

2017

Concepts of Moral Geography in Dante Alighieri and James Joyce

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CONCEPTS OF MORAL GEOGRAPHY IN DANTE ALIGHIERI AND JAMES JOYCE

Undergraduate Honors Thesis

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Fall, 2017

To Zach

“Now, my darling Nora, I want you to read over and over all I have written to you. Some of it is ugly, obscene and bestial, some of it is pure and holy and spiritual: all of it is myself.”¹
- James Joyce

¹ Kevin Birmingham. *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce’s “Ulysses.”* New York: Penguin, 2014:16.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	5
Acknowledgements.....	6
Citation Abbreviations and a Note on the Citations.....	7
Preface.....	8
Previous Work.....	11
The Concept of Moral Geography.....	13
Moral Geography in Dante: The Image of Water.....	17
The Bridge from Dante to Joyce.....	33
“Wombed in sin darkness I was too”: The Liminal Moral Landscape in “Proteus”.....	40
Moral Geography in “Circe”.....	54
Creating Moral Space in the Geography of “Penelope”.....	70
Diving into the <i>Wake</i> : Beyond “Penelope” and <i>Ulysses</i>	83
Conclusion.....	84
Appendices.....	86
Works Cited.....	92

Statement of Thesis — Abstract

Moral geography illustrates the relationship between the landscape and the moral, religious, and psychological structures that are in place in the text. In literature, moral geography is present vis-à-vis how the physical landscape reflects the mental landscape of the characters, and vice versa. This is especially pertinent in Dante, who can be seen as the most prominent example of moral geographical frameworks in the Western canon. Joyce, who was an avid reader of Dante, understood Dante's use of the concept and redefined the concept to suit his purpose in *Ulysses*. This thesis operates upon the premise that the moral geographical framework laid by Dante laid the groundwork for Joyce's moral geographical framework, and though Joyce altered Dante's to a fair degree, he is indebted to Dante for this framework.

Acknowledgements

To my friends, I am incredibly grateful for the constant support that I was given. I give special thanks to Zachary Hawkins, Taylor Nowicki, Gabriel Lavendal, Austen Thum, Sean Pease, Claire Doyle, Katie Robinson, Morgan Schwartz, Becca Thompson, Lily Abrams, Shane Town, Julia Hurd, and Matthew Agranat. Many thanks to Johannes Christopher, whose many discussions on “Circe” helped to formulate key ideas for my work. Further thanks go to my classmates in both the Dante independent study in Spring 2017 as well as the Joyce seminar in Fall 2017.

To Dad, Mom, Maggie, Abby, Drake, and Ahab: thank you for your constant and unfettered loving support. I cannot thank all of you enough, and I hope that this work serves as testimony to my deepest appreciation for all of you.

Dr. Thomas Simone guided me through this process over the past year, and I am incredibly grateful for his dedication to my project and for the numerous discussions we have had over the years that helped me to formulate this thesis.

I would finally like to thank the other two committee members of this thesis for the time and resources they provided me with. Dr. Sean Witters and Dr. Ignacio Lopez-Vicuña provided me with comments and feedback that I am incredibly grateful for. I further wish to thank Dr. Antonello Borra for his reading of draft material on Dante that provided me with guidance and direction. The time they all devoted to me was extremely helpful in guiding me during the writing and revising process, and to them I am extremely grateful.

A.M.D.G.

Citation Abbreviations and a Note on the Citation

All citations to the primary sources used in this thesis — being the works of Dante and Joyce — are parenthetically cited in the text for the convenience of the reader. For *Ulysses*, the citation format is “U” followed by the chapter number in roman numerals, followed by the line numbers of the quote. For Dante, the citation format is the abbreviated title of the work (see below), followed by the canto number in roman numerals, followed by the line numbers of the quote. A list of the abbreviations with the exact texts they reference is provided for your convenience below.

Inf. — Alighieri, Dante. *Inferno*. Translated by Tom Simone. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2007.

Purg. — Alighieri, Dante. *Purgatorio*. Translated by Tom Simone. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2014.

Par. — Alighieri, Dante. *Paradiso*. Translated by Tom Simone. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2017.

Portrait — Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Penguin Books, 1964.

U. — Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Ed. Hans Walter Gabler. New York, New York: Random House, 1986.

FW — Joyce, James. *Finnegans Wake*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Additionally, there are three appendices located at the terminus of this thesis. “Appendix D.(#)” refers to the Dante section; “Appendix D.J.(#)” to the Bridge section; “Appendix J.(#)” to the Joyce section.

Preface

In the Western literary tradition there are few giants that stand as tall as Dante Alighieri and James Joyce. Both were innovators, philosophers, and social cast-offs — Dante as a sociopolitical exile and Joyce as a cultural exile (though it was self-imposed). Their respective literary pinnacles, the *Commedia* and *Ulysses*, are referenced time and again as capstone creations of human experience in art.

Joyce was born in 1882, five hundred and sixty-one years after Dante passed away in Ravenna in 1321. While many centuries separate their works and social circumstances, their works share a remarkable number of similarities. Both Joyce and Dante insert themselves into the work via the protagonist; in the *Commedia*, Dante is the Pilgrim, and in *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce is Stephen Dedalus.² Dante caustically refers to Florence a number of times in the *Commedia*, suggesting that the City of Dis in *Inferno* resembles Dante's home city. This is further attested to by the fact that Dante's *Inferno* is populated with a plethora of Florentine residents from times past and present. Joyce chose to situate *Ulysses* in Dublin on a single June day that showcases a wide variety of human experience and interaction. Both writers chose to have one of the central themes of their works be love, and both were inspired by women (Beatrice de Portinari and Nora Barnacle, respectively) in the writings of their texts.

Joyce was a student of Dante's from quite early on in his literary career. He was exposed to Dante from a very early age, probably in his early teens, and he studied the Italian poet intensively during his time in college and university. Joyce's major published works, beginning

² Mary T Reynolds. *Joyce and Dante: The Shaping Imagination*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Legacy Library, 1981: 4.

with *Dubliners* and leading up through *Finnegans Wake*, are rife with Dantean references and allusions. These have been investigated to some detail by past scholars, but Joyce's use of Dante's understanding of moral geography has not been as well documented. I attempt to bridge a portion of this gap in this thesis, and "The Bridge from Dante and Joyce" serves to illustrate parallels between the two writers as well as transitioning from the *Commedia* to *Ulysses* and the differing representations of the concept in both works.

The relationship between the physical geographical landscape and the moral, religious, and psychological landscape is of paramount importance in Dante. The juxtaposition of the mental within the physical and vice versa helps to elucidate moral principles important to Dante as well as illuminating situations of great moral importance. This is evidently seen in the structure of each of his canticles where the physical landscape reflects the moral instances in place in the text. As a student of Dante, Joyce understood Dante's use of this structure and further adapted it to fit his modern milieu.

My research delves precisely into this facet of the relationship between the two writers and expands into Joyce's use of the concept. In doing so, attention is given to Dante and Joyce individually, as well as to Joyce's renegotiation and redefinition of the conceptual framework that Dante uses. Because of this, Joyce's moralized landscape opens a dialogue with Dante's moralized landscape that exhibits the relationship they had with each other.

The first chapter discusses the concept of moral geography at a greater length in an attempt to give the reader a larger understanding of the conceptual framework found in Dante. Chapter two shows the implementation of the concept in Dante's work and shows how it is present throughout the *Commedia* via the image of water. The image of water is given direct focus because of its continuity throughout the text as well as its extensive applications in Joyce's

world in *Ulysses*. The third chapter acts as a transitional point between Dante and Joyce, further highlighting their relationship and delving into greater depth in Joyce's reading of Dante and how he adapted Dante's use of moral geography. I address the issue of modernization and Joyce's more secularized worldview, which impacts *Ulysses* to a great extent.

