home to Alfred H. Hunter, the rumoured model for Bloom (Ellmann 1982, 161-2). The other is a much later fracas with the British ex-soldier Henry Carr, who worked at the British consulate in Zurich (ibid, 426-9).

⁸ Another crucial factor in this scene, the fact that King Edward sings Buck Mulligan’s songs, will be discussed in Chapter 3.

desire, a figure of social legitimacy or entitlement, and a some way problematic object of erotic attraction” (Valente 2004, 221). This seems to be correct, and is particularly apparent in the two works Joyce started writing on around the outbreak of the First World War, *Ulysses* and the play *Exiles*, published in 1915.⁹

Notwithstanding, I would suggest that *Ulysses* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* differentiate themselves from Joyce’s other works through their close connection between the female imaginary and Stephen Dedalus. More than any character in Joyce’s *oeuvre*, he is preoccupied with an imaginary Mother Ireland that appears in a number of shapes and forms throughout both *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. Moreover, this personification of Ireland is – as in Mr. Deasy and the Citizen’s accounts – presented as an adulteress, turning against her rightful king/husband, and initiating a love triangle involving her husband and another man. Stephen’s consciousness thus produces a triangular system of imaginary representations, consisting of a rightful king, an earth goddess/queen, and an adulterous usurper. This is for instance the gist of Stephen’s Hamlet theory, identified correctly by John Eglinton as “a French triangle” (9.1065) – a theory that shall be discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, I will suggest that this triangle have important similarities to the Bloom/Molly/Boylan-triangle.

⁹ This might have been inspired by biographical, rather than political, events. According to Brenda Maddox’ biography on Nora Joyce, *Exiles* and “The Dead” were both inspired by incidents involving other men who had a romantic interest in Nora (28, 175-7). This seems to be connected with Frank Budgen’s anecdote that Nora once told him that Joyce wanted her to go out with other men so that he will have something to write about (Maddox, 217). Perhaps the latter story is a bit too curious to be taken completely literally, but it certainly goes a long way in suggesting that the romantic triangles in Joyce’s works have autobiographical counterparts. Acknowledging this, I nonetheless feel a closer exploration of these biographical connections falls outside the purpose of this thesis, and I will concentrate on other aspects of *Ulysses*, which I consider to be more significant.

Importantly, though, I would claim that critics often have failed to recognise the difference between the various reincarnations of the imaginary Mother Ireland in Joyce's text, and as a result attribute Stephen's obsession to Joyce. A typical example of this is found in Catriona Moloney's article "The Hags of *Ulysses*: The 'Poor Old Woman,' Cathleen Ni Houlihan, and the Phallic Mother," where she (in an argument which otherwise has similarities to mine) collapses the distinction between Joyce and Stephen.

According to Moloney:

The adulterer becomes Joyce's icon of sovereignty: several times he invokes this relationship directly and then uses the metaphor of adultery to suggest that political and cultural betrayal is one of Ireland's most striking qualities for him. Molly Bloom becomes the ultimate figure of an adulterous woman with an Irish background who will inevitably betray her husband, but she is conflated with Kitty O'Shea, Mary Rochfort, Devorgilla, Ann Hathaway, Hamlet's mother Gertrude, Helen of Troy, and most significantly, the sovereignty goddess. Joyce uses nationalist rhetoric that collapses time periods and makes Irish history one long tale of female betrayal. (Moloney, 110)

I might first mention, in passing, that, it is doubtful that Kitty O'Shea can be seen as an Irish adulteress. Not only was she English, but also – as I will point out in the next chapter – it is the Catholic anti-Parnellite Dante Riordan that emerges as the incarnation of the Irish adulteress in the account of the Parnell crisis in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. However, what I find most problematic about this argument, and also similar arguments such as Tymoczko's (see for instance 108-9), is that it seems to take for granted that Stephen's obsession with the adulterous Mother Ireland was also shared by Joyce when writing *Ulysses*. Granted, this might be a natural conclusion based on the obvious, and very well known, biographical similarities between the author and the character. Furthermore, the themes that Stephen deals with are often echoed – as I have just pointed out – in Joyce's other works, although they usually appear there in very different, and less obsessive, ways. However, to ignore the distinction between the

two would be to ignore the extent to which embodiments of the imaginary Mother Ireland in *Ulysses* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are presented as creations of Stephen's consciousness, and are not reinforced by the texts themselves. "You are a delusion," John Eglinton says in "Scylla and Charibdis" (9.1064), and the texts often seem to support him. For instance, when Stephen identifies Cranly's mother as a hag with "exhausted loins" (*Portrait*, 270) in the first person narrative at the very end of *Portrait*, the readers are able to recognise that his assessment is made without any basis in the textual "reality." Moreover, the other characters in *Ulysses* that read Irish history as a narrative of female betrayal are Mr. Deasy and the Citizen, and their dubious accusations against women are deliberately presented as historically incorrect. There is in other words a disparity between the fictional world of Joyce's text and Stephen's imagination that escapes Moloney.

There is however one exception to this, and it is a very significant one: Molly. She is arguably the only representation of Mother Ireland in *Ulysses* that appears as a character in *Ulysses* and is not shaped explicitly by Stephen's consciousness. However, I will suggest that she also might be understood as a creation of Stephen's. Although this might appear to be a peculiar claim, I believe that it reflects, like Moloney also seems to think, Molly's position as the ultimate figure of the adulterous Mother Ireland. Furthermore, this is connected to a significant development in Stephen. From Stephen obsessing over this imaginary – and being presented in a rather pathetic and unsympathetic way – the creation of Molly might indicate that the artistic consciousness of the book and Stephen's consciousness have become identical. Stephen can be understood as having overcome his mother complex and instead is writing a novel giving prominence to several imaginary representations, who – though similar to those the Stephen of 1904 conjures up in *Ulysses* – also reflect Stephen's later maturation. This

is perceived, I would suggest, first and foremost in Stephen's symbolic daughter-mother, Molly, who is both a continuation and a departure from his earlier Mother Ireland figure. However, I would also suggest that the parallel could be extended to a character that can be understood as Stephen's symbolic father, Leopold Bloom, as well as the adulterer-usurper Blazes Boylan.

MORE SINNED AGAINST THAN SINNING

Stephen Dedalus and the Conception of *Ulysses*.

There is not past, no future; everything flows in an eternal present.

– James Joyce on the structure of *Ulysses* in a letter to Jacques Mercanton.

It's every man's right to have babies if he wants them.

– From *Life of Brian*.

Ulysses is in a very real sense metafiction, a novel about its own making. There is a pervasive feeling that the incidents occurring in the novel will later be retold in the future, or perhaps that incidents from the past, “the time of the action,” are being retold in the present, “the time of writing.”

“Seems a long way off,” Haines says when Mulligan laughs off the notion of Stephen writing a novel in ten years, but he adds: “Still I shouldn’t wonder if he did after all” (10.1092-2). The comment is one of many clues implying that the events taking place in *Ulysses* will later be made into fiction, most likely through the very account we are reading. Moreover, the feeling that the time of writing is imposing on the time of the action results in a number of Escher-like moments – as for instance when Stephen thinks: “that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which then I shall be” (9.382-5). This sentence begs the question: What is the present time of *Ulysses*? Is it 16th of June, 1904, the date on which the novel is set, and which is celebrated every year in Dublin (on the day now dubbed Bloomsday)? Or is it the time of Joyce’s writing, from 1914 to 1921, which among other things coincided with the eventually successful struggle for Irish independence, a

struggle that a number of scholars, including Enda Duffy, have argued that the novel incorporates? Certainly, the numerous references in the novel, set in 1904, to Sinn Féin – an organisation founded in 1905, and whose real importance would not become apparent until after World War 1 – are among the many historically incongruous hints that buttress the argument that this is a novel that (at least in one sense) looks back on 1904, and infuses it with references to the present, the time of writing.

Perhaps this aspect of *Ulysses* is best understood by using a metaphor from childbearing. In terms of compositional history, June 16, 1904 is the time of conception, and the time of writing, presumably the period from 1914 to 1921, is the time of birth. A protracted labour indeed, one that makes the delivery of Mina Purefoy (or is it Beaufoy?) seem a cinch in comparison. But if *Ulysses* is a child, who is the mother? Joyce certainly, but what about Stephen Dedalus, whose future novel Haines seems to predict? Is it not implied that Stephen will one day write (or is writing) Ireland's "national epic" (9.309)? Of course, Stephen is not the only author in *Ulysses*. Bloom is one, too. When asked to state his profession in "Circe," Bloom says he follows "a literary occupation. Author-journalist" (15.802), and we learn that he considers to write down the events of the day "approaching the same luck as Mr Philip Beaufoy" writing for Titbits a guinea a column "*My Experiences, let us say, in a Cabman's Shelter*" (16.1228-31). Nevertheless, the great amount of references pointing to Stephen's future work makes him by far the most likely candidate to write *Ulysses*. However, Bloom might still play a crucial role in the conception of *Ulysses*, one that can be compared to that of the mothers of Socrates (who himself compared philosophy to midwifery) and Shakespeare (according to Stephen), as these mothers taught their sons "how to bring thoughts into the world" (9.235-6).

We are now well on our way to another Escher-like paradox. It is often assumed – not at least due to the Homeric allusions in the novel – that, in some mysterious way,

Bloom becomes Stephen's metaphysical father. Even if we disregard the Homeric references, scenes like the end of "Circe" – where Bloom has a vision of his dead son Rudy while tending to the exhausted Stephen (15.4955-67) – seem to imply that we might regard Bloom as an exiled father and Stephen as the searching son. However, by taking on this paternal position, it seems Bloom will enable Stephen to reinvent himself as the writer of *Ulysses*, by becoming *filus* – Latin for "son" – he becomes *file* – Old Irish for "poet." Paradoxically, by recreating himself as an artist, Stephen is able to become "himself his own father" (9.875). This trope of self-fathering is found in the artistic projects of a number of Irish writers such as Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw, and Joyce is also often interpreted in this manner (see for instance Kiberd 1992, lxiv-lxix). In *Ulysses*, the rebirth of the artistic self in literature is seen not least in the novel's continual – if somewhat ironic – juxtaposition of the creation of literature on the one hand and the creation of children on the other, such as for instance in Bloom's mix-up of the author Phillip Beaufoy and the mother Mrs. Purefoy at 8.276-80, or in the structure of "Oxen of the Sun," where the evolution of English literature is likened to the gestation of a foetus.

In other words, we might understand Stephen as metaphorically conceiving his own parents, Bloom and Molly. The "Himself his own grandfather"-notion may be strange, but is in fact ubiquitous in *Ulysses*. Just as Leopold Bloom is "the grandson of Leopold" (15.260-1), and Rudolph the grandfather of Rudolph, so is Stephen the grandfather of Stephen, the father of his father, Bloom. And of course, Stephen's mythical mother Molly might also be Stephen's daughter, like the Virgin Mother, she is "figlia di tuo figlio" (14.303), "daughter of thy son." In this chapter, I will attempt to interpret Bloom and Molly as creations of Stephen's artistic psyche, and show how they might be perceived as mirroring his influence from imperial discourse and Irish mythology. More

precisely, I will attempt to demonstrate how Bloom and Molly might be regarded as Stephen's ultimate embodiments of two imaginaries, one coded masculine – and with which Stephen himself identifies – and the other coded feminine. Originally, Stephen's imaginaries are also polarised; the former, masculine system is imbued with positive values, whereas the latter, feminine one is decisively negative, corresponding to the misogynistic impulses that Stephen seems to harbour. However, due to what might be perceived as an implied artistic and ideological metamorphosis of the more mature Stephen – the one I posit as the author of *Ulysses* – the relationship between Bloom and Molly appears less rigid. At any rate, in this chapter I will attempt to trace the origins of these two gendered imaginaries in Stephen's consciousness through passages in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. In *Ulysses*, I will give special emphasis to Stephen's "Parable of the Plums" in the "Aeolus" chapter, and his Shakespeare theory in the "Scylla and Charibdis" chapter, which I believe have important similarities to the Bloom-Molly-relationship.

The first critic to suggest a circular structure in *Ulysses* was Margaret MacBride, who in her *Ulysses and the Metamorphosis of Stephen Dedalus* (2001) claims that the "central event of the novel is the novel's own narration" (29). She considers *Ulysses* not to be simply a thinly disguised autobiographical novel, but in fact an *autological* novel, which dramatises "its own conception and development" (ibid., 30). Moreover, MacBride postulates that the final inscription, "Trieste –Zurich –Paris 1914-1921," can be understood as a part of the text, referring not necessarily to Joyce, but instead to Stephen. If so, the latter has, like in *Portrait*, "undergone an understood metamorphosis, as he moves from the young man the reader meets in the first chapter to the fulfilled poet who creates the completed tale" (ibid., 21). In others words, the novel implies a

change for Stephen, from the young and immature man we meet in the novel itself to the older, wiser author who is actually writing *Ulysses*.

This metamorphosis will also be an important part of my thesis as well, but will be more clearly linked to how – as I adumbrated at the end of the previous chapter – Stephen’s misogynist view of Ireland is turned into a story of reconciliation between husband and wife that might also signify national liberation. Thus whereas MacBride sees the creation of *Ulysses* and its chief characters Leopold and Molly Bloom as an Aristotelian “creation from nothing” (73), I will argue that the creation stems from Stephen’s soul crisis, a crisis connected both to the death of the mother and to a self-inflicted political servitude of a perceivably feminine Ireland. In this chapter I will attempt to demonstrate this in greater detail, by showing how *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* together form a more or less unified account of the development of Stephen’s imaginary Mother Ireland. I will also attempt to show how this imaginary is influenced by the traditional portrayal of a feminine Ireland in a love triangle with an Irish nationalist and a British imperialist, found both in British imperial, and Irish nationalist discourse. I consider this trope to be mirrored in the relationship between the nationalist Bloom, the mother goddess Molly, and the “stranger” Boylan, which in turn is formed into an account of Irish liberation in *Ulysses*.

Besides a strain of political and mythological readings, Stephen’s relationship to women has often been subjected to Freudian readings. For instance, Suzette Henke, in a much praised and cited reading of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, argues that the young Stephen sees his mother, and to an lesser extent also women generally, as a threat to his newly acquired, fragile sense of self (Henke, 52). According to Henke, the female figure is a “goddess in terms of parental authority” and is “unconsciously identified by the child with the hated flesh that eludes infantile control” (ibid.). Henke argues well for

there being a division between Stephen's mother, sensual warmness, and nice smells on the one hand, and how his father's house is "cold and dark under the seawall" (*Portrait*, 14) on the other hand. Notwithstanding, this division is not, as Henke presumes, readily identifiable with the political dispute that dominates the first part of *Portrait*, which is between the religious Dante and Stephen's Parnellite father. We see this for instance in the following passage:

Dante had ripped the green velvet back off the brush that was for Parnell one day with her scissors and had told him that Parnell was a bad man. He wondered if they were arguing at home about that. That was called politics. There were two sides in it: Dante was on one side and his father and Mr Casey were on the other side but his mother and uncle Charles were on no side. Everyday there was something in the paper about it (*ibid.*, 13-4).

