Cracked and Fragmented Identities: Colonized Voices in *Ulysses* and *Omeros*

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Class of 2019

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Departmental Honors in English

Middletown, Connecticut        April, 2019
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Acknowledgments

Thank you so much to Professor Fitzpatrick, whose support and guidance made this possible. He was the best advisor I could’ve hoped for, and without him this thesis wouldn’t exist. I’d also like to thank Professor Meyer for all of her support and guidance over the years, and the rest of my professors who have made Wesleyan a wonderful experience.

Thank you also to Mom and Dad, to Jack, and to all my friends at Wesleyan and at home.
Introduction

It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant.
James Joyce, *Ulysses*.

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars.

The story of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is a fairly simple one: the overwhelming majority of its eighteen episodes focus on the wanderings and wonderings of two men, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, as they trapse around the Dublin cityscape and its environs. The novel’s complexity stems from its form and from the wide range of allusions and references that litter the text, and upon publication it immediately became subject to much scholarly scrutiny. Some early reviewers focused on its approaches to representing human consciousness; others, on its parallels to Homer’s *Odyssey*.¹ Many of these early readers, especially Americans, “read Joyce as an international modernist who turned his back on the parochial nationalism of Ireland and embraced the cosmopolitan culture of Europe.”² They seemed to embrace the idea put forth by Gabriel Conroy, the main character in Joyce’s story “The Dead,” “that literature was above politics,” that Joyce as a writer

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and *Ulysses* as a work of art were pointedly apolitical.\(^3\) Joyce, of course, did not turn his back on Irish parochial nationalism, or indeed any aspect of Ireland’s sociopolitical reality. He engaged with it, wrestling throughout his life, and in *Ulysses* specifically, with the inextricable intertwining of Irishness and Englishness, the paradoxes of life in a colonized island nation. This positionality of suppression and subjugation comes to define the text holistically, and more recent criticism on the novel tends to grapple more with the novel’s sociopolitical undertones.\(^4\) Maria McGarrity, for example, argues that the “Martello Tower at Sandymount opens *Ulysses* as a colonial novel and Joyce as a writer centrally evoking the history of Ireland as a colony.”\(^5\)

Derek Walcott’s *Omeros* also opens with an invocation of colonialism:

> “Philocetete smiles for the tourists, who try taking / his soul with their cameras.”\(^6\)

The tourists function in the same way as Joyce’s Martello Tower, marking a modernized form of neocolonialism that defines St. Lucia and the Caribbean Islands at large.\(^7\) Indeed, *Omeros* is in its entirety a much more obviously colonialist text than *Ulysses*. It follows a motley collection of islanders: the fishermen Achille and Hector, who fight over the woman Helen; the pitiful Philocetete, pained constantly by his wound; Major Plunkett, a retired English military officer, and his wife Maud. These characters and others struggle with their heritages in a system of European, mostly

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\(^3\) James Joyce, *Dubliners* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2006) 163.

\(^4\) There was a shift in the 1990s towards reading *Ulysses* through a more political lens. *Semicolonial Joyce*, edited by Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes (Cambridge University Press, 2000), is a collection of essays by prominent Joyce scholars dealing with the politics that shaped Joyce’s work.


\(^6\) Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1990) 3.

\(^7\) The idea of tourism as a form of neocolonialism is evoked in *Ulysses* as well. In “Telemachus,” Haines, an Englishman living in the Martello Tower with Stephen who blames simply “history” for the recurrent subjugation of Ireland by the British, is introduced; in “Eumaeus,” Bloom refers to Haines as “that English tourist friend of” Buck Mulligan’s (16.264-5).
British, imperialist hierarchy which they have inherited or, in the case of Major Plunkett, actively participated in building. It is therefore “appropriate if not inevitable that Walcott’s story line should reflect European affinities in order to dramatize the evolution of a creolized Caribbean identity.”8 Walcott himself experienced this imposition of Eurocentric ideas, art, and culture firsthand when he was a student on the island. “When the Irish brothers came to teach at the college in St. Lucia,” he said in a 1977 interview, “I had been reading a lot of Irish literature: I read Joyce, naturally I knew Yeats, and so on. I’ve always felt some kind of intimacy with the Irish poets because one realized that they were also colonials with the same kind of problems that existed in the Caribbean.”9

This affinity for the Irish is readily apparent throughout Omeros, and Joyce himself becomes a character in a later chapter. It is natural, then, to think of Ulysses and Omeros together. Walcott himself anticipated as much: “So what’s going to happen? The parenthesis, the large parenthesis will begin. Everybody will put in a bracket – now he is trying to do Ulysses.”10 His worry appears to stem from the obvious fact of the two books’ shared Homeric parallels, which lend a sense of structure to the “encyclopedic form” of each text.11 It is not the use of ancient mythology as a structuring modality that links the texts together, however, but the ways in which these ancient mythologies are reframed and reshaped to reflect the historical and current reality of colonized occupation in which each book was

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9 William Baer, editor, Conversations with Derek Walcott, (University Press of Mississippi Jackson) 59.
10 Baer, 182.
11 Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (Random House, 1994) 189. Said names Ulysses specifically as an example of this “encyclopedic form;” I’ve extended his descriptor to Omeros.
produced. These realities imbue each text with a fluidity of being, one that rejects the idea that individuality is reducible to anything less than an inherent multiplicity. As McGarrity asserts, “examination of Joyce and Walcott shows that each writer appears increasingly captivated by the illusory nature of individual identity, from Bloom’s transgendered visions in Bella Cohen’s brothel to Achille’s journey to Africa, to the ancestors who sell him and fail to remember his absence.”

Stephen’s claim in the opening episode of *Ulysses*, that Irish art is the “cracked lookingglass of a servant,” suggests that Joyce achieves this ephemerality of identity through a multiplicity engendered by the fragmentation of a reflective surface. That which is shown in the “cracked lookingglass” would be fractured and multiplied; this image has been read as a gesture towards “a recognition that every person has several selves,” and that these selves, as they exist in a colonized space, are servile to imposed masters. This explains why Stephen is called so many different names in the book’s opening, and why, in the closing three episodes, the same thing happens to D.B. Murphy. Walcott, as quoted in the epigraph to this introduction, uses a different metaphor for his art: that of the broken and subsequently repaired vase. The implication is that fluidity of being for him is achieved through absorbing and recombining the various fragments that make up his nation and its inhabitants and gluing them back together in a restructuring that “shows its white scars.” It is impossible, in other words, to create a St. Lucian text that is holistically unified and singular, as St. Lucia is composed of – and indeed itself – a multiplicity.

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14 Kiberd points out that “Stephen is given a bewildering variety of names in the opening episode (Jesuit, Kinch, mummer, knife-blade, Dedalus, Japhet), showing that his identity is yet unresolved” (*Ulysses and Us*, 37).
This extends to the people who inhabit it: the idea that any of them could be reduced to one lone embodiment is fundamentally untrue; or, as Walcott puts it, “every ‘I’ is a fiction finally.”

Implicit in both writers’ metaphors – the cracked lookingglass and the reassembled vase – is a sense of repurposing, of reflecting or re-forming that which is already there to make something new and distinctly Irish, distinctly St. Lucian, distinctly colonized. Both texts are defined in part by “a novelty based almost entirely on the reformulation of old, even outdated fragments drawn self-consciously from disparate locations, sources, cultures.” To this end, both writers rely on engaging with foundational Homeric myths that are themselves steeped in a history of recurrent colonization. As Martin Bernal demonstrates in his *Black Athena*, “Greek culture had arisen as the result of colonization, around 1500 BC, by Egyptians and Phoenicians who had civilized the native inhabitants. Furthermore, Greeks had continued to borrow heavily from Near Eastern cultures.” The *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, therefore, can be viewed profitably as texts that arose from the context of colonialism. It was not until the first half of the nineteenth century that what Bernal terms the “Aryan model” of Greek history was developed; according to this methodology, Greece is viewed as “essentially European or Aryan.” In other words, Homer’s work was recolonized by Western European imperialist powers in the nineteenth century in an effort to create a white European history that extended back into antiquity.

Eventually, this invented history became ingrained in the Western European psyche,

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16 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 189. Here again, Said makes only specific reference to *Ulysses*; again, I’ve extended his point to *Omeros*.
18 Ibid.
and ancient classics became tools employed in imperialist expansionism. As Declan Kiberd notes, “British pedagogy in the lead-up to World War I reduced many Greek and Roman classics to a cult of mere power as in empire-building, boy-scouting, or mountain-climbing.”

Joyce and Walcott use these classics as structuring modalities not to take part in this empire-building but to undermine it, to reproduce the realities of life on colonized islands in order to simultaneously subvert the powers that be and acknowledge the influence they have had. Furthermore, the fact that these classics were born of an ancient colonialist empire and then recolonized by a modern one allows both writers to saturate the framework of their texts in a history of colonialism that is thousands of years old and persists to the present day.

The difference in the naming conventions of the two titles highlights the different modes by which the two writers wrestle with this history. “Ulysses” is the Latinized form of “Odysseus;” it was changed when the Roman Empire rose to prominence and colonized the Greeks. “Omeros” is the Greek name for “Homer”:

“‘O-meros,’ she laughed. ‘That’s what we call him in Greek.’”

In other words, Joyce’s title embraces the language of the colonizer, Walcott’s reclaims that of the colonized. The titles can, to some degree, elucidate one of the key differences between how the two texts grapple with their positionalities of subjugation. Ulysses itself stands as a testament to Joyce’s calls for a reclaiming and repurposing of the language of the colonizer (which is, of course, English) by the colonized.

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20 *Omeros*, 14.
21 This is a common theme that runs throughout much of Joyce’s work and is perhaps most plainly stated in the following scene from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Penguin, 1992), in which Stephen talks to an English dean: “The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words” (205).
language had been almost entirely eradicated in Ireland, and Joyce viewed all attempts to revitalize it as based in nostalgic romanticizing of the language.\textsuperscript{22}

Conversely, Walcott aims in \textit{Omeros} to capture the language of St. Lucia that is unique to the island. He writes in English, but he is focused throughout the epic on evoking a specifically Caribbean type of English. To this end, Walcott Creolizes his title within his epic, blending Latin, Greek, English, and French: “\textit{O} was the conch-shell’s invocation, \textit{mer} was / both mother and sea in our Antillean patois, / \textit{os}, a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes / and spreads its sibilant collar on a lace shore.”\textsuperscript{23}

Though their linguistic approach differs, Joyce and Walcott both aim their texts towards the same end, and \textit{Omeros}, then, is undoubtedly indebted to \textit{Ulysses} in a broad sense. But the goal of this thesis is to demonstrate just how \textit{Omeros} contextualizes and complicates \textit{Ulysses}’ relationship to both myth and the English imperial force that colonized it. My reading of the connection between the two texts is built on an analysis of \textit{Ulysses}’ concluding three episodes – “Eumaeus,” “Ithaca,” and “Penelope.” In these final episodes Joyce builds towards situating his book in a globalist, colonialist context that surpasses the boundaries of the city in which the novel takes place. In “Eumaeus,” he introduces Murphy, an Irish sailor who finds mythic parallel not only in Homer but in Robert Burton’s translation of \textit{The Arabian Nights}. This mythic parallel allows Joyce to connect his book with a non-European mythic history that is also colonized by Western Europe. It soon becomes clear that

\textsuperscript{22} An early scene in \textit{Ulysses}, in which the English visitor Haines speaks Irish and is misunderstood by an old Irish milkwoman, underscores Joyce’s relationship to the Irish language: “-Is it French you are talking, sir? The old woman said to Haines. Haines spoke to her again in a longer speech, confidently. -Irish, Buck Mulligan said.” (1.425-7).

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Omeros}, 14; “\textit{mer}” is French for “sea,” but it comes from the Latin “\textit{mare};” “\textit{os}” is Latin for “\textit{bone}.”
Murphy parallels Bloom in unusual, but not uncertain, terms, as if he were an embodied manifestation of one of the multiplicities contained within Bloom. Murphy complicates the one-to-one relationship of Bloom with Odysseus that was popularized by early reading guides of *Ulysses*. He serves as an acknowledgment of the multiplicity of reflection to be found in *Ulysses*, or, as Walcott phrases it, the idea that “Names are not oars / that have to be laid side by side, nor are legends.” The sailor becomes an access point for Bloom to imagine travelling outside the boundaries of the novel’s primary setting, and one of the places to which he seeks to go is Gibraltar, birthplace of his wife.

