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## 'May I trespass on your valuable space?': Ulysses on the Coast

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**"MAY I TRESPASS ON YOUR  
VALUABLE SPACE?":  
ULYSSES ON THE COAST**

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**Nels C. Pearson**

[I]t is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately only the source of all culture.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

At the conclusion of his essay "On National Culture," Frantz Fanon emphasizes that the rationale for focusing on the establishment of national culture during decolonization is that a meaningful sense of national identity is a prerequisite, or stable conduit, for reciprocal belonging in a broader global society. But this famous proclamation also reveals the tremendous challenge that many developing societies experience in identifying the relationship between their national and international phases. Lingered beneath Fanon's taut biological metaphor is the vexing reality of the unsynchronized and spatially uneven relationship between these two stages or states of emergence. Although postcolonial studies has often focused on the erosions and fraught reconstructions of national or indigenous cultures in the wake of imperialism, equally at stake is the tremendous influence that colonization, and certain nationalist reactions to it, have on the global-economic and related transnational-cultural life of the subject population. Too often, these systems conspire to usurp that population's ability to develop balanced migrations and

reciprocal socioeconomic exchanges, turning its borders into sites of surveillance, apprehension, forced emigration, and segregation from international economic processes. Indeed, when we speak of development, or the establishment of sovereign postcolonial states, much of what we are referring to is the recovery from a drastically uneven entrance into global capitalism, a recovery that does not and cannot follow simple, unidirectional models of movement from regional to universal allegiances, from national to international consciousness.

That the access to and control of ports, harbors, and waterways are vital to the economic and cultural development of a civilization is one of the most secure truths of world history. Yet when we consider development from a global perspective, it is also true that shipping ports and coastal infrastructures are often microcosms of the gross imbalances that exist between one locus of socioeconomic emergence and others, or between the subject populations of imperialism and the broader commercial systems that it aggressively introduces.<sup>1</sup> Especially in the colonies of a British empire for whom "ships and overseas trade were, as everyone knew, the lifeblood," local ports, rivers and navigable estuaries have not been vital arteries connecting the national organ to the international body, but sites that reveal the diseased perversion of such potentially reciprocal flows—sites of mass emigration, controlled immigration, embargoes and sanctions, human cargoes and fiercely exploitive imbalances of labor and capital (Hobsbawm 24). In short, maritime hubs offer an important focal point for the stifling, coerced economic dependencies that have repeatedly threatened Fanon's "two-fold emerging" (248).

Throughout the opening chapters of *Ulysses*, which prominently feature the coastline of greater Dublin (including Dalkey, the imperial port at Dún Laoghaire then called Kingstown, Sandymount Strand, and glances north to Howth), Joyce provides crucial insight into Ireland's particular and acute experience of this broader problem. Postcolonial interpretations of *Ulysses*, in their long overdue effort to show "how a text . . . which for years has been gleaned for every last attribute of its [apolitical] narrative theatrics, might have all the time been operating as a postcolonial novel," have typically focused on the nation—or potential nation—as the damaged entity on whose behalf Joyce's writing subverts and dismantles imperial discourse (Duffy 5). Enda Duffy for example observes that the opening chapters deploy a series of imperialist stereotypes of Irish national and cultural life—the "derivative interpellating narratives [of] the oppression of Ireland as a colony"—so that the novel can proceed to deconstruct them (26–27). Vincent Cheng meanwhile notes, in *Joyce, Race and Empire*, that Stephen's ouster from the Martello Tower is "a figure and a parable for Ireland itself . . . a synecdoche for the Irish condi-

tion [that] resonate[s] with the home rule question and the longing for Irish autonomy from English occupation" (151–52).

If, however, we shift our attention from symbolic national territory to the importance of coastal setting, and then expand our theoretical framework to include the intervention of pragmatic sovereignty in the dialectic of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, we begin to see that the more insidious crime, for Joyce, is the destruction of a legitimately *international* Irish identity.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, we begin to see that *Ulysses* is shaped by its engagements with the challenges and contradictions of postcolonial internationalism, chief among which is the paradox that the insistence on a distinctly national phase of development is both a vehicle of decolonization and a threat to its ultimately transnational socioeconomic aspirations. In saying that *Ulysses* is shaped by its engagements with this paradox, I mean that even as it exposes the ways in which the decoupling of national and international modes infected Dublin life, it also reflects Joyce's much more immediate, less conclusive effort to resolve the profound contradictions that result from such a decoupling. In what follows, I will first examine the ways that *Ulysses* exposes these contradictions, and then consider how, via the consciousness of Bloom and Stephen, it becomes more intimately entangled in them.

Given its setting of the Martello tower at Sandycove, the "Telemachus" chapter is of course full of references to the sea, ships, and maritime trade and travel. We begin with Buck Mulligan's classical and romantic homage to the sea, his shouting "Thallata! Thallata!" (1.80) as he looks from the tower across Dublin Bay and proclaiming, in reference to Algernon Swinburne and George Russell, respectively, that the sea is our "great sweet mother" (1.78) and "our mighty mother" (1.85). These reverential pronouncements are ironically undercut in several ways, most compellingly by the episode's references to drowning, a tactic Joyce continues in "Nestor" (as Stephen's pupils read "Lycidas," Milton's elegy for a friend who drowned in the Irish Sea) and "Proteus," where Stephen reflects at length on "the man that was drowned nine days ago off Maiden's rock" (3.322–23), the same "man who had drowned" he had begun to associate with in "Telemachus" (1.675). This ironic contrast deepens the satirical implications of the Homeric parallel—the *Odyssey* is, after all, the tale of a long, serially interrupted effort to sail home and restore threatened sovereignty—and helps to create an initial subtext whose theme is the imperiled capacity for departure and return via the sea. Mulligan's "thallata!" cry in fact alludes to *Anabasis*, wherein a remnant of Greek mercenaries, after being betrayed by their Persian officers, march home through the Assyrian desert and Armenian mountains, then joyously hail "the sea!" as they reach their

return route, the Black Sea. The allusion suggests a journey commissioned by another empire that has been fraught with failure, narrow escape, and negative return for traveling labor. All of this attention to threatened sea routes is meant to symbolize not only Stephen's recently ill-fated expatriation, but also the damaged transnational livelihood in Ireland that is the material basis of that failure. This is confirmed when, immediately after Mulligan's energetic cry, Stephen gazes down despondently at the water and notices "the mailboat clearing the harbormouth of Kingstown" (1.83–84). The inevitable mailboat, leaving for Holyhead, indicates foreign control of Ireland's coasts (and its international commerce) just as the point of view from which Stephen "looks down" on the harbor scene, the Martello Tower, is a potential vista of transnational aspiration that is in reality a site of imperial surveillance and containment.<sup>3</sup>