Outside the political division, Stephen's mother offers solace and sanctuary from this bitter rivalry. When Stephen relives the horror of being pushed into the vermin-and rat-infested squire-ditch, he comforts himself with the thought of his mother, sitting by the fire with "her feet on the fender and her jewelery slippers were so hot and they has a lovely warm smell" (*ibid.*, 7). This push will facilitate, as Henke also points out, Stephen's identification with Parnell, who died instead of Stephen when he was in the infirmary, and who, like Stephen, was thrown in the cesspool. "When he was down they turned on him to betray him and rend him like rats in the sewer, " Stephen's father exclaims (*ibid.*, 33). Dante, on the other hand, triumphantly identifies herself with Parnell's opponents: "Devil out of hell! We won! We crushed him to death!" (*ibid.*, 39). For Stephen, the self-righteous ravings of the unmarried Dante are hypocritical. Not only is Dante, according to Stephen's father, actually a "spoiled nun" (*ibid.*, 34) who left the monastery when her brother came to money. Moreover, as a representative for the Ireland that turned its back on Parnell – often referred to as "the uncrowned king of Ireland" and called "(m)y

dead king” by Stephen’s father (ibid., 39) – Dante might herself be construed (by metaphorical extension) as an adulteress. If we take into account the long line of Irish literature portraying the ruler as married to the land, we can see Dante as typifying a Mother Ireland, a Sovereignty goddess, who betrays her sacral king/husband for the foreign masters of the British Empire and the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, it is Dante, and not Parnell (or Katherine O’Shea), that is the actual adulterer. Moreover, Dante is transformed into the first incarnation of the imaginary adulterous female Ireland in Stephen’s consciousness. This treacherous Mother Ireland will resurface throughout both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, the metempsychosis ending with Molly. On the other hand, the male nationalist emancipator/king, Parnell, to whom Stephen connects his own destiny and his father imbues with his masculinity, will form a prototype for Leopold Bloom.

Just how this treacherous female figure should be connected to Ireland becomes even clearer if we proceed to a much later section of *Portrait*. In the last part of that novel, Stephen hears a story told by his friend Mat Davin about a woman Davin encountered walking through the Ballyhoura hills in County Cork. The woman, a young, pregnant bare-breasted mother, had told Davin that her husband was away and asked him to stay the night, which he refused. For Stephen, she becomes a symbol of colonial Ireland: “a type of her race and his own, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness and, through the eyes and voice and gesture of a woman without guile, calling the stranger to her bed” (*Portrait*, 198). The phrase “stranger to her bed” seems to be an echo of “the strangers in our house,” the famous quote from Yeats and Gregory’s *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (Yeats and Gregory, 88), also referred to in *Ulysses*. Consequently, it establishes an association between the woman in Davin’s story and the figure in the play’s title role. Here we see even more

clearly how Stephen sees these women rather in terms of his mythic imaginary Mother Ireland, than as individuals.

Not many pages after Davin's story, Stephen's repulsion towards this Irish imaginary becomes even more pronounced, as he rejects the Irish nationalist struggle in a clearly misogynist tirade:

- My ancestors threw off their language and took another, Stephen said. They allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them. Do you fancy that I am going to pay in my own life and person debts they made? What for?

- For our freedom, said Davin.

- No honourable and sincere man, said Stephen, has given up to you his life and his youth and his affections from the days of Tone to those of Parnell, but you sold him to the enemy or failed him in need or reviled him and left him for another. And you invite me to be one of you. I'd see you damned first.

- They died for their ideals, Stevie, said Davin. Our day will come yet, believe me. Stephen, following his own thought, was silent for an instant (...)

- When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets (...). Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow. (*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 220)

In this passage, Stephen rejects the traditional nationalistic call of Kathleen Ni Houlihan's for self-sacrifice, not least because the nationalist symbol herself is portrayed as unworthy of such a deed.¹ For someone adamantly opposed to the nationalistic ideology that can bring forth such a representation, this is not an uncommon reaction. For instance, in France there was also much hostility to the figure of Marianne by those not sharing the revolutionary ideas she represented. Consequently, she was, depending on the viewer, seen "either as a princess or a wicked stepmother" (Agulhon, 3). However, the really striking part of Stephen's rejection of Irish nationalism is not the

¹ An interesting point with regard to the argument of Stephen as the artistic consciousness of the novel is that the parodic account of Robert Emmet's hanging (12.525-678), which will be discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, mirrors perfectly Stephen's views in this passage from *Portrait*. Here, Emmet dies for a female personification of Ireland, who nonetheless leaves him for another.

representation of Ireland as a hag, but the focus on female betrayal. Besides identifying Ireland as a mother (pig) who commits the treacherous act of eating her own children, there is again a strong sense of infidelity in this passage. Stephen's image of Ireland is in fact that of the Catholic Sovereignty goddess turned adulteress, abandoning her sacral kings, the leaders "from Tone to Parnell," and instead turning to another, the "stranger." Ireland is in other words at least partially responsible for her present state; the colonisation of the Irish was made possible by an act of volition on the part of the colonised. To evoke the opening proposition of the introduction to this thesis: If Ireland was raped, she was raped willingly. Irish history, becomes, as Moloney puts it, "one long tale of female betrayal" (Moloney, 110).

At this point, the question of Stephen's mother should be addressed – a question I have avoided until now. For what is indeed the relation between the Mother Ireland that "eats her farrow" and Stephen's actual mother, Mary Dedalus? Her connection to Stephen's image of Ireland is both crucial and elusive. As a deeply Catholic mother, she seems to be connected to the imaginary female Ireland that Stephen believes is at fault for the colonial condition of Ireland. Her request for him to kneel on her deathbed seems moreover to be interpreted by Stephen as an attempt on her part to break his self-righteous promise of "Non Serviam" towards Church and State. Nevertheless, his demonization of women seems seldom directed at his mother, at least not until she appears in *Ulysses* as a ghostly "reproachful" presence in Telemachus (1. 100-110), but even there we might interpret her as a projection of Stephen's guilt.

Marylu Hill suggests a distinction between Stephen's real mother and "an imagined symbolic mother who is a product of Stephen's fearful and anxious consciousness" (Hill, 329). Although her understanding of this imaginary mother does not take into account the mythic and ideological implications of the symbol – instead

only implying links to nature and death – the distinction itself is helpful. As we have seen, Stephen can allow himself mentally to transfigure other, more peripheral female acquaintances, such as Dante Riordan, the woman of Ballyhoura Hills, or even Cranly’s mother – who he has never seen, but still deems an old hag with “exhausted loins” (*Portrait*, 270) – to fit his misogynistic image of Mother Ireland, denying them an individual identity. This is more difficult when it comes to his mother, however, as her “real” personality seems to be constantly interfering with his imagery mother. This interference is bolstered by the fact that Stephen’s mother is – unlike Dante Riordan – in a borderline position in political matters. Judging from *Stephen Hero*, we might also assume that her sexual morality is beyond suspicion. In this earlier draft of *Portrait*, she seems – despite her many children – to have retained a bizarre sexual innocence, suggested in a scene where she is not even able to name her own sexual organ, which she only refers to as “the hole we all have” (*Stephen Hero*, 163).

This conflict between Stephen’s real mother and the imaginary Mother Ireland is clearly presented in the early chapters of *Ulysses*, as this conflict has been exacerbated – beyond the point it reached by the end of *Portrait* – by his mother’s death some months earlier, and his refusal to kneel at her deathbed. Kiberd’s assessment that Stephen “feels guilt at that necessary betrayal but also pride at his rejection of a religion in which he does not believe” (Kiberd 2009, 42) does not fully probe the complexity of his mixed emotions. In Stephen’s consciousness, his mother is a mythic Irish hag, a “crazy queen, old and jealous” that commands him to “(k)neel down before me” (1.640), and who is responsible for the Irish colonisation by the two masters, “an English and an Italian” (1.638). However, she is also the woman who “had saved him from being trampled underfoot and had gone, scarcely having been. A poor soul gone to heaven” (2.146-7). Here he recalls his mother’s original role in *Portrait* as a refuge both from the masculine

realities at Clongowes and the female treacherousness of the anti-Parnellite Dante Riordan. Moreover, she is also a victim. When Mulligan half-jokingly accuses Stephen of killing his mother, Stephen “gloomily” replies that “(s)omeone killed her” (1.90). This seems to echo Joyce’s own words about his mother:

My mother was slowly killed, I think, by my father’s ill treatment, by years of trouble, and by my cynical frankness of conduct. When I looked on her face as she lay in her coffin – a face grey and wasted with cancer – I understood that I was looking on the face of a victim and I cursed the system that had made her a victim.
(*Selected Letters*, 25.)

Though Mary Dedalus cannot be simply identified as Mary Joyce, Stephen’s mother too seems to be a victim. Moreover, the split between the sufferings of Mary Dedalus on the one hand, and the culpability of the imagined Mother Ireland on the other, appears to be what creates Stephen’s crisis of soul, as fear or hatred towards the imaginary mother indefinitely complicates the mourning process of his real mother. This crisis, I will suggest, cannot be alleviated until the construction of a character that can encompass both the real and the imaginary mother. This artistic creation will be Molly (Marion) Bloom, who is both mother and goddess, both victim and adulteress, and who is paired with an ideal mate, the “bawd-and-cuckold”-king Leopold Bloom.

But I am getting ahead of myself. In “Telemachus,” Stephen is still obsessed with the imaginary mother – as he was at the end of *Portrait*. Even the statement that he almost never washes (1.475-7) – confirmed in “Ithaca” when he states that he is a “hydrophobe” (17.237) – is connected with his disgust at the female mother figure, related to Mulligan’s three-fold claim that the ocean is a great mother (1.77-8, 1.80, 1.85). Moreover, it seems to be connected to river goddesses in Celtic mythology, which were often connected to mothers. For instance, the river Marne in the north of France is named after “Matrona,” the divine mother (Tymoczko, 100). As water also symbolises

health and fertility, Tymoczko suggests a link between the river goddesses, the Sovereignty, and Molly, with the latter's streams of milk, menstruation and urine – as well as her streams of language – connects her to both river goddesses and the Sovereignty (Tymoczko, 111-2).

For Stephen, however, the mother – though associated with liquids – is nevertheless not fertile. We see this in the visit from the milk woman. The latter becomes, for Stephen, Mother Ireland. She is “Silk of the Kine and poor old woman, names given her in old times” (1.403-404). Moreover, the milk woman is portrayed as barren and unfruitful, the milk, which suggests fertility, is “not hers. Old Shrunken paps”(1.398). The issue of adultery is raised again as Stephen imagines that she is a “wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer, their common cuckquean, a messenger from the secret morning” (1.404-406). This becomes even clearer for Stephen when she “slights” him for his imperialist co-inhabitants:

She bows her old head to a voice that speaks to her loudly, her bonesetter, her medicineman: me she slights. To the voice that will shrive and oil for the grave all there is of her but her woman's unclean loins, of man's flesh made not in God's likeness, the serpent's prey. (1.418-422)

In this passage the image of Ireland as a whore-mother is conjured up again, she is “the serpent's prey” with “unclean loins.” When Stephen sees her ignoring him, preferring to listen to the Englishman Haines (who is, ironically, in that moment reciting Irish) and his Irish collaborator Mulligan, this is construed as another form of betrayal – as cuckolding. In other words, in this section the milk woman is both betrayer and betrayed, bawd and cuckold, and thus establishing a pattern of coupled tropes that will recur in the novel.

However, the milk woman is in fact more than simply a new incarnation of the female imaginary we were presented with in *Portrait*. She is also a cuckquean, that is, a female cuckold – and might in that respect anticipate Bloom. As Stuart Gilbert pointed out in his authorised study *James Joyce's Ulysses* (99), she is a messenger, serving as an equivalent of Pallas Athene, who, in the shape of Mentor, summons Telemachus to go searching for his father. That she would be the first to evoke the image of Bloom in Stephen's mind, however vaguely, should therefore not come as a surprise.

Other Mother Ireland figures also appear to be related to Bloom. In Stephen's account "A Pisgah Sight of Palestine," alternately called "The Parable of the Plums" (7.1057-1058), we get a demonstration of this. This parable, or vision as Stephen alternately calls it, is narrated by Stephen near the end of "Aeolus," the seventh chapter of *Ulysses*, and tells how Anne Kearns and Florence MacCabe, two middle-aged Dublin spinsters, "want to see the views of Dublin from the top of Nelson's pillar" (7.931), but fail to reach it and instead gorge themselves with plums. Their failed attempt at reaching the top of the Pillar has been read by many critics as a reflection of the yet unsuccessful struggle for Irish independence from Britain. According to Kiberd, for instance, "the parable of the plums" is "all about failure and frustration" (2009, 121). I also believe that the sense of incompleteness in the story is emphasised by the unclear ending and the fragmented way in which the story is told. Stephen's parable is a part of the already deeply fragmented "Aeolus" chapter, and is itself constantly interrupted by comments from the listeners or even other conversations. Furthermore, the biblical title is not really compatible with what actually takes place in the story, which comically enhances the disparity between aim and execution. However, it is of particular interest for us that this political failure is represented as distinctly feminine. In my opinion, this gendering can be interpreted allegorically as showing how Ireland is incapable of challenging the

masculine constructions of Empire. It also suggests clearly, that although Stephen resents his perceived position as the “servant of two masters (...), an English and an Italian” (1.638), he is influenced by the imperial ideological discourse that presents Ireland as politically unfit and female, and is also expressing a hope for a masculine redeemer. I should note that this political element is not perceived by MacBride, who nevertheless acknowledges the importance of the parable to the creation of *Ulysses*. However, she argues that the omissions and fragmentations of the story indicate “that the significance of the parable does not lie in the actual tale. It lies instead in Stephen’s composing process” (71). I believe both are significant.