Throughout “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca,” Gibraltar lingers in the background as a sort of abstracted imagining of foreignness. It is a space that has been colonized by the British empire for the purposes of establishing a military base to further their imperialist goals, and also the location of The Pillars of Hercules, through which Dante’s Ulysses is condemned to sail in *Inferno*. The fort therefore links *Ulysses* both to other British colonies in the world at large and to the mythic history upon which *Ulysses*, and to a certain extent the British empire, is built. In “Penelope,” the point of view shifts to that of Molly Bloom, and Gibraltar is finally accessed as a known space, albeit one that is visited only in memory. It is here that the fluidity of being that typifies *Ulysses* in its entirety is realized fully: Gibraltar and Ireland are confused and compounded in Molly’s mind, as are her former and current lovers, in moments that reject the bound specificity of individual identity. Spaces, and the

24 Joyce’s own Gilbert and Linati schemata strengthened the apparent legitimacy of this reading of Bloom and Odysseus.
people who inhabit them, contain often contradictory multiplicities in Molly’s imagining, as her mind and body function as “cracked lookingglasses” out of which these diversities shine.

Walcott uses Ireland in the same way as Joyce uses Gibraltar. Walcott calls the Irish writer “our age’s Omeros, undimmed Master / and true tenor of the place” aligning him with Homer and Vergil and, in doing so, positioning *Ulysses* as an epic akin to those from antiquity.27 As such, Ireland links *Omeros* to a mythic history while simultaneously invoking the present, expanding the scope of postcolonial space being represented. The bulk of my engagement with *Omeros* in this thesis deals with Book Five – specifically Chapter XXXIX – wherein the narrator travels to Europe and, eventually, comes to Ireland. Here he sees Maud Plunkett’s birthplace before coming to Dublin to meet Joyce himself. Joyce and the characters from *Omeros* convene in a scene fueled by music in an instance of transcendence as St. Lucia and Ireland are linked across the Atlantic. Ireland becomes a colonialist parallel to and extension of St. Lucia, a space wherein time and identity blend as they do in the Gibraltar of Molly’s recollection. Like Gibraltar, it is accessed through a woman, allowing Walcott to, like Joyce, “associate the theme of colonialism and its implications with his female persona.”28

Early in *Omeros*, Walcott mentions Gibraltar in a scene that helps map out his epic’s relationship to *Ulysses*. As Major Plunkett reflects on his lived experience as a

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27 *Omeros*, 200; Walcott’s invocation of Joyce clearly echoes Dante’s of Vergil in his *Inferno* (translated by Dorothy Leigh Sayers, Penguin, 1949). In Canto 1 Lines 85-6, Dante says to Vergil: “Thou art my master, and my author thou, / From thee alone I learned the singing strain.”

soldier who fought on behalf of colonialist expansion, he considers the nature of the island for which he fought:

He smiled at the mythical hallucination
that went with the name’s shadow; the island was once
named Helen; its Homeric association

rose like smoke from a siege; the Battle of the Saints
was launched with that sound, from what was the ‘Gibraltar
of the Caribbean,’ after thirteen treaties

while she changed prayers often as knees at an altar
till between French and British her final peace
was signed at Versailles.29

This is the only time Gibraltar is named in Omeros, and it is in a context that explicitly links it with “Homeric association;” Walcott was evidently familiar with the fact that the Pillars of Hercules are located on Gibraltar. The rocky Spanish outcropping has suffered a colonial history similar to St. Lucia’s own; McGarrity notes that “the now British colony of Gibraltar had to endure attacks by the Spanish and the French” because of its favorable location.30 What emerges, then, is a satisfyingly cyclical pattern of relation, beginning in Ulysses and coming to completion in Omeros, that demonstrates that Walcott understands the history of English colonialism in a context beyond St. Lucia and suggests that he uses Ulysses to access this broader context. Joyce links Ireland to Gibraltar; Walcott then links Gibraltar to St. Lucia; and then, finally, Walcott links St. Lucia back to Ireland. The two writers’ approaches to representing these colonized spaces are, however, mirrored converses, much like their approaches to naming and language. Joyce seeks to evoke locality in the personal body. Molly alludes to this when she is

29 Omeros, 31.
30 Maria McGarrity, Allusions in Omeros (University of Florida Press, 2015) 42.
considering the authenticity of her Irishness, thinking that she “had the map of it all;” as Gifford points out: “That is, she has the map of all Ireland all over her face: colloquial for ‘it’s obvious that she is Irish.’” The overlaying here of map and face points towards the connection between locality and the body that Joyce considered to be fundamental to “Penelope.” He wrote, in an August 1921 letter, that the final episode “turns like the huge earthball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning. Its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb, and cunt.”

Whereas Joyce imbues the body with the landscape, Walcott imbues the landscape with human properties. His Ireland is one in which a “child-voiced brook repeated History’s lesson / as an elder clapped its leaves in approbation.” Walcott’s Ireland, like his St. Lucia, is a living landscape that has its “own pulse and arterial topography and sinew which differ from ours but are as real – however far-flung in variable form and content – as the human animal’s.” The living aspect of both islands – Ireland and St. Lucia – in Walcott’s text allows them to become compounded and linked with each other in the same way that his characters are.

Gibraltar and Ireland, then, function respectively as microcosms of the colonialist ephemerality that produced both Ulysses and Omeros. Gibraltar acts for Joyce as a midway point between Ireland and ancient Greece, the birthplace of the epic upon which his novel is structured, while also allowing him to metonymically connect his text with other British colonies in a larger global setting. Ireland for Walcott functions in the same way. Both spaces serve as connecting axes through

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33 Omeros, 199.
34 Wilson Harris, “The Music of Living Landscapes,” Selected Essays of Wilson Harris (Routledge, 1999) 44. Harris is not talking about Omeros specifically in his essay.
which *Ulysses* and *Omeros* are able to access a colonized globalism that produces a worldly context for the sociopolitical and cultural specificities of the Ireland and St. Lucia that produced the texts.
Chapter I: Ulysses

Bloom, Murphy, Sinbad, and Gibraltar

In “Eumaeus,” the 16th episode of Ulysses, Stephen and Leopold head to a cabman’s shelter. They have been out drinking in the red-light district, and Bloom takes his younger companion in for some coffee and something to eat in an attempt to sober him up. There, among the derelicts of Dublin nightlife, they meet a sailor named Murphy. He commands the attention of everyone in the room and becomes the primary focus of the episode, playing the role of a sort of inverted Leopold Bloom, one whose most obvious mythic correspondence comes not from Homer but Burton’s translation of The Arabian Nights. Murphy is a modern Irish recreation of Sinbad the Sailor, the adventurer who lends his name to seven stories in The Nights collection, and he allows Joyce to do several things at once. Murphy is an inverted global opposite to Bloom, one whose adventures extend beyond Dublin and environs. His relation to both The Nights and the world past Ireland allows Joyce to situate his novel in a global – that is to say, non-Eurocentric – context both present and mythic. Murphy also provides Bloom in particular with an access point to Gibraltar, the rock fortress that comes to serve synecdochally as the world outside of Ireland in the novel’s final episode. The sailor signifies a gesturing beyond the streets of Dublin, Joyce’s intention for Ulysses to be read as transcending its primary urban setting.

Stephen initially gets Murphy’s attention by inadvertently mentioning his name during a drunken rhetorical rumination on the nature of names. Bloom and Stephen have just overheard some people speaking in Italian; Bloom expresses his
love for the sound of the language ("so melodious and full") (16.346), but Stephen is unimpressed: "To fill the ear of a cow elephant. They were haggling over money" (16.350). This leads Stephen to ponder the nature of sounds and language, which he immediately equates with names. "—Sounds are impostures," he says, "like names. Cicero, Podmore, Napoleon, Mr Goodbody. Jesus, Mr Doyle. Shakespeares were as common as Murphies. What's in a name?" (16.362-4). Here he translates names that sound foreign and impressive because of the people associated with them – Cicero, Napoleon, Jesus, and Shakespeare – into names common to Dublin – Podmore, Mr Goodbody, Mr Doyle, and Murphy. He wonders, in other words, about the relation of names to other names. "Shakespeare," when compared to "Murphy," is more impressive, as Shakespeare is connected with literary greatness and Murphy with banality. He seems to suggest that bound in names are culturally specific connotations, drawing attention to the way certain names become imbued with meaning through historical association in specific cultural contexts.

Bloom responds with immediate understanding: "—Yes, to be sure, Mr Bloom unaffectedly concurred. Of course. Our name was changed too" (16.365-6). He is referring to the fact that his father, when he immigrated to Ireland from Hungary, changed his name from Rudolf Virag to Rudolph Bloom in an attempt at assimilation (in Dublin, "Virag" would evoke difference). Throughout the entire interaction, then, Joyce appears to be playing with the relationship between names, the localities that produced them, and their hearers. It is in this loaded context that Murphy is introduced. Attracted by the sound of his own exampled name, which to

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35 This has been touched on earlier in the novel, most pointedly in "Cyclops," when Jack Power and Martin Cunningham are talking about Bloom with the citizen: "—Isn’t he a cousin of Bloom the dentist? says Jack Power. —Not at all, says Martin. Only namesakes. His name was Virag, the father’s name that poisoned himself. He changed it by deedpoll, the father did" (12.1638-40).
Stephen evoked commonality, “the redbearded sailor who had his weather eye on the newcomers boarded Stephen, whom he had singled out for attention in particular, squarely by asking: – And what might your name be?” (16.367-70).

Murphy’s question sparks conversation. At this point, however, Murphy’s name is unknown. He is still just a drunken stranger at a cabman’s shelter full of a “decidedly miscellaneous collection of waifs and strays” (16.327-8). His lack of name allows him to be more easily lumped in with this collection, as a given name of any kind – something foreign like Cicero, or banal like Podmore – could influence the hearer’s perception of the subject of the name. But before his name is revealed, he is tacitly and inversely linked with Bloom. Murphy is introduced in nautical terminology, as a “sailor” who “board[s]” Stephen with his questions. Bloom, confused and scared by the man, finds himself “all at sea for a moment” (16.380). By describing them in the same language, the narrator explicitly links the two men together, but the manner by which they are joined highlights the differences between them: Murphy undoubtedly feels quite comfortable at sea, whereas Bloom is frightened and confused.

As Murphy and Stephen exchange brief words about the latter’s father, Bloom struggles to “make head or tail of the whole business and he was just asking himself what possible connection when the sailor of his own accord turned to the other occupants of the shelter” (16.385-7). The “possible connection” is seemingly in regard to Murphy and Simon Dedalus, but the question is left unfinished. The ambiguity means that the “possible connection” for which Bloom searches could be, for the narrator and reader, between Bloom and Murphy. Finally, Bloom engages Murphy, and the sailor finds himself “relaxing to a certain extent under the magic
influence of diamond cut diamond” (16.410-1). It is here that the connection crystalizes: only diamond can cut diamond, and only Bloom can relax Murphy. Though Murphy is a world traveler, a brave adventurer who goes to shooting competitions “in Stockholm” while Bloom has only ever been to “the Bisley,” they are aligned with each other in some shared cadence (16.407, 413).

At this point, Murphy finally tells Stephen and Bloom who he is: “--Murphy’s my name, the sailor continued. D. B. Murphy of Carrigaloe. Know where that it? – Queenstown harbour, Stephen replied. –That’s right, the sailor said. Fort Camden and Fort Carlisle. That’s where I hails from. I belongs there. That’s where I hails from” (16.415-9). Seemingly unbeknownst to both Stephen and Murphy, the latter’s response answers the former’s earlier question very specifically, and very emphatically. Murphy, when giving his name, also gives his place of origin, as if to say that this place of origin is “what’s in a name.” For Murphy, like for the formerly Rudolf Virag, a name contains and evokes the locality that produced it. It is a marker of the subject’s origin as much as it is of the subject itself. Murphy is from “Queenstown harbour” and “Fort Camden and Fort Carlisle,” steeping him in a specific solution of British imperialism even in his originating locality.