The final three chapters of the thesis each contain an investigation into a chapter of *Ulysses* that exhibits the relationship between the physical landscape and the moral, religious, and psychological landscape to a high degree. The three chapters that occur at the end of each of the three parts of *Ulysses* — "Proteus," "Circe," and "Penelope" — have been chosen because of the variability of the moral geographies that they harbor. These three chapters also showcase a progression from a more physically-oriented moral geography in "Proteus" to a moral geography of the mind in "Penelope," with "Circe" acting as the juncture of the mental and the physical in the hallucinogenic dreamscape of Nighttown.

In doing so, I hope to illustrate that Joyce uses the concept of moral geography in *Ulysses*, a concept that Dante perfected to a wide extent in the *Commedia*. I also point towards the continuity of the concept in Joyce's other works, notably *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, from which much of the background information on Stephen Dedalus is derived from, and *Finnegans Wake*, the nighttime counterpart to the daytime *Ulysses*.

Previous Work

Studies of moral geography in literature are not extremely prevalent, and while scholarly works have been written about how ideological moral structures influence the text (such as Marc Cogan's *The Design in the Wax*, which illustrates Dante's structuring of morality in the *Commedia*), studies regarding the relationship between the physical landscape and the internal religious and psychological forces within characters have not been undertaken. That being said, there are many works in which moral geography is outlined from a sociological or sociocultural perspective, as the concept has been historically used more in other subject areas than literature. David Smith's *Moral Geographies: Ethics in a World of Difference* (2000) and Owen Flanagan's *The Geography of Morals* (2017) provide the basis for an understanding of the concept as a stand-alone entity. From a literary standpoint, I base some of my understanding of the concept as a literary entity based on a letter written by Dante himself. The Italian poet wrote of the literal and allegorical aspects of geographical structures as early as the 14th century in his Letter to Cangrande, where he speaks of the text having a physical geography, "which is called literal, while the latter is called allegorical, or mystical [or moral, or anagogical]."³

The relationship between Joyce and Dante has been well-documented and examined in past scholarly work. While these documentations have not entered the moral geographical realm, few who compare Joyce and Dante are without debt to Mary Reynolds' *Joyce and Dante: The Shaping Imagination*, which provides an overview of the relationship between the two writers, as well as cataloguing a plethora of Joyce's direct references to the Italian poet. Stephen Sicari continues Reynolds' tradition by investigating how Dante influences Joyce's modernist allegory that is present in *Ulysses*. Others, such as Samuel Beckett, who in a symposium regarding

³ Dante Alighieri. "Epistle to Cangrande (XIII, 1-90)." Accessed November 3, 2017. <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/epistole.html>.

Finnegans Wake wrote an essay entitled “Dante...Bruno. Vico.....Joyce”, investigated the presence of major literary figures and their concepts in Joyce’s texts.

Joseph Campbell, who is perhaps best known for his theory of “the hero’s journey,” wrote a relatively brief text (*Mythic Words, Modern Worlds: On the Art of James Joyce*) exploring the mythological element of *Ulysses*, in which he vies for a Dantean reading of the text that posits that *Ulysses* is, to some extent, a representation of *Inferno*. He continues to say that *Finnegans Wake* is representative of *Purgatorio*, and if Joyce had survived to write another book, it would have been representative of *Paradiso*. Campbell’s claims certainly leave room for doubt, but his general overview of *Ulysses* is quite helpful and certainly investigates a Dantean element of Joyce’s magnum opus.

In *Ulysses Explained: How Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare Inform Joyce's Modernist Vision*, David Weir proposes that the structure of *Ulysses* is indebted to Dante’s *Commedia*, and that Dante was more of an influence than Shakespeare on Joyce’s work. Like Campbell’s claims, Weir’s leave room for interpretation and uncertainty, though *Ulysses Explained* nonetheless provides an interesting take on the relationship between the two writers.

The Concept of Moral Geography

Moral geography operates on two main levels: the literal and the allegorical. The literal level is the landscape itself, whereas the allegorical level is what it implies. The literal landscape can be interpreted in a variety of different ways based on the way that one perceives the world. Therefore, these implications are various and a singular allegorical explanation does not necessarily exist, as Dante himself wrote of this in this Letter to Cangrande in the early 14th century:

For the elucidation, therefore, of what we have to say, it must be understood that the meaning of this work is not of one kind only; rather the work may be described as 'polysemous', that is, having several meanings; for the first meaning is that which is conveyed by the letter, and the next is that which is conveyed by what the letter signifies; the former of which is called literal, while the latter is called allegorical, or mystical [or moral, or anagogical].⁴

Dante explains that in coming to understand the moral landscape that is created, one must ascertain the literal, physical level in order to proceed to the “allegorical, or mystical [or moral, or anagogical]” level.⁵ This level in Dante is comprised of various geographical features such as mountains, lakes, rivers, desert plains, forests, and icy tundra. The implementation of these geographical features operates in direct correlation with the religious, moral, and psychological situations that the character is presented with in the text. Dante’s understanding that there are multiple levels of moral geographical understanding is of paramount importance when the concept is applied to his work and beyond. The various levels of meaning attributed to the

⁴ Dante Alighieri. “Epistle to Cangrande (XIII, 1-90).” Accessed November 3, 2017. <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/epistole.html>.

⁵ This can be analogized to Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic theory on semiotics, where the signifier — the literal, physical landscape in Dante’s case — prescribes an allegorical or moral interpretation that germinates the signified.

allegorical level of moral geography helps to create a morally variable world and one that rejects the existence of a singular narrative.

The relationship between what we see and what is inside of us is remarkably intense and pertinent to our interaction with the world. Our influences, together with our religious and moralized notions on how social apparatuses operate, forms a distinct vision of the world that is important to the functions of ourselves and society. In literature, this concept can be understood as moral geography, as the geography reflects the moral and religious situations present in the text. The late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish wrote that “a place is not only a geographical area but a state of mind”⁶ and thus that the mental world is incredibly valuable in ascertaining the physical world. Many authors in literature — such as Dante and Joyce — address this vis-à-vis reflecting the inner world of the mind in the geographical landscape used as the setting of the work. Because characters undergo transformations, such as the *bildungsroman* of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and the further development of Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses*, the landscape adapts itself to the many stages of the work in order to reflect the changing mental states of the characters. As a result of this intense variability, moral geography has the ability to operate on many different planes of spatiality and temporality at once, meaning that different characters may perceive certain situations and landscapes in different ways due to the variability of their past influences. This rejects notions of singularity and posits that the variety of human experience is intensely variable and permutable.

Of the influences used to construct the inner worlds of the characters, religion, and in turn morality, plays a role of paramount importance. One reason for this is that religion (as well as the many permutations of its ideologies) has played a central role in the development of civilization.

⁶ Mahmoud Darwish. *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*. Brooklyn: Archipelago Books, 2010: 15.

It is responsible for the physical structures we build and the landscape we alter in order to serve our religious ethic. Evidence of this is presented worldwide, from the construction of the Pyramids and the alteration of the Nile in Egypt to the creation of the Jewish Ghettos around Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. We create the world molded from our moral compasses, and thus we are an “integral and active part of nature.”⁷ One aspect of human nature is to question the world around us in an attempt to gain knowledge of our surroundings in an attempt to unite ourselves with what is “other.” Moral geography is exemplary of this because it layers fundamental moral and ethical questions with the physical world that we live in.