At any rate, one way in which Stephen’s influence from imperial discourse is displayed, is through the misogyny in which this tale is immersed, suggested already in the setting: Stephen tells the parable going to the pub in the company of other males whose facetious comments largely are directed at the women in the parable. Furthermore, the phallic Nelson’s Pillar in Sackville Street, “in the heart of the Hibernian Metropolis”(7.1-2), provides the central environment of the parable. This edifice is distinctly male and British, whereas the women themselves are geographically peripheral, coming from the Dublin suburbs. In my opinion both these elements align with imperial ideological formations presenting a masculine imperial centre penetrating and ruling the feminine colonies. However, it must obviously also be seen in relation to the image of Ireland as an adulteress over which Stephen is obsessing. In that respect, the way in which Anne Kearns and Florence MacCabe, or at least two women with identical names, are first presented by Stephen when they are seen walking along the Sandymount Strand in “Proteus” is significant. They are midwives – or they are so at least in Stephen’s imagination – and thus like other Sovereignty goddesses connected to fertility. However, as we earlier saw with the milk woman, this connection proves a false

lead as it does not predicate actual birth. Florence MacCabe carries in her bag – according to Stephen – a “misbirth” (3.36), a stillborn child.

These small references in “Proteus” contain– as MacCabe puts it – “within them the seeds of larger stories” (76). When the women “return” in Stephen’s parable, they apparently are not midwives, but are instead referred to as Dublin Vestals (7.923) – vestals being priestesses of Vesta, the goddess of hearth and home in Roman mythology. The vestals were virgins, and the virginity of the two women in Stephen’s parable is also specifically emphasised during his narration, as Professor MacHugh refers to them as “wise virgins” (7.937) and “Vestal virgins” (7.952). Furthermore, the description of how the two women abandon their endeavour to reach the top of the Pillar is underscored by sexual innuendo, with the result that the fiasco is presented as a symbolic loss of virginity:

– But they were afraid the pillar will fall, Stephen went on. They see the roofs and argue about where the different churches are: Rathmines’ blue dome, Adam and Eve’s, saint Lawrence O’Toole’s. But it makes them giddy to look so they pull up their skirts...

THOSE SLIGHTLY RAMBUNCTIOUS FEMALES

– Easy all, Myles Crawford said. No poetic licence. We’re in the archdiocese here.
– And settle down on their striped petticoats, peering up at the statue of the onehanded adulterer.
– Onehanded adulterer! the professor cried. I like that. I see the idea. I see what you mean. (7.1010-1020)

After a new interruption, the chapter ends with Professor MacHugh and Myles Crawford again commenting on the parable:

DIMINISHED DIGITS PROVE TOO TITILLATING FOR FRISKY FRUMPS. ANNE WIMBLES, FLO WANGLES – YET CAN YOU BLAME THEM?

– Onehanded adulterer, he said smiling grimly. That tickles me, I must say.

– Tickled the old ones too, Myles Crawford said, if the God Almighty’s truth was known. (7. 1069-1074)

Several elements in these passages suggest that we should regard the failure of the Dublin women as a sexual as well as political surrender. These are: the suggestive pause after “pull up their skirts” in 7.1013, potentially an act which precedes sexual intercourse; the paragraph titles, where “rambunctious” and “titillating” arguably have sexual overtones; the references to “poetic licence,” and to Nelson as adulterer,² something which “tickled the old ones.” Instead of climbing up the pillar, they are awed by the very height and (masculine) greatness of it, and, preferring to stay where they are, they gorge on the plums in a kind of masturbatory fashion, spitting the seeds onto the pavement.

Masturbation as a symbol of the colonial state is in itself important in *Ulysses*. In “Imperialism and the Rhetoric of Sexuality in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*,” Gerald Doherty explores this convincingly in relation to Bloom. For Doherty, masturbation acts as “the essential clue” to the difference between coloniser and colonised. His understanding is that “(e)ven though his ejaculatory capacity is still intact, (Bloom) has lost both the fertility and his penetrative power. Put differently, he has lost the ‘colonial’ desire to expand, to propagate his own image, and to impose it on future generations of Blooms” (Doherty, 222). Applying this kind of reading directly to Bloom is problematic. However, applied to this parable, Doherty’s theory can be illuminating. As I have shown, Florence MacCabe and Anne Kearns are infertile, like the milk woman, and lack “penetrative power,” resorting to (metaphorical) masturbation as a sort of comfort. However, in

² The sobriquet “onehanded adulterer”, used several times in this chapter of the novel, has its origin in the famous liaison Nelson formed from 1798 and onwards with Emma Hamilton (c. 1765-1815), the spouse of Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803), the British minister at Naples. Nelson is “onehanded,” as he lost his arm in a battle the year before he met Lady Hamilton.

Stephen's vision, their femininity makes penetrative power not just a lost property, as Doherty believes the case is for Bloom, but simply an impossibility of nature. Their quixotic attempt at conquering the Pillar, quite literally penetrating the phallus, is doomed from the outset. Their ascent to the top of the Pillar is in itself unimpeded, but the women are let down by their own bodies; they feel giddy just halfway up, and are incapable of going further. Subsequently, they seem to perform a sort of auto-defloration that signifies, I would suggest, a subjection to the British Empire. The obvious implication is a harem-like Empire where the colonies appear as concubines subjected to the male political centre. At any rate, in the double dichotomy of male/female and empire/colony which Stephen's parable indicates, Florence MacCabe, Anne Kearns, and the Ireland they arguably represent, are predetermined to come out on the losing side. In other words, the ideological implication is that masculinity is essential for the capability of self-rule, and that the female Ireland is incapable of that kind of government – a view that aligns itself with that of the British imperialist discourse described by Curtis (1968, 61). For all his statements of “non serviam,” and his contempt for the imperial masters, I believe that Stephen is still deeply influenced by British imperial discourse, a discourse that he nominally resists but from which he in fact cannot liberate himself.

However, we cannot leave the discussion of the Pisgah sight-parable without addressing its implications for Bloom. Among other things, the implicit connection to him is made through the terms Stephen uses to describe his story. He first claims it is a “vision” (7.917), which would suggest that the story contains prophetic revelations of a mystical nature, not unlike the prophecies of the Bible. Especially relevant are the prophecies of Elijah – a figure repeatedly referred to in *Ulysses*, who was believed to precede the coming of the Messiah. Stephen's later use of the word “Parable” (7.1057-

1058) again suggests the Bible, but perhaps this time more clearly the New Testament and the parables told by Jesus, again a reference to Messiah. This also implies Bloom, who is – more or less ironically – imagined as a new Messiah for Ireland in the “Cyclops” and “Circe” chapters, and implicitly makes Stephen his prophet, his Elijah. However, Stephen’s title “A Pisgah sight of Palestine” is just as revealing. The biblical Mount Pisgah is the mountain from which Moses was able to see Canaan, the Promised Land, before dying. This establishes a clear parallel between Ireland and Moses and the journey out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. This connection between Israel and Ireland has already been established earlier in the same chapter through a retelling of a speech delivered by John F. Taylor in the Trinity College Historical Society in Dublin. In this speech, Taylor remarks that listening to the former speaker, the anti-home ruler Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, was like standing in ancient Egypt, “*listening to the speech of some highpriest of that land addressed to the youthful Moses*”(7.832-833). The high priest’s speech, as Taylor tells it, makes the connection between Egypt and the British Empire, and consequently also Israel and Ireland, apparent:

Why will you jews not accept our culture, our religion and our language? You are a tribe of nomad herdsmen: we are a mighty people. You have no cities nor no wealth: our cities are hives of humanity and our galleys, trireme and quadrireme, laden with all manner merchandise furrow the waters of the known globe. (7.845-849)

By emphasising Egypt’s status as a naval power, the parallel to the British Empire becomes very obvious. Britain was in 1904 the world’s predominant sea power and had by far the biggest fleet on the globe. Furthermore, this connection is expanded if we link Moses to the Irish leader Daniel O’Connor, the “Liberator,” who, in the words of J. J. Molloy, like Moses “died without having entered the land of promise” (7.873). The link to Moses could also be extended to Charles Stewart Parnell. He is another Irish leader

who died without entering the “promised land,” something Joyce addresses directly in his political essay “The Shade of Parnell” (1912). There Joyce claims that Parnell, “like another Moses, led a turbulent and volatile people out of the house of shame to the edge of the Promised Land” (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 193). We might start to see the contours of Bloom as a successor to Parnell, appearing as the Moses of the Irish, a new sacral king ready to take Ireland out of the house of bondage.

Stephen’s most elaborate, and ingenious, description of the female Ireland is however reserved for the ninth chapter, “Scylla and Charibdis.” Through his theory on Hamlet, where he argues that Shakespeare’s relationship to his wife, Anne, is the central element in his writing, Stephen in reality tells the story of his own estrangement from Ireland and his parents. However, the theory can just as much, as the case is with the “Parable of the Plums,” be related to Bloom and Molly. Sentences such as “Elizabethan London lay as far from Stratford as corrupt Paris lies from virgin Dublin”(9.149-150) make it easy to conclude, even for a casual reader, that Stephen’s theory of Hamlet and Shakespeare should be understood at least in part as a vehicle for Stephen himself to relate to Ireland and his Paris exile. The similarities to the plot of *Ulysses* itself are also obvious enough, and MacBride points out that “(a)lmost all readers of *Ulysses* (...) take note of this widespread reciprocity; it is as if the rudimentary scaffolding of the Shakespeare piece has somehow been transplanted into modern Dublin and embellished into *Ulysses*” (83-4). However, McBride was the first to make the claim that these connections were there because Stephen’s Shakespeare theory in fact might be an early draft of *Ulysses*, though again disregarding the deeper implications of the Mother Ireland figure.

Nevertheless, several other critics also have to some extent been aware of the wider relevance of Stephen’s theory. Kiberd claims for instance that “Stephen Dedalus

becomes 'himself his own father(...)made not begotten' on the same principle by which Shakespeare recreated himself in both the doomed father and the avenging son of *Hamlet* (...) and by which Joyce reincarnates himself in both the middle-aged Bloom and the youthful Stephen" (1992, lxix). He is thus seeing Stephen/Joyce's self-fathering as typical of the modernist project of self-reinvention. Moreover, critics such as Catriona Moloney relate Ann Hathaway and Hamlet's mother Gertrude to Stephen's female image of Ireland (110). Importantly, however, linking together these paternal and maternal themes suggests another, and even clearer connection to Bloom and Molly.

Thematically, Stephen's theory is very similar to his other musings in *Ulysses*, especially the "Parable of the Plums." Stephen's struggle to convince his listeners of his theory ironically resembles both that of the women climbing Nelson's Pillar in his earlier parable, as well as his own narration of that story. Stephen's self-conscious presentation is audacious, but also interrupted, most notably by Buck Mulligan, the usurper of the Martello tower. Furthermore, like his creations Florence MacCabe and Anne Kearns, he fails due to own exhaustion: "I am tired of my voice, the voice of Esau. My kingdom for a drink" (9.981), he says before renouncing his own theory (9.1067). As MacBride points out, this renouncing has an Aristotelian dimension (69), as the Greek philosopher claimed that the poet's function was not to record "what *has* happened, but the kind of thing that *might* happen" (quoted in MacBride, 63). Stephen is a poet, not an historian. Furthermore, this chapter ends, like the "Aeolus" chapter, with a focus on masturbation, as Mulligan interprets Stephen's emphasis on self-fathering a call for onanism (9.1143-52, 9.1171-89), repeating the use of the trope of masturbation as a symbol of colonial devastation.

Both the parable and the theory can be understood as attempts at turning innocent, domestic females into lewd and lecherous ones, aligned with Stephen's

obsession with the Irish adulteress. When Stephen has finished the narration of the parable in “Aeolus,” the professor says he reminds him of Antisthenes who “took away the palm of beauty from Argive Helen and handed it to poor Penelope” (7.1038-1039). However, in his mind, Stephen metamorphoses “poor Penelope” to “Penelope Rich” (7.1040), Sir Philip Sidney’s mistress and muse, who had affairs with several men whilst married to Robert, Lord Rich (Gifford, 153). The innocent, domestic woman is in other words turned in Stephen’s mind into an adulteress, just like the two women in his parable. He of course also gives an implicit nod in the direction of Molly Bloom, the adulterous Penelope of *Ulysses*.

The further implications to Molly become apparent when John Eglinton points out that Anne has usually been thought of as “a patient Griselda, a Penelope-stay-at-home”(9.620). As a retort, Stephen repeats the professor’s statement about Antisthenes taking “the palm of beauty from Kyrios Menelaus’ brooddam, Argive Helen, the wooden mare of Troy in whom a score of heroes slept, and handed it to poor Penelope.” (9. 621-623) – before again mentioning Penelope Rich a few lines further down (9. 639).³ The implication seems to be that Stephen’s theory attempts to metamorphose Anne Shakespeare from the chaste Penelope of the *Odyssey* to an adulterous Penelope in keeping with his imaginary Mother Ireland.

However, apart from the context of the “Parable of the Plums,” Anne Hathaway has several other qualities that connect her to Stephen’s Ireland. She is presented as a mother figure as well as the wife and betrayer of Shakespeare. She is a woman who “saw him into and out of the world. She took his first embraces. She bore his children and she laid pennies on his eyes to keep his eyelids closed when he lay on his deathbed” (9.217-

³ To add even another layer to his already very intricate web of textual and intertextual adulteresses, Penelope Rich is a possible “dark lady of the sonnets” (Gifford, 230).

220). This indicates a kind of ubiquitous, powerful presence that we also may relate to Stephen's Mother Ireland. Another important aspect that attaches Anne Hathaway to Ireland is the connection with Gertrude in *Hamlet*, the former being identified as "the guilty queen" (9.179-80). This does not only relate to the "crazy queen, old and jealous" whom Stephen speaks of in "Telemachus," but also the manner in which Gertrude sums up most of Stephen's Mother Ireland figure – she is a mother and (arguably) an adulteress to whom significant political power is attached. The link between adulteress and queen is reiterated later on in the chapter, when Stephen recalls haggling with a prostitute in Cours de la Reine (English: The Queen's promenade) in 9.641-2.