The sailor continues: “My little woman’s down there. She’s waiting for me, I know. For England, home and beauty. She’s my own true wife I haven’t seen for seven years now, sailing about” (16.419-420). At this moment, the link between Murphy and Bloom becomes explicit. Murphy’s situation carefully reflects Bloom’s own: Bloom has also spent his day preoccupied with thoughts about his wife, but he

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36 The fact that the two have seen similar shooting performances is, as Bloom notes, a “curious coincidence;” this aside flags the exchange as something important, as there are no simple coincidences in Joyce’s text (16.414).
has only left her for the day, and he is certain of her infidelity. The song that Murphy quotes, however, is what solidifies the connection. Earlier in the novel, in “Wandering Rocks,” “a onelegged sailor crutched himself round MacConnell’s corner...up Eccles street...he growled unambiably: --For England...home and beauty... A woman’s hand flung forth a coin over the area railings” (10.228-53). The woman to whom that hand belongs is, of course, Molly Bloom.37 It is at this moment that the small connections that have seemingly linked Murphy and Bloom together are validated, and it becomes clear that the two are mirrored opposites. Bloom is the son of an immigrant, and a social outsider in Dublin because of it, but he’s spent nearly his entire life in Ireland; Murphy thinks of himself as so Irish that he feels he can judge just how Irish Stephen’s father is (“—He’s Irish, the seaman bold affirmed...All Irish (16.382-3)), but he hasn’t been in the country for the last seven years. Molly becomes in this moment the lynchpin of their connection.

It is soon revealed that this inverted pairing extends even to the characters from myth the two men most closely parallel: Bloom, wily Odysseus; Murphy, Sinbad the Sailor. Murphy’s link to Sinbad is stated plainly a few pages later in “Eumaeus,” when the narrator refers to him as “friend Sinbad and his horrifying adventures” (16.858). Murphy then boasts still later in the episode that he “could read a book in the dark, manner of speaking. The Arabian Nights Entertainment was my favourite” (16.1679-80). These two mentions are the most explicit, but the connections between Murphy and Sinbad run throughout “Eumaeus.” There are, for example, Murphy’s many monstrous encounters (“We was chased by pirates one

37 This is confirmed in “Penelope,” wherein Molly thinks: “when I threw the penny to that lame sailor for England home and beauty” (18.346-7).
voyage” (16.460)), or the fact that the “seven years” he’s been gone mirror the seven voyages of Sinbad. In order to determine how and why Joyce is in dialogue with these stories, one must look to the stories themselves.

Gifford notes that *The Arabian Nights Entertainment* was “introduced into English in the first two decades of the nineteenth century; a complete, unexpurgated translation, *The Thousand Nights and a Night* (1885-88) was done by Sir Richard Burton.”38 It is known that Joyce had read Burton, as he “owned all seventeen volumes” of this particular translation when he was living in Paris.39 Burton, in footnotes he provides for his reader, draws clear parallels between the adventures of Sinbad the Seaman and the trials of Odysseus.40 In doing so, he asserts a Eurocentric dominion over the text, reducing it, as Said in particular argues, to “a domain of actual scholarly rule and potential imperial sway.”41 In essence, he colonizes the text. It is clear why Joyce would have been drawn to this particular translation. In addition to the aspect of its fundamental colonized state of being, the text seems to suggest that “Sinbad” is just another name for “Odysseus,” that the stories and characters in them, through a change of locality, come to be called different things. In Burton’s text, the actual Sinbad parallels the actual Odysseus; in Joyce’s, the Irish Sinbad parallels the Irish Odysseus. By differing circumstances, differing localities, they come to be called different things, but they are undoubtedly connected.

38 Gifford, 559.
40 In “The Third Voyage of Sinbad the Seaman,” he remarks that the giant Sinbad faces “is distinctly Polyphemus” (24); in “The Fourth Voyage,” he goes so far as to call Sinbad “Our Arabian Ulysses,” writing that he “had probably left a Penelope or two at home and finds a Calypso in this Ogygia” (40); still later, he links the story of Sinbad’s men eating the Rukh’s egg to “the companions of Ulysses who ate the sacred oxen,” and writes that the King in “The Sixth Voyage” is “the Alcinous of our Arabian Odyssey (49,65); all quotes from: Richard Burton, translator, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, Vol. VI (Printed by the Burton Club for Private Subscribers Only, 1885).
Katie Logan contends, in a discussion on *Nights* in a wider context throughout *Ulysses*, that “the *Nights* emphasizes the global implications of the storytelling techniques in *Ulysses* and underscores the colonial frameworks in which both texts were produced.” She argues:

engagement of *Ulysses* with the *Nights* establishes a connection between Joyce’s Irish heritage and its colonial history under the British and the imperial relationship between Persian and Arabian cultures that produced the earliest written editions of the *Nights*. Using the *Nights*, Joyce employs what [she terms] an empathetic intertextuality that suggests parallel if not shared histories across wide geographic and temporal divides.

This reading could be applied with a narrower focus to “Eumaeus,” with Murphy functioning as Sinbad in careful correspondence to Bloom as a means by which Joyce is able to access this “parallel” global history. The manner by which Murphy is introduced is also notably colonial. He is attracted by a rumination on names that comes from Shakespeare; Stephen’s complex relationship with the bard offers “a subtle indication of the complicity of high culture in the expansion of British imperial power.” This points to the fact that Shakespeare, like Homer, has come to be used as a validating tool in English imperialist expansionism. Murphy then gives his name and mentions that he’s been sailing “for England, home and beauty,” a snippet from a song that stresses the importance of English subjects fighting on behalf of British colonialism. “Murphy,” as a name, evokes a specific kind of Irish colonized subject; the later naming of him as “friend Sinbad” evokes another, globalized and yet still

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42 Logan, abstract.
43 Ibid.
45 Gifford gives the full lyrics on page 265. Interestingly, when Bloom thinks of the lyric briefly in “Eumaeus,” he switches the country (“Ireland expects that every man”), perhaps compounding English nationalist imperialist attitudes with the nationalist anti-imperialist attitudes of certain Irish (16.648).
colonized, subject. Joyce, through Murphy/Sinbad, introduces a character who is at once emphatically Irish and emphatically worldly, an embodied mythic touchstone who, in being cast as parallel to Bloom, enables Bloom to transcend the locality of his Dublin and, seemingly unbeknownst to him, situate himself in a global colonialist context.

It is Molly’s birthplace, however, that is the bedrock on which Murphy and Bloom’s connection is built. Bloom, wanting to talk about the place outside of Ireland with which he has the greatest connection, engages Murphy. “—Have you seen the rock of Gibraltar? Mr Bloom inquired. The sailor grimaced, chewing, in a way that might be read as yes, ay, or no” (16.611). Unsatisfied, Bloom presses him:

—Ah, you’ve touched there too, Mr Bloom said, Europa point, thinking he had, in the hope that the rover might possibly by some reminiscences but he failed to do so, simply letting a spirt of jet spew into the sawdust, and shook his head with a sort of lazy scorn. —What year would that be about? Mr Bloom interrogated. Can you recall the boats? Our soi-disant sailor munched heavily awhile hungrily before answering: –I’m tired of all them rocks in the sea, he said, and boats and ships. Salt junk all the time. (16.614-23)

Murphy’s response, or lack thereof, can be read in at least two ways. There is the possibility, of course, that he has, as Bloom suspects, been lying about his adventures. He could be unwilling to discuss a place with which someone in the shelter is familiar, as he could be exposed as a fraud; “soi-disant” strengthens this reading.46 The other option is that Murphy has in fact been to Gibraltar, and, for whatever reason, it triggers in him a marked desire to stop talking about his journeys. This

46 If, in fact, Murphy has never been, Bloom could think of himself as an explorer in his own right, having a familiarity with a place to which not even the brave adventurer has traveled. Bloom would undoubtedly favor this possibility, as it is pointed out in “Eumaeus” that he thinks of himself as “at heart a born adventurer though by a trick of fate he had consistently remained landlubber” (16.502-3).
reading provides another inverted link between Murphy and Bloom: while Gibraltar is a global space for Bloom, idealized in his mind for the foreignness he associates with the place, Murphy thinks of it as nothing more than “rocks in the sea.” The sailor’s refusal to talk about it allows Bloom to continue to abstract the fortress in attractive foreignness.

Bloom continues to dwell on Gibraltar and Murphy throughout “Ithaca,” and it is mentioned the most in this episode out of any other than “Penelope.” As Bloom considers the various reasons for “departure (change of place),” he includes “the straits of Gibraltar (the unique birthplace of Marion Tweedy)” among the “considerations [that] rendered departure desirable” (17.1983-4, 1968). Bloom wants, in other words, to escape from Dublin. The parenthetical clarifier, which is unnecessary at this point, as it has been made clear that Molly is from Gibraltar, highlights the association Bloom draws between his wife and attractive exoticism, and Gibraltar becomes a manifestation of his wife’s foreignness. It remains for him an abstraction, but it is made somewhat familiar through his connection with Molly, and through her he accesses it. Bloom then considers leaving Ireland, in an attempt “to counteract by impermanent sojourn the permanence of arrest” (17.1960-1). He has clearly been influenced and perturbed by his encounter with Murphy, a man so like him who has spent his life travelling, and he desires a change. He has also apparently been thinking about the nature of names: “What universal binomial denominations would be his as entity and nonentity? Assume by any or known to none. Everyman or Noman” (17.2006-8). Stephen’s question, “What’s in a name?”, and Murphy’s

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47 For example: Bloom remembers conversations similar to the one he has with Stephen held on walks “between Gibraltar villa and Bloomfield house in Crumlin (17.46-7; 52). Later, the narrator makes specific note of “Hozier’s History of the Russo-Turkish War,” published in Gibraltar, mentioning that it is “the largest in bulk” on Bloom’s shelf (17.1385).
answer, so bound in a specific place, appears to have made an impression on Bloom. In an instance that recalls Odysseus’ encounter with Polyphemus, Bloom seeks to abandon his own name in order to become someone who is everyone and, by extension, no one.\textsuperscript{48} He seems to have agreed with Murphy, and his father Rudolf Virag, on the fact that names contain and evoke the localities that produce them, and Bloom wants to transcend this locality. The anonymity towards which he strives is at once as alienating as it is unifying. The convention of naming binds a subject both within itself and to a certain place outside itself; Bloom, in this instance, seeks to abandon both.

These events of “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca” then come to a head in the final questions of the novel’s penultimate episode, as Bloom lays in bed next to Molly in his last few moments of wakefulness. The narrator notes that Bloom is weary, as “He has travelled” (17.2320). Taken literally, this is simply a reference to all of the walking Bloom did around Dublin that day. The question that follows complicates the simplicity of this reading:

With?

Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailer and
Whinbad the Whaler and Ninbad the Nailer and Finbad the Failer and
Binbad the Bailer and Pinbad the Pailer and Minbad the Mailer and
Hinbad the Hailer and Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and
Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and Xinbad the Phthailer.
(17.2321-6)

It has already been established that Sinbad is Murphy, and that Murphy’s “horrifying adventures” are global in nature. For Bloom to think of himself as traveling with Murphy is to draw a clear link between travelling around the world and wandering

around Dublin. Joyce wants the reader to think of his book as located in a global colonized context beyond Ireland. Logan writes that “[Joyce’s] empathetic intertextuality introduces global literatures and histories into a national discussion without erasing the importance of specific communities.” Her analysis offers a clear distinction from that of Said’s. Throughout both *Culture and Imperialism* and *Orientalism*, Said posits that the ideas and ideologies from colonized spaces that are reproduced in the literature of Western Europe are subsumed into Eurocentric methodology. Conversely, Logan contends that, in offering a portrait of Murphy as Sinbad, Joyce at once aligns the culture that produced *Ulysses* with that which birthed *The Nights* while simultaneously underscoring the fundamental distinctions between these two communities. Bloom is connected with a more globalized literature and history through Murphy, who is Sinbad but is also importantly D.B Murphy of Carrigaloe. The long list of punning names can therefore be read as Joyce’s joking answer to “What’s in a name?” Names bind individual nature in a specificity of individuality that the nature of the individual itself rejects, and so Joyce explodes the entire notion of naming with his joking list. Murphy, when called Murphy, hails from Carrigaloe, and is nothing more than a fellow Irishman. When he is called Sinbad, however, he is bound not to a specific place but specifically to a lack of place; this is taken even further, nearly *ad absurdum*, with Joyce’s list. Murphy becomes not just Sinbad but also Tinbad and Jinbad and so on in a total rejection of any sense of naming or locality whatsoever.