In literature the world is created by the artist. The artist acts as a deific figure, creating the character’s cognitive as well as physical landscapes. The artist’s creative control lets them create their world at will and alter it to suit their needs.⁸ The author does not create a rigid interpretation of the moral landscape, because the allegorical nature of moral geography necessitates a variety of interpretive understandings. Suzette Henke echoes this in *Joyce’s Moraculous Sindbook*: “From the material of words, the artist creates worlds: with godlike omniscience, he fashions an aesthetic microcosm, a fictional ‘postcreation’ that expands the collective horizons of human awareness.”⁹ Henke’s comments support an idea of moral geography as expanding the realm of possibility in the variety of human existence and therefore the permutability of moral landscapes.

⁷ David Smith. *Moral Geographies: Ethics in a World of Difference*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000: 2.

⁸ Authors as early as Homer implemented this in their work, using mythological geography in order to reinforce the moral authority of the Grecian pantheon. One sees this used in *The Odyssey* with the use of Scylla and Charybdis. This Homeric geographical element is used even today in our society as an idiom to connote a dicey moral situation.

⁹ Suzette Henke. *Joyce’s Moraculous Sindbook: A Study of “Ulysses.”* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978: 3.

The concept can be applied to a wide range of structural and non-structural means, including not only the structure of the afterlife and its many forms but also hallucinogenic episodes and stream of consciousness narratives. Though it has seldom been applied to literature, this concept gives the opportunity to investigate the structural features of particular settings in texts as well as how they interact with the mental structures that exist in the consciousness of the characters. The religious and moral states of these characters often presents themselves in the landscape that they occupy, displaying how their surroundings are emblematic of what is happening inside of them.

Moral Geography in Dante Alighieri: The Image of Water

The structural relationship between landscape and morality is a recurring theme in the cornucopia of the Western canon, which is seen in its most prominent form in the works of Dante Alighieri. This concept of moral geography helps to form the identity that a landscape has within a specific cultural context and layers of meaning. Through the lens that we are looking through, it can be seen as “the imprint of the Creator,” or as Marc Cogan titles his book, “the design in the wax.”¹⁰ With Dante, this lens is the Judeo-Christian tradition as well as the sociopolitical milieu of 14th century Florence. “The imprint of the Creator” on the landscape and the way that the text interacts with this is of immense importance in Dante’s *Commedia*. Dante cites the importance of this in his Letter to Cangrande when he mentions the significance of the allegorical level of the physical geography. This allegorical level is able to have multiple interpretations, one of which is the intent of the Creator in relation to the creation of the landscape. In addition to the “imprint of the Creator,” moral geography draws on historical, political, religious, and psychological elements that intensify the meaning and significance of Dante’s construction of the *Commedia*’s geographical landscape. His magnum opus can be seen as the zenith of moral geographical frameworks, as his use of the concept demonstrates focus on the physical details, the primary and secondary meanings, and its narrative impact.

Reading Dante makes it clear that the physical world is not the only world of significance. The moral geography of the mind and the signified meaning of the landscape is of great importance to Dante, as he elucidated in his Letter to Cangrande. There is a major focus on mentality in the *Commedia*, particularly as the reader progresses into the second half of the poem

¹⁰ Marc Cogan. *The Design in the Wax*. Vol. 3. The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante Studies. South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999.

and in *Paradiso* in general. With that in mind, the literal level of moral geography is of primary importance in understanding the mental portion, and *Inferno* is the canticle in which Dante places the majority of his focus on the physical world.

A central locus of Dante's focus is water. This geographical structure shows Dante's use of the concept of moral geography via its continuity throughout the text and thus its narrative significance to the poem, as each canticle's climactic point gives water context and heightened meaning. The movement of the Pilgrim and Virgil throughout the *Commedia* along and in relation to these bodies of water from *Inferno* to *Purgatorio* and then with Beatrice in *Paradiso* affirms its centrality to the narrative.

The *Commedia* is comprised of three parts or canticles. In order for the Pilgrim to reach Heavenly Paradise, he must traverse first through *Inferno*¹¹ before ascending Mount Purgatory in *Purgatorio*, where he will ascend to *Paradiso*. The Pilgrim's movement throughout *Inferno* is downward towards the Earth's core and towards Lucifer, who resides in the very bottom of the infernal pit. The canticle begins with Dante in deep moral strife, which is manifested by being lost "in a dark wood" (*Inf.* I. 2). The understanding readers have at this point is that Dante has been deeply embroiled with many varieties of conflicts, including that his exile from his home city of Florence in 1302. The journey of the *Commedia* takes place in 1300, and therefore the setting predates Dante's actual exile. *Inferno*'s focus is on combatting corruption and sin with divine omnipotence, and the evidence of this in the landscape is quite powerful.

From the very onset of *Inferno*, Dante shows that moral geography is a foundational element of his work. In addition to the celebrated opening when Dante describes himself as being "in a dark wood, / where the straight path was lost," *Inferno* opens up with a wide variety of

¹¹ Please refer to Appendix D.1. for a map of *Inferno*.

moral possibilities with water playing a key role (*Inf.* I. 2-3). In a literal sense, the Pilgrim is lost and mortally afraid of the perilous situation that he is in. There is no clear way to turn, and as a result, the Pilgrim is in an area of liminality. This liminality can be defined as the transitional area between two different moral regions. Dante illustrates this allegorically when he describes himself as exiting the ocean, having barely survived its torments. The ocean parallels the “dark wood” in many ways, offering an alternative geography to further the notion of the Pilgrim’s moral strife. This passage begins the *Commedia*’s presentation of water as a constituent of moral geography:

I was like one with labored breath,
who struggles out of the surf onto the shore
who turns to the deadly water and gapes

so my fleeing soul turned back to look again
at the treacherous pass that never yet
let any person escape alive.

(*Inf.* I. 22-27)

The image that Dante presents to us is one of an escape in the midst of intense physical and moral struggle. His use of “the deadly water” creates a mental conceptualization of water that signifies the struggle for life, suffering, and the omnipotence of the Creator. The sea becomes an image for *Inferno* as the place where those who enter are called to “Leave behind all hope” (*Inf.* III. 9), as it embodies all of these qualities while additionally showcasing the vastness of the separation from God. The vastness of the ocean further provides a perfect image which symbolizes the undertow of sin. The torment of being separated from God is more fully defined as *Inferno* progresses, and thus this image acts as a precursor to what is to come in the later portions of the text.

This initial instance of water therefore is representative of the escape from sin and moral decadence that Dante had experienced previously in his immoral past. Water is operating in this

scene on both the physical and mental planes of moral geography. The physical sense is the escape from the sea itself, which has immense destructive potential. From a mental standpoint, the sea represents the maelstrom of the Pilgrim's past and the spiritual distancing of himself from the Creator. A prime example of Dante's recognition of the power of sin to invade the very core of oneself is through "the lake of my heart" (*Inf.* I. 19). The image of this "lake" characterizes the internal aspect of his "drowning" in "the deadly water."¹² The literal level of the lake presents the ability to drown sinners as well as trap them in its grasp. Singleton's note that this "lake" is connotative of "the location of fear within the human body"¹³ is apt and appropriate, since fear causes the soul to stagnate into a state of crisis. The "lake of my heart" is therefore a symbol for the state of all of the souls in *Inferno* who are drowning in their self-inflicted moral wounds. Consequently, illustrating water as having mentally and physically destructive potential suggests the moral decrepitude of *Inferno* that is to come.

After encountering the Latin poet Virgil, who resides in Limbo, Dante gains a guide for his journey through *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. The descent of the two into *Inferno* eventually brings them to the Acheron, where they have their first encounter with the intricate river system of the canticle. The narrative significance of water continues with the encounter of the Four Rivers of *Inferno*, the Acheron, Styx, Phlegethon, and Cocytus. The continuity of these recurring geographical images of water is immediately suggestive of their centrality to Dante's work. These rivers are portrayed in a stormy and destructive way throughout *Inferno*, including "a tempest, / when it is embattled by opposing winds" in the circle of the lustful (*Inf.* V. 29-30),

¹² Previous readers of the *Commedia* will see a parallel between the description of his heart as a lake and the frozen Cocytus at the end of *Inferno*, which is a lake that keeps Lucifer captive in ice. Dante seems to suggest that unless his erring ways are amended, "the lake of [his] heart" will freeze as well and he too will be relegated to that icy realm.