Furthermore, as seducer and adulteress Anne Hathaway is presented as causing Shakespeare to lose belief in himself: "He was overborne in a cornfield first (a ryefield, I should say) and he will never be a victor in his own eyes after nor play victoriously the game of laugh and lay down" (9.456-8). This loss of self-confidence is seen by Stephen as the reason why Shakespeare associated himself with dubious women like the black lady of the sonnets. Why else, Stephen says, would "he send to one who is a *buonaroba*, a bay where all men ride, a maid of honour with a scandalous girlhood, a lordling to woo for him?" (9.452-4). We can hardly miss the relevance to Stephen in all this. He has been buying the services of prostitutes both in Paris and Dublin, and Stephen clearly sees himself reflected in Shakespeare's mingling with women such as the dark lady of the sonnets. Notwithstanding, his characterisation of Shakespeare is much more resonant in relation to Leopold Bloom. Stephen's reference to Shakespeare being overcome in a "ryefield," appears to connect him to Bloom, whom Lenehan associates with the song "The Bloom is on the Rye" (10. 524, repeated in 11.230-1). Shakespeare's seduction by his wife also connects him to Bloom, as the latter was seduced, even fertilised, by Molly on Howth head. "She kissed me. I was kissed. "(8.915), he recalls in "Lestrygonians," just

after he remembered how “she gave me in my mouth the seedcake warm and chewed”(8.907). As Henke puts it, Bloom is “a vulnerable Adonis ravished by the seductive Venus who lies throbbing and receptive beneath his trembling body” (Henke, 124). The link between Shakespeare and Bloom is also strengthened by Stephen’s emphasis on the Jewishness of Shakespeare, whom he describes as a “cornjobber and a moneylender” who “drew Shylock out of his own long pocket”(9. 741-743),⁴ a description which causes John Eglinton to dare Stephen to “(p)rove that he was a jew” (9.763).

Moreover, whereas Shakespeare is “all in all” both “bawd and cuckold,” one who “acts and is acted on” (9.1020-2), Bloom is referred to as more “sinned against than sinning” – first by Gerty McDowell in “Nausicaa” (13.432) and then by Mulligan during one of Bloom’s reveries in “Circe,” (15.1783), an assessment that in fact is a quote from *King Lear* (Act III, scene 2). All these statements can be connected to the Irish Moses figure to whom Bloom is imagined to be a kind of successor, namely Parnell. The latter’s illicit affair with Mrs. Katherine O’Shea, a woman he actually ended up marrying, pales, it is implied, beside the betrayal of the institutions and people of Ireland who subsequently turned their backs on him.

“You have brought us all this way to show us a French triangle,” John Eglinton remarks to Stephen near the end of the chapter (9.1064-5). And so he has. What Stephen’s Shakespeare theory in fact is, is arguably an early draft of *Ulysses*. Even the Homeric allusions are in place. Anne Shakespeare is an adulterous Penelope, and Shakespeare is “shipwrecked like another Ulysses” (9.403). Furthermore, in “Scylla and

⁴ In addition to having readings of history that are similar in some respects, Stephen shares some likeness with Mr. Deasy when it comes to Shakespeare’s financial dealings. Mr. Deasy says that Shakespeare “made money. A poet yes, but an Englishman too” (2.242-3).

Charibdis” it becomes clearer how we might perceive the multiple historical references being turned into two characters. The Sacral king, Moses, Parnell, and King Hamlet appear to anticipate Bloom, whereas the Sovereignty, Kathleen Ni Houlihan, Gertrude, and Ann Hathaway might be regarded as merging into Molly. Moreover, there is also a sense that these two characters are being put in connection with a third character, a third imaginary representation, namely a stranger, that along with the wife will cuckold the Sacral king, a man who “gets the plums, and I the plumstones” (13.1098-9), as Bloom puts it. In my next chapter I will argue for the similarities between the ideological resonances of this character, Boylan, and the British Empire.

The metafictional allusions in the chapter are enhanced by Mr. Best urging Stephen to write his theory down: “You ought to make it a dialogue, don’t you know, like the Platonic dialogues Wilde wrote” (9.1068-9). This can be interpreted not only as suggesting the composition of *Ulysses* itself – the “national epic” that will “hellenise” Ireland – but perhaps also the very chapter “Scylla and Charibdis,” which indeed has some similarities to Plato’s dialogues. “They say we are to have a literary surprise”, Lyster says at 9.289. They are indeed. But before Stephen can write his novel, it seems Stephen must find his metaphysical parents. Only when he is *filius*, can he be *fili*, and take his place among the Irish bards and tell his own account of the Irish sovereignty.

However, if we accept that Stephen in fact is the writer of *Ulysses*, the discrepancy between the views of Stephen and the implied views of the writer of the novel signifies that Stephen has gone through a metamorphosis between the time of the action of the novel and the time of the writing. For MacBride, more than anything else, the creation of the character of Bloom testifies to Stephen’s maturation since 1904. According to her, “Stephen has plumbed the depths of his own soul in order to fabricate the contrapuntal Mr. Bloom, who clearly represents all that the Stephen of 1904 is not” (MacBride, 59).

And indeed, it definitely appears unlikely that Stephen as he appears in the greater part of the novel could have created Bloom, who represents not only an opposite to Stephen, but arguably also has – as I will demonstrate in the next chapter – qualities that can be perceived as subverting the British “conquerors” and the Anglo-Irish “gay betrayers” (see 1.405).

Stephen’s implied change facilitating his writing of *Ulysses* is also indicated with regard to Molly. Tymoczko has remarked that the progress of *Ulysses* involves a circular change, suggestive of the Sovereignty goddess, as it moves from the hag (represented by the milk woman) in the first chapter, “Telemachus,” to the younger, fertile woman – Molly – in the last chapter, “Penelope” (133-5). This change, I might add, would also support the claim that *Ulysses* is in a way a story of Irish independence, as the Sovereignty’s metamorphosis from hag to young woman traditionally represented the coming – or the return – of the rightful king in Irish myths. Moreover, the reconciliatory tone at the end of the novel hints at a similar conclusion. Molly also departs radically from Stephen’s earlier avatars of Ireland in the respect that she is given her own voice; she is not simply the caricature-like Ghost mother we find in Stephen’s earlier incarnations of Mother Ireland. Indeed, Molly is even allowed to speak back against the stereotypical characteristics of the Mother Ireland figure, suggesting that the guilt is not all on the female side. In “Penelope,” Molly thinks that “its a wonder Im not an old shrivelled hag before my time living with him so cold never embracing me” (18.1399-1400). A little later she goes on to claim that “its all his own fault if I am an adulteress” (18.1516), thus deflecting the question of blame in their relationship. Moreover, as I pointed out in the first chapter, the fact that Molly, unlike Stephen’s other representations of Ireland, is an incorporated figure in the fictional world of the text, might be interpreted as an indication that the consciousness that produces Molly is

identical with the consciousness that produces the reality of the text. Thus, I would suggest that a coming-to-peace with Mother Ireland, signified through the more reconciliatory figure of Molly, is on Stephen's part related to his elevation to the status of author of *Ulysses*. However, just *how* this change takes place is, in my view, more difficult to answer. An actual metamorphosis of Stephen can hardly be perceived in any of the four remaining chapters in which Stephen appears after "Scylla and Charibdis." His rant about bringing "a stranger within thy tower" (14.355-400) in "Oxen in the Sun" is a drunken continuation of his Shakespeare theory, and even the rejection of his mother in "Circe" (15. 4216-42) seems to be more a repetition of his refusal to kneel at her deathbed than any resolution of his crisis of soul. Even in "Ithaca," we learn for instance that he still is "hydrophobe" (17.237), which suggests a continuation of the connection between water and women that was initiated in "Telemachus." This is also indicated by the "waterlover" Bloom's association of women with "effluent and reflux waters" (17.1164) and "arid seas" (17.1169) in the same chapter.

How Stephen's change might come about – if it comes about at all – can obviously only be a matter of speculation. Perhaps Stephen, like Joyce, met a woman that would modify his views on woman and help him conceive his novel, although clearly at a later date than June 16, 1904. Nevertheless, "Nostos" still seems to have a particular significance when read in this metafictional light. In her study, MacBride claims that the importance of "Nostos" lies in that it is here that Stephen gets the information from Bloom that makes him able to reconstruct his day and construct the character that later will constitute the protagonist of his novel. As she points out, "every one of Bloom's Odyssean adventures can be tracked directly to incidents he mentions near the story's end" (MacBride, 114), such as the purchase of the soap (17.231-2), the trip to the

cemetery (16.1253-66), or even his love of burgundy (16.89-92).⁵ The fact that “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca” contain so much redundant information, is, as MacBride points out, all the more remarkable because of its position in the text:

The repetitions come at the story’s close, just as the reader is expecting a crucial development or denouement. At a point that ought to be proffering the traditional climax, the finale serves up, not just mundane information, but mundane information *with which the reader is well-acquainted*. (ibid., 117)

If Stephen is the father of his own father and Bloom the son of his own son, a similar circularity can be allotted to the novel itself. In a similar pattern to that found in Joyce’s next work, *Finnegans Wake*, *Ulysses*’ end, “Nostos,” can also be regarded as its beginning.

⁵ See MacBride 108-123 for more details on this point.

UNCONQUERED HERO

Leopold Bloom, Rhetorical Struggle and National Emancipation.

Didn't I tell you? As true as I'm drinking this porter if he was at his last gasp he'd try to downface you that that dying was living.

– The narrator in "Cyclops."

I'm a Red Sea pedestrian, and proud of it!

– From *Life of Brian*.

Because life is a stream.

– Leopold Bloom.

Of the many accounts in *Ulysses* of Irish betrayal and love triangles, the perhaps most poignant and amusing is found in "Cyclops," the chapter with arguably the most anti-English propaganda in the novel. The concluding passage of a long parody of Robert Emmet's execution in "Cyclops" (12.525-678), told in the style of a newspaper feature story, serves as an interesting illustration of Stephen's obsessions. The Irish nationalist rebel Emmet (1778-1803) is presented as dying for his "bride elect" (12.636), or – as the pompous narrator in the parody states – he is "about to be launched into eternity for her sake" (12.638-9). In other words, the parody effectively merges Emmet's real life fiancée, whose name was Sara Curran, with Ireland, for which Emmet died, creating a female figure similar to Kathleen Ni Houlihan. This resemblance is enhanced by the fiancée's name being "Sheila" (12.640), which is another traditional name for Ireland (Gifford, 336). Moreover, Sheila promises that "she would never forget her hero boy who went to his death with a song on his lips" (12.644-5). The episode ends however, not with Emmet's death – perhaps that would have been too brutal for this rosy account – but with a "most romantic incident" (12.658) when "a handsome young Oxford graduate"

(12.658-9), bearer “of one of the most timehonoured names in Albion’s history” (12.666), asked for Sheila’s hand in marriage, and she accepted “on the spot” (12.661-2).¹ This latter event, which is presented as merely an afterthought in the account, in fact changes the entire story. It leaves Emmet’s sacrifice pointless, as Ireland goes willingly into the union with Britain – represented by the Oxford graduate – the very same union from which Emmet dies attempting to protect her.

As a personification of a treacherous Ireland, “Sheila” corresponds more or less to the letter with Stephen’s misogynistic representations of Mother Ireland, perennially recurring in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*. In a passage from the former novel, which I also quoted in the previous chapter, he says; “No honourable and sincere man (...) has given up to you his life and his youth and his affections from the days of Tone to those of Parnell, but you sold him to the enemy or failed him in need or reviled him and left him for another” (220). We might interpret this as another example of how these novels, and particularly *Ulysses*, are filled with rhetorical formations and values that are filtered through a single artistic consciousness – one we might identify as Stephen’s.

The most important triangular representation in *Ulysses* is no doubt the relationship between Bloom, Molly, and Boylan. Its similarities to Stephen’s Shakespeare theory have already been discussed in the previous chapter, but it also has clear parallels to the British presentations of Ireland as a woman placed in between two suitors, one representing Irish nationalism and one British imperialism. The triadic formations in *Ulysses* are at least partially indebted to British imperial – and Irish nationalistic – discourse, including the relationship involving the Blooms. But if Bloom –

¹ Sara Curran did in fact marry an Englishman some years after Emmet’s death, the pro-Irish army captain Henry Sturgeon (Gifford, 336-7).

whose politics are broadly identifiable with those of an Irish Catholic Parnellite, a point to which I shall return – is a nationalist, there are obviously numerous differences between this character and more radical nationalists such as Emmet or the Citizen. Bloom is for instance very sceptical about the ethos that demands you to “die for your country” (12.500). In fact, Bloom has a disagreement with the Citizen on this issue, in the passage leading up to the Emmet-parody (12.498-524). Before that, Bloom has already stated that he is not interested in becoming like Robert Emmet, whom Bloom imagines being a ghost “(m)aking his rounds” (6.978) in Glasvenin cemetery: “My ghost will haunt you after death. There is another world after death named Hell. I do not like that other world she wrote. Neither do I. Plenty to see and hear and feel yet” (6.1001-4). In other words, Bloom rejects the death cult of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, to which also later rebel leaders such as Patrick Pearse – who “gave up family, love, and marriage, and died for his country” (Tymoczko, 105) – adhered. Instead, Bloom, the “unconquered hero” (11.342) of *Ulysses*, chooses an entirely different path for challenging the imperial usurpers or suitors, which entails a rejection of the notion of fighting injustice by warfare and violence. This does not involve putting force against force, of the kind that John Wyse Nolan and his compatriots in “Cyclops” embrace when Nolan speaks how the Jews like Bloom should “stand up to it then with force like men” (12.1475) – a sentence which juxtaposes violence and masculinity. Such use of force involves in reality the replication of the masculine, violent tactics which the imperialist oppressors are presented as using in this novel, and is ultimately not only fatal, but also self-betraying. To “put force against force” is, according to Bloom, after all “the same everywhere” (12.1360-1). This is one of the most important insights made by Bloom in the novel, and one of the many he shares with Stephen Dedalus.

In *Portrait* and *Ulysses* the young Stephen might be seen as grappling with an imaginary Mother Ireland, with whom he ultimately reconciles himself. However, in *Ulysses* this crisis is overwritten, I would suggest, by a conflict of another type, where the narrative consciousness is far more prominent. This is directed at a particular strand of male Irish “betrayers,” represented in the novel chiefly by Mulligan and – I would also suggest – Boylan, who both are compared and juxtaposed with the adulterous British conquerors. In this chapter I will interpret this conflict in the light of the metafictional construction adumbrated in the previous chapter, where the creative consciousness is identified as being that of a mature Stephen. However, it will be contextualised by relating it to Joyce’s project, his “Celtic revenge,” which consist of liberating Ireland from English and Anglo-Irish Revivalist influence, which is argued for by among others Kiberd (1995, 334-8), Gibson (13-20) and Platt (7-14). However, the divide between Celtic Ireland and Anglo-Ireland was for Joyce not chiefly a matter of race, but of a position towards the British Empire and its ideology and discursive formations. According to Kiberd, Joyce resisted both the Anglo-Irish revivalists and the British colonisers, seeing their projects as ultimately originating in the same imperialistic assessment of Ireland. For Joyce, what the predominantly Anglo-Irish Literary Revival sought to discover, was not a Gaelic culture – Joyce believed that to be forever lost – but instead “merely a projection of imperial fantasy” (Kiberd 1995, 335), making Irish revival art – to use Stephen’s phrase – nothing but the “cracked lookingglass of a servant” (1.146). For Joyce, as well as Stephen, the conscience of the Irish race was yet “uncreated” (*Portrait*, 276). Joyce’s conjunction of the British and the Anglo-Irish projects seems to be reflected for instance in the character Haines, the British imperialist in “Telemachus,” who in fact was based on Samuel Chevenix Trench, who came from an old Anglo-Irish family (Platt, 56). Moreover, Haines’ interest in Irish language and folklore, as well as his

“sentimental Celticism,” also associate him, as Gibson points out (27), with Anglo-Irish revivalism. Gibson also suggests that the later chapters of *Ulysses* involve a deliberate reworking and corruption of a number of English (and revivalist) discursive formations, such as Victorian and Edwardian bardology (“Scylla and Charibdis,” pp. 60-80), the Victorian and Edwardian anthology (“Oxen in the Sun,” pp. 150-82) or Anglo-Irish revivalist musical discourse (“Sirens,” pp. 103-7). In this chapter, however, I wish to step away from the more general socio-political aspect of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and keep Stephen in the centre of my reading.