The penultimate question then connects to a specific moment from *The Nights*: “When? Going to dark bed there was a square round Sinbad the Sailor’s roc’s...”

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49 Logan, 83.
auk’s egg in the night of the bed of all the auks of the rocs of Darkinbad the Brightdayler” (17.2327-30). This is a punning reference to “The Second Voyage of Sindbad the Seaman,” wherein the sailor ties himself to a mother roc to escape from a deserted island. By aligning the bed in which Bloom is ending his day with the method of Sindbad’s escape, Joyce invites the reader to think of Bloom as leaving Dublin. The domestic space of the roc in the Sindbad story is what enables the sailor’s getaway, just as this domestic space enables Bloom’s access to globality.

“Ithaca” then ends in a final “Where?” that is answered only with a large dot (17.2331). It is an interpretive opening, a moment in the text that rejects any sort of definitive explanation. “Ithaca” builds to this climaxing “Where?”, pulling in questions about location and locality, name and place, Ireland and its relationship to the globe beyond its borders, and pointedly leaves the question unanswered. It is the moment in the text where Bloom, defined throughout the novel by movement and wandering, comes to a final halt, and yet it is his most globalized and furthest dislocated moment in the novel. “Ithaca” then leads directly into “Penelope,” the episode wherein the geographic spaces of Gibraltar and Ireland are confounded and confused in Molly’s nightly imaginings. Given this context, one potential interpretation of the dot is that it evokes Gibraltar and, from this jumping-off point, the rest of the world in totality.

50 In his “The Full Stop at the End of “Ithaca”: Thirteen Ways – and Then Some – of Looking at a Black Dot” (Joyce Studies Annual, 1996, pp. 125-44), Austin Briggs lays out several of the multitudinous and varied interpretations of the black dot; it is simultaneously Molly’s bed, Penelope’s bed, the omphalos, Ithaca, Ireland, and Gibraltar (and many other things besides).

51 In “The Logic of ‘Ulysses’; Or, Why Molly Had to Live in Gibraltar” (Critical Inquiry, vol. 10, no. 4, 1984, pp. 567–578. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1343311), William R. Rader makes a similar argument. He points out that the “roc’s/auk’s eggs are immediately echoed in the opening of “Penelope” in Molly’s famous meditation on the two eggs that Bloom has ordered for his breakfast;” he also contends that “the roc’s/auk’s conjecture…is intended to allow” for “rocks,” which he connects to the Rock of Gibraltar (576).
Why Gibraltar?

Multiple critics have commented on the ostensible strangeness of Joyce’s choice to end his foundational Irish epic in Gibraltar, the rocky British territory just south of Spain that Joyce himself never visited. It is, as one points out, “unique in Joyce’s work and marks a rare departure for him from Dublin and environs, of which he possessed almost unfailing knowledge.” Phillip F. Herring believes the setting to be largely irrelevant: “Ultimately Gibraltar is a dash of local color in the drab landscape of Dublin that was never meant to be examined closely.” He asserts that Joyce chose the location as Molly’s birthplace for three simple reasons:

(1) epic topography: Gibraltar is at the mouth of a great womb, the end of the known world for ancient mariners, part of the Pillars of Hercules through which, as Richard Ellmann has noted, Dante’s Ulysses was obliged to sail…(2) It was there that Willie Mulvey was stationed, an old flame of Joyce’s wife Nora Barnacle; (3) Molly’s character is based in part on that of Nora, who came from Galway, a city known for its Spanish connections.

Michael Seidel summarizes Herring’s first reason neatly: “Gibraltar appears at the end of Ulysses to provide Dublin a connecting, Mediterranean axis.” James Van Dyck Card offers a study of Joyce’s notes and manuscripts, and lists several sources he is certain Joyce read as he crafted what Card coins “a simulacrum of verisimilitude” of Gibraltar. Card concentrates most heavily on Henry Field’s 1888 book *Gibraltar*, in which the English author describes a visit he took to the outpost in

53 Herring, 516.
54 Herring, 518.
56 Van Dyck Card, 21.
1886. He is thorough in his analysis of *Gibraltar’s* relevance in *Ulysses*, pointing to a number of moments in “Penelope” where Joyce is either clearly influenced by Field or repeats a phrase from his history verbatim. This is Card’s primary concern. He largely ignores why Joyce chose to draw so heavily from Field’s book specifically, a book in which Field describes Gibraltar as a place “unique in position, in picturesqueness, and in history.”

He demonstrates that Joyce was unquestionably reading Field, but does not comment on the sociopolitical and historical implications for *Ulysses* that come with its being in dialogue with the text.

Anti-imperialist inklings sporadically creep into Field’s history. While he does not go so far as to condemn British colonialism, conceding that “the English have taken it and hold it, and by right of war it belongs to them, as a fortress belongs to the power that is strongest,” he does express a certain uneasiness with this notion.

“There is one thing in Gibraltar which strikes me unpleasantly,” he writes, “and yet (such are the contradictions in our likes and dislikes) it is the very thing which has made it so attractive, viz., the English occupation.” Field is here tapping into an idea about colonization that Joyce picks up on. This is perhaps an unknowing acknowledgment that “colonialism, in essence, operates on opposing principles,” that contradiction is inherent in a colonialist situation. Field continues: “And so it remains that England holds Gibraltar, I will not say in an enemy's country, but certainly in a foreign country—a fact which, however it be disguised, it is not

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58 Field, 110.
59 Ibid.
60 Bazargan, 121; Bazargan makes three central claims about the chapter, arguing that “by extending the topography of his text to Gibraltar, Joyce was able to (1) synecdochally represent British imperialism, (2) project colonialism in its contemporary, international guise in his study of the displaced and dispossessed, and (3) associate the theme of colonialism and its implications with the female persona.”
pleasant to contemplate.” Field, it seems, is aware of the fact that something is amiss in Gibraltar, and, towards the end of his history, perhaps even offers a tacit disavowal of colonialism as practice. This undoubtedly would have appealed to Joyce, and it is possible to read his primary choice of subtext in “Penelope” as a further condemnation of British imperialist practices both in Ireland and elsewhere.

Perhaps most pleasing to Joyce would have been Field’s early description of an English soldier:

I thought how hard was the fate of the English soldier: to be an exile from the land of his birth, “a man without a country”; who may be ordered to any part of the world (for such is the stern necessity, if men are to defend "an Empire on which the sun never sets"); serving in many lands, yet with a home in none; to sleep at last in a nameless grave!

It is easy to apply Field’s description of “a man without a country” to Ulysses’ three central characters. Field’s mention that being an English soldier entails “serving in many lands, yet with a home in none” is recalled in Stephen’s claim that he is “a servant of two masters…an English and an Italian,” and by the fact that he has no home to sleep in that night (1.638). Bloom can be read as a “man without a country,” as, though he interacts with many people over the course of his day, there seems to be no one with whom he shares a genuine friendship. He is not entirely socially outcasted, but he does not appear to be a fully accepted member of the Dublin community that views him, in many instances, through an anti-Semitic, xenophobic lens. And finally, Molly is “an exile from the land of [her] birth,” perceived by many in Dublin, including her own husband, to be somehow not-Irish. Taken together, these

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61 Field, 111.
62 Field, 47.
facts highlight that Joyce’s infatuation with a fluidity of being extends even to
_Ulysses_’ subtexts: the colonizing British soldier of Gibraltar and the colonized Irish
citizens of Dublin are compounded.

So too are the worldly traveler of the surrounding oceans (Murphy) and the
local wanderer of the city (Bloom), and their mythic parallels (Sinbad and Odysseus).
Throughout the novel’s concluding chapter, this fluidity becomes most readily
apparent. Molly often confuses and compounds areas in Ireland with places in
Gibraltar, the people she knew during her childhood with the people she knows now.
She is half-asleep, and in this state achieves a transcendence of identity and locality
towards which Joyce strives throughout his novel. As previously noted, McGarrity
asserts that “the Martello Tower at Sandymount opens Ulysses as a colonial novel
and Joyce as centrally evoking the history of Ireland as colony.”\(^{63}\) This tower is
mirrored at the novel’s conclusion in the Pillars of Hercules on Gibraltar, which
Henry Field describes thusly: “the Pillars of Hercules, that once marked the very end
of the world; and around its base ancient and modern history flow together, as the
waters of the Atlantic mingle with those of the Mediterranean.”\(^{64}\) At Sandymount the
novel’s post-colonialist undertones are set; on Gibraltar, they are situated in a global
context. In both places in the novel, antiquity and modernity, and history and myth,
flow together. This fluidity, this amalgamation of time and place, gets at the inherent
“ambivalence and contradiction” that typify colonized life, “since colonialism, in
essence, operates on opposing principles.”\(^{65}\)

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\(^{63}\) McGarrity, _Washed by the Gulf Stream_, 88.

\(^{64}\) Field, preface.

\(^{65}\) Bazargan, 121.
Joyce’s solution to this paradoxical adjoining of space, place, time, and identity is to render his characters and his localities as inherently ever-changing. Just as Bloom and Murphy are linked, both intra- and intertextually, so that the identities of either could be conflated or confused with the other, so are Ireland and Gibraltar, Ireland and England, Odysseus and Sinbad, the Irish Sea and the Mediterranean. This fluidity of being defines the novel holistically and comes to a head in its concluding episode.

**Gibraltar in “Penelope”**

The first mention of Gibraltar by name in “Penelope” comes a few pages into Molly’s soliloquy:

> I popped straight into bed till that thunder woke me up God be merciful to us I thought the heavens were coming down about us to punish us when I blessed myself and said a Hail Mary like those awful thunderbolts in Gibraltar as if the world was coming to an end. (18.136-7)

Molly’s thinking that it was “as if the world was coming to an end” can be read as a nod to the mythic history that is linked to Gibraltar, as the aforementioned Pillars of Hercules once marked the end of the inhabitable world. Furthermore, the connection between Gibraltar and sleep reinforces the earlier connection made at the end of “Ithaca.” The “Where?” posed to Bloom as he was drifting off is answered only by the large circle, which, as I contended, could be interpreted as a stand-in for Gibraltar and, through the Rock, the rest of the world at large; this reading of the circle is strengthened by the fact that the first time Molly thinks of her birthplace is in the same context as that in which the circle appears.
Gibraltar’s first mention in “Penelope,” then, is linked with sleep, or, more specifically, an inability to sleep. Molly makes this connection at least thrice more in “Penelope.” She mentions it a few pages after its initial occurrence as she recalls a night spent with a childhood friend on the Rock: “we were like cousins what age was I then the night of the storm I slept in her bed she had her arms round me then we were fighting in the morning with the pillow what fun” (18.640-3). The fact that Molly did not sleep in her own bed, coupled with the memory that her friend “had her arms round me,” indicate that, even if she did sleep for a bit, her rest was troubled. A few moments later, she remembers the first time she saw Captain Grove on Gibraltar, a man for whom she had feelings as a child: “I looked up at the church first and then at the windows then down and our eyes met…the excitement like a rose I didnt get a wink of sleep” (18.645-6, 651). And lastly, after she has successfully broken wind without waking her husband, she thinks of the dangers of leaving the gas on all night and recalls how, even in her childhood, this worry would keep her up: “I couldnt rest easy in my bed in Gibraltar even getting up to see why am I so damned nervous about that” (18.914-6).