¹³ Charles Singleton, trans. *The Divine Comedy: Inferno (Commentary)*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970: 7.

“everlasting, cursed, cold and heavy” in the circle of the gluttons (*Inf.* VI. 8.), and “mournful” (*Inf.* VII. 106) in the circle of the avaricious allude to each of their moral valences. Each one of these four rivers represents the furthering of oneself from the creator via sin and thus from the “good of intellect,” as Virgil notes (*Inf.* III, 16-18). Because of this, we can see the shorelines of these rivers as being areas of moral liminality and where abrupt change is about to take place. Liminality in moral geography can be described as an area where two or more moral planes intersect. In the case of the infernal rivers, the liminality is expressed at the shoreline where the moral plane that the Pilgrim and Virgil occupy ends and the next begins. The four rivers in *Inferno* demarcate moral boundaries and the progressively destructive nature of the sins punished within these boundaries.

By crossing each of the rivers, Dante indicates how water acts as a conduit for separation from the Creator because it drives the sinner deeper into *Inferno* and thus farther from the realm of *Paradiso*. John Scott’s apt characterization of the infernal rivers being “in fact one channel, which changes names at different levels”¹⁴ means that the rivers flow down and converge at the nadir of *Inferno*, the Cocytus, where all hope is truly resigned at the geographically farthest point from the Creator. The Cocytus is in *Inferno*’s basement, Circle Nine, and is described by Dante as a frozen lake and as “evil,” which is fitting because this is where Dante places Lucifer, trapped in the ice. Dante describes the sinners placed in Circle Nine as being trapped in the Cocytus:

under my feet a lake that was ice,
and had the appearance of glass and not water. [. . .]

amongst them their mouths showed the cold,
and their eyes testified to their evil hearts.

¹⁴ John A. Scott. *Understanding Dante*. The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante Studies 6. South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2005: 215.

(*Inf.* XXXII. 23-24, 38-39)

The icy Cocytus is where traitors of varying degrees are punished. The way Dante characterizes the sinners in this realm as how “the cold / and their eyes testified to their evil hearts” harkens back to the image of the “lake of my heart” conjured up by the poet in Canto I. The focus on the ice in the cantos dealing with the Cocytus is emblematic of the use of the frigid temperature of the gelid water, which highlights the separation of the created from the Creator and instead unifies them with Lucifer, who is also trapped in the ice. The ice functions as a means to describe this body of water as a point of finality instead of liminality. This is shown vis-à-vis the solidity of the ice and the end of the image of the flowing water that we have seen in the rivers up to this point. This point of finality signifies that this is the farthest one can be from the Creator and that it is where the reach of divine love is at its weakest. In *Paradiso*, the contrast between the Cocytus and the River of Light, which gesticulates entrance into the Celestial Rose, will be evident, as the latter can be seen as an inversion of the former. *Paradiso* will furthermore allow Dante to expand the meaning and significance of water and what it signifies.

While Dante is most known for *Inferno*, it is important to illustrate that moral geography exists not only in the first canticle and that the Pilgrim is not only “the man who traveled to hell.”¹⁵ In contrast to *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*¹⁶ is a realm where those punished eventually gain entrance into *Paradiso* through their penitential actions pursued on the seven Terraces of the mountain that they occupy. This realm is located on an island in the middle of a sea, with Mount Purgatory ascending skyward towards the heavens and *Paradiso*. The prospects of the ascent of the mountain presents immense physical difficulties and is in many ways symbolic for the moral

¹⁵ Erich Auerbach. *Dante: Poet of the Secular World*. Ed. By Michael Dirda. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: New York Review Books, 2001: 104.

¹⁶ Please refer to Appendix D.2. for a map of *Purgatorio*.

purpose of this realm, as even though climbing the mountain presents an intense difficulty, the reward is great.

In *Purgatorio* we see an intense paradigmatic shift in the journey and in the way that water is presented. The Pilgrim and Virgil no longer are struggling “with labored breath” but rather are sailing in “the little boat / of my imagination” (*Purg.* I. 1.). From this point onwards, representations of water are seen as reformatory instead of destructive. As it was in *Inferno*, the moral geography of water is presented at the beginning of *Purgatorio* and gains immediate attention in Canto I:

To course over better waves the little boat
of my imagination raises her sails,
and leaves behind her that sea so cruel

(*Purg.*, I. 1-3)

The contrast that Dante provides us for the oceans of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* could not be more different. By designating *Inferno* as the region of “that sea so cruel” and then immediately denoting the ocean at the base of Mount Purgatory as an area of “better waves” we are able to distinguish that the moral landscape has undergone a reversal. As a result, the moral landscape in *Purgatorio* is more limited than its infernal counterpart, meaning that the variety and degree of sinful action punished here is of a considerably lesser extent, or at least not without a teleological purpose.

Throughout the *Commedia* there are many congruent occurrences in the same canto number in multiple canticles. Dante and Virgil begin to walk “along the deserted shore, / which never saw a man who had sailed its waters, / who returned after with experience of it” (*Purg.* I. 130-132). This echoes the Pilgrim’s experience in Canto I of *Inferno* when he described “the deadly water” as a place “that never yet / let any person escape alive.” This affirms and furthers

the immense significance that water has on a moral landscape.

The emergence of Cato later on in Canto I of *Purgatorio* brings about the first instance of ritualistic cleansing in the canticle. Cato was a Roman statesman who committed suicide so as to not live under the rule of Caesar and his dictatorship. He is placed in a role that recalls Charon, the boatsman who took Dante and Virgil over the Acheron in *Inferno*. Cato is placed here because “he goes seeking liberty, which is so dear to you, / as he knows who gave up life for it,” which makes it known that Cato died for the sake of liberty. The primacy of Cato in at the onset of *Purgatorio* elucidates that the liberation from sin is one of the primary goals of the canticle (*Purg.* I. 70-72).¹⁷ Cato indicates to the Pilgrim that “it is not proper to go with eyes / clouded by mist before the first / minister [or angel],” since that the grimy residue accumulated from *Inferno* is a moral hindrance to his ascent of the mountain (*Purg.* I. 97-99). The removal of this grime covering Dante’s face is thus a symbolic representation of the idea of the liberation from sin in the canticle.

The contrast of the eyes “clouded by mist” to Virgil’s cleansing of Dante’s cheeks with the morning dew from the plants of the base of the mountain is stark, suggesting that the origin of the water in *Purgatorio* seems to have a completely different composition than that of *Inferno* and thus that water serves a different moral purpose in this realm. This is demonstrated by the ability for plant life to sprout here. The Pilgrim is intensely aware of this difference as Virgil cleanses his cheeks. This purification takes place at the base of Mount Purgatory and is completed by Virgil himself.

I, who was fully aware of his art,
turned my tear-stained cheeks towards him;

¹⁷ Charles Singleton, trans. *The Divine Comedy: Purgatorio (Commentary)*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973: 15.

and there he made me completely unveiled
from the color with which Inferno had hidden me.
(*Purg.* I. 126-129)

Dante recognizes the irony of Virgil cleansing his “tear-stained cheeks,” as Virgil’s eternal residence is in Limbo. Being “fully aware of his art” signifies that Virgil is unacquainted with the physical landscape of *Purgatorio*; even though he was able to guide the Pilgrim through *Inferno*, Virgil’s knowledge of *Purgatorio* is minimal because he was not permitted to enter it by the Deity, due to his pre-Christian beliefs.¹⁸ The gaps in Virgil’s geographical familiarity become more prevalent as the canticle progresses as Dante and Virgil ascend Mount Purgatory. Eventually, Virgil’s “aware[ness] of his art” will separate him from the Pilgrim once they reach Earthly Paradise on the top of the mountain.