I will postulate that Bloom is presented as Stephen’s ultimate weapon against the rigid and phallic ideology of imperial Britain, but also – and just as importantly – the likewise phallic Irish usurper Mulligan, whose treacherousness and acquiescence to the British Empire are reflected also in the character of Blazes Boylan. My argument will moreover be that the Jewish-Irish Bloom, who both is familiar with and alienated by the ideology and discursive formations of the British, is in a far better position than Stephen to subvert them. In its own right, this is not a new claim, and similar arguments are found in central works of postcolonial Joyce criticism such as Gibson’s *Joyce’s Revenge* or Enda Duffy’s *Subaltern Ulysses*. However, I will concentrate specifically on how this ideology is represented through rectilinearity within the novel, as such rectilinearity is connected to the “male principle of violence and love of warfare” (Lefebvre, 409). More specifically, this will be done by referring to the Gold Cup Race – where the horse “Throwaway” might be associated with Bloom and the horse “Sceptre” with both Britain and Boylan – and moreover by attempting to show how Bloom’s erratic wanderings in Dublin can be identified as a subversion of the phallic ideology of imperialism.

I have earlier postulated that Bloom is a Parnellite nationalist, identified as a sacral king, and also posed as a sort of successor to Parnell in Stephen’s consciousness.

This is contrary to the readings of several earlier scholars; Gilbert and Budgen, for instance, see Bloom as a benevolent internationalist, aloof to questions of parochial nationalism. However, close readings of the text – as for instance in Cheng (242-6) – make Bloom’s nationalist sympathies in fact rather obvious. In *Ulysses*, there are for instance references to Bloom partaking in a pro-Boer, anti-English demonstration (e.g., 8.419-36 and 15.791) and several comments by Molly in “Penelope” about Bloom’s politics; during this chapter she remembers “all his blather about home rule and the land league” (18.1187-8) and how he has been “going about with some of them Sinner Fein lately or whatever they call themselves talking his trash and nonsense” (18.383-4). She also remembers Bloom calling Sinn Féin-founder Arthur Griffiths “very intelligent the coming man” (18.386-7). Moreover, in “Ithaca,” we learn of Bloom’s adherence to “the agrarian policy of Michael Davitt” and “the constitutional agitation of Charles Stewart Parnell” (17.1648-9) – in other words Land Reform and Home Rule, the two most pressing Irish political questions of the 1880s. Thus Bloom is readily identifiable with the politics most prominent in the Dublin Catholic community in which he lives, which are post-Parnellite, anti-British, and sympathetic to Sinn Féin (see Gibson, 55). Moreover, through Parnell and Home Rule on the one hand, and through Arthur Griffiths and Sinn Féin on the other,² Bloom can be related to both the start and the conclusion of the modern era of Irish nationalist politics within the British Empire. Parnell connects him to the Home Rule movement in the 1880s up until 1890 and Griffiths to the founding of Sinn Féin in 1905 and onwards to the negotiations that produced the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, where Griffiths led the Irish delegation. With regard to the latter

² The connection between Bloom and Arthur Griffiths is however problematic, not least as the latter too was anti-Semitic. For a close examination of this, see Andrew Gibson’s *Joyce’s Revenge*, chapter 2: “Only a Foreigner Would Do: Leopold Bloom, Ireland, and Jews,” pp. 42-59.

politician, it is perhaps no coincidence that the chapter in which Bloom's connection to Griffiths is established is "Penelope," was completed during these negotiations.

But if Molly can be understood as an adulterous Mother Ireland – as I suggested in the previous chapter – and Bloom can be identified as an Irish nationalist, and moreover an Irish sacral king, where does that leave the third character in the triangle, Boylan? As Bloom's sexual "other" and Molly's lover, he occupies the role in which we find the British in other triangular representations of Irish-British relations in imperial discourse, which frequently recur in Stephen's consciousness. But instead of being directly identified as a British imperialist, he seems more likely to be connected to the Anglo-Irish Mulligan.

According to Joyce's biographer, Richard Ellmann, Joyce made Boylan, his villain, the negative reproduction of his hero, Bloom (1982, 378), and his portrayal is an extremely unsympathetic one. According to Molly, Boylan is a "brute" (18.144) with a "vicious look" (18.153), who renounces not only religion, but any kind of spirituality: "he says your soul you have no soul inside only grey matter because he doesn't know what it is to have one" (18.141-3). In other words, Boylan denies the existence of a soul simply because he himself is soulless. Moreover, Boylan seems to lack a consciousness in the novel, as he is allowed only three sexist words of interior monologue throughout the novel: "A young pullet" at 10.327. Even the "pullet" herself, a female assistant in Thornton's shop, is allowed nine words of interior monologue, although her only appearance is in the section in question. It is, as Ellmann says, as if "coarseness had no consciousness" (1982, 372).³ Contrary to Bloom and Stephen – but like the British,

³ Ellmann also quotes Joyce's assessment of Oliver St. John Gogarty, the model for Boylan and Mulligan, from a paper where Joyce writes that Gogarty's "coarseness of speech" was "a blasphemy of the spirit" (Ellmann 1982, 379).

whose similarities to Boylan we will get back to – the reader’s impression of Boylan is a completely external one.

However, I believe that Boylan’s connection to Stephen’s love triangle is determined by his connection to Buck Mulligan,⁴ and we also know that Joyce used Oliver St. John Gogarty as the model for both Boylan and Mulligan (Ellmann 1982, 291).⁵ The latter is repeatedly presented as an adulterer, and, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the first instance of metaphorical cuckolding in *Ulysses* takes place when the milk woman “slights” Stephen for Mulligan, “her medicineman,” (1.418-23). Mulligan also seems to occupy the position of the adulterer in “Scylla and Charibdis.” After having identified Anne Shakespeare’s lover as Shakespeare’s brother (9.893-935)– seeing a parallel to the love triangle with King Hamlet, his brother Claudius, and Gertrude in *Hamlet* – Stephen calls Buck Mulligan his brother (“Where is your brother? Apothecaries’ hall. My whetstone. Him, then Cranly, Mulligan”; 9.977). Moreover, Stephen poses himself as “Esau” (9.981), the oldest son of Abraham, whose birthright

⁴ The role of Mulligan, and by extension, Boylan, might be reflected in the manifold pun on the word “Buck.” Mulligan’s moniker does not only denote a womaniser or a young man about town, i.e. a stag – something both Mulligan and Boylan undoubtedly are – but moreover a “buckeen,” an Irish word for a young man who apes the manners of the wealthy ruling classes (Platt, 55-6). Moreover, in “Scylla and Charibdis,” it appears as a part of the word “buckbasket” which has strong connotations to adultery. Stephen refers in his Shakespeare theory to “grope for (...) deephid meanings in the depths of the buckbasket” (9.759-60). This alludes to Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Winsor*, where the would-be adulterer Falstaff hides in a buckbasket, or laundry basket, to escape the jealous Master Ford (act III, scene 3). On the other hand, it should perhaps be pointed out that the pun is not entirely semantically stable within this context. A “buck” is after all also a “horned animal,” and can thus connote a cuckold. The ambiguities of the word are exploited by Master Ford in the same scene from *Merry Wives*: “Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck! Buck, buck, buck! Ay, buck; I warrant you, buck; and of the season too, it shall appear” (III.3,132-4).

⁵ This is perhaps also reflected in Boylan and Mulligan’s manner of dressing. Whereas Mulligan’s flashy suaveness is contrasted to Stephen’s dowdy cast-offs – resulting in Mulligan’s condescending remark “You look damn well when you’re dressed (1.118-9) – it can be mirrored in Boylan’s likewise suave “Straw hat (...) Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers”(8.1168). The latter article of clothing is “the very latest in flashy clothes” (Gifford, 188).

has fallen into the hands of a "usurper," already identified as Mulligan (1.744). Stephen is in other words a dispossessed Irish artist, and Gibson, leaning on Cheng and Benstock, sees this dispossession "as effected, above all, by the Anglo-Irish, by Unionism, Revivalism, and West-Britonism" (23).

However, Mulligan is also often compared to, or juxtaposed with, the British Empire. We are made aware of this connection not least in "Circe," where King Edward VII appears in one of Stephen's dream reveries singing two songs which Mulligan has sung in "Telemachus," first the "Ballad of Joking Jesus" (15.4475-9, sung by Mulligan at 1.584-99) and then "Coronation Day" (15.4559-64, Mulligan: 1.300-6). This immediately suggests a link between the Irish "usurper" Mulligan and the British adulterer and coloniser King Edward. However, the Anglo-Irish Catholic⁶ Mulligan can hardly be seen as a representation of the British, his position seems instead to be that of a "gay betrayer"(1.405), a "jester at the court of his master" (2.44). Stephen sees Mulligan as an Irish "court jester to the English" (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 149), and part of a tradition in which Joyce placed writers such as Goldsmith, Shaw, and Wilde. These were Irishmen who Gibson claims Joyce saw as "acquiescing in, even hoping to benefit from, inequality, the insubordination of Ireland"(Gibson, 30). Acquiescence means power for Mulligan, and he is throughout "Telemachus" trying to coax and bully Stephen into a similar servile complicity with Britain. Mulligan implores him to imitate his role ("Why don't you play them as I do," 1.506) or even giving their imperialist co-habitant Haines money ("touch him for a quid, will you? A guinea I mean," 1.290-1).

Richard Ellmann suggests that there exists a dichotomous relationship between Stephen and Bloom on the one hand, and Mulligan and Boylan on the other. He states

⁶ By 1904, the Ascendancy was no longer exclusively Protestant, but still, as Platt points out, upper class (50). The Oxford graduate Mulligan has moreover had the benefits of a Protestant education.

that “Stephen and Bloom, the mental men” are ranged against the physically superior “Mulligan and Boylan, the burly men” (1982, 372). I would however suggest a somewhat different reading, in tune with the conception of *Ulysses* as a metafictional novel. Stephen can, in my view, be seen as re-envisioning his relationship to Mulligan in the love triangle between Bloom, Boylan, and Molly. Like Mulligan, Boylan might also be seen as an Irishman acquiescing to the British presence. His father sold horses to the British during the Boer War (12.998-9) and he is identified as “the conquering hero” in “Sirens” (11.340). He is moreover allowed to conquer Molly, a symbol of the Irish Sovereignty, with the same force as Britain has overtaken Ireland. Here Gerard Doherty identifies the so-called “Colonial Compact” in relation to Boylan, a term introduced to explain how colonial, male acceptance of the will of the conqueror is rewarded with superiority to and dominance over the female:

In effect, Boylan embodies the “colonial compact” in his tacit submission to the will of the conquerors in return for their permission to lord it over the females of the conquered domain. Boylan’s machismo is a function of his identification with the territorial drive of the colonists, *his* preoccupation with women substituting for *their* preoccupation with colonies. (Doherty, 218)

By letting Boylan remain Irish, the opposition between Bloom and Boylan does not become a contest simply between Ireland and Britain, but also between Gaelic Ireland and the acquiescing anglicised Ireland to which Mulligan belongs. Moreover, to buttress this connection, I believe there is a system of connotations within the novel that is common for the British, Mulligan, and Boylan. Firstly, Mulligan and Boylan are both associated with rampant sexuality. Mulligan plans jokingly to set up a fertility farm (14.651-737) and Boylan’s penis is according to Molly “standing all the time” (18.148). This is juxtaposed with Britain who in *Ulysses* constantly is associated with frivolous sexuality, particularly by the most ardent nationalists in the novel. With the publicly

accepted face of Victorian morality nowhere to be found, Nelson, “the onehanded adulterer,” and Edward VII emerge instead as important representations of the British Empire. British civilisation is referred to as “syphilisation” (12.1197) by the Citizen; a point is made of Edward VIII’s reputation as a womaniser (“There’s a bloody sight more pox than pax about that boyo”; 12.1400-1, 1406); and Griffiths is quoted calling the British Army “an army rotten with venereal disease” (5.72).

Moreover, they are all associated with brutality. Stephen’s charge against Mulligan is, at least according to Ellmann, that he is “brutal and cruel”(1982, 379); Molly’s complaint against Boylan is also one of brutality, and the British are the “Brutal Sassenachs” (12.1190-1). The British are also often described as extremely violent by Joyce in his critical writings, for instance in “Ireland at the Bar,” where he claims that to find brutality one should look not to Irish terrorism but to British mistreatment of Irishmen (*Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, 146-7). Thus Mulligan, Boylan, and the British Empire all represent separate, but related, usurping, masculine, and physical threats to Ireland, Bloom, and Stephen. However, I will argue that it falls to the Irish Ulysses, Bloom, to overcome these threats.

The invention of Leopold Bloom is important for Stephen not least because Stephen himself is caught up in many of the same discursive formations that is shaped by British ideology and its perspective on Ireland, for instance through the representation of the country as a woman. This is the same fault that to an even larger degree is applied to the nationalists in “Cyclops,” whose ideals were “nothing but a point-for-point contradiction of English Tory thinking” (Kiberd 1995, 335). At least, Stephen knows that an attack on the British and the Irish usurpers must not be a violent uprising, but an uprising of intellect. “But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king,” Stephen says in “Circe” (15.4437), tapping on his brow – a notion that is both ironised

and sustained throughout *Ulysses*. The creation of Stephen's mind, his anti-imperialist weapon, is Bloom, an "anythingarian" (15.1712), whose nationality and race are ambivalent and uncertain: "Is he a Jew or a gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler or what the hell is he?" asks Ned Lambert in "Cyclops"(12.1631-2). Thus he is, as Gibson points out (56), both familiar with the ideological and discursive formations of the imperial masters, and alienated from them. He is in a far better position than Stephen to subvert and "make strange" those formations.