Molly clearly, then, associates Gibraltar with a specific form of restlessness. Her inability to fall asleep at present, in Dublin lying next to her husband, mirrors the many instances when she was unable to fall asleep in Gibraltar, which perhaps catalyzes her many childhood recollections. What remains is a contradictory sort of static motion: Molly is, literally, lying in bed, immobile for the most part, and yet her soliloquy is the most globalized part of a novel that is defined by wandering, the furthest removed from Dublin. At the end of “Ithaca,” the reader is removed from Bloom’s sleeping consciousness as he drifts off and travels to Gibraltar in his
dreamstate with Murphy as Sinbad; later, Molly, as she lays in bed attempting to drift off, remembers a previous time when she had been wrenched from sleep into wakefulness by thunder that reminds her of Gibraltar. She then proceeds to travel there in her own semi-dreamstate, marking on several occasions the times where she was unable to sleep on Gibraltar. The inverted modes by which Molly and Leopold are able to access this space is made manifest in the inverted manner by which they sleep together. As Molly points out, they lie head to foot next to each other, “with his big square feet up in his wives mouth” (18.1206). The idea behind this static motion is inherently contradictory and paradoxical, as is much of “Penelope,” and Joyce lets it stand as it is. To remedy these two terms is impossible and seems to imply that the fluidity of being that typifies “Penelope” extends beyond identities and localities but to the very status of the identities and localities as they exist in space. Gibraltar is at once both visited and abstracted, just as Molly is at once mobile and immobile. This fluidity of motion and rest links her with her husband, who, at the end of “Ithaca,” is in the same situation.

Bloom is more explicitly linked with Molly’s past life on Gibraltar later in the episode. “You never know what freak theyd take alone with you,” she thinks, “theyre so savage for it if anyone was passing so I lifted them a bit and touched [Leopold’s] trousers outside the way I used to Gardner” (18.311-3). Gardner is the soldier with whom Molly had a relationship before she met Leopold, and she often thinks of them together throughout her internal monologue: “I liked the way he made love then he knew the way to take a woman…but he never knew how to embrace well like Gardner I hope hell come on Monday as he said” (18.328-9, 331-2). The quoted fragment is, like all of Molly’s soliloquy, vague. The first three “he”s all refer to
Leopold; the latter two to Blazes Boylan, the man with whom Molly is having an affair; and then, finally, there is Gardner. They are conjoined as lovers of Molly and, as the ambiguity of her internal monologue suggests, the individuality of each man is muddied in another rejection of singularity. Gardner is the only one named because his name, for Molly, is bound in and evokes the locality of Gibraltar.

Molly then moves on to become her most political when she thinks of “the last concert [she] sang at” (18.374). Based on her recollections, it did not go as she wanted: “little chits of missies they have now singing Kathleen Kearney and her like on account of father being in the army and my singing the absentminded beggar and wearing a brooch for Lord Roberts” (18.375-8). Kathleen Kearney is a character in “A Mother,” a story from Joyce’s *Dubliners*, whose mother tries to catalyze her singing career by taking advantage of the fact that she shares a name with Kathleen ni Houlihan, a traditional symbol of Ireland; this is yet another example of a name evoking the locality that produced it. It is apparent that Molly’s audience is pro-nationalist and, as Gifford points out, she thinks they “are discriminating against her because of her father’s army career (making him anti-Irish).” Gifford also notes that “the absentminded beggar” is a reference to a song of the same name, and writes that “during the Boer War intensely anti-British Irish nationalists were inclined to be as intensely pro-Boer, and this song of Kipling’s was regarded as pro-British.” It is also a reference to the moment where Molly “threw the penny to that lame sailor for England home and beauty,” linking this moment of highly-charged nationalist

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66 Gifford, 614.
67 Gifford, 614.
recollected with Murphy and with the human consequence of British expansion abroad (18.346-7).

Taken together, then, the small scene is a manifestation of Molly’s status as a political outsider within Dublin that is accessed through the Boer War. M. Keith Booker argues that Joyce uses “the Boer War as an emblem of English colonial expansionism.” Here, it marks Molly’s differences that are born of this colonial expansionism. Molly, however, does not consider the political ramifications of her song choice or brooch. She is representing unpopular political opinions, but she also is, importantly, excluded entirely from politics, both British and Irish, by virtue of her womanhood. Indeed, she rejects entirely the politics that have themselves rejected her. In reference to Leopold, she thinks “he was going about with some of them Sinn Fein lately or whatever they call themselves talking his usual trash and nonsense” (18.383-4). Molly’s misremembering of the name of Sinn Féin, the left-wing Irish nationalist party focused on a reunified Irish state, can be read most obviously as a Freudian slip. As she bluntly puts it: “I hate the mention of their politics” (18.387-8).

She aligns herself with the British army, then, because of her father and because of her childhood on Gibraltar, which she idealizes in her imaginings as a means of liberating escapism. This, of course, is another parallel between Molly and her husband: Leopold, as previously noted, thinks of Gibraltar as one of the places that made a change in locality desirable. Gibraltar itself therefore functions in two mutually exclusive modes in the novel. For the reader, it evokes mythology and colonialism (which, of course, are intertwined); for Molly and Leopold, it is an

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68 Booker, 86.
idealized space, free from the ardent nationalism (the result of pushback against British colonialism) that has come to typify the zeitgeist of their Dublin and marks both of them as outsiders.

Molly makes it clear she is not thinking of the politics of colonialism shortly. “Or the lancers,” she thinks, “O the lancers theyre grand or the Dublins that won Tugela” (18.402-3). Gifford notes that it is unclear exactly which regiment of lancers to which Molly is referring, but her immediate follow-up with “the Dublins that won Tugela” suggests that it is the Royal Irish Lancers.69 For Molly, these Irish soldiers are a source of pride, a manly attraction: “I love to see a regiment pass in review” (18.397-8). They are idealized in the same way that Gibraltar itself is, an embodiment of the idyllic life she had on the Rock in her childhood. She continues: “his [Boylan’s] father made his money over selling horses for the cavalry” (18.403). This is not the first time a reference has been made to the export of Irish horses for military services abroad.

In “Cyclops,” the citizen refers to “our farfamed horses” in a rant about the exploitation of Irish resources by international powers (12.1252-3). In the same monologue, he also asks, “Where are the Greek merchants that came through the pillars of Hercules, the Gibraltar now grabbed by the foe of mankind, with gold and Tyrian purple to sell in Wexford at the fair of Carmen?” (12.1248-50). It is the citizen’s opinion that the Irish traders have been taken advantage of, that they have been left with “ruined trade and…ruined hearths” to “die of consumption” (12.1255, 1257). In “Penelope,” Molly refutes this claim. What is present is a dichotomy of interpretation with Gibraltar as its connecting point. The citizen conflates Gibraltar’s

69 Gifford, 614.
occupation by the British with Irish economic decline; Molly, with economic flourishing. Gibraltar, then, assumes here a role of economic joinder between Ireland and the world at large, a marker of and access point to the British occupation that influences Ireland’s relations with the rest of Europe and abroad. Joyce is being “careful that his assaults on British imperialism not be taken simply as direct support for an Irish nationalism that was, in many ways, itself a product of British imperialism, and was constantly in danger of repeating the ideological inclinations of its colonial antagonists.”

Molly rejects the idea that her apparent sympathies for the British military mark her as somehow non-Irish, thinking “I had a map of it all” (18.378). Her own husband disagrees. Leopold says, in “Eumaeus:”

My wife is, so to speak, Spanish, half that is. Point of fact she could actually claim Spanish nationality if she wanted, having been born in (technically) Spain, i.e. Gibraltar. She has the Spanish type. Quite dark, regular brunette, black. I for one certainly believe climate accounts for character (16.876-880).

Leopold suggests here that, not only does Molly not look Irish, but that her character is different as well. When the two instances are placed in dialogue together, Joyce’s inclination towards embodied locality comes into focus. It has already been noted that he thinks of “Penelope” as functioning as an “earthball,” with its four cardinal points in the “breasts, arse, womb, and cunt.” Gibraltar, as a space accessed through Molly’s memory, is organized, it seems, by means of her four bodily points. Importantly, however, “Penelope” as a whole does not take place entirely on Gibraltar; Ireland also feature prominently. The “earthball” to which Joyce refers can therefore be read as

70 Booker, 100.
both Gibraltar and Ireland, compounded throughout the episode in Molly herself. The fluidity of being that defines the characters Molly thinks of – her former and current lovers – extends even to the spaces that produce both of them, and both of them are contained and reproduced in Molly’s body. She is not wholly Spanish, or Gibraltarian, or Irish, but reflects a multitudinous refraction of localities in her very physicality. Her body, like a name, contains and evokes the localities that produced it. Furthermore, aligning Molly’s female body with two distinct colonized spaces allows Joyce to associate a colonized space with a colonized body. As Booker points out, Molly is bound by an “entrapment within the world of the private and the domestic, an entrapment that effectively precludes women from participation in politics and thereby ensures their continuing subjugation.”

The same, of course, can be said of the Irish, who are, as colonized subjects, excluded from their governing political body.

While Molly may be perceived as non-Irish, as containing a locality beyond that of the island, she herself claims Irishness. There is her earlier assertion that she had a “map of it all,” and this later instance wherein she thinks of Gardner: “we kissed goodbye at the canal lock my Irish beauty” (18.391-2). Here, the assertion of her national identity comes from Gardner, a British soldier stationed on Gibraltar; in other words, somebody who is not himself Irish and in fact works for the force that is occupying the island. What is present, then, is an interesting dichotomy of perception. To Gardner, Molly is undoubtedly Irish, and he provides a sort of validation for Molly that she does not seem to find elsewhere. To her fellow Irish citizens, and indeed to her own husband, Molly is undoubtedly not Irish. Murphy parallels Molly

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“71 Booker, 101.”
in this regard. Both think of themselves as Irish, both have spent extensive time outside of the country, and both are perceived by Leopold as being somehow not Irish: Molly as a “Spanish type,” Murphy as “Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor, etc.” Because of this perceived non-Irishness, they both provide access points for Leopold – and the novel itself – to imagine life outside of Ireland. What emerges is a question about what exactly being Irish means and entails, and the answer *Ulysses* offers is that to be Irish is to be a contained multiplicity. Joyce’s book, and the characters therein, are cracked lookingglasses, reflecting a multitude from a singularity.

Molly’s affirmation of her love for Leopold at the end of “Penelope” is a microcosmic confirmation and acceptance of these multitudes, this fluidity of being. Molly recalls “the day [she and Leopold] were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me” (18.1572-4). The two of them are in Ireland but, as Molly points out, she “was thinking of so many things he didnt know of Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors” (18.1582-3). She was, in other words, thinking of her childhood, conflating Howth and Gibraltar as overlapping spaces, and conflating her soon-to-be husband with a litany of other individuals. It is a curious double removal, as she remembers an experience of remembering, and, removed as she is from both the instance of remembering and that which is remembered, she reduces the memory into a list of defining features:

the Spanish girls laughing in their shawls and their tall combs…the Greeks and the jews and the Arabs and the devil knows who else from all the ends of Europe…and those handsome Moors all in white and turbans like kings…and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes. (18.1586-1602)
The Gibraltar she remembers here is defined by globality and by fluidity. She remembers thinking of Leopold as she thought of her old lovers, of men with whom she has previously conflated both her husband and Boylan in the episode. In the instance recalled, only she and Leopold are present, but she brings into being people “from all the ends of Europe.” “The Spanish girls” signify the manner in which Leopold thinks of his wife; “the Greeks” evoke the Homerian theme that most obviously structures *Ulysses*; “the jews” suggest the way Leopold is perceived in Dublin; “the Arabs” remind the reader of Murphy as Sinbad; “and those handsome Moors” recall “the Moorish wall” under which Molly and Mulvey kiss (18.1604).

This fluidity of being that defines the moment Molly recalls also extends to her commitment to Leopold specifically: “I thought well as well him as another” (18.1604-5). Even in the context of expressly individualistic love, she evokes a sense of changeability. Leopold, in a moment of highly individualistic love, could easily be “another.” What is important, then, is that, out of all the others he could have been, Molly chose him specifically and, in choosing him, accepted all the potentialities and possibilities of being that define him as an individual. Molly’s affirmation is therefore more than a simple confirmation of her love for Leopold: “Would I yes to say yes my mountain flower…and yes I said yes I will Yes” (18.1606-9). “Mountain flower” is a repetition from earlier: “Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain.” In saying yes to Leopold, both in that moment in Howth and now in Dublin, she is affirming herself as well. The contradictions and paradoxes that have defined and continue to define her are not reconcilable with each other. She is a Spanish-born English subject living in Dublin; her psyche is undoubtedly and inarguably that of a
colonized subject, one defined by what Derek Walcott calls “the subtleties of contradiction.”\textsuperscript{72} The final message of \textit{Ulysses} is one of affirmation for these inherent subtleties.