Although Kingstown had been made the Irish mail terminus in the late nineteenth century, and although mail did expeditiously and regularly cross the channel from Holyhead to Kingstown, the mailboat, as it came to be called, was actually a large passenger ferry connecting the two port towns. This cross-channel connection was also a link to the heavily traveled metropolitan rail lines (and, soon, motorways) on either side of the water: in England, between Holyhead and London; in Ireland, between Kingstown and Dublin. Despite this mass transit, and the attendant spectacle of large ships, vibrant commerce, and period fashion that it often brought to Kingstown pier, the reality is that this commercial bustle was a classic sign of uneven development—the symptom of a modernized pale whose accrued capital in travel, trade, and culture, already disproportionately distributed within that pale, had also reached only sporadically into the wider Irish society (see fig. 1–2).

It is this economic imbalance, and not just cultural imperialism, which underscores the cultural stasis that pervades the chapter. The only intellectual and artistic goods that Ireland has recently produced, Joyce suggests, are of the static, non-regenerating type incentivized by such unidirectional economic flows. The traveling Englishman Haines's willingness to pay Stephen for his witticisms, the ironic difference between nationalism's symbolic investment in peasant women and the Irish-illiterate milk woman—likely a transplant from rural Ireland—who gets shortchanged, and Mulligan's hedonistic encouragement that Stephen take advantage of Haines' offer so that "the bards [can] drink and junket" (1.467) each represent the decadent cultural caricatures favored by a colonial tourist economy.<sup>4</sup> As Stephen implies, the market for anything else is limited at best: "The problem is to get money. From whom? From the milkwoman or from him. . . . I see little hope . . . from her or from him" (1.497–501). At the end



Fig. 1. Kingstown Harbour, Photochrome Print cir. 1895. Dockside is one of many early twentieth-century "Mailboats" plying the Kingstown/Holyhead route, this one likely operated by the British Railway Company. Library of Congress. Used by permission.



Fig. 2. Kingstown Harbour, 1930.

of the chapter, Joyce's famous reference to usurpation (of Stephen's home by Haines and Mulligan, of Ireland by the global designs of others) might, then, be more specifically understood as the appropriation of Ireland's ability to be functionally global, the ongoing denial of its mutually productive exchange with the broader ecumene.

In "Nestor," Joyce more thoroughly develops this theme, and again employs Ireland's appropriated and partitioned coastal territory as a fitting site in which to do so. On multiple levels, the episode plays on the contrast between a British imperial state that has expanded its influence by controlling the seas (and the exchanges between itself, its colonies, and other nations) and an Ireland that has been unable to cultivate an international consciousness because its trade is tightly restricted by England and its extranational self-image is confined to an anticolonial obsession with English culture. The most obvious example of this contrast is during the history lesson on Pyrrhus that Stephen is teaching at a school for boys in the wealthier, protestant suburbs of Dalkey. When a befuddled student answers with a pun ("Pyrrhus, sir? Pyrrhus, a pier. . . . A kind of bridge. Kingstown pier, sir" [2.26–33]), Stephen responds with the heady joke that Kingstown pier is "a disappointed bridge" (2.39). The joke, which the students do not understand and which Stephen fears will make him a "jester at the court of his master" when he later tells it to Haines of course hints at his own failed exile (2.43–44). But it also implies that the pier, under the control of the imperial British state in both name and function, is a false bridge to the wider world. It is "disappointed" both in the Latin sense that it is pointed away from equitable international exchanges and in the legal sense that it is incorrectly appointed, or deeded in ownership. For Joyce, who saw ancient Ireland as vibrantly and materially cosmopolitan—as a gathering place for Europeans and the center of a culture that spread "throughout the continent a . . . vitalizing energy"—and who saw modern Ireland as a racially diverse society coerced into attitudes of ethnic essentialism, Stephen's joke about the pier is also symbolic of Ireland's lost or forgotten transnational identity (*Critical* 154).<sup>5</sup> The context and setting of the joke further substantiate this interpretation.

The context is a history lesson during which Stephen wonders to himself, via Aristotle, about how the possible or potential in human affairs eventually becomes the actual, the recorded events of history that cannot "be thought away" because "Time has branded them and fettered [and] lodged [them] in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted" (2.50–51). The disappointed bridge thus raises the question of whether Ireland was fated—as in Stephen's grim forecast that his riddle will only win condescending approval from Haines—to be fettered as a servant in England's global design, or whether there

might be a counterfactual trajectory of events wherein Ireland could continue to develop as a sovereign presence in an international system. A later echo of this effort to think against the self-manifesting, progressive temporality of imperial capitalism is Bloom's question, in "Eumaeus," about how "to meet the traveling needs of the public at large, the average man" without first knowing "whether it was the traffic that created the route or vice versa" (16.537;567).<sup>6</sup> Such attempts to discern Ireland's agency and position within the time frames of global development return us to Joyce's acute awareness of Fanon's paradox, to the problem of how the emerging postcolony, which has focused on constructing or reconstructing a distinct national consciousness, is to conceptualize its role in an international system.