For Bloom, this ambivalence is coupled with the intertextual baggage coming together with his role as Ulysses, which we see Stephen approaching already in his Shakespeare theory. In the *Odyssey*, the reunion between Odysseus and Penelope is preceded by a battle against the suitors. Furthermore, if we accept that a corresponding reunion – to which I shall come back to later in the chapter – in *Ulysses* also symbolises Irish national emancipation, then we should note that *Ulysses* was written during a violent ongoing struggle to achieve this. With that in mind, we might ask ourselves where the battle is in *Ulysses*? It lacks an obvious correspondence in Joyce's novel, at least in terms of being absent from both Gilbert and Linati's schemata of *Ulysses*. However, I would suggest that such a parallel struggle actually takes place *throughout* the entire novel. This is not a physical fight – which would signify a reproduction of the tactics of the brutal British Empire and their manly, Irish accomplices, such as Mulligan and Boylan. What we instead have, I will suggest, is a rhetorical struggle between the destabilising anti-essentiality of Bloom and the attempted stabilising and rigid formations of imperial Britain.

One example of how we might perceive these formations as being contested in the novel is through the Gold Cup Race. In "Lotus Eaters," Bantam Lyons believes that Bloom gives him a tip about the horse "Throwaway," a rank outsider in the horse race

that is to take place the same day. Lyons is mistaken, however, as Bloom actually says that Lyons can *throw away* the newspaper in which the Gold Cup race is mentioned. Nevertheless, the misunderstanding is never cleared up and Bantam Lyons decides to risk it (5.520-41). The dark horse “Throwaway,” as we later will learn, actually goes on to win the race, to the detriment not least of Blazes Boylan, who had put twenty pounds on “Sceptre,” a competing horse in the race (18.424-5, see also 11.374). Without actually realising it, Bloom – who is believed to have betted and won on the horse, and later is identified with “Throwaway” when Joe Haines exclaims that Bloom is “a bloody dark horse himself” (12.1558) – here apparently prevails not only over Boylan, but also over the phallic and monarchical values implied in the word “Sceptre,” associated with Britain.⁷ Furthermore, this victory takes place in the context of an event that has a name containing the word “race” – already used by Joyce as a pun related to colonialism and ethnicity⁸ – as well as the word “cup,” with its obvious Freudian connotations to female sexuality. I believe that this is typical of Bloom’s battle with both imperialism and Boylan. The Gold Cup race might in fact be interpreted as an image of the phallic (sceptre-like) aggressor being beaten by a more complicated and anti-essential formation.

The phallic shape has great significance within the context of the novel. We might note that Molly, the character from whom we learn the most about Boylan, seems to associate him mostly with his sizable and ever erect penis. At least, she keeps on referring to it in relation to him, it is “that tremendous big brute of a thing he has” (18.144), “a thick crowbar” (18.147-8), “I never in all my life felt anyone had one the size

⁷ It is perhaps relevant that Great Britain is famously referred to as “sceptred isle” in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, act II, scene 1.

⁸ Vincent Cheng explores the use of this word in relation to “After the Race” in *Dubliners* in his *Joyce, Race and Empire*, p. 101-27.

of that to make you feel full up" (18.149-50), "as big as he is" (18.1123-4). On the other hand, representations of the phallus – incorporated in the geometrical figure of the straight line – are in fact constantly associated with the British imperialists in *Ulysses*. This starts off already in the first chapter, set in the Martello tower in Sandycove, where Stephen lives with Haines and Mulligan, the conqueror and the gay betrayer (1.405). The Martello towers were built in several countries of the British Empire as a defence against an invasion by the Napoleonic forces, an invasion which also might have brought Irish freedom in its wake.⁹ Thus the tower in "Telemachus" might be a symbol of Irish suppression. In the next chapter of the "Telemachiad," the same geometrical figure also evokes the religio-imperial narrow-mindedness of Mr. Deasy in "Nestor," the man who believes there can be "no two opinions on the matter" (2.322-3), and claims that "(a)ll human history moves toward one great goal, the manifestation of God"(2.380-81).¹⁰ That Deasy's favouring of rigidity and straightness is important to this argument can be perceived in the ghost-like rerun of the Gold Cup race in "Circe," brought forth in Stephen's hallucination, where Throwaway again wins, and where Mr. Deasy, who jockeys the horse "Cock of the North" – in other words another horse with a phallic name – comes last. After this race, Deasy repeats the motto of his ancestor John Blackwood: "Per vias rectas", or "by straight roads" (15. 3975-90, see also 2.282). Again we see straightness and rigidity being associated with masculinity and imperialism.

⁹ Though, considering Napoleon's track record, that is unlikely.

¹⁰ The connotations of rigidity and straightness might also be extended to Victorian values. Walter E. Houghton, who devotes an entire chapter to "Rigidity" in his study *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, claims that "The Victorians were perhaps the most John Bullish generation in English history; which is to say, with Havelock Ellis, that 'they were men of great character; slow-witted, often dominated by a single aim, with difficulty taking up new positions, but inflexibly tenacious of the positions once attained' – qualities of inestimable value 'in ages of ferocious struggle'" (Houghton, 174).

Another important phallic shape is also one of the truly great spectacles of imperialism in *Ulysses*, Nelson's Pillar, already discussed as the setting of Stephen's "Parable of the Plums." This phallic-shaped edifice can be seen as a most blatant attempt at displaying British imperial presence in Ireland. The 121ft Pillar, upon which a 13ft statue of Nelson was placed, stood in the very middle of the Dublin city centre and would certainly have been a very striking reminder of the imperial rule in the country.¹¹ The ideological implications of the Pillar as a symbol of British rule in Ireland become even more apparent when we take into consideration that Trafalgar Square, the famous square in the heart of London, is dominated by Nelson's Column. As Andrew Thacker puts it, "(t)he metropolitan centre of Ireland is thus, paradoxically, not an Irish centre, (...) the Irish metropolis has its governmental centre in London" (198). The phallic column fits also very well, as Thacker points out (199), with Lefebvre's description of the arrogant verticality of public and state buildings, the purpose of which is "to convey an impression of authority to each spectator. Verticality and great height have ever been the spatial expression of potentially violent power" (Lefebvre, 98). Moreover, rectilinearity is also generally associated with violence and male dominance. Again I cite Lefebvre, who claims that the "overuse of straight lines, right angles, and strict (rectilinear) perspective" is a result of male dominance, connected to the male principle of violence and love of warfare (Lefebvre, 409-10). Thus, all these phallic representations of space in *Ulysses* might be regarded as attempts to display imperial, and masculine, power in Dublin, and imbuing the image of Britain with those values. Moreover, particularly Nelson's Pillar has the additional connotation that it represents

¹¹ As a telling example of the pillar's symbolic significance, it was blown up in 1966 by a dissident faction of the IRA for the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter rebellion. In its place, the three times higher Spire of Dublin, officially titled the "Monument of Light" was built.

not only the figure of a masculine imperialist, but also that of an imperial adulterer. Both of these things will be important to bear in mind, when I now return to Bloom.

Beside the metaphorical triumph of Bloom in the Gold Cup race, there are also other places in the novel where it is suggested that Bloom is capable of undermining variations of these phallic, rigid ideological and discursive formations. On the following pages, I wish to show in some detail how Bloom destabilises such imperial rectilinearity through what Enda Duffy has called “the primary motif in Bloom's representation as a character” (54), namely his wanderings.

Bloom's wanderings are an integral part of the novel as a whole. The main bulk of *Ulysses*, from chapter four to chapter fifteen, has also by several critics been referred to as “The Wanderings” or “The Wanderings of Ulysses.”¹² Joyce's attention to minutiae when writing these chapters is well known. He used maps and consulted *Thom's Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* when describing the streets of Dublin (see Budgen, 123; Gunn and Hart, 15-27), famously stating that if Dublin “one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book” (Budgen, 69). Bloom's wanderings can also be followed on a map, and these itineraries are reproduced in Ian Gunn and Clive Hart's book *James Joyce's Ulysses*, a book containing detailed maps and trajectories for the entire novel. One of the most significant discoveries we can make when inspecting maps showing Bloom's progress through Dublin is that his routes are often very unorthodox and laborious. In the beginning of chapter 5, the “Lotus Eater” chapter, for instance, we meet Bloom on Sir John Rogerson's Quay walking along the River Liffey (5.1).¹³ Although originally intending to go to the public bath in Tara Street, Bloom has decided first to pick up his

¹² For instance Gifford, 67; Seidel, 150-210.

¹³ The map in Gunn and Hart showing Bloom's trajectory in “Lotus Eaters” is reprinted in the appendix of this thesis.

letter from Martha Clifford at the post office. To get there, he follows the river eastward, and turns right in Lime Street (5.4) and right again in Hannover Street. However, as we can see from the map in *James Joyce's Dublin* (35), a much less laborious route is available: he could have walked westward, turned left into Creighton Street and then ended up in Townsend Street, a continuation of Hannover Street. Instead, Bloom walks down both Hannover Street and Townsend Street, before turning right in Lombard Street East. From here, the easiest direction to the post office would be to walk down the east side of this street. Instead, he crosses Townsend Street (5.10) before walking down on the west side of Lombard Street East, crossing Great Brunswick Street (a parallel street to Hannover Street and Townsend Street), and continuing down Westland Row, before crossing the street (5.47) and ending up at Westland Row post office. As Gunn and Hart point out (35), thus far his wanderings correspond to the shape of a question mark.

Having picked up the letter, Bloom turns right (5.76), walking back up Westland Row before meeting M'Coy (5.82). After that, he strolls down the road and goes round the corner, turning left into Great Brunswick Street (5.210) and then again turning left into South Cumberland Street (5.229), reading the letter from Martha, before walking into the Church of All Hallows by the backdoor (5.318). Afterwards, he walks out of the church, using the main entrance, finding himself back in Westland Row (5.467), only a few yards to the south of the post office, coming almost full circle. In other words, if the aim of Bloom's walk was to get from one point to another, his perambulations since he left the post office have been completely pointless. As it is, however, Bloom then turns right, walking southward until he reaches the chemist, Sweny's, in Lincoln Place (5.472). By then he has completed another question mark.

These erratic, and often arduous, routes are actually quite characteristic of Bloom. At the end of "Aeolus," while Stephen is telling his parable of the plums, Stephen and the others are walking east along Middle Abbey Road towards Sackville Street, when Bloom comes after them from behind, wanting to speak to Mr. Crawford (7.965). However, as Bloom has been to see Keyes in Dillon's auction room in Bachelor's Walk (7.430-431), the easy route would be for Bloom to go through William's Row, an alley that runs parallel to Sackville Street, and then turn left. Like walking up Sackville Street, which would be the second shortest route, this line of progress would bring him face to face with Mr. Crawford and the others. As he instead comes from behind the group, this suggests a roundabout route down the entire Bachelor's Walk, then right up for instance Lower Liffey Street before turning right again into Middle Abbey Street, about three or four times as long as necessary.

Furthermore, his habit of coming from an unexpected direction is reiterated in "Cyclops," where Bloom has an appointment with Cunningham and Power at Barney Kiernan's pub (11.910). The easiest route from Ormond Hotel in Ormond Quay Upper to Barney Kiernan's would be to walk eastward along the Liffey for a block before turning right into Capel Street, a street which would eventually get him within a few yards of the pub in Little Britain Street. Instead, Bloom chooses a much more devious route, going west along Ormond Quay Upper and choosing one of the several smaller parallel streets to Capel Street before being spotted by the narrator of "Cyclops" on the corner of Pill Lane and Greek Street (12.213-14), far from his supposed destination. From Greek Street, Bloom most likely turns right into Little Mary Street and then left into Little Green Street before turning right into Little Britain Street, coming to the pub from the opposite direction of what would have been the easier, and expected, route along Capel Street.

As Bloom's walking patterns demand both more time and more effort than necessary, most people might consider them quite surprising and erratic. So why is it that Bloom, literally, goes to considerable lengths to avoid the obvious route between two different places? Gunn and Hart clearly state that it is characteristic of Bloom to choose peculiar routes. However, they still argue that these routes usually can be explained by specific incidents in the different chapters of the novel. With regard to chapter 5, Gunn and Hart claim that Bloom's roundabout manner of walking is caused by his trying to avoid meeting acquaintances (something he in any case miserably fails to do) on his way to and from the post office. This is not entirely convincing. We get a clear sense from the text that Bloom is trying not to be seen when he walks into the actual post office, as it is clearly stated that he makes sure that no one sees him before he enters ("Post. No-one. In."; 5.53). However, for the rest of the walk there is little evidence suggesting that he pays much attention to who sees him, or even to the route he is taking. Concerning the latter, Bloom's rather long stroll from Sir John Robertson's quay to Lombard Street East is compressed within only sixteen lines, and a long street like Hannover Street is not even mentioned. Gunn and Hart claim this suggests that Bloom is not conscious of his actions (35), which again should be seen in reference to the theme of drugs in "Lotus Eaters." However, as potentially brilliant as this idea might be, it is clearly contradicted in the text, as Bloom is characterised as walking "soberly" (5.1).

Instead, I would argue that, although Bloom is mentally quite conscious, his walking is typified by a leisurely – or even "throwaway" – demeanour. He takes time to contemplate and look at the surroundings and he even stops in front of a teashop (5.17-18) opposite the post office, reading the advertisements in the window. Furthermore, when Bloom crosses the road to the post office, he is twice described as "sauntering"

(5.46, 5.50). When he goes out of the post office, he “strolled” (5.76), underlining his leisurely manner of walking. In other words, Bloom seems very relaxed, which suggests that he enjoys the very act of wandering. If so, this implies that wandering is not just a means to an end – that is, a means of transportation – but something that provides pleasure in itself. What seems clear is that Bloom is not concerned with efficiency when he chooses his routes. At any rate, using such specific references to this chapter, or any other, to explain Bloom’s behaviour, as Gunn and Hart do, will of course not account for the fact that Bloom’s walking patterns are consistently erratic throughout the entire book.

In both the carefree manner of his wanderings and his seemingly arbitrary itineraries, I would suggest that Bloom seems to oppose the rectilinearity of the British colonisers. Moreover, Bloom’s wanderings are directly opposed to the so-called viceregal procession, the event of the latter providing the only occasion the British colonisers appear in the novel.¹⁴ The procession’s itinerary arguably is in tune with the imperial representation of space, as it is completely straight, going practically the entire time in a south-easterly direction.¹⁵ Furthermore, the penetration, or intrusion, of this British delegation into the streets of the Irish city, the daily life of which has been so

¹⁴ Haines being a possible exception.