As the Pilgrim and Virgil traverse up the mountain, they encounter various souls who are deeply engaged in their purgatorial cleansing. Arriving at the Second Terrace (Envy) of the mountain, they encounter two souls, including Guido del Duca, who addresses Dante and asks where he comes from. Dante mentions the Arno as being in the vicinity where he lives. This river has a remarkable presence in *Purgatorio* and in Dante’s life, as it runs through Dante’s home city of Florence. The implementation of a geographical feature from Dante’s life indicates the possibility of the extension of moral geography from the literary world to the physical world. Furthermore, the poet’s placement of the discussion of the Arno at virtually the geographic center of the text indicates its centrality to both the poem itself and to Dante.

And I said: “From the middle of Tuscany there spreads
a stream that is born in Falterona,
and the course of a hundred miles does not quench it.”
(*Purg.* XIV. 16-18)

¹⁸ In spite of this, Statius comments to Virgil that it is because of Virgil’s writing that Statius became a Christian and thus is able to exist in *Purgatorio*. See *Purg.* XXII. 64-75.

The Pilgrim's initial description of the Arno elucidates the unquenchable thirst that the Tuscans have for power and consumption. Guido responds to this by further lamenting the decadence and corruption of Tuscany by pointing out the flaws in the virtue of the people: "it is fitting for the name of that valley to perish [. . .] they all flee virtue as if it were the enemy / like a snake" (*Purg.* XIV. 30, 37-38). Guido's juxtaposition of the snake as a simile for the people of Florence recalls the Biblical serpent in the Garden of Eden, essentially equalizing those in the Tuscan valley with evil and corruption. The Arno acts as a conduit through which this evil is spread throughout the countryside as well as the *Commedia*.

Throughout its invocations in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, the Arno has come to be known as a symbol of decadence and corruption, highlighting the sociopolitical situation in Florence during the time of Dante.¹⁹ Dante used the disordered river as the model for the Four Rivers in *Inferno*, though it has undergone a shift in meaning here. Just as the crossing of the bodies of water in *Inferno* merited a furthering from the Creator, the same action in *Purgatorio* draws the Pilgrim closer to it. One could say that after the discussion of the Arno in Canto XIV that Dante has crossed it and moved on with his journey. In addition to being placed at the geographic center of of the *Commedia*, the image of Arno functions as a bridge into discussions of love and free will that proceed immediately following the discussion of the river.

At the conclusion of their ascent of Mount Purgatory, the Pilgrim, Virgil, and now the Roman poet Statius²⁰ arrive at the Earthly Paradise. Earthly Paradise is Dante's vision of Eden that represents a return of the human soul to a state of grace. The position of the Pilgrim and Virgil at the summit of the mountain points towards this, as it is literally the furthest point on

¹⁹ This further suggests concepts of a moralized vision of the city, which is very present in Dante's *Commedia*.

²⁰ Statius has been recently freed from his purgatorial bonds when Dante and Virgil encountered him in Terrace Five (*Purg.* XXI. 91).

earth from the depths of *Inferno* from which they came. The allegorical significance of the placement of Earthly Paradise at the summit of the mountain is that this is the highest level of moral placement that one can be in without being in the direct presence of the Creator (i.e. being in *Paradiso*). Once these three arrive at the Earthly Paradise, the Pilgrim encounters the River Lethe and a further change in the moralized presentation of water in the *Commedia*. Instead of immediately crossing it, Dante is immersed in the Lethe by Matilda²¹ and drinks of the water of the Lethe (meaning “forgetfulness” Greek) which “takes away every moment of sin” (*Purg.* XXVIII. 128). The purpose of the river, as the Grecian origin of the name suggests, is to purify the memories of those who cross through it and rid them of memories of their inequities, while its counterpart, the second river Eünoè, strengthens the memories of good deeds: “On this side it descends with a strength that / takes away every memory of sin, / on the other it gives back that of every good” (*Purg.* XXVIII. 127-129). Because it is placed in the Earthly Paradise, the Lethe represents one of the final movements toward a completely positive moral geographical landscape that is embodied in *Paradiso*. The passage through the Lethe and into the Earthly Paradise furthermore represents the complete reversal of the initial forest that Dante found himself in at the beginning of the *Commedia*.

The Pilgrim’s journey through the Earthly Paradise eventually brings him to the Eünoè immediately before he and Beatrice ascend to *Paradiso*. The placement of the Eünoè at the end of the text before the ascent to *Paradiso* is of great importance because of its function in relation to the Lethe. Unlike the Lethe, which is given an immensely physical description by Dante, the Eünoè is given very little direct or physical attention. Because the Pilgrim’s actions associated with this river are taking place out of the direct attention of the text, the Eünoè can be seen as the

²¹ She is currently unnamed at this point in the text. Beatrice will reveal her name in *Purg.* XXXIII. 119.

prelude to the moral geography of the mind that will gain more prominence in *Paradiso*. What amounts to the description of the Pilgrim's immersion within the Eünoè is given by Beatrice:

And Beatrice: "Perhaps a greater care,
which many times holds back the memory,
has made the eyes of his mind so dark.

But see Eünoè which comes forth there:
lead him to it, as is your manner,
and revive his exhausted strength."

(*Purg.* XXXIII. 124-129)

In the ensuing episode, the Pilgrim is immersed in the river. The last physical description of *Purgatorio* that we receive is that of "the holiest wave," which presumably is the Eünoè (*Purg.* XXXIII. 142). Dante's lack of a description of the Eünoè can be viewed as a prefiguration of the noticeably less-described physical landscape in *Paradiso*.

The transition from *Purgatorio* to *Paradiso*²² is facilitated under the guidance of Beatrice, and she is to serve as the Pilgrim's guide throughout the final canticle. Their journey takes them to the realm of the stars, where they stop on cosmological structures that correspond with the spheres of *Paradiso*.²³ The journey from each sphere to the next is unlike the journey from one circle of *Inferno* or one terrace of *Purgatorio* to the next in that Beatrice and the Pilgrim take "flight" and ascend in a way that Dante is sometimes unable to describe with human language.²⁴ Furthermore, unlike the previous constituents of the *Commedia*, *Paradiso* does not use water as a symbol for moral geography in direct ways as they were in the previous two canticles. The literal level of water that was much more clear in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* is substituted for a primarily allegorical vision of water. Dante's use of the allegorical meaning as

²² Please refer to Appendix D.3. for a map of *Paradiso*.

²³ These structures are, in order, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, the Primum Mobile, and the Empyrean.

²⁴ See *Par.* I. 5-6 and XXXIII. 140-145 for instances where the Pilgrim's linguistic capacity falls short in describing the physical landscape around him.

the primary meaning is based on the understanding that the reader has already read the first two canticles and has arrived in *Paradiso* with some understanding of how water functions as a harbinger of moral geography. Though direct instances of water are not common in *Paradiso*, the magnificent River of Light juxtaposes the symbol of the river with a new medium.

The placement of the River of Light is in the Empyrean and leading towards the Celestial Rose. This is the holiest of holies in the *Commedia* which is attested by the content of the river being angels. The Pilgrim and Beatrice arrive at the River of Light at the coda of the canticle in Canto XXX. The River of Light is the most elevated and exalted form that water takes in the *Commedia*, thus acting as a climax for the presentation of water in the text. The River of Light represents the culmination of morality vis-à-vis the Creator.

and I saw light in the form of a river
flowing with radiance, between two banks,
painted with miraculous spring time.