Joyce's use of setting in the episode suggests he was also deeply aware that this paradox has a spatial dimension. As Mulligan notes in jest, when Stephen goes to teach in the upper-middle class seaside vistas of "Vico road, Dalkey" (2.24–25), he has crossed one of the many borders that conceptually divide Ireland's urban regions into communities of nationalists and unionists, Catholics and Protestants, the culturally Irish and the west Britons. Not surprisingly, Stephen can only think of his pupils as the sons of "well-off people, proud that their eldest son was in the navy" (2.24–25) even though he rightly senses that they share his feeling of national-historical disaffection: "For them *too* history was a tale like any other too often heard, their land a pawnshop" (emphasis added; 2.46–7). More than just a "cynical [reflection] of [Stephen's] own failed attempt to fly by the nets Irish culture has thrown at him," the reference to the misdirected and externally-owned shipping pier is therefore part of a broader interrogation of the temporal and spatial logic of postcoloniality—of when and where such a phase of existence can be positioned if the conditions of achieved nationhood are separated from those of an active and actual internationalism (Rickard 17). Given that Joyce was now living in Trieste, where many "well appointed" piers extended from bustling piazzas into the Adriatic and where cosmopolitan culture existed alongside strong factions of irredentist nationalism, it is logical that he would make the critical comparison between the two coastal cities, and increasingly recognize that the separation of the two conditions was a crippling falsehood.<sup>7</sup>

There is much to support the argument that the bracketing out of global flows from the conceptual space and time of the postcolonial nation is a form of false consciousness—a lie of omission delivered via the hegemony of a first world interstate system whose members were able to historicize their nationhood at roughly the same time that they established state sovereignty (or were making the transition from earlier forms of sovereignty). For although there is ample evidence,



not to mention psychological and strategic merit, to the idea that an insulated national period must precede international engagement, it does not square with what we know—from de Certeau, Hobsbawm, Bhabha, and others—about the timeframe in which national histories and traditions are actually constructed. It is antithetical, in other words, to the fact that much of a nation's historical identity is constructed in any given present, typically at the same time that the nation seeks to identify itself relative to others (the audience for its self-creation necessarily being both internal and external). Nor does Fanon's injunction that "the mistake . . . lies in wishing to skip the national period" align with what we know, from transnational historians and post-structural anthropologists, about the role of cross-border migrations of labor, capital, and ideas in the production of what are only later imagined as home-grown economies and cultures (247).<sup>8</sup> The same is true of multiculturalism, which cannot simply be the historical phase that follows a global condition of "monoculturalism," for what was often lacking was not the conditions of national or cultural plurality, but the ability to affirm or elaborate them.<sup>9</sup>

One might propose, then, that the longer a given nation-state has been settled and established (the longer the national idea has been "bonded to the territorial state"), and the more that the imperial expansion of the state has been naturalized, the easier it is for the subjects of that state to repress these inherent contradictions, and, in turn, project and perpetuate elsewhere the idea that the separation of the two modes is natural (Cheah 26). In many colonized societies where this idea, like nationalism itself, is inherited via the already untimely mode of anticolonialism, the postponement of the territorial state can easily become proportional to the exclusiveness of the conceptual boundaries that are erected around the national idea (as race, ethnos, culture, popular history), which comes to serve as its placeholder. The insidious irony here is that, under such conditions, the separation of the national and international modes in time, as well as in space (for example, partitions, class enclaves, racial zones), can actually become accepted as the primer for a role on the international stage. One thinks of the uneven playing field on which Fielding and Aziz discuss nationalism in Forster's *A Passage to India*. Aziz's halfhearted cry for nationhood, "No foreigners of any sort!" (361), uttered even as he is excluded from English society, is a grim foreshadowing of Indian partition.

The problem, in Ireland as in India, is that once this derivative essentialism is asserted as conscious design, its inherent contradictions cannot be repressed in the same way that they can be in the achieved or imperial state. Thus, they remain at the surface. As a result, the individual's ability to think of his or her actions as mean-

ingfully involved in a national milieu is constantly assailed by the fact that the conceptual history and geography of the nation remain contested, their inherently constructed nature always too painfully evident, too much of a daily dispute to become "branded . . . and fettered [and] lodged" in collective memory (2.49–50). The national phase or national modality, which despite this fragmentation continues to be governed by an ideal of essential unity, therefore threatens to extend indefinitely, all the while postponing an international identity that itself becomes distorted and idealized in the process. Left in an untimely relationship to interstate dynamics and incipient globalization, citizens of the late colony are thus easily caught between the habit of recognizing (or misrecognizing) the local and the daily in terms of competing national abstractions and the inclination to romanticize, obfuscate, or demonize existing extranational and subnational phenomena.

*Ulysses* certainly diagnoses these problems, often with searing and uncanny objectivity. After all, much of the novel focuses around the Ireland-born son of a Hungarian Jew from "Szombathély, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, London and Dublin" (16.534–36)—"Leopold Bloom of no fixed abode" (15.1158)—who negotiates multiple ethnic affiliations and exhibits cosmopolitan feeling, but is repeatedly misunderstood and marginalized by nation-centric cliques. Of the many scenes in the novel involving Bloom that demonstrate the multifaceted political and psychological condition just described, the most notable occurs in the "Cyclops" episode. In the scene, the unnamed narrator, the Citizen, J.J. Molloy and Joe Hynes are gathered at Barney Kiernan's pub discussing national concerns, chief among which is the British trade restriction on Irish cattle. Joe Hynes tells the narrator he is going to "give the Citizen the hard word about" a recent meeting of the "cattle traders [association]" concerning "the hoof in mouth disease," the infection that British officials had cited as reason for the Irish livestock embargo (12.62). Their discussion quickly becomes a well-rehearsed tirade about the long history of imperial usurpation of Irish industry and the maritime trading autonomy that was once a sign of Ireland's international vitality and sovereignty: "We had our trade with Spain and the French and with the Flemings before those mongrels were pupped," the citizen boasts:

Spanish ale in Galway, the winebark on the winedark  
waterway.