¹⁵ The procession travels from the viceregal lodge in Phoenix Park (10.1180) to the Royal Dublin Society Bazaar in Ballsbridge (8.1162), passing most of the characters from the earlier sections of the chapter on their way. It starts in Phoenix Park in the northwest of Dublin, and passes, among other places, Kingsbridge along the northern quays (10.1181), Ormond Hotel (10.1198), Leinster Street (11.1263) and Northumberland and Lansdowne Roads (10.1277-1278), ending up in Ballsbridge southeast of the city centre. The procession consists of two carriages, the first of which contains the viceroy himself, William Humble, Earl of Dudley, along with his wife and the lieutenant colonel Heseltine. In the following carriage, “the honourable Mrs Paget, Miss de Courcy and the honourable Gerard Ward A.D.C.” (10.1178-1179) are seated. Whereas the persons in the first carriage are historical, the persons in the second appear to be fictional, according to Gifford (284).

elaborately described earlier in the same chapter, is in many ways one of the most blatant political statements in the book.

At any rate, the connection between rectilinearity and the British Empire is one of the main reasons why we can regard Bloom's erratic wanderings as subversive. Through his wanderings, he not only challenges the panoptic control of the Empire, he also rejects phallic representations of violent British power. These wanderings present, I will suggest, a way of undermining imperial discourse. Michel de Certeau is an illuminating theorist in this respect. He argues that walking manipulates spatial organisations, such as streets, no matter how panoptic they may be, and "creates shadows and ambiguities within them" (101). Thus walking subverts the conformity of the city as a representation of space. It forms and shapes its own trajectory independently of the original intentions of the city planner. By choosing other paths than the most obvious for means of transportation, Bloom undermines and destabilises the language of the street in the colonial capital of Dublin. We could in that respect see him as an urban-spatial rebel, questioning, in his own way, the value and truth of established paths and trajectories. Moreover, we might even see Bloom's wanderings as a symbol of a third option pitted in-between the active, imperial masculinity (the exact replication of which for the Irish would ultimately constitute a self-betrayal) and the passive, placebound femininity of the colonised. Such anti-essentiality is what appears to be an antidote to Stephen's rigid image of Ireland. Up against the straight, phallic empire and the likewise phallic usurpers Boylan and Mulligan, Bloom, "the bawd and cuckold," "the half-and-half," might seem to prevail.

However, I would suggest that the clearest sense in which *Ulysses* might be read as a story of national emancipation, is through the possible reunion between Bloom and Molly, the ultimate sacral king and sovereignty of the novel. This is also suggested in the

mythic change in *Ulysses*, reminiscent of the Sovereignty and pointed out by Tymoczko (131-5), from the old hag in the first chapter to the younger Molly – who again thinks back on her youth in Gibraltar – in “Penelope.” This change might be associated with the coming (or return) of the rightful ruler, the sacral king, in Irish mythology, and the establishment of a new rightful rule. I would suggest that we here might perceive the importance of the *Odyssey* as the main literary model for the novel. The *Odyssey* is not just, as Duffy terms it, “the first narrative of imperial voyaging” (72), it is also, and perhaps more precisely, the first narrative of returning. This is a return to the wife, but also a return in order to reclaim political power usurped, or attempted usurped, from the rightful husband/ruler. In both of the two main literary predecessors of *Ulysses*, the *Odyssey* and *Hamlet*,¹⁶ we see that the roles of husband and ruler, in a manner far from uncommon in pre-modern societies, are linked. In *Hamlet*, through Claudius’ marriage to Gertrude, there is at least an implication that political power can be gained by marriage to the former ruler’s wife. This is even clearer in the *Odyssey*, as Penelope’s suitors are also political pretenders, and in order to reinstate himself as ruler of Ithaca, Odysseus must purge the country of these sexual, as well as political, competitors to his rule. That the wife’s representing the key to political power is in both these works highlighted by the fact that the former ruler actually has a son, who would automatically have inherited the throne if laws of primogeniture were to be followed. However, in *Hamlet* and the *Odyssey*, Claudius and Penelope’s suitors clearly can disregard Hamlet and Telemachus, and seek power through the wife/mother. In this respect, both *Hamlet* and the *Odyssey* can be seen as parallel narratives to the Sovereignty myth and other representations of Ireland as a woman, who is torn between two opposing political forces in male guises.

¹⁶ We might also mention Orestes in this company, who Joyce saw as a parallel to Hamlet. (Ellmann 1977, 45)

However, whereas *Hamlet* ends in bloody mayhem and the political seizure by a third party, the *Odyssey* is in fact a story about return and reinstatement of the rightful king. This might also explain Stephen's progress, from *Hamlet* as the frame for his "French triangle" (9.1065) – where Gertrude and Anne Hathaway are twin manifestations of "the guilty queen" – to the reconciliatory story of marital reunion in the *Odyssey*.

Taking this into consideration, the wanderings of Bloom can be read as ultimately entailing a quest for Irish freedom. But can we also say that after a long day's journeying, Bloom's return to Eccles Street symbolises a reinstatement of political and sexual rule of the lawful husband/ruler, as is the case in the *Odyssey*? First we must remember that in *Ulysses* we actually deal with two "exiles" in relation to Bloom. One is his actual wanderings in Dublin away from Eccles Street on the 16th of June. The other, which is less literal but in the context of the book more important, relates to the estrangement with Molly. This latter estrangement is presented as a kind of sexual exile, following the death of their son Rudy, and resembles the wanderings of Odysseus closely in terms of length, as they both last for roughly ten years.¹⁷ However, these two exiles are interrelated and we might read the former of these two, which is a physical absence, as symbolic of the latter, which is a marital or sexual absence. The former has also clear political connotations, which I will explore shortly. At any rate, ending the physical absence, through Bloom's return to Eccles Street, is not sufficient in order to conclude any of these two "exiles." Such a conclusion, an end to Bloom's exile, could only properly take place in the event of Bloom and Molly's reunion, which also might signify a reinstatement of the rightful ruler of Ireland.

¹⁷ In "Ithaca," we learn that there had been for the Blooms "a period of 10 years, 5 months and 18 days during which carnal intercourse had been incomplete, without ejaculation of semen within the natural female organ" following the death of their son Rudy (17.2282-4).

However, to state that such a reunion actually comes about is problematic as Bloom and Molly's future relationship is usually considered an unresolved issue in the novel (see for instance MacBride, 99-100). However, although I cannot, and do not wish, to break completely with this open-ended reading of the marital reunion at the heart of *Ulysses*, I believe that with close consideration, it is possible to establish that a kind of reunification actually is achieved. Firstly, the historical and literary contexts surrounding the novel are hard to overlook in this respect. The final chapter, "Penelope," is after all written while negotiations for the terms of Irish independence were being discussed with Britain (Gibson, 19). Irish freedom – although in an imperfect form – was in other words about to be achieved. We must also take into consideration the parallel to the *Odyssey*, where the reunification of the rightful husband/ruler with the wife/country actually takes place. However ironically we might regard a number of the Homeric correspondences between *Ulysses* and the *Odyssey*, almost all the key incidents in that former work can be matched against incidents in Joyce's novel. If we were to argue that the reunion between husband and wife does not occur, it would be a highly notable exception.

Actual clues in the text, on the other hand, might seem slight in comparison. However, they do occur, and are in my view more suggestive than they usually are granted to be. Bloom's kiss of Molly's buttock in "Ithaca" (17.2240-3) might be compared to Odysseus kissing the earth when returning to the kingdom of Ithaca. The fact that Joyce in his notes to this chapter equated Molly's rump with the "promised land" (Tymoczko, 110) seems to support this. In "Penelope," Molly's decision to make breakfast for Bloom, as well as indications that she might end the affair with Boylan, may be construed as pieces of textual evidence that hint far more than they affirm. However, such indices are by no means insignificant, and point unequivocally in the

same direction as the political and literary contexts of “Penelope.” The same can certainly also be said of the deeply positive and joyful tone of the ending of the chapter, where Molly’s repeated use of “yes,” directed at Bloom, indicates that things might soon get substantially better for the Blooms. Another important “clue” to the same effect is the shift in Molly’s role, according to Joyce’s Homeric scheme. Molly is not only a kind of successor to Penelope: she is in the first chapter of the main part of *Ulysses* identified as Calypso,¹⁸ the goddess who kept Odysseus prisoner on her island, which again links up with Stephen’s feelings of entrapment faced with the figure of the imaginary Mother. It might be incorrect to suggest that Molly, like Calypso, alone is responsible for Bloom’s exile-like condition, as he seems to have been just as culpable himself. Still, Molly’s change, from being associated with a figure of captivity to one of marital bliss and repatriation, is a significant and powerful one, and not least shows Stephen’s change. Consequently, the implied shift of the status of 7 Eccles Street, from being identified with the island of Calypso to being identified with the island of Ithaca – from the site of Odysseus’ captivity to the homeland and kingdom of Odysseus – parallels that of Ireland at the moment of the writing of “Penelope.” Ireland too changes from a site of (colonial) captivity to one of freedom and independence, however problematic the freedom might be. As Richard Ellmann states in his Joyce biography, “Joyce has Bloom defeat his rival, Blazes Boylan, in Molly’s mind by being the first and the last in her thoughts as she falls off to sleep” (Ellmann 1982, 361). All in all, there are good grounds to argue that although an actual reunion between Molly and Bloom ultimately must take place outside the pages of the book, that scenario is by far the most likely one.

¹⁸ Though, arguably, Molly shares this role with the household cat, another female to whom Bloom serves breakfast.

As we have seen in this chapter, rigid and violent representations of masculinity, associated with the British Empire, and partly embodied in Boylan and Mulligan, can be read as posed against a Parnellite Irish nationalism, associated with a rejection of violence and something approaching an androgynous position on gender. The most important exponent of the latter is of course Bloom. The conquering heroes are pitted against the unconquered hero, and the latter is presented as what at least amounts to a moral victor. In the Gold Cup race of national rule, Throwaway is indeed the first over the line. The usurpers of Ithaca can be understood as defeated by the returning king.

Notwithstanding the possibility of such a reading, in the end not all is clear. Bloom and Stephen have met, but the actual significance of their meeting might still be undecided. Although there is at least some feeling of triumph in the end of the novel, *Ulysses* is a novel that reaches for the future. Moreover, the novel is not simply circular; it also progresses. Stephen is most likely to again return to exile, where he will attempt to create the “conscience” of the Irish race. His models might be the anti-essential “anythingarian” Bloom, and perhaps also his wife Molly. As such, the latter present far more sustainable ideals than not only the violent machismo of chauvinistic imperialism and nationalism, but also Stephen’s own misogyny and physical abnegation.

CONCLUSION

You have brought us all this way to show us a French triangle.

– John Eglinton

He's not the Messiah, he's a very naughty boy.

– From *Life of Brian*.

“Although we are still forced to use the language of stereotypes for analysis, the stereotypes no longer apply.” This sentence appears in a report by a commission headed by Professor Torkel Opsahl, addressing political opinion in Northern Ireland in the early nineties, and was strongly repudiated by Peter McDonald in his book on Northern Irish poetry, entitled *Mistaken Identities* (1-4). However, the language of stereotypes is sometimes very difficult to escape, especially in Irish writing. When related to Joyce, the use of it might potentially be interpreted as evidence of both treason and necessity at the same time. For instance, I have constantly used the word “novel” for a work of fiction that transcends established genre, and I have also, throughout this thesis, used the problematic term “colony” as a designation for Ireland, although “quasi-colonial” (English, 125) or “semi-colonial” (Attridge and Howes, 1-4) might be less disputable.¹

In a sense, Joyce criticism will perhaps always have some semblance to a “clockwork orange,” as it to some extent attempts to describe concisely and clearly something so allusive, complex and intangible that it most likely never can be reduced to one single reading. This has been one of the reasons why Joyce’s modernism has often been perceived as in a polar opposition to Irish nationalism. Whereas Joyce is seen to destabilise notions of language, race, and nationhood, nationalistic discourse can be

¹ My use of this term is also partly explained by the relatively accepted suggestion that Joyce “wrote insistently from the perspective of a colonial subject of an oppressive empire” (Cheng, i).

interpreted as doing the exact opposite. Contrary to such a view, I would argue that Joyce's modernism is especially obvious when one is dealing with political interpretations of the novel. Gibson states for instance that the "will to freedom and the will to justice which power the novel also turn on each other and turn back incessantly on themselves. In this respect, like the colonial culture from which it emerges, Joyce's novel is founded on a contradiction" (17). This contradictory aspect of *Ulysses* is perhaps best perceived in Bloom. As a character he is in a sense essentially anti-essential, always bordering on the self-contradictory. For instance, while he might be perceived as subverting the British imperial discourse, the same discourse seems to have contributed to the creation of him as a character. Certainly, both Bloom's effeminate characteristics and Jewish origins – that contribute to make him a liberating figure – also owe something to traditional imperialistic representations of Ireland as feminine and oriental. Moreover, both the contradictory Bloom and the likewise indefinable *Ulysses* itself might be seen as reflecting the ambiguous status of both pre-Treaty Ireland generally (simultaneously a colony and part of an imperial state) and Dublin specifically (a site of imperial rule as well as national emancipation). This is also one of the reasons why a nationalist reading of *Ulysses* is not necessarily inconsistent with the status of *Ulysses* as a modernist work of fiction.

In this thesis, I have tried to bring together a number of critical approaches. Politics, gender, myth, metafiction, and to some extent even spatial theory, have all played an important role in my reading of *Ulysses* as I have tried to show how the love triangle of Bloom, Molly, and Boylan is, through Stephen, presented as reflecting Irish-British relations. In the first chapter, I explored the numerous mythic and discursive formations that represented Ireland as a woman, made contemporary by the Irish Literary Revival and British caricatures, among others. Molly is of course not readily

identifiably with any of these formations, but her position within the text certainly owes something to them, and she should most likely be understood both as a critique and a continuation of these formations. The second chapter was perhaps the most ambitious of this thesis, arguing that *Portrait* and *Ulysses* might be read as Stephen's journey towards the creation of *Ulysses'* main characters Molly and Leopold Bloom. I postulate that *Ulysses* has a circular pattern where Stephen not only can be regarded as Bloom and Molly's metaphysical son, but also vice versa, and that the final chapters might point towards the actual conception of the novel. The third chapter postulated, among other things, that Stephen's conflict with Buck Mulligan is re-envisioned in the relationship between Bloom and Boylan, where the latter has taken the role of the usurper Mulligan. I furthermore suggested how Bloom might be perceived as subverting those rigid imperial formations also associated with Boylan and Mulligan, specifically focusing on spatial constructions.