From such a river live sparks went forth,
and placed themselves on flowers in every part
(*Par.* XXX. 61-65)

Even in relation to *Purgatorio*, where the presentation of water was crisply distinctive from those of *Inferno*, the linguistic description of the watery vision here is superbly divine. Dante the poet paints the picture of a heavenly-realized version of Earthly Paradise, a Paradise fed by the divine love that finds its genesis in the River of Light. The constituents of this river (the “live sparks” Dante speaks of are angels) present a contrast to the sinners boiling in the Phlegethon in *Inferno* XII as well as to the frozen Cocytus, furthering the idea that this instance of water is the culmination of the geographical feature in the *Commedia*. This final vision of water culminates the Trinitarian nature it has assumed throughout the *Commedia* as being destructive in *Inferno*, reformatory in *Purgatorio*, and restorative in *Paradiso*.

Instead of being called upon to cross the river, Dante is told to “drink of this water” that invokes an internal cleansing reminiscent of an inner baptism (*Par.* XXX. 73). In a way this is the fulfillment of the Pilgrim’s immersion in the Lethe; as the river of forgetfulness causes one to forget past transgressions and acts as overcoming that portion of the self, drinking of the divine river “so much thirst is sated” causes the Pilgrim to experience a spiritual rebirth in the presence of the Deity (*Par.* XXX. 74). Furthermore, and in conjugation with the Celestial Rose, the river’s illuminating radiance exhibits a moral field that extends throughout the canticle. The framing of the *Commedia* with watery landscapes asserts the way that it acts as a nucleus of moral geography in Dante.

Unlike *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, the opening of the final canticle lacks the distinctly fluid element we saw in the previous two canticles, though Dante characterizes himself as metaphorically being “in a tiny bark [. . .] behind my boat which sails forth singing,” prompting the reader to not fall behind in their journey with the Pilgrim (*Par.* II. 1,3). Instead, the final scenes of *Paradiso* (and of the *Commedia*) as a whole provide the culmination of Dante’s use of water. The transformation of previous conceptions of the river as a liquid entity into one that is comprised of light signifies a change in the moral valence of the concept of water in *Paradiso*. This is reflected in the content of the river as well as its geographic placement within the canticle’s structure. The River of Light is free from all notions of moral negativity; this is due to its function as the delta by which life genuflects towards the Empyrean, the Celestial Rose. It is a road, or rather an aqueduct, that leads the heavenly bodies towards the divine. Furthermore, it is the ultimate reversal of the initial moral geographical landscape we encountered when “the straight path was lost”; in acting as a path towards the Celestial Rose, we are given an absolute trajectory towards salvation and moral perfection. Because of this, the Celestial Rose is able to

radiate divine love outwards because of the River of Light, and thus water in *Paradiso* becomes a conduit by which divine love is radiated outwards from the Deity. Marc Cogan comments on this in *The Design in the Wax*:

It is love, after all, that moves *il sole e l'altre stelle* (*Par.* XXXIII, 145), and in the variations on love that we see in the three *cantiche* Dante constructs the single plot and single allegory that is the *Commedia*.²⁵

It is of paramount importance that the conception of love in *Paradiso* differs starkly from the “corrupted” and “misguided” love that is present in the previous two canticles, concepts of which the bodies of water in those areas reflect conceptually. *Paradiso* reflects divine love, which cannot be anything but perfect. The River of Light’s existence as a non-aqueous river — that is, one that is not comprised of the same elements that comprise the waters of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* — demarcate it off from other instances of water in the text. This suggests that the existence of water in the different stratifications of Dante’s worlds implies a deviation from divine love. Thus, not only does *Paradiso* become the obvious culmination of the Pilgrim’s journey, it becomes the journey by which he comes to a fuller understanding of what divine love is.

In viewing the concept of a moralized vision of water throughout the *Commedia*, one comes to an understanding of not only how a facet of Dante’s moral landscape functions, but how it points towards the central theme of the work. Dante’s use of both the literal and allegorical aspects of moral geography helps to create both physical and mental understandings of moral geography. Through the example of water, Dante gives the reader a deeper appreciation and understanding of the moral landscape that he employs in his work. Additionally, Dante shows that moral geography has a transitive aspect, as the representations of water throughout

²⁵ Marc Cogan. *The Design in the Wax*. Vol. 3. The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante Studies. South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999: xxxiii.

the *Commedia* evolve and change over the course of our encounter with the text. The concept of moral geography as a whole also undergoes a shift in understanding in accordance with the evolution of our understandings of water.

In conclusion, Dante's use of the physical and literal level of geography elicits an allegorical level that is heavily influenced by religion and the psychological mindsets of both the author and the characters. The representation of water provides the clearest avenue by which this is presented in the *Commedia* due to its continuity throughout the text in each of the three canticles. Dante's model of moral geography is of great importance to his poem and is the most well-developed and pronounced instance of the use of moral geography in Western literature. In spite of Dante representing the zenith of the concept's presentation, moral geography has wider literary implications than just the *Commedia*. James Joyce, one of the most enigmatic figures of Western literature, was himself a dedicated reader of Dante and as a result implemented Dante's use of moral geography in his works (particularly *Ulysses*), albeit through a redefinition of the concept.

The Bridge from Dante to Joyce

Joyce's Dantean Influence

It is only fitting to briefly discuss Joyce's relationship with his "master of those who know" (*Inf.* IV. 131, *U.* III. 6).²⁶ Joyce's direct experience with Dante was extensive. He was an avid reader of Dante dating back to his studies of Italian at Belvedere College and University College Dublin, where he presented on Dante's works many times.²⁷

Joyce's brother Stanislaus remarked that James so loved the Italian poet that he was "examined in the language of Dante, whom he already considered an artist superior to Shakespeare."²⁸ Joyce's love and admiration for Dante was clearly incredibly strong if this impression was received by Stanislaus. What this quote furthermore represents is Joyce's attempt at gaining separation from Anglo-Irish culture in a literary sense, in effect "re-mapping" his own moral and literal geography. Aspects of Joyce's writing seem to imitate the Italian poet, including portions of Joyce's writings where he directly quotes Dante, including the citation above. Joyce's imitation of Dante was not relegated to literary pursuits.²⁹ This was later extended to Joyce's physical self-imposed exile from Ireland that can be seen as mirroring Dante's exile from Florence.

²⁶ Translated from the original "*maestro di color che sanno*" found in *Ulysses*. In *Inferno*, Dante uses this phrase to represent Aristotle, who played an important role in the ethical system used to construct the *Commedia*.

²⁷ Mary T Reynolds. *Joyce and Dante: The Shaping Imagination*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Legacy Library, 1981: 21.

²⁸ Richard Ellmann. *James Joyce*. (1959): via [quoted in?] Reynolds, Mary T. *Joyce and Dante: The Shaping Imagination*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Legacy Library, 1981: 22.

²⁹ There is also the sense that Joyce inherited Dante's sense of linguistic innovation, especially in form. Just as Dante created the *terza rima* style that he utilizes in the *Commedia*, Joyce creates many different styles in *Ulysses*, such as the "musical" style he incorporates in "Sirens". A list of these styles can be found in both the Gilbert and Linnati schemas that Joyce constructed for his friends as structural guides to his book.

Joyce's early readings of Dante can be physically seen in his "Dante notebook" that is currently held at the National Library of Ireland. This notebook chronicles his early experience with Dante, though all that survives (or perhaps all that was written) is a selection of commentaries on cantos from *Inferno*. Many entries in this notebook, such as the one shown in Appendix DJ.1, translate words from Dante's older Tuscan dialect into the modern Italian that Joyce was familiar with. This not only demonstrates Joyce's cosmopolitanism but that he was closely in touch with Dante's use of language and structure. This fascination with language and its moral valence plays a particularly important role in the creation of moral landscapes in *Ulysses*, especially in chapters where the mental world is given precedence over the physical.