—And will again, says Joe

—And with the help of the holy mother of God we  
will again. . . . Our harbours that are empty will be full  
again, Queenstown, Kinsdale, Galway, Blacksod Bay. . . .

And will again, says he, when the first Irish battleship is seen breasting the waves with our own flag to the fore. (12.1296–1307)

As Joyce well knew, the basic argument here is valid and relevant (in fact, he made similar arguments in articles he wrote on Irish ports and trade for Irish and Italian newspapers, which I will examine shortly). The problem lies in the men's compulsion to make the present trade crisis an immediate symbol of a vast history of transgressions, thus projecting the weight of accumulated history onto it, a maneuver that they make throughout the episode, and that Joyce relentlessly parodies with inflated narrative styles. The result is a tragically self-manifesting rhetoric of postponement in which the present problem is obscured by idealistic images of the distant past and distant future: "and will again . . . and will again." But the deepest irony of the scene is that as the men bond over this inflated yearning for a restored international Ireland, they cast a xenophobic eye at Bloom, who represents both transnational and economic livelihood in a very quotidian, realistic sense. Unable to recognize this, they ultimately revile him as a money-lending, rootless Jew whose only value lies in the possibility that he may have helped Arthur Griffith to devise the plan for Sinn Féin to follow Hungarian models of national self-fashioning.

The question of where Joyce's modernism is located relative to the troubling desynchronization of national and international consciousness—or the degree to which the subjective and polyvocal techniques of *Ulysses* can represent an aloof diagnosis of its effects—is a more complex matter, however. We recognize this when we consider the ways in which Bloom and Stephen, the principal foci of that modernism, can themselves become stymied by the extremes of the national/international binary, and unable to think outside of its paradoxes. The "Cyclops" scene is typically understood as opposing the open-minded, mobile perspective of Bloom to the narrow-minded myopia of the nationalist Citizen. This opposition is often interpreted as being reinforced at the level of style, the idea being that Bloom's disruptive interventions in his society are paralleled by Joyce's parallax, polyvocal narrative styles. In similar fashion, Stephen's cerebral, critical distance from his environment—epitomized by his claim that "history . . . is a nightmare from which I am trying to awaken"(2.377)—has been seen as a gateway into the critical stance of Joyce's modernism relative to historical conditions. As Trevor Williams puts it in *Reading Joyce Politically*, "the development of a critical consciousness in Stephen Dedalus and in Leopold Bloom's . . . persistent silent questioning of the status quo, are the beginnings of a counterhegemony" that is paralleled at "the level of

technique" (xiv). But when it comes to the difficulties of developing a sustainable transnational consciousness, both characters struggle to apprehend the problem, to the extent that their own thoughts are liable to reveal its symptoms.

In the scene discussed above, for example, Bloom's vision of universal tolerance, his protest against "national hatred among nations" (12.1428) and his disdain for "hatred, history, all that" (12.1481), suggest an overly idealistic, politically abstract brand of cosmopolitanism. This too is symptomatic of the broader problem I have identified, for, like the territorial ethnocentrism it contests, it is part of a more pervasive inability to find pragmatic, realistic common ground between national and global concerns.<sup>10</sup> Put more accurately, it too reflects the insipid conundrum bequeathed to "developing" nations by interactive sovereign states: the challenge of locating a viable transnational self-awareness amidst widespread belief that the national is territorial and monocultural while the global, which comes later, is nonterritorial and hybrid. The opposition between Bloom and the Barney Kiernan's clique becomes further muddled when we consider that the Citizen and his cronies are not just espousing nationalist clichés, but are also trying in their own way to imagine Ireland internationally, as part of what J. J. Molloy boastfully calls "The European family" (12.1202). Joyce's own voice or position is itself split between the two, given that his writings consistently demonstrate both a wish for Ireland to be a recognized, sovereign member of the international community (culturally and politically) and a predilection for imagining universes—moral, psychological, linguistic—that obliterate or transcend national and cultural particularity.<sup>11</sup>

More than a mock-epic battle between myopic, rooted nationalists and the mobile, broad perspective of Bloom, the episode is thus a layered, self-reflexive revelation of how deeply and pervasively the lack of sovereignty impacts the global identity of the colonized. Joyce, who was abroad during the Great War and Ireland's war of independence, and whose nationalist and cosmopolitan perspectives both became more sophisticated in these years, is certainly more aware of this dilemma than his characters. But it is hard to interpret his display of technique in this episode as advocating any particular mode of resistance to it, or as providing an aesthetic analog for how to counter its hegemony. Once we recognize that it is a key crisis of the chapter, for example, we can no longer rely on the critical trend of linking the multiple narrators and perspectives with Bloom's mobile, open-minded, disruptive interventions in the societal norm, a trend evident in both high-modernist and postcolonial criticism. What we might reasonably conclude, though, is that Joyce's national and transnational commitments were both becoming more defined,

and that he was still in the throes of forging a composite in which neither was superseded by the other. Moreover, doing so required him to think along two temporal trajectories simultaneously: one in which the construction of national identity is leading to a sovereign place in world society and one in which the impermeable borders of that construction can be disavowed, knowingly conscribed to the nearsighted past. The opinions about national belonging advanced by the Citizen and his cronies, which offer both a narrow perspective that Joyce ruthlessly parodies and a salient, material counterpoint to Bloom's vague cosmopolitanism, reflect this double-consciousness, as does the monumental effort to articulate and mock cultural nationalist concerns simultaneously throughout the episode. Even the interpolated stylistic parodies embody this tension, insofar as Joyce's own literary project, and his hope of seeing Irish culture emerge within international culture, is among its "targets": "the grave elders of the most obedient city, second of the realm . . . had taken solemn counsel whereby they might . . . bring once more into honour among mortal men the winged speech of the seadivided Gael" (12.1185–1189).