Chapter II: Omeros

Conventions of Naming and Places

Throughout Omeros, Walcott focuses on conventions of naming, playing with the multitudinous array of languages that have been imposed on his homeland by foreign invaders. His chosen title is a Creolization of what one character claims is the Greek for Homer: “O was the conch-shell’s invocation, mer was / both mother and sea in our Antillean patois, / os, a grey bone, and the white surf as it crashes / and spreads its sibilant collar on a lace shore” (14). The title, and the way Walcott toys with it within the text itself hints at one of the ways that naming functions in the epic. Take, for example, Philoctete. As one critic points out, “The name Philoctete, a French form of a name from classical Greek myth, points at the outset to the hybridity that marks St. Lucia’s culture and the poem itself.”73 As has been made clear in Ulysses, names evoke the locality that produced them; the evoked locality here is at once Greece and France. The name marks the differences between the two spaces at the same time as it joins them in something distinctly Caribbean. There is a clear difference, then, between the methodology of naming in Ulysses and Omeros. While Joyce’s characters have many names that reflect the many differing aspects of their identity, these names never converge. Murphy, for example, is called Murphy only

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when he functions as a common Irishman, and Sinbad only when his worldly
adventures are referenced.

The same can be said of the way places function in each text. In *Ulysses*,
Ireland and Gibraltar are aligned and paralleled, but they are always separated in
space and time: Molly may confuse and compound the two places, but that occurs
only in her recollection. Though Ireland functions largely in the same way in *Omeros*
as Gibraltar does in *Ulysses*, and both places are accessed by a female persona who
was born there, the way each writer presents these spaces is different. As shown in
the introduction, Walcott points out early in his epic that St. Lucia is the “Gibraltar /
of the Caribbean;” there is an equation here not present in *Ulysses*. Later, as *Omeros*’
focus shifts across the Atlantic, St. Lucia and Ireland converge in a fluidity of being
that rejects spatial and temporal distinctions. This convergence allows Walcott to do
several things at once. Since he aligns Joyce with figures like Homer and Vergil,
Ireland provides a means for Walcott to link his Caribbean fiction with a colonized
Eurocentric mythology. At the same time, Ireland is at present colonized, and so it
also allows Walcott to broaden the scope of the colonized space he represents,
enabling him to situate St. Lucia in a global framework.

**Major and Maud Plunkett**

Major Plunkett and his wife Maud have names that stand out in *Omeros*, as
they are notably English; they are not, in other words, Creolized in any sense. The
Major’s first name is Dennis, but he is referred to most commonly throughout the text
as “The Major,” evoking the British military service that produced and defines him.
There is a tension between his signifiers, as his last name “is also linked to an Irish revolutionary, Joseph Mary Plunkett.”

This tension extends to his marriage, as his wife Maud is also linked with an Irish nationalist: “Maud also refers to Maud Gonne (1866-1953), the famous stage actress and Irish revolutionary involved in the Easter Rising.”

Maud is specifically known to be Irish, and it is through her that The Major is able to access and idealize Ireland in his mind, much like Leopold does with Gibraltar through Molly. Taken together, then, the two enable Walcott to link his own colonized island space with another one across the Atlantic.

Major Plunkett and Maud’s ties to Ireland are stressed from the first moment they are introduced: “Major Plunkett gently settled his Guinness / wiped the rime of gold foam freckling his pensioned moustache / with a surf-curling tongue. Adjacently, Maud sipped / quietly, wifely, an ale” (24). The Guinness hints at Irishness. The extensive use of adverbs – “gently,” “adjacently,” “quietly,” “wifely” – is a flourish particularly reminiscent of Joyce and differs noticeably from the style Walcott employs through most of the poem. Ireland is then specifically named, functioning as an idealized escape: “Their marriage / a silver anniversary of bright water / that glittered like Glen-da-Lough in Maud’s home country” (25). Major Plunkett seems to imagine Ireland as a place wherein his position as a colonizer is forgotten or irrelevant, which is, of course, a great irony. In this regard, Ireland functions like Gibraltar for Molly, her escape from the fact that the other citizens of Dublin with strong nationalist feelings think of her apparent ties to the British

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74 McGarrity, Allusions in Omeros, 35. McGarrity goes on to note that Joseph Mary Plunkett “participated in the Easter Rising of 1916 and was one of the men who signed the Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the People of Ireland. The British crown executed the historical Plunkett in May 1916 for his participation in the Easter Rising.”

75 McGarrity, Allusions in Omeros, 36.

76 Like Bloom in Ulysses, the two are introduced eating.
military as making her somehow not-Irish. Importantly, that which Walcott likens to Glen-da-Lough is the Major’s “marriage” to Maud; Ireland is, in other words, a literal union of colonizer and colonized, at least for Major Plunkett. He then continues to dwell on the injustices of his past, the mode by which he and his fellow soldiers colonized the Caribbean: “We helped ourselves / to these green islands like olives from a saucer, / munched on the pith, then spat their sucked stones on a plate” (25). He apparently overlooks the fact that Ireland itself can be included among the number of those “green islands” that the British military has forcefully occupied.

Maud and the Major are then tacitly linked to Molly and Leopold Bloom. The major recalls looking through “the Moorish arches of the hospital ward, / with a cloud wrapped around his head like an Arab, / he saw the blue Mediterranean, then Maud / lying on her back on the cliff” (28). The scene is reminiscent of the concluding moments of “Penelope.” The “Moorish arches” recall Molly’s “Moorish wall;” the “cloud wrapped around his head like an Arab,” the “Arabs” and “Moors all in white and turbans like kings;” “the blue Mediterranean,” Molly looking “out over the sea and the sky;” “lying on her back on the cliff,” “lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head.” The closing moments of “Penelope” are replete with floral imagery, and indeed Molly calls herself “a flower of the mountain” several times therein. Maud’s repeated association with flowers – “You are my tea-rose, my crown, my cause, my honour, / my desert’s white lily” – recalls this (28). There is also Maud’s “mapped arm;” the phrasing recollects that of Molly’s assertion that she had “a map of it all” (28). Molly’s nostalgia for Gibraltar is echoed in Maud’s “old longing…/ to see Ireland” (29). And, finally, there is the fact that “a son was missing” from their marriage, recalling Bloom’s recurrent anxieties about the death of his son Rudy (29).
Major Plunkett’s inability to see Ireland as colonized furthers McGarrity’s claim that, “due to Ireland’s lengthy experience of invasion from abroad, its subject status was often simply seen as the norm.”

This is noteworthy because of the Major’s relationship to history. The Major “is representative of historical representation,” and it is clear why. The first time the reader is granted access to “an evening with the Plunketts: he [is] marking cannons / by their Type, Trunions, Bore, Condition, Size, Weight, / in a marbled ledger, by order of Ordnance, / Cipher – GR. III, GR>IV, Site, Silhouette, Day” (88). Plunkett’s list of fastidiously attentive categories is nearly comical, but it highlights his obsessive belief that “history as meaningful action is coterminous with its ‘factual’ representation.”

He worries that “History will be revised, / and we’ll be its villians, fading from the map,” and so he tries to establish through a never-ending accrual of historical fact an unchangeable historical narrative (92). Within this narrative, he hopes to forge and defend an identity for himself, one that is “governed by and constitutive of a discourse of British imperialism.”

His desire to craft the history of colonialism is in itself a neocolonialist urge, one that Walcott subverts throughout the epic.

There is a futility inherent in Plunkett’s goal that is made expressly clear toward the end of the epic: “Now there were hundreds of Frenchmen / and British listening in their separate cemeteries, / who died for a lizard, for red leaves to belong / to their ranks, for that green flash that was History’s” (315). The Frenchmen and British are not named, as they have been forgotten. The description of History as a “green flash” evokes its fleetingness, its defining ephemerality. Williams argues quite

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77 McGarrity, Washed by the Gulf Stream, 18.
78 Williams, 277.
79 Williams, 279.
80 Williams, 278.
convincingly that Walcott’s repeated allusions to Homer are an effort to transcend this temporality. “The trans-historical register of myth,” he writes, “gains its value in *Omeros* by means of a foundational system of knowledge in relation to which the one-dimensional contingencies of the temporal world are relegated to the status of mere ephemera.”⁸¹ In other words, myth provides an access to the eternal that cannot be captured in recorded historical narrative. The narrator’s trip to Europe, and Ireland specifically, allows Walcott to access a spatialized manifestation of an intersection of myth and history that aims towards an ineffable transcendence of both, a fluidity of space and individuality that defies the conventions of nation and naming.

### Coming to Europe and Glen-da-Lough

In Book Five, the narrator journeys to and through Europe. He comes first to Portugal and moves swiftly to Britain, then almost immediately the location shifts back to the Caribbean and South America.⁸² McGarrity notes that “this radical switch in movement suggests a shifting and shadowing of character and location,” and indeed this fluidity of being, which is seen throughout the text, is perhaps most evident in this book.⁸³ The narrator quickly returns to Europe, looking backwards through the “gliding fog” of history towards empires that once were: “London, Rome, Greece” (196). Walcott is moving backwards in time, looking at past empires and the remnants they have left behind, but also pointing to the interconnectivity of these

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⁸¹ Williams, 284.
⁸² Lisbon is first called “this mud-caked settlement founded by Ulysses,” which serves as a link to myth, but could also be read as an acknowledgment of Joyce’s highly influential text (189).
empires. The Greeks influenced the Romans, the Romans and Greeks in turn the English, and the English in turn their colonies.

Walcott points here to the lineage of empire, the colonized inheritances that are passed down through the ages of differing empires. Joyce and his work embody this inheritance for Walcott, and this Joycean influence begins to take shape in Section III of Chapter XXXVIII, wherein Walcott mimics “Ithaca” from Ulysses. The section is brief, but it is written in the catechismal question-and-answer format of Episode Seventeen: “Who decrees a great epoch? The meridian of Greenwich;” and so on and so forth (196). Walcott here plays with a temporal and spatialized fluidity, confirming that he’s in dialogue with Ulysses. He writes: “Stand by the tilted crosses of well-quiet Glen-da-Lough. / Follow the rook’s crook’d finger to the ivied grange” (197). The “rook’s crook’d finger” echoes both sonically and functionally the “roc’s auk’s egg;” just as Joyce travels, in a sense, to Gibraltar with the roc, Murphy/Sinbad, and Molly, Walcott moves to Ireland with the rook and Maud Plunkett.

Ireland from its introduction is at once static and mobile, like Leopold and Molly in their bed: “The great headstones lifted like the keels of curraghs / from Ireland’s groundswell” (198). The stationary headstones are cast as moving boats, those devices which allowed one to move off the island. The convergence of land and sea, death and motion, suggests that Walcott’s Ireland is a space of junction. Mary W. Helms, on the topic of island life, writes: “Land is stable and heavy, weighted down, while the sea is associated with lightness, slipperiness, speed, and

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84 Ivy is used by Joyce to signal Irish nationalism throughout both Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.
85 McGarrity, on curraghs: “also curaghs or coracles; small, somewhat broad boats constructed of a light weight lathe or wicker frame that are covered with tarred canvas or sealed animal skins to form their hulls. [They are] identified with an impoverished peasant culture close to the sea” (Allusions in Omeros, 142).
upwardness.” By inverting this notion, Walcott highlights Ireland’s role in his text as connecting axis by which disparate entities – land and sea, Europe and the Caribbean, colonizer and colonized – can come together. This idea is furthered as Walcott continues: “and spray foamed on the walls / of the broken abbey” (198). The “broken abbey” is a shattered reminder of a religious past, that, like the headstones, signals the history of the place. It is the only thing that is inert, hinting at the paralyzing role religion plays in the Ireland of Omeros. It also marks Ireland as different from St. Lucia; tourists “go to St. Lucia in search of the pristine,” and it is clear why this is the case. There are no ruins of ancient cities or civilizations on the island to serve as tangible reminders of its antiquity. The victors of the island games mount “no Parthenon / to be laurelled;” “their arena” is “the sea’s amphitheatre” (32). This lack, for the tourists, signals a sense of Edenic tranquility on St. Lucia, one that is impossible on Walcott’s Ireland.