One of the main similarities between the writings of Joyce and Dante is the use of the author as one of the main characters. In the *Commedia*, Dante is the Pilgrim. The story of the Pilgrim's voyage is the story of Dante in relation to his escape from the grasp of sin. While made less explicit in *Ulysses*, Joyce is Stephen Dedalus, and thus Stephen's thoughts and wanderings can be seen as being reflective of Joyce's youth.³⁰ While this is the case, Joyce wrote *Ulysses* during what Dante would have considered to be near the middle of the journey of his life; he was in his late thirties when writing the book, and it was published on his fortieth birthday. Thus, he is closer in age to Leopold Bloom while transferring some of his inner life to Stephen's.

Structurally, Joyce's magnum opus owes much to his Italian predecessor.³¹ In *Ulysses Explained*, David Weir proposes that "The overall design of *Ulysses* owes more to Dante than it

³⁰ In order to more fully apprehend this connection, it is necessary to read Joyce's previous novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which is an account of the earlier years of Stephen Dedalus.

³¹ The structure of *Ulysses* is unparalleled in relation to the rest of the Western canon. In its structure lay the traces of the Western tradition, and though T.S. Eliot said that "Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them. There is no third," Joyce is certainly able to take a spot on that literary mantle due to *Ulysses*, though not without assuming intense influence from both Dante and Shakespeare.

does to Homer and Shakespeare.”³² While Weir’s conjectures may be slightly grandiose, his understanding that Joyce owes much of *Ulysses*’ structure to Dante is correct. This comparison in structure has been documented by both Mary Reynolds (in *Joyce and Dante: The Shaping Imagination*) and Joseph Campbell (in *Mythic Words, Modern Worlds: On the Art of James Joyce*), amongst others.

One of the more interesting structural similarities is in the structure of both texts. Both *Ulysses* and the *Commedia* are set up in a tertiary structure that reflects the trajectory of the character’s journeys as well as the evolution of the moral landscape. The correspondence is striking; The “Telemachia”³³ (Chapters 1-3 of *Ulysses*) is like *Inferno* in that the physical aspects of moral geography are the more prevalent than in the rest of the text. Additionally, the “Wanderings of Ulysses” (Chapters 4-15) correspond to the moral geographical landscape of *Purgatorio* because of both the physical and mental aspects of moral geography present. Consequently, the “Nostos”³⁴ (Chapters 16-18) corresponds to *Paradiso*’s overwhelmingly mental moral geography. Because of the varieties of moral structure in Joyce, it is helpful to have a meeting point between the worlds of Joyce and Dante. Besides the pronounced and sweeping comparison of Florence and Dublin, the crucial use of water by both writers exhibits a major point of commonality.

³² David Weir. *Ulysses Explained: How Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare Inform Joyce’s Modernist Vision*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2015: 127.

³³ While these Homeric titles are used to refer to specific chapters and sections of the text, it is important to note that Joyce did not include these in his final version of the text, though he did use them in his drafts of *Ulysses*. These names are used by scholars to refer to specific chapters and to connote certain Homeric references to those chapters.

³⁴ “Nostos” is a theme used in Greek literature to illustrate the return home from the sea. It is only fitting in our discussion of moral geography to mention this, especially with the allusion it makes to *Inf.* I. 22-27, where the Pilgrim barely makes it to the shore alive. In “Proteus,” Stephen is also struggling with his complex inner world, just as the Pilgrim was at the commencement of his journey.

Just as Dante had, Joyce also nurses a particular affinity towards water, as Sandymount Strand and Dublin Bay play major roles in the morally geographic landscape of *Ulysses*. While it was not used explicitly in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce used a beach very close to Sandymount Strand (named Dollymount Strand) in Part Four of the text. This close proximity of these locations to each other suggest the importance of this location to not only the texts but to Joyce himself. Joyce uses the shoreline as an important crossroads of the physical world with the intersection of the land, sea, and sky, just as Dante did in the *Commedia*. The use of the physical world in this way is carried over to the mental sector as the shoreline is also used in Joyce to connote a state of mental flux. Water is used as not only as a geographic locator of oneself within the city but also as a moral locator within the text. Like Dante, Joyce uses water and the shoreline in order to connote certain moralized aspects of the physical and mental landscapes present. This is perhaps most evident in “Proteus” as Stephen Dedalus walks along Sandymount Strand, thinking of the intense guilt he harbors towards his mother’s death. Stephen has arrived here after spending the night at the nearby Martello Tower, where he was conversing with Buck Mulligan about the death of his mother. Now mulling over the events of the past and present in his mind, Stephen walks Sandymount Strand en route to taking a tram to Dublin proper. Joyce’s use of water in this regard highlights the state of confusion and spiritual strife that Stephen is in. As the link between the land and the sea, the shoreline presents a geographical area that reflects the internal difficulty Stephen is trying to come to terms with. In addition to “Proteus,” there is a focus on water in “Penelope” through the viscous stream of consciousness style and the use of Dublin Bay in the final scene of the text. There are significant moral valences attached to water within the first chapter of *Ulysses*, “Telemachus,” and the thirteenth chapter, “Nausicaa,” as well.

Joyce's Redefinition of Moral Geography

The way in which Joyce incorporates moral geography into his work is quite different than how Dante does, and this is mainly due to a redefinition of the concept by Joyce. Joyce's redefinition of the concept comes in the wake of the change in historical and cultural context. His reinterpretation of moral geography involves expanding the concept to include the wide variety of human experience and the range of moral possibilities in the modern world. As a result of this expansion, there is inevitably moral contradiction in Joyce. This moral contradiction is the result of the expanding variety of human existence and experience in the modern world as well as the interpretation of situations from different moralized viewpoints. However, these contradictions were not problems to the author of *Ulysses* when compared to the shrinkage and restriction of the moralized world. Because of this, Joyce's moral landscape is open to subjective interpretation, and by no means are any conjectures made in this thesis an absolute definition of his moral landscape.

The main difference that is striking to readers is that, at least on the surface, there does not seem to be the same teleological purpose to Joyce's moral landscape that there was in Dante. This can be partially attributed to the style of the works (Dante's portrayal of the afterlife versus Joyce's portrayal of a day in cosmopolitan Dublin) and the milieus in which they were written, as Dante was writing in the wake of an eschatological tradition of writing regarding the end of times³⁵ while Joyce was writing during the height of Modernism, a period of intense flux. This results in a different way of exhibiting the moral landscape in each work, beginning with how that landscape is created by the author.

³⁵ John A. Scott. *Understanding Dante*. The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante Studies 6. South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2005: 213.

The “imprint of the Creator” that Dante used so effectively in the *Commedia* undergoes a conceptual metamorphosis in Joyce, as the Creator shifts from the outer world (God, nature, and history) to the inner world (man himself). Joyce assumes a God-like role in the text because of the lack of the same sort of teleological purpose found in Dante. In effect, this places moral culpability on Joyce himself because he is the creator and sustainer of the universe inside of *Ulysses*. While elements of the outer world affect his authorship, Joyce’s writings lead us to believe that moral truth should come from within rather than from the outside. The moral compass generated by the text therefore is a variant of Joyce’s moral compass, which is hazy at points and difficult to pinpoint. Looking at Joyce’s moral influences in relation to Dante’s leads to a clearer understanding of how setting and morality are juxtaposed in his work.