The text thus simultaneously sustains the desire to construct a yet-unrecognized Irish identity and the desire to suffuse Irish particularity into a heterogeneous universe, a combination that is elaborated exponentially in *Finnegans Wake*. Indeed, we might speculate that where the paradoxes of postcolonial internationalism are concerned, Joyce's modernism is neither subverting nor transcending them, but emerging in their midst, voicing their inherent challenges. This would not mean that Joyce has been duped by history, nor that he escapes its materiality by responding to it on a separate aesthetic plane. It would simply mean that one of the conditions to which his art responds—that of being pulled between a potential world society and a contested colony not yet able to be absorbed equally into any imagined global community—is already suffused with profound philosophical obstacles, as well as potentially transformative insights about concurrent, plurilocal belonging that are simply not available to those who have not seriously contemplated these obstacles.<sup>12</sup>

The communicative crises and philosophical conundrums that preoccupy Stephen throughout the opening chapters of *Ulysses* are a monumental example of an effort to comprehend and negotiate the colony's national/international paradox. His increasingly ironic and cerebral perspective constitutes an intense, ultimately inconclusive intellectual response to the postponement of Ireland's sovereign participation in world society, and the simultaneous need to develop and emerge from a distinct national consciousness that comes with it. After all, one of the main things that troubles Stephen, who in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, could only find "proud sover-

eignty" via aesthetic reverie (183), is that his art and his international identity do not really exist outside of the realm of imagination and possibility. Like Bloom, his cerebral, critical ruminations upon his society are therefore liable to reflect, rather than transcend, the mutually-negating or mutually-distorting relationship between home and world that plagues his society. A prime example of this susceptibility is his inclination to read his situation in terms of a stark opposition between nationalistic generalizations and exilic-cosmopolitan alienation. Stephen proclaims that "all Ireland is washed by the gulf stream," declares the broken mirror "a symbol of Irish art" and reads the milkwoman as a national symbol (1.476). Because he so immediately subjects every local event or object to national abstraction—extending his near-obsession, in *Portrait*, with making totalizing or final statements about the Irish race—he leaves himself no option but to map his internal contemplation onto an equally abstract cosmos: "his own rare thoughts, a chemistry of stars" (1.652–53). This tendency of Stephen's to turn away by turning inward, coupled with his physical departure from Ireland, has been read as either a cosmopolitan gesture or a desire to subvert both imperialism and its nationalist derivatives. But it might be more pragmatically understood as a mystification or misrecognition of the extra-national, a projection onto the world of the epistemic disjunctures that define his perception of Ireland. The "cracked looking glass of a servant," in other words, has also disfigured his image of the world (1.146).

Seen in this light, Stephen is plagued by the same general problem as his students, Deasy, Haines, and Mulligan, and the social sectors they represent: the geographical and historical episteme in which he operates has made thinking beyond the nation into an act of the mystical or fantastic. Like Bloom and the Citizen, Stephen and Deasy are opposites on the surface, but quite similar insofar as they both inflate or abstract extra-national reality in unreasonable ways. For the protectionist Deasy, border crossing means a diabolical permeability that leads to immigrant masses (especially Jews) who erode the nation; for the brooding, now-defeated expatriate Stephen, it is a vague, ever-deferred cultural and intellectual space that he imagines as existing beyond the nightmare of history, or outside of the seemingly interminable national modality. If we look more closely at what is often read as Stephen's smug, erudite dismissal of Deasy's bombastic missive against the English embargo of Irish livestock—the central reference to international maritime trade in "Nestor"—the validity of this argument emerges more distinctly.

After lecturing Stephen on coinage and financial conservatism, Deasy asks Stephen to read an editorial that he has composed about the foot and mouth disease infecting Irish livestock and threatening

"an embargo on Irish cattle" in English ports (2.339). Like the heated conversation in "Cyclops," his letter refers to an actual incident that came to a head in 1912, and is thus one of the many anachronisms that, as Enda Duffy has shown, indicate Joyce's investment in contemporary Irish politics while he was working on *Ulysses* in Trieste. The restrictions on Irish livestock had indeed threatened Irish commerce, raised vociferous debates about national economic policy, and, especially as Joyce saw it, exposed the relationship between Ireland's interminable national debate and its uncertainty about how to present itself in international affairs. In the letter, Deasy inflates the issue to symbolic historical status, posing it as the latest in a long legacy of England's conspiratorial subversions of Irish industry, chief among which is the forever-delayed nineteenth-century plan to build a major transatlantic seaport in Galway. Stephen's glance through the letter indicates that he sees these arguments as tired clichés: "May I trespass on your valuable space? That doctrine of *laissez faire* which so often in our history. Our cattle trade. The way of all our old industries. Liverpool ring which jockeyed the Galway harbor scheme" (2.323–26). The arguments are indeed tired ones, or truths elaborated by untruths. The Galway harbor, for example, was likely not undermined by competitor interests in Liverpool, but by mismanagement (Gifford and Seidman 37). Yet there is more to Stephen's reaction, and considerably more to Joyce's own interest in these affairs, than an argument for the artist's ability to outwit the historical status quo.

For one, Stephen at some level sympathizes with the problem Deasy addresses, as did Joyce, even though he harbors deep distaste for the strident, self-invested, and rather exotic solution Deasy proposes. As in "Cyclops," the larger problem is that because every local discourse is based on a national debate, the two parties are unable to communicate their potentially similar desires for international recognition. Like the Citizen's diatribe against British control of Irish harbors, the topic of concern in Deasy's letter—embargos in the east and the denial of transatlantic connectivity in the west—is something Stephen can only partly reject, and that the novel itself most articulate on two levels. At one level, the letter symbolizes the over-rehearsed, national-historical obsession from which Stephen is "trying to awake," while at another, it serves as a valid indictment of the usurped sovereignty that is still unresolved, and that validates the notion that the national phase of history is not yet finished. To be sure, one cannot simply "wake" from such a paradoxical condition. This inevitably divided feeling about the nation's incompleteness emerges later in the episode when Stephen, after having wrung free of Deasy, decides to assist him with his anti-embargo letter ("Still I

will help him in his fight" [2.430]) and then smirks at the thought of Mulligan accusing him of being "the bullockbefriending bard" for doing so (2.430–31). The subtle epiphany here suggests a symbiotic relationship between domestic tolerance and functional internationalism that is thinkable, but realistically unavailable in the prevailing conditions.