There are, however, commonalities between the two places that stem from both being colonized island nations. Walcott writes that “Silence was in flower” at Glen-da-Lough (198). The silence stems from the forgotten Irish language (more commonly known as Gaelic) that has been mostly supplanted in Ireland by English, the language of the colonizer. Though it is not commonly spoken by the Irish populace anymore, it appears to be interwoven into the fabric of the space. Walcott

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87 This concept recalls The Major’s earlier likening of his marriage to Glen-da-lough.
88 Austin, 30.
89 Glen-da-Lough is mentioned only once in the entirety of Ulysses, in a list of famed places from Irish antiquity: “The scenes depicted on the emunctory field, showing our ancient duns and raths and cromlechs and grianans and seats of learning and maledictive stones, are as wonderfully beautiful and the pigments as delicate as when the Sligo illuminators gave free rein to their artistic fantasy long long ago in the time of the Barmecides. Glendalough, the lovely lakes of Killarney, the ruins of Clonmacnois…” (12.1446-52).
writes that one can “hear a brook talk the old language of Ireland;” a few moments later he writes that “alder and aspen aged in one alphabet” (198, 199). This language excludes the narrator and, most likely, the reader.\textsuperscript{90} The narrator writes that he “had no oasis, / no pebbled language to drink from like a calm horse” (199).\textsuperscript{91} As he is not Irish, he is largely excluded from understanding, and yet still the “weight of the place” is contained in “its handle, its ancient name / for “wood with a lake,” or “abbey with hooded hills,” / rooted in the bucket’s clang, echoed the old shame / of disenfranchisement” (199).\textsuperscript{92} For Walcott, like Joyce, names evoke and contain the locality that produces them, and here this locality is defined by “the old shame of disenfranchisement,” by forced imperialist occupation.\textsuperscript{93} Even though he does not understand the “old language,” he feels the weight of the history it contains. This is made clear shortly: “The child-voiced brook repeated History’s lesson / as an elder clapped its leaves in approbation” (199). Walcott never makes clear exactly what “History’s lesson” is, but he continues immediately and makes note of what it is not: “until others swayed to the old self-possession / for which faith is known” (199). This “self-possession,” which Walcott aligns with faith, transcends religion. It contains religion, but it also encompasses the ardent nationalist tendencies that come to define Ireland.

\textsuperscript{90} Walcott hyphenates “Glen-da-Lough” throughout \textit{Omeros}. Typically in Irish writing – as evidenced by its lone appearance in \textit{Ulysses} – it is written as one word: Glendalough. This could be interpreted as Walcott’s tacit acknowledgment of his position of an outsider, his unfamiliarity with the language being rendered in the onomatopoeic hyphenated spelling.

\textsuperscript{91} “Pebbled language to drink from” is perhaps a nod to Yeats’ “Easter, 1916” (\textit{Poetry Foundation}, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43289/easter-1916), a poem about the nationalist Irish uprising on Easter, 1916: “Hearts with one purpose alone / Through summer and winter seem / Enchanted to a stone / To trouble the living stream.”

\textsuperscript{92} McGarrity notes that this could refer to the eighteenth century Penal Laws “imposed on the majority of native Irish, Roman Catholics, by a parliament comprising minority Protestants who identified with the English crown,” that denied Catholics property rights and civic representation (\textit{Allusions in Omeros}, 143)

\textsuperscript{93} Exactly to what Walcott is referring here will be explored fully in the following paragraph.
The narrator describes Ireland as “a nation / split by a glottal scream” (199). Walcott could refer here to the divide between the native Irish, overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and the occupying British, overwhelmingly Protestant, and the prevalence of religious imagery in the opening scene reinforces this reading. One critic points out that “St. Lucia is divided by race and class just as Ireland is split along religious and class lines.” In addition to the “broken abbey,” Walcott makes reference to “the monks’ footpath,” “a gap between hymns,” “a square Celtic cross,” and a “baptismal font” (198-9). The Ireland he conjures is one in which Catholicism, an ancient and foundational aspect of Irish life (that, interestingly, was brought to the island by colonizers), is present, but broken and inert. It is still an influential and important part of Ireland’s society and culture, but it remains rooted firmly in the past. These signs of Irish Catholicism are, for Walcott, a tangible reminder of British imperialist might, an embodiment of the paradox inherent to an Irish religious identity that was forced on the nation and then later discriminated against.

The “glottal scream” could also, however, allude to the split among the Irish themselves, the differing opinions held by the populace at large regarding the correct response to continued British occupation. Walcott writes about how “a Celtic rune / could send the horse circling with empty stirrup / from a sniper’s bolt” (199). He refers here to the violence that has typified Anglo-Irish relations for years, most pointedly in the Easter Rising of 1916 and throughout the late twentieth century in

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94 Hamner, 114.
95 In Portrait, Stephen claims: “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” (220).
96 Joyce makes these differing opinions overwhelmingly evident throughout Ulysses.
Northern Ireland during the troubles, which were reaching a fever-pitch as Walcott was writing his epic. The poem continues:

Here, from this abbey’s ruin,

if the rook flew north with its funereal caw,
far from this baptismal font, this silver weir
too high for inspection as it crossed the border,

it would see a street that ended in wreaths of wire
while a hearse with drizzling lights waits for an order
in a sharp accent, making the black boots move on

in scraping syllables, the gun on its shoulder,
still splitting heirs, dividing a Shem from a Shaun,
and Ireland no wiser as it got older (199).

The rook here journeys from Ireland into Northern Ireland which, since the early 1920s, remains a part of the United Kingdom. The bird evokes the violence that was common in Northern Ireland, with its “funereal caw,” and the violence is brought into poignant tangibility with the “wreaths of wire,” the “hearse,” and the “gun.” The “scraping syllables” contrast with the aforementioned lost language of the Irish land, marking a new language of the state defined by and rooted in violence. The punning “splitting heirs” refers to the forceful division of families who lived in different parts of the island imposed by the border wall.97

Finally, there is the reference to Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*. The invocation of two of the text’s central characters, Shem the Penman and Shaun the Postman, conjures the fluidity of being that characterizes Walcott’s Ireland. The two characters, “shifting representations of principal figures,…are twin brothers who signify opposing drives yet linked consciousnesses.”98 Colonialism in Ireland, it seems, has

97 It could also be another reference to the aforementioned Penal Laws, which denied Irish Catholics the laws of inheritance; Walcott evidently views assaults on the Irish nuclear family as a defining feature of British imperialism in Ireland.

created an environment wherein inextricably intertwined aspects of identity—Irishness and British subjugation—are fundamentally opposed. Ardent nationalism and the blowback it incites have led to an attempted separation of these paradoxical and yet inherent facets of Irish personhood, and they have since before Joyce was writing. The portrait Walcott presents of the island nation is a bleak one, defined by a Joycean paralysis that leaves it “no wiser as it got older.”

Walcott then pans out, and in a brief three tercets captures Ireland’s extant positionality as an island nation torn by conflicting religious and political ideology in a convergence of nature and colonialist oppression. He writes: “Though all its wiry hedgerows startle the spirit, / when the ancient letters rise to a tinker’s spoon, / banging a saucepan, those fields which they inherit / hide stones white-knuckled with hatred” (200). “Wiry hedgerows” recalls the aforementioned “street that ends in wreaths of wire;” the agents of colonialism have, it seems, begun to encroach on even the natural order of secluded Glen-da-Lough. The “ancient letters” could refer either to the prayer inscribed in “Celtic rune” or to “the old language of Ireland;” in either case, they evoke some sense of the ineffable “spirit” of a pre-colonized island, one that is “startled” by the violence, suggested by the wires, that now typifies life in the nation. “Tinker” is Irish slang for a member of an itinerant ethnic group, a wanderer like Achille and also a marginalized minority, like Bloom. It is the wanderers, the outcasts, who inherit Walcott’s Ireland, and this inheritance is underlain with turmoil;

99 Paralysis is a defining feature of Joyce’s Dubliners, a text about which he claimed, in a June 23, 1906 letter to Grant Richards: “I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking glass” (The Letters of James Joyce, Volume 1, 64).

100 The three tercets of Part II of Chapter XXXIX are particularly trinitarian.
the land itself is furious at its position as a colony, the “stones white-knuckled with hatred” recalling the earlier mentioned “pebbled language.”

Rising prominently above this scene of Irish history and its embedded colonialist violence is the Round Tower at Glen-da-Lough. Referring to the aforementioned broken abbey, Walcott writes, “the panes of blue sky in the abbey were all set in a past as old as Glen-da-Lough’s obelisk” (199). He plays with the homonymity of panes/pains, alluding to the strife that plagues sociocultural and political life on the island. This pain is as much a part of the natural world as the ruins of antiquity that populate Glen-da-Lough, entrenched in the being of the space. It is mentioned again on the following page, at the end of a short section woven from imagery of a Roman Catholic mass and the Irish bloodshed that stains it: “Along a yew-guarded road, / a cloud hung from a branch in the orange hour, / like a shirt that was stained with poetry and with blood. / The wick of the cypress charred. Glen-da-Lough’s Tower” (200). The scene is one defined by struggle and destruction, the compounding of Irish art and religion with butchery. The obelisk/tower, however, stands alone as its own sentence, removed from the preceding imagery. It is not “broken” like the abbey; it marks a different aspect of Irish history. According to the Wicklow County Tourism website, the tower’s main use was as a bell tower, but it also served as a place of refuge for the monks when the monastery was under attack, and as both a lookout post and a beacon for travelers. It is a sign, in other words, of openness, a signal of welcoming cast against and yet rising above a backdrop of savagery and violence. It contrasts starkly London’s “Bloody Tower,” noted a few

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101 McGarrity points out that, at over one hundred feet tall, the tower is “notably higher than its surroundings” (Allusions in Omeros, 145).

moments earlier, and with the Martello Tower that opens *Ulysses* and appears on the following page of *Omeros*: “from the Martello brought one-eyed Ulysses” (197, 201). It also connects Ireland as a space to Gibraltar, as it links with “O’Hara’s tower,” which was constructed by the military governor of Gibraltar “in order to watch the movements of the Spanish fleet.”103 If, as Maria McGarrity points out, the Martello tower marks *Ulysses* as a colonialist text, as it was built by colonists to protect Ireland from other colonizers, O’Hara’s tower functions in the same way on Gibraltar, bringing a satisfyingly cyclical fluidity to the novel. The obelisk/tower at Glen-da-Lough, then, stands in opposition, Walcott’s acknowledgment of an Irish history that was, at one point, open and welcoming.104

**Dublin, Joyce, and Myth**

Finally, the narrator comes to Dublin. “I leant on the mossed embankment,” Walcott writes, “just as if he / bloomed there every dusk with eye-patch and tilted hat / rakish cane on one shoulder” (200). The yet unnamed “he” is, of course, James Joyce, “our age’s Omeros.” “Bloomed” is a play on Leopold Bloom; “every dusk” recalls the “orange hour” noted earlier, and perhaps suggests that it is Joyce’s “shirt that was stained with poetry and with blood,” as, clearly, Walcott reads his works as deeply influenced by the British imperialist violence that produced them. “Rakish cane on one shoulder” recalls the earlier scene wherein the “black boots move on / in scraping syllables, the gun on its shoulder.” Here, the shouldered item of debonair

103 *Ulysses*, 18.783; Gifford, 621; the tower also parallels the Pillars of Hercules.
support contrasts the earlier instrument of violence; the “scraping syllables” of soldiers’ boots, the language from the “true tenor of the place.” It is with this description that Walcott establishes Joyce as the voice of Ireland. He is able to sound the “the old language of Ireland” that the narrator hears, but does not comprehend, from the brook and the trees at Glen-da-Lough. The “silence [that] was in flower” there mirrors the phrasing of “just as if he / bloomed;” without Joyce, there is nobody to capture Ireland’s voice.105

What follows is a moment of identity blending that recalls *Ulysses* while simultaneously linking Joyce’s Ireland with St. Lucia. “There’s a bower of roses by Bendemeer’s stream,” Walcott writes, “was one of the airs Maud Plunkett played, from Moore / perhaps, and I murmured along with them” (201).106 Moore is Thomas Moore, an Irish poet who “served the British crown in Bermuda.”107 The scene points back to Molly’s botched concert, at which she sang “the absentminded beggar and [wore] a brooch for Lord Roberts;” in this instance, however, the song of the colonizer is used to unite two distinct colonized spaces.108 Walcott, as he does with language in the naming of his characters, reclaims the music of the colonizer and turns it into something markedly colonized. The narrator communes with his characters, and with St. Lucia and Ireland, as he “murmured along with them.” As the scene continues, the characters begin to converge with others from Joyce: “The

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105 Walcott’s phrasing echoes the opening sentence of Djuna Barnes’ April 1922 profile of James Joyce for *Vanity Fair* ([www.vanityfair.com/news/1922/03/james-joyce-djuna-barnes-ulysses](www.vanityfair.com/news/1922/03/james-joyce-djuna-barnes-ulysses)): “There are men in Dublin who will tell you that out of Ireland a great voice has gone.”