In transitioning from the moral landscape of Dante to that of Joyce, the primary interlocutor is the Roman Catholic Church and the Judeo-Christian tradition, as well as the moralities they presuppose. As a result, one aspect of Joyce’s moral geographical vision that must be addressed is his elaborate relationship with religion. After being raised Catholic, he claimed to have left the Church because of a fervent hate for the Church as an institution:

My mind rejects the whole present social order and Christianity[...] Six years ago I left the Catholic church, hating it most fervently. I found it impossible for me to remain in it on account of the impulses of my nature. I made secret war upon it when I was a student and declined to accept the positions it offered me. By doing this I made myself a beggar but I retained my pride. Now I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do.³⁶

This excerpt comes from a letter that Joyce wrote to his future life partner Nora Barnacle on 29 August 1904. Joyce directs this letter toward the physical institution of the Church instead of towards the ideological basis for the Church itself. While the two are inevitably intertwined to an

³⁶ Letter to Nora Barnacle. 29 August 1904. In *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Richard Ellmann, ed. London: Faber and Faber, 1975: 25-26.

extent, the focus here on the tangible institution is apparent.³⁷ Joyce's criticism of Church leadership frequently occurs in his works, and contributes to the moral geographical landscape of many portions of *Ulysses*, including the "Circe" chapter. It is furthermore important to recognize that not only is it impossible to separate one's upbringing from oneself, but also that the artist cannot separate himself from his work. Consequently, Joyce's Catholic upbringing cannot be totally dissociated from *Ulysses*, as his exposure to a wide variety of Catholic sources (such as Thomas Aquinas and Dante) and the peppering of Catholic allusions in the text suggests.

Joyce's secularized moral geography confronts more than just theological issues and differences of how one directs forms of love. While love plays a central role in Joyce's vision of moral geography, as it is "the word known to all men" (*U.* III. 435, XV. 4192-4193), his moral vision is additionally shaped by other facets of human emotion and experience, such as guilt, jealousy, and desire. Joyce's ultimate ambition was to recreate a day in Dublin in the most accurate way possible. He remarked in a conversation with his friend, the artist Frank Budgen, that "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book."³⁸ The hypothetical fulfillment of this wish means that an extremely complex web of moral geographical interactions would take place, in turn explicating Joyce's ideas of the complexity and variety of human existence and experience.

³⁷ Dante performs a similar criticism in *De Monarchia* where he investigates the relationship between secular authority and religious authority.

³⁸ Frank Budgen *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972: 69.

“Wombed in sin darkness I was too”: The Liminal Moral Landscape in “Proteus”

“Proteus” is presented at the end of the first section of *Ulysses*³⁹ that is called the “Telemachia,” the section of the novel that concerns Stephen Dedalus and his attempt to reconcile himself with not only the physical world around him but also with his internal conflicts. Much of the stock Joyce uses for Stephen’s internal monologue in “Proteus” — especially the interaction between Stephen and his mother’s apparition — comes from these previous two chapters. The most notable image Joyce resurrects in “Proteus” occurs early on in “Telemachus,” the first section of the “Telemachia,” and is that of Stephen’s troubling relationship with his mother. In “Telemachus,” Stephen reveals that he denied his mother’s last living request to have him pray next to her on her deathbed:

Her glazing eyes, staring out of death, to shake and bend my soul. On me alone.
The ghostcandle to light her agony. Ghostly light on the tortured face. Her hoarse
loud breath rattling in horror, while all prayed on their knees. Her eyes on me to
strike me down. *Liliata rutilantium te confessorum turma circumdet: iubilantium
te virginium chorus excipiat.* [. . .] No, mother! Let me be and let me live.
(U. I. 273-277, 279)

The most poignant emotions found in this passage are Stephen’s guilt and fear, which results in Stephen feeling morally inadequate because he did not go through the motions that his mother requested of him. Stephen’s relationship with these aspects of his past helps to form the structure of how he views his own identity. Furthermore, these emotions function as catalysts that allude to his emotional register and serve as a vehicle through which he sees the world in “Proteus.” As a result, this scene plays a crucial role in Stephen’s psychological disposition in the “Telemachia.” These appearances of Stephen’s mother in the text very frequently arise as a result

³⁹ I have attached a copy of the Gilbert Schema to *Ulysses* in Appendix J.1 for the convenience of the reader to help orient themselves in the text.

of the landscape Stephen encounters, especially in “Proteus,” helping to create the moral landscape that Stephen experiences.

The geographical placement of “Proteus” is on Sandymount Strand, a beach located six and a half miles from the Martello Tower of Sandycove, the setting of “Telemachus.” Stephen has arrived at Sandymount after finishing a lesson he was teaching on history in the “Nestor” chapter, the second chapter of *Ulysses*, and is beginning to walk towards Dublin proper along the Strand. The setting of this chapter is of immense narrative significance to *Ulysses*, as it is also the setting of the fifteenth chapter, “Nausicaa,” as well as making at least a visual appearance in “Penelope.” This suggests the importance of this particular geographical area to the progression of the moral landscapes in the text because of its placement at the end of this section of *Ulysses* as well as the multiple appearances it makes in the text. Joyce uses the shoreline at the culmination of the three episodes in the “Telemachia” in order to reflect upon the events of Stephen’s progression through the text thus far. Joyce uses Sandymount Strand in order to aid the presentation of Stephen’s internal monologue, with the shoreline Stephen walks on acting as a mirror to his moralized consciousness.

One of Joyce’s focuses in “Proteus” is how we encounter the landscape through our senses and how these perceptions react with memory. Joyce’s redefinition of moral geography allows for a tremendous amount of variety in deciphering the moral landscape, which, in effect, challenges the notion of a singular unified life-narrative that would restrict the interpretation of moral geography to a single view. This is challenged promptly in “Proteus” by way of Stephen’s initial impressions and wanderings around Sandymount Strand. The famous opening to the chapter, “Ineluctable modality of the visible,” states the undeniable effect of the physical landscape on the mind when visually apprehended (*U.* III. 1). The etymological root of the word

“ineluctable” comes from the Latin “*ineluctabilis*,” meaning “struggle.” Stephen’s “struggle” with the visible then refers to the constant struggle he has with relating what he sees with what inside of him; while he is ultimately able to have the two realms meet a consensus and produce a moralized landscape, Stephen struggles particularly with the internalization of the visible and how it connects with his mental world. This showcases the temporality of the moral landscape and its intense permutability vis-à-vis its ability to change throughout the text.

Joyce is not arguing that what Stephen sees as a beach is a mountain to another person; rather, he is proposing that the “ineluctable modality of the visible” corresponds to wide array of past experiences that Stephen harbors inside of his mind. These past experiences are memorialized via the senses and carry a moralized element to them that is a result of Stephen’s contextualization of the world around him. Joyce recognizes that landscape is not connected to moral consciousness through visual stimuli alone. To Joyce, geography is not just what we see, but rather the complex web of what we see, touch, taste, smell, and hear. In light of this, he modifies his famous statement to include other senses (“ineluctable modality of the audible”) and in order to expand the ways in which we perceive the physical world (*U.* III. 13). These various stimuli act as memory triggers that result in Stephen’s monologue vacillating between different objects of thought because of the particular time and place that he is located in. The reception of various forms of stimuli allow Stephen to more fully connect the geographical landscape with his internal monologue in a complex way, allowing for an expansive insight into the workings of Stephen’s mind. This connection helps to further illustrate how the physical landscape is a reflection of the mental states of the characters and vice versa.

Stephen’s attempt to cognitively map the landscape begins early in “Proteus” when he begins to navigate the landscape without the use of his eyes. His movement through the world in

relation to perception begins with himself. From a moral standpoint, this allows Stephen to attempt to carve out his own moral space in the world because of his unique interpretation of received stimuli as well as his unique moralized past. While Stephen is in near constant physical movement throughout