In complicating the nation/world and history/art oppositions that pertain to the relationships between Bloom and the Citizen and Stephen and Deasy, I have suggested that the trials of articulating an international Irish consciousness are voiced as much through Deasy and the Citizen's coterie as they are through Bloom and Stephen's efforts to see their environment at a critical distance and from a universal perspective. Another reason I am inclined to complicate them is that, in 1912, Joyce himself took great interest in both the Galway harbor scheme and the British cattle embargo. He composed newspaper articles on both topics, for Irish and Italian newspapers, and traveled to the Aran Islands where he studied the promotional materials for the proposed harbor. In his article on the cattle trade for *The Freeman's Journal*, Joyce notes the seriousness of the "national calamity," and assures readers that "Irish farmers and traders . . . have sound and solid reasons for demanding the reopening of the ports to healthy Irish stock" (*Critical* 240). But he calls for Irish statesmen to act as confident diplomats rather than covert conspiracy-theorists who will only confirm British suspicions of Irish backwardness, or inwardness, and thus jeopardize "the confidence of the trading public" (*Critical* 240). His piece on the Galway harbor, written for Trieste's *Il Piccolo della Sera*, is also concerned with the accumulating crises of deferred internationalism. The article indirectly comments on the harbor through the perspective of weary Aran islanders who have only trace memories of the expansive commerce that once emanated from nearby shores. They have forgotten the "long friendship between Spain and Ireland," writes Joyce, for "time and the wind have razed to the ground the civilization . . . of [their] forefathers" (*Occasional* 204). The imagery here is akin to a cultural nationalist's opposition between the ideal past and its erosion under colonial modernity, but the important distinction is that what Joyce sees in the deep past is a multicultural Ireland that did not separate its expansive interactions from its rich local culture—a society of vernacular cosmopolitans who would not have known what it was to decouple or desynchronize the two spheres of being.

Joyce hints that the new port might restore (or "reappoint") this condition by circumventing the destructive one-way flow of Irish commerce across the channel: "The old decaying city would arise once more. Wealth and vital energy from the New World would run



through this new artery into blood-drained Ireland." However, in a stronger nod to the present day problem of postponed sovereignty and externally-controlled coastlines, he then compares the proposed harbor to the mystical land of promise that the fishermen of Aran legend envisioned on the horizon of the Atlantic: "Once again, after ten centuries or so, the mirage that dazzled the poor fisherman of Aran . . . appears in the distance, vague and tremulous on the mirror of the ocean" (*Occasional* 203). Joyce's suggestion is that just as the ancient mirage, which implies America, has been made ironic by modern Ireland's mass emigrations, so too is the contemporary port a mirage that is ironically destined to be another "disappointed bridge." The pamphlet promoting the Galway harbor, which Joyce had been reading, more than substantiates these grim associations. Its authors envision better access to Canada, whose "recent industrial growth [has made it] the granary of great Britain," as well as a "highway to America, which is the great industrial storehouse of the future." The seaport would thus be "of incalculable advantage to British and American commerce, yet because it is in Galway and in Ireland, this benefit which God intended as a blessing is of no avail to them" (qtd. in *Occasional*, 343n).

That Joyce was still caught up—geographically, politically, intellectually—in the effort to address the conundrums of postcolonial internationalism, and that certain aspects of his modernism are an outgrowth of his own ongoing, inconclusive effort to combat them, is perhaps nowhere more evident than in "Proteus," the episode that "come[s] nearer the edge of the sea" than any in Joyce's oeuvre (3.265). A plausible synecdoche for the genesis of Joyce's art, Stephen's internal, philosophical meditation as he walks along Sandymount Strand can be interpreted as an intense effort to transcend and particularize a location at the same time. It is also densely allusive, relentlessly subjective, and takes as its theme the cyclical nature of all life, the shifting physical and material forms in which the universe is made manifest. As such, I would argue, it constitutes a monumental attempt to respond to an irresolute dialectic of colony and universe that perpetually elides a sustainable international consciousness or identity. The most recent chapters in Stephen's development as an artist, we might recall, attest to precisely such an elision.

Just prior to his artistic epiphany in section IV of *Portrait*, he had "turned seaward from the road at Dollymount" and crossed the bridge to Bull Island, in Dublin Bay. From this symbolic vantage point he had gazed back upon Dublin—a city "weary [and] patient of subjection" since the days of the Norse invaders—then turned eastward to look out on a Europe he envisioned, in stark contrast, as a world of achieved races, established cultures, and firmly bordered nation-states: "out there beyond the Irish Sea [was a] Europe of strange tongues and

valleyed and woodbegirt and citadelled and of entrenched and marshaled races" (181). Caught between the interminable colony and the lure of a Europe that appeared, in contrast, as an ideal example of how independent nations produce international culture, he had decided to resolve the problem in art. That his art is a substitute for an active transnational reality, or an effort to forge one in the mind, is also suggested in the coastal location of his epiphany. It is further implied in the contradiction of national and cosmopolitan ambitions that Stephen associates with his art, and in the idealistic nature of each contradictory ambition. Rather than being a part of international culture, he imagines himself transcending the earthly altogether: "A Voice from *beyond the world* was calling" (emphasis added; 181–83). Yet he will also resolve Ireland's unformed national self-awareness by seeking, and giving form to, an equally metaphysical iteration of origin: the "uncreated conscience of his race" (276).