106 The song is Thomas Moore’s “Bendemeer’s Stream” ([https://www.contemplator.com/ireland/bendmr.html](https://www.contemplator.com/ireland/bendmr.html)). Maud has been mentioned as playing this song before, in Chapter X, page 56: “[Major Plunkett] felt murderous / as the monsoon when she started playing some tripe / about ‘Bendemeer’s stream,’ each chord binding the house / with nerves of itching ivy”; ivy is a symbol Joyce employs, both in the story “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” from *Dubliners* and throughout *Portrait*, as evocative of fevered Irish nationalism.


Dead were singing in fringed shawls, the wick-low shade / leapt high and rouged their
cold cheeks with vermilion / round the pub piano” (201).\(^{109}\) “Wick-low” is a punning
reference to both worn candles and Maud’s home county; the two spaces, Dublin and
Wicklow, here seem to blend and converge in the pub, colored “in the dye of the New
World,” as are the characters.\(^{110}\) This moment in the text disproves the assertion that
“Maud’s Irishness remains through all of these roles and identities a constant, fixed
essence despite nearly 40 years of marriage to an Englishman and life as an expatriate
on a Caribbean island.”\(^{111}\) While her Irishness has remained an indelible aspect of her
personhood as sense of self, Walcott shows here that it has not been fixed and
unchanged. It, like the rest of her, has been washed “in the dye of the New World.”

This is not to say that her Irishness has in any sense vanished, but it has come
to be colored differently by her relationship with the Major and by her life in the
Caribbean. Maud is positioned not in Dublin, Wicklow, or St. Lucia; she is instead
rowing at the piano: “the air Maud Plunkett played, / rowing her with felt hammer-
strokes from my island / to one with bright doors and cobbles” (200). The choice of
verb situates her not on land but on the Atlantic, serving as an embodied intermediary
between Ireland and the Caribbean. As he did earlier in his description of Glen-da-
Lough, Walcott compounds the land and the sea, merging the two spaces, each an
inescapable aspect of island life, in a commonality of being that surpasses any sort of
individualized locality. In resurrecting Maud from the dead, Walcott transcends time

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\(^{109}\) “The Dead” is a reference to Joyce’s short story, from *Dubliners*, of the same name, in which
Gabriel Conroy grapples with love and identity and nationalism and the finality of life. The fact that
Major Plunkett is able to commune with Maud, his recently deceased wife, through art is perhaps a nod
to Stephen’s theory of *Hamlet* from Episode Nine of *Ulysses*. He (Stephen) asserts that William
Shakespeare played the ghost of Hamlet’s father in a production of *Hamlet* in order to communicate
with Hamnet Shakespeare, his (William’s) recently deceased son.


as well, pointing to the fact that Ireland in *Omeros* links ancient myth with modern politics, an island from which the past and the present converge in paradox.

Finally, Walcott calls Joyce by name: “and then Mr. Joyce / led us all, as gently as Howth when it drizzles, / his voice like sun-drizzled Howth, its violet lees / of moss at low tide, where a dog barks ‘Howth! Howth!’ at / the shawled waves” (200).\(^{112}\) Howth is where Molly and Leopold share a memorable, seedcaked kiss. Leopold recalls it several times over the course of his wandering throughout the city, and Molly remembers it, and its violets, in “Penelope.” The place is also conflated and compounded in Molly’s recollection with Gibraltar. As Walcott has already called St. Lucia the “Gibraltar / of the Caribbean,” this scene becomes a high point of convergence between Ireland and St. Lucia, *Ulysses* and *Omeros*. The scene that follows is replete with subtle allusions to Joyce’s text: “and the stone I rubbed in my pocket / from the Martello brought one-eyed Ulysses / to the copper-bright strand, watching the mail-packet / butting past the Head, its wake glittering like keys” (200). The pocketed stone mirrors the earlier references made to the stones and pebbles in Glen-da-Lough, especially given its colonialist origin “from the Martello,” but it also faintly recalls Leopold Bloom’s pocketed potato.\(^{113}\) “The Martello” harkens back to *Ulysses*’ notably colonialist opening; “the copper-bright strand,” Sandymount; “the mail-packet,” the “mailboat clearing the harbourmouth.”\(^{114}\) The descriptor “glittering

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\(^{112}\) Here again Walcott echoes Dante: Joyce serves as the narrator’s guide through Ireland much like Vergil guides Dante through Hell. Joyce himself relies heavily on imagery from Dante throughout his work, particularly in *Dubliners*, wherein his characters often find themselves in scenarios that draw from the punishments of Dante’s *Inferno*.

\(^{113}\) From *Ulysses*: “On the doorstep he felt in his hip pocket for the latchkey. Not there. In the trousers I left off. Must get it. Potato I have” (4.73).

\(^{114}\) *Ulysses*, 1.83.
like keys” can be read as an allusion to the fact that, at the start of their days, both Stephen and Bloom are without their keys.

Referring to Joyce as a “one-eyed Ulysses,” however, is perhaps the most important part of the scene. Malouf argues that, “as a Cyclopean Ulysses, Joyce represents both the barbaric Ireland described in the landscape and the exilic culture of Ireland found in the bar, which is in a dialectical tension with this violence.”

This interpretation, though somewhat valid, is reductionist. Joyce as a “one-eyed Ulysses” first recalls the citizen of “Cyclops,” the highly xenophobic and nationalistic figure whose interaction with Leopold nearly ends in violence. It also brings to mind Murphy, the sailor of “Eumaeus” who is tacitly linked with the citizen in his role as a drunken, nationalistic stranger Bloom encounters at a bar. If this were the case then Joyce, as a “one-eyed Ulysses,” could be read as serving the same role as Murphy, the Sinbad figure who, along with Molly, provides Bloom with an access point to Gibraltar. It also, in a mythic sense, links Odysseus and Polyphemus, enemies of the Odyssey. Polyphemus originally knows Odysseus as “No One;” it is not until Odysseus is sailing away that he calls out his actual name. Here, the actual name of the Odyssey figure – James Joyce – is also notably withheld. This convergence of mythic identities also likens Joyce with Polyphemus directly, and it is easy to see why Walcott would have been partial to this association: what was Polyphemus, if not a “native” protecting his homeland from invading militarist forces?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it saves Walcott from having to name the character in his poem as “James Joyce.” In a text that is notably indulgent with regards to the names of its characters (there is not much subtlety in “Hector,”

115 Malouf, 165.
“Helen,” and “Achille”) Walcott here withholds the name. The implication seems to be that Walcott is not interested in the full person of James Joyce; he reveres him only as “our age’s Omeros / and true tenor of the place!” What he does, then, is conflate Joyce’s seminal work with Joyce the person, in the same way that the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* are conflated with Homer. The “Mr. Joyce” Walcott mentions, shielded as it is in formality, becomes simply an embodiment of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the text which most completely influences Walcott’s own. Walcott, to use his own words, “always felt some kind of intimacy with the Irish poets because one realized that they were also colonials with the same kind of problems that existed in the Caribbean.”116 This intimacy comes from Joyce’s art, not the man himself, but the name “James Joyce” is too rooted in the biography of the writer for Walcott to use here. This withholding seems to be Walcott’s own tacit answer to Stephen’s question in “Eumaeus;” “What’s in a name?” For Walcott, “James Joyce” is not sufficient to capture and evoke the extent of “our age’s Omeros.”

116 Baer, 59.
Conclusion

Ulysses and Omeros are both foundational national texts that are deeply steeped in the colonized island spaces that produced them. Joyce’s Dublin is a teeming epicenter of Irish life; his characters, fully realized and highly localized Irish subjects. The same can be said of Walcott’s St. Lucia and the islanders who inhabit it. This thesis aims at demonstrating that both pieces, however, seek to situate themselves in a globalized colonialisit context that goes beyond their respective islands. Ulysses does this through Gibraltar; Omeros, through Ireland.

Gibraltar provides Joyce with a connecting axis back to the Greek myth from which his text so heavily draws while simultaneously giving him a space through which he is able to link his book to modern British colonialism and expansion. The Rock begins to be fully realized as a manifestation of globalized colonialism in “Eumaeus,” wherein Stephen and Bloom meet D. B. Murphy. Murphy is a modern Irish manifestation of Sinbad the Sailor, the adventurer from The Arabian Nights Entertainment, and his introduction into the text allows Joyce to do several things at once. First, he offers an interpretation of names that is based in locality that fits in with Joyce’s broader exploration of the nature of names throughout the novel. Second, his relation to a mythical history that comes not originally from the Western literary tradition allows Joyce to tap into a colonized history that extends beyond Western Europe; it positions his text as seeking to transcend Western-Eurocentricity, while simultaneously acknowledging that Western European expansion has made
efforts to colonize Middle Eastern cultural history. Finally, he provides Leopold with an access point into Gibraltar, birthplace of his wife and, for him, an abstracted version of worldly globalism.

In “Penelope,” the point of view of the novel shifts, and within Molly’s nightly imaginings Gibraltar is finally realized in actuality, albeit only through imagined memory. The space is compounded in Molly’s mind with Ireland, as are the people she knows from both places, in moments of fluidity that blend the boundaries between nations and identities. In her mind, Joyce makes most explicit the fluidity of being that defines his novel through a wide range of unresolved paradoxes of individual and nation, presenting the inherently contradictory colonized psyche and relating it to the female persona. Molly’s body becomes an embodiment of both Ireland and Gibraltar, two distinct yet fundamentally connected entities, and Molly herself comes to epitomize Stephen’s “cracked looking glass.” Her singular body produces a multiplicity, the many and opposing aspects of her identity – she is a British subject, born and raised in a colonized part of Spain, who now lives in Dublin but has an affinity for the British military – left unresolved in an affirmation and acceptance of the contradictory nature of colonized identity.

Ireland functions similarly for Walcott. He aligns Joyce with Homer, and so Ireland, like Gibraltar, can be understood as a connecting mythological axis for Omeros. It is also another colonized space, inhabited by the British military, that allows Walcott to situate his epic in a modern context of British imperial expansionism. He accesses this space through Major Plunkett and his wife, Maud; like Joyce, he associates a colonized space with a female persona. Though Ireland appears several times early in the text, as an idealized escape for the Major from his
lived reality as a soldier who fought on behalf of a colonizing force, it is not visited until Book Five. There, before coming to Dublin, the poet explores the violent history of Ireland that has become interwoven into the fabric of the landscape itself.

Along the banks of the Liffey he meets Joyce, and with him participates in moments of transcendency, during which the Major and Maud Plunkett convene with characters from Joyce’s texts. It is a moment of intense ephemerality that at once clouds individual identity while connecting Ireland and St. Lucia, the Gibraltar of the Caribbean, across the Atlantic. Both islands are fragments in Walcott’s reconstructed vase of epic art, unified by their joint experience of colonized occupation. The fact that Walcott likens his homeland to Gibraltar before communing with Joyce in Ireland demonstrates that he is engaging with *Ulysses* through a highly specific colonized lens: Joyce links Ireland with Gibraltar to situate his novel in a simultaneously mythological and modern colonized global context; Walcott then does the same thing with St. Lucia and Ireland. What results in *Omeros* is a cyclical fruition of myth and colonization from Ireland to Gibraltar to St. Lucia and back again.
Works Cited