This thesis has covered a lot of ground – perhaps too much ground – and a lot of the topics I have addressed (such as the connection between gender and politics) deserve a more thorough examination. Nevertheless, in *Ulysses*, which is a deeply interconnected and in many ways even overplotted text, it is always problematic to address one aspect without discussing its wider implications within the framework of the novel. The purpose of this thesis has thus been both very simple and very complicated. On the most basic level, I fairly straightforwardly postulate that Stephen Dedalus has a problem, and attempt to show the origins of this problem as well as potential solutions. The more imposing challenges faced in this thesis may, to some degree, arise from the far-flung connotations and implications of the original problem. Thus, Bloom is not only Stephen's personal redeemer, he is also a national or even universal redeemer, a man who, after finally seeing the implications of the Gold Cup

Race, acknowledges that he “brought a positive gain to others. Light to the gentiles” (17.352-3). I am also very aware that the positing of Bloom, the “new womanly man” (15.1798-9) as “the new Messiah for Ireland” (12.1642) should not be taken without irony, but I nonetheless believe that such ironic implications are less important than *Ulysses*’ very real elevation of the mundane and quotidian to the level of the heroic; to quote Kiberd, in *Ulysses* “(m)an’s littleness is seen, finally, to be the inevitable condition of his greatness” (Kiberd 1992, x).

As argued in the third chapter of this thesis, the nationalist Bloom’s potential reunion with Molly, the novel’s prime incarnation of Ireland, might represent Irish national emancipation. However, to insist too rigidly on this political allegory would be to overlook that there is after all numerous textual references indicating that Bloom is actually relishing his wife’s infidelity. Notwithstanding, it is quite clear that – given Molly’s infidelity – he would have much preferred it to involve another man, notably Stephen, to Boylan. Willy Maley argues along such lines when he concludes that “whereas (for Joyce) national betrayal is a bad thing, men – in particular – must learn to come to terms with sexual jealousy and the spectre of betrayal in the home” (quoted in López-Vicuña, 146). However, such an argument also might lead to an oversimplification of Joyce’s text, as for instance sexual betrayal and an extramarital affair are not necessarily the same thing. Bloom is, again, essentially anti-essential and contradictory. Both nationalism and monogamism are moreover effectively essentialist concepts, and to deal with them in their most reductive form, would most likely be contrary to Joyce’s intentions.

In any case, the heart of this thesis involves a meditation on the marriage between Molly and Leopold Bloom. I have suggested that these characters are the ultimate embodiments produced by Stephen’s dichotomous system of gendered

imaginaries, such as the Sacral king and the Sovereignty, Odysseus and Penelope, Parnell as Irish redeemer and Mother Ireland. My argument has implicitly been conditioned by the premise that a marital union is a natural union, that those who are married belong, in so many words, together. Thus, I have claimed that Boylan becomes an adulterer – and a villain – because he is disrupting a legitimate union, supplanting the rightful husband.

However, this is a problematic presupposition when concerned with a work by Joyce, who lived with the same woman for twenty-seven years without marrying and repeatedly rejected marriage as an institution (Maddox, 83, 339). Moreover, there are few happy marriages in Joyce's *oeuvre*; most of them seem, rather, to have failed. Examples of the latter are Mr. and Mrs. Sinico in "A Painful Case," Josie and Denis Breen, Martin Cunningham and his drunkard wife, the likewise alcoholic Bob Doran, married to Polly Mooney, among others. Thus we might be surprised to find the union of a married couple being given such a prominent and important position in *Ulysses*. Nevertheless, I would suggest that the Blooms are, in a sense, natural spouses independently of the fact that they are married. This is moreover enforced by the fact that while both Bloom and Molly have many, and fond, memories of the first time they made love, on Howth Head, neither of them think back on the actual marriage ceremony during June the 16th. The union between Bloom and Molly transcends – so is the implication – the mere fact that they are legally married. Moreover, the two characters are presented as complimentary figures, and thus it is all the more poignant that they are living in what has been known in Ireland as a "silent marriage," whereby, to quote Kiberd, "two people manage to share a house but not a life" (1992, lii). Molly and Leopold Bloom are however compatible in a number of ways, not least in their experimental views on gender relations. Whereas Bloom is effeminate and has been a female impersonator in a play (15.3009-11), Molly

wants to try being a man “for a change” (18.1381-3) and originally felt attracted to Bloom because “he understood or felt what a woman is” (18.1578-9). Moreover, they in fact have a distinct longing for regaining intimacy with one another, which underpins the tragic element of their exile-like condition. Whereas Bloom writes love letters to anonymous women, Molly hopes that someone would write her a love letter (18.734-5), which “true or no (...) fills up your whole day and life” (18.737-8). In parallel fashion, Bloom wishes to have Stephen as a lodger in order to achieve “rejuvenation of intelligence” (17.938) – something he apparently does not get from Molly, as he seeks to mend the “deficient mental development in his wife” (17.674). However, Molly twice states that she too longs to have an intelligent person to talk to (18.1341-2, 1494), as Bloom is not stimulating her intellectually. Instead, she is “always listening to him and Billy Prescotts ad and Keyess ad and Tom the Devils ad” (18.1342-3). In Bloom and Molly, then, we actually have two people with much the same needs and longings – two people, in Cook Callow’s words “whose pain and desires and sense of self are very similar” (472). They share a house, but are unable to truly find each other. Their union is, in a sense, a natural one, and this makes their reunion all the more desirable.

There are a number of themes raised in this thesis that might be suited for further research. Most notably, many of the topical tropes in this thesis, particularly the interrelation of nationalism and gender, could be placed within a larger frame of early to mid-twentieth century Irish literature. Especially Synge’s *The Playboy of the Western World*, with its emphasis on gendered nationalism and adultery, would be well suited for a comparison with *Ulysses*. Similarly, many of Yeats’ works, such as the “Crazy Jane”-poems of the 1930s, could also be addressed in a similar context. I also believe that Joyce’s later work, *Finnegans Wake*, and the character Anna Livia Plurabelle in particular, would be amenable for sustained attention to topics such as gender and Irish

nationalism. On a more general note, my interpretation of *Ulysses* could be linked with similar features in *Finnegans Wake*, for instance with regard to circular structure and the framing of a novel through the consciousness of a character.

In the final chapter, I have only scratched the surface of what potentially can be done on the theme of wanderings, and I have deliberately used the word “wanderings” instead of the more suggestive, but perhaps also more precise, term *flânerie*. However, to see Bloom as a *flâneur* would open up for a number of literary comparisons which I felt were too complicated for the present thesis, but might very well be worth pursuing in another context. A starting point here might be Enda Duffy’s *The Subaltern Ulysses*, where an entire chapter, called “Traffic Accidents: The Modernist Flâneur and Postcolonial Culture,” is devoted to this subject. Duffy’s key point is, in a somewhat bewildering argument, that the colonial *flâneur* is a mirror image of the metropolitan *flâneur* we meet in Baudelaire, Eliot, and Poe. I would however suggest a different approach to this, claiming that the metropolitan *flâneurs* too – with Baudelaire as the most obvious example – are alienated by the brutal spatial practice of imperialism, and that the alienation of the speaker is caused by a feeling of exile, not dissimilar to the feeling of exile for Stephen and Bloom.

The juxtaposition of artistic conception and childbirth is also only barely touched on here and could be expanded. In a parallel fashion to a number of other tropes in *Ulysses*, I would suggest that the similarities between writing and childbirth are both ironised and sustained, the former not least by Mulligan (“Himself his own father (...). Wait, I am big with child. (...) A play!, 9.875-6). Concerning childbirth, this has also a socio-political dimension, due to the falling birth rates and depopulation in Ireland. With that in mind, it is interesting to note that neither of the two main representations of Irish womanhood in *Ulysses*, Gerty McDowell and Molly Bloom, are particularly interested in

having children. Whereas Molly does not want children, at least not from Boylan, the crippled incarnation of colonial Irish female consciousness, Gerty McDowell, does not even seem able to imagine having them. For instance, her vision of an ideal marriage does not involve offspring, but only her and her husband's "own two selves" (13.240-41).

The issue of Catholicism in relation to the trope of Mother Ireland might also have been addressed more thoroughly in this thesis. The reason why I have mostly avoided it is that also this is extremely complex. In many ways, there is a very strong bond between Catholicism and Irish nationalism in the novel, and Stephen's imaginary representations of Mother Ireland and Virgin Mary are so connected that it does not necessarily make sense to speak of them in separate categories. But needless to say, for Joyce as well as Stephen, the Catholic Church is also one of two colonisers of the Irish. In *Ulysses*, this is most clearly seen in "Wandering Rocks," where the Church and the British Empire are almost presented as two sides of the same coin, although that too would be an oversimplification. The Church is after all presented as an integral part of the Dublin city life, whereas the British delegation in the viceregal procession is completely external and intrusive. However, there can be no doubt that Bloom's Jewishness – whether we see him as a projection of Stephen's consciousness or only a creation of Joyce's – is intended to alienate him from the Catholic Church as well as the British rulers. This alienation is sometimes simply comic, for instance when he believes that I.N.R.I. means "Iron nails ran in", and IHS "I have suffered" 5.372-4. However, it also appears in a more serious, but still humorous dissection of the confession, where spiritual dominion is turned into financial gain ("repentance skindeep. Lovely shame. Pray at an altar. (...) Squareheaded chaps those must be in Rome: they work the whole show. And don't they rake in the money too?," 5.430-5). Thus Bloom might be just as much a subversive

presence in relation to the discourse of the Catholic Church, as he is for the British Empire.

However, in the end, it should be pointed out that although Bloom subverts and undermines imperial and clerical discursive formations in *Ulysses*, these are not eradicated, and that such eradication is neither possible nor necessary. As there, in Joyce's view, existed no pure past to return to, it would not make sense to annihilate those formations that came later. As Gibson claims, Joyce "rather recognizes the point at which resistance may be more damaging than acceptance for the resister themselves" (270). One need not destroy to build anew. With that in mind, we might also see another reason why the conflict between a modernist open-ended *Ulysses* and a nationalist approach to the same text – one which connects the final chapters of the novel with the establishment of the Irish Free State – is less definite than one might first presume. The ending promises nothing but possibilities for future creation in Ireland. It is not conclusive, but it is still a very much hopeful ending.

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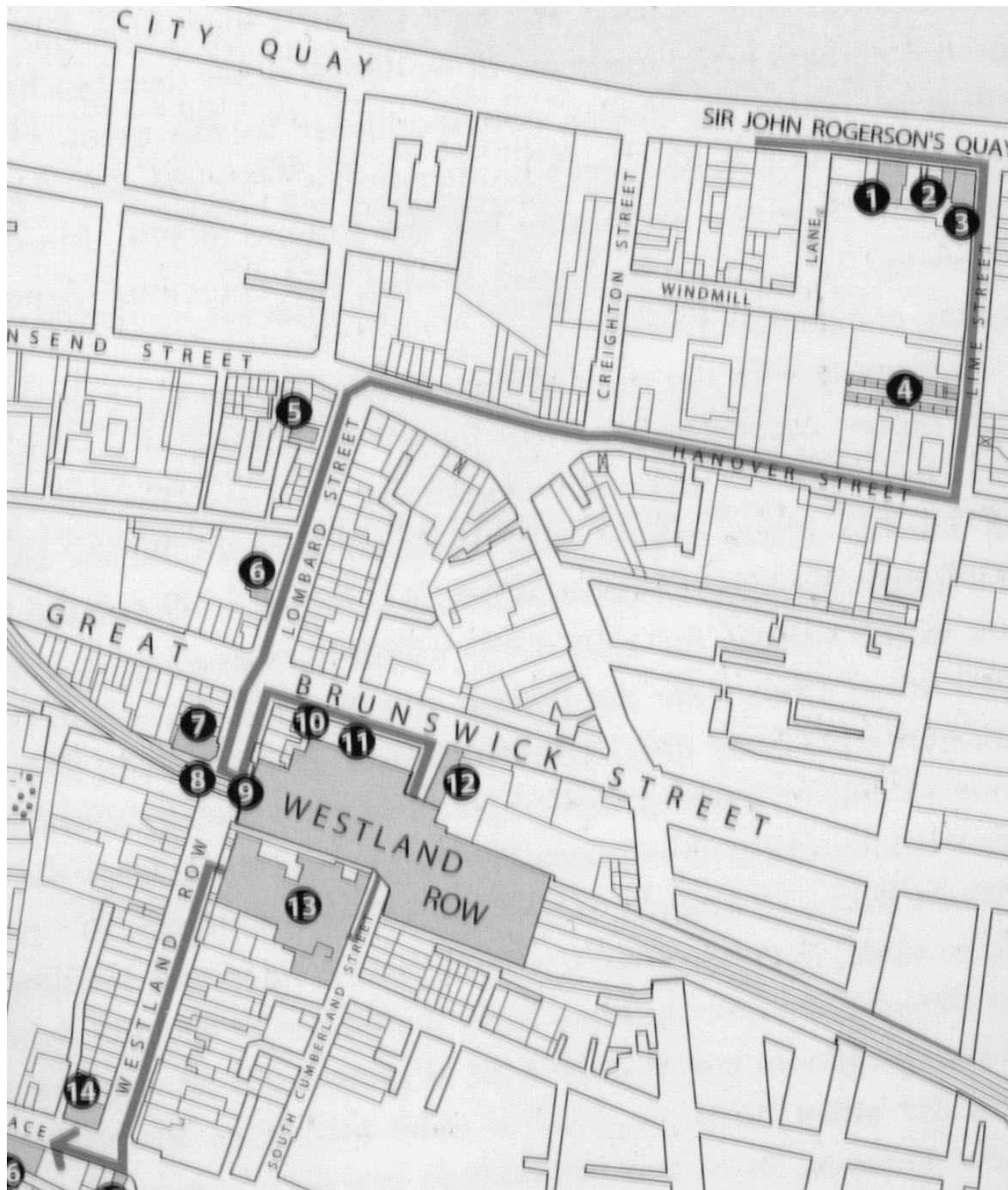
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Appendix:

Map showing the progress of Leopold Bloom in "Lotus Eaters," from Ian Gunn and Clive Hart's *James Joyce's Ulysses*, pp. 35.



Point 9 on the map demarcates the Westland Row Post Office, and point 13 the All Hallows' Church.