In "Proteus," having been called back to Dublin and again walking alone on its coast, he has even more trouble reconciling national and global affiliation. He notes with irony that while in Paris, one of his most significant interactions was with the exiled Fenian Kevin Egan, who was "unsought by any save me" (3.250). Despite his disdain for this encounter, he does feel a degree of sympathy for Egan. Indeed, the duo's meeting in Paris resonates with Joyce's own still-forming relationship to Ireland in Trieste: "they have forgotten Kevin Egan, not he them" (3.263–64). Thus, as in *Portrait*, Stephen is again at the crux of national and international consciousness, unable to synthesize or actualize the two. Indeed, his inclination to seek a resolution of this crisis at the level of philosophical and aesthetic abstraction has only been augmented. In other words, although his reflections are purely philosophical, their impetus or latent content is his inability to ascertain quotidian transnational actuality. His preoccupation with things returning, "wending back," "fall[ing] back" (3.419), being "call[ed] back" (3.420), "bring[ing] . . . back" (3.83–84), "homing" would certainly stem from this deeper concern (505). His obsession with "ineluctable modalities" may also be seen as its abstract extension; that is, as a philosophical iteration of the question of whether one can emerge from the colonial nation, or whether it extends indefinitely. The only way one can affirm that Stephen's abstract queries are not an extrapolation of the political situation I have been discussing is by making the smug assumption that the intellectual challenges pertaining to the political are by their nature more limited than the philosophical, as opposed to existing on the same plane as the philosophical. Stephen's famous question in this episode—"Am I walking into eternity on Sandymount strand?" (3.18)—implies many theoretical conundrums, but none of these are more easily solved than the political, local question that subsists

within it: does the modality of postcolonial nationhood end? If not, do its shifting forms reveal the universal, or conceal it?

Hommi Bhabha has written extensively about Fanon's formula for international self-recognition, noting the apparent contradiction in its requirement for the simultaneous "emergence and . . . erasure of the conscious of nationness." For Bhabha, this paradox is actually the key to a new postcolonial-cosmopolitan, or "vernacular cosmopolitan," understanding of global diversity. Bhabha reminds us that, for Fanon, "national consciousness is not nationalism," but the awareness of one's actions and interactions as meaningful relative to a national community or context. Therefore, national consciousness never does conclude, but instead extends into dialogue with international communities "in a temporality of continuance." The international sphere, in turn, can no longer be imagined as an undifferentiated, homogenous space of common humanity, as in Enlightenment ideals of cosmopolitanism, but must be understood, like the nation, as a site of ongoing "acts of cultural translation between here and there, private and public, past and present." To recognize this subidealistic, constant negotiation between what is within and beyond the nation is to affirm the "potentially subverseive, subterranean sense of community" that develops in the "disjunctures of space, time, and culture" that exist globally. I would argue that Stephen has encountered these communal negotiations and is desperately trying to imagine such acts of "cultural translation" between Ireland and Europe, but he does not recognize these interactions in anything close to the affirmative and commonplace context that Bhabha does (43).

Nor is it really possible for Stephen to do so, for what is most important about Stephen's journey along the strand is that he is walking along a border that does not exist, one that will remain vehemently contested throughout the century: the would-be physical limit of an independent Irish state, the potential point of confident departure into and exchange with other states—the Irish border that would be the transparent form or diaphanous manifestation of international consciousness itself. When Stephen is walking along it in 1904, this potentially porous threshold of the nation-state is riddled with signs of uneven development and imperial surveillance: harbingers of the restrictive and insular border that it will soon become under the anxious, partial sovereignty of the Free State. In marked contrast to the vistas of Dalkey, a mere six miles south, the strand boasts "unwholesome sandflats" that "breath[e] upward sewage breath" from the polluted Liffey (3.147–48). Jutting into the beach from the corner of Strand and St. John's roads is a wide, imposing Martello Tower, a symbolic counterpart to the police barrack that, in *Portrait*, he had passed on Clontarf road, just before heading out to Bull Island (see fig. 3). If



Fig. 3. Postcard of Sandymount Strand, cir. 1950 from <http://www.joyceimages.com>.

not as extensively in 1904, then certainly during the 1916 to 1922 heyday of an RIC backed by paramilitary forces, this section of the strand would also have been regularly policed. Given this setting, it is understandable that Stephen's thoughts are more of a hermetic, erotic montage of international culture than a fluid blending or affirmative negotiation of global locations. Linguistically, his mind jumps from Scots dialect to snippets of Italian, German, Hebrew, Hindu, Swedish, Greek, and Latin. Culturally, it scans through images of the sensual in contemporary and medieval European art and the diverse, bohemian, nocturnal life that made Europe alluring to Stephen and that is no longer available, at least without abjection, in Dublin. His recitation of the verses "*Won't you come to Sandymount / Madeline the mare?*"—an allusion to the sensual watercolors of fin de siècle French painter Madeline Lemaire—encapsulates the serious threats to Irish-European cultural translation that Stephen faces: European culture is not only embargoed by a colony that has restricted moral conscience to the realm of nation building—a vibrant "Ireland [of] the Delcassians" that has become "of Arthur Griffith now" (3.226–27)—but it is also idealized and eroticized as a result.

This contrast between an externally-possessed coastal border and a cosmopolitanism turned inward, a potentially expansive socio-cultural negotiation inverted and transformed into sensual reverie, is striking. To be sure, it is an apt, formal conceit for the effort to

think and act globally from a location whose genuine and equitable involvement in interstate systems has been assailed on all sides. Having crossed Ireland's nonexistent border in both directions, and now walking along it while struggling to synthesize memories of home and abroad, Stephen is clearly still engaged in a battle to perceive the interchange between home and world as something happening in Bhabha's realm of action, in real time and inhabited space. In conclusion, I offer that Joyce's modernism, which culminates and recommences in Anna Livia's internal, polyvocal, indefinitely postponed effort to reconcile Ireland and the universe in words, to merge the territory of the nation with the unappointed, circumfluent water of the world, also remains, in its entirety, so engaged.

## Notes

1. The case of Liverpool, a hub for the slave trade and a site that funneled wealth into the hands of the British imperial state and its beneficiaries while channeling insignificant returns to the migrant working class that supplied its labor, is a fitting example. Like many coastal cases, it also has transoceanic echoes or correspondences: the dispersion of African peoples, the development of slave-dependent colonies in the Caribbean, and the ruthless drive to possess coastline and waterways in the European "scramble for Africa," to name but a few.
2. Implicit in this shift of attention is the broader concern, in modernist studies, for differentiating local conditions within global modernity and understanding how these local variations produce distinct modernisms. I am thinking, in particular, of Susan Stanford Friedman's call to "revisit the concept of modernist internationalism" by adopting "transnational strategies for reading a global landscape of mutually constitutive centers . . . that produce their own modernities and modernisms at different points in time" ("Toward" 35–36), and of Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel's proposal that we "emplace modernism" by taking "a locational approach to [its] engagement[s] with cultural and political discourses of global modernity" (3).
3. The Martello towers were only one example of England's historically and geographically extensive practice of policing the Irish coast. As Patrick J. Duffy notes in *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes*, "Coastguard stations are frequently imposing structures . . . Like the RIC barracks, they were part of the fabric of the authority of the British state in the nineteenth century, the eyes and ears of Empire or Castle designed to stamp out smuggling, poitín making, plunder of wrecks and to maintain surveillance and security along the coast. . . . The Martello towers were erected (1804–10) around the coast at strategically important points such as Cork harbor, Dublin Bay, the Shannon estuary, Galway Bay and Lough Foyle, as a signaling defensive network during the Napoleonic war" (136–37).

4. For the role of intranational rural migrations in the history of Joyce's working class Dubliners, see Fairhall, chapter 3: for example, many "petty-bourgeois Dubliners, the class depicted by Joyce, either were rural migrants themselves, or were their children or grandchildren" (75).
5. For extensive evidence of this position, and of how Joyce's experiences in Trieste helped to shape it, see chapter 3 of John McCourt's *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste 1904–1920*, especially pages 92–120.
6. Frederic Jameson would probably note that Bloom is here struggling with the "always already begun dynamic" of capitalism. Especially in its imperial phase, argues Jameson, it is "a synchronic system which, once in place, discredits the attempts . . . to conceive of its beginnings" (280). After coming to Trieste, Joyce was increasingly concerned with Ireland's economic development vis-à-vis interstate capitalism, as is evident in a 1906 letter to his brother: "You ask me what I would substitute for parliamentary agitation in Ireland. I think the Sinn Fein policy would be more effective. Of course I see that its success would be to substitute Irish for English capital but no-one, I suppose, denies that capitalism is a stage of progress. The Irish proletariat has yet to be created" (*Letters* 125). Here, it sounds as if Joyce's sympathy for a socialist position that would see "capital" as the problem is preempted by the fact that capitalism, as a post-feudal "stage of progress," has not itself been fully realized in Ireland. The suggestion, once again, is that the time of postcolonial progress in Ireland is inherently out of joint.
7. Joseph Valente has recently noted that "the undeniable anti-nationalism of Joyce's Irish years and the budding nationalism of his early period in Italy" fostered by his interest in Italian irredentism and local misunderstanding of Irish nationalism, "dialectically resolved themselves into an idiosyncratic cultural transnationalism, in which the localized attachments of and to the ethnos coincide, productively, with their cosmopolitan negation" (73).
8. As Ian Tyrell notes, in defining the aims of transnational historians, "Even when the nation-state becomes vital, that itself is produced transnationally. That is, the global context of security, economic competition, and demographic change means that the boundaries of the nation had to be made. They don't exist in isolation. National identities have been defined against other identities, including the transnational phenomena that impinge upon the nation as it is constructed" (par. 12).
9. Importantly, the ability to affirm these transnational realities, as opposed to the compulsion to suppress them, is an option available to the established state more so than the nation-in-process. As Louisa Schein argues, it is the state that has a "dialectical relation to the production of the transnational" because it is "crystallized in part through its engagement with that which breaches its border control, its putative sovereignty" (165).

10. As Rebecca Walkowitz has argued, Bloom's "utopian platitudes" betoken a "detached idealism and universalist cosmopolitanism" that neglects the "living, contested present" of Irish nationhood introduced by his interlocutors (74–75).
11. One could argue that the critical history of *Ulysses* reflects the difficulty of seeing that the novel weighs both concerns equally: it begins in earnest when critics rescue the novel from negative receptions laced with English religious, class, and anti-Irish bias (for example, Virginia Woolf's claim that it "is underbred, not only in the obvious sense, but in the literary sense") by demonstrating the immensity of its international significance and continental influences (48). This argument then sets in motion a cosmopolitan Joyce movement that underestimates the immensity of the Irish postcolonial concerns that are also a driving force behind the author's work.
12. As Walter Mignolo has argued, a "critical cosmopolitanism" sensitive to geopolitical particularity and postcolonial experience must imagine a global conversation in which those formerly silenced by imperial world systems are not simply subsumed into a vague multicultural ideal: "While Cosmopolitanism," in the past, "was thought out and projected from particular local histories" that were "positioned to devise and enact global designs, other local histories in the planet had to deal with those global designs [and their] abstract universals . . . . For that reason, cosmopolitanism today has to become border thinking, critical and dialogic, from the perspective of those local histories that had to deal all along with" the divisive repercussions of such "global designs" (182). If this is to happen, cosmopolitanism "cannot be reduced to a new form of cultural relativism but must be thought out as new forms of projecting and imagining ethically and politically, from subaltern perspectives" (181). This need to understand why an extraction from colonial experience cannot be a one-way entrance into an abstract "global design," and especially not an emergence into a universe "of cultural relativism," illuminates the perpetual, dynamic tension between national-cultural particularity and vast universals in Joyce's modernism.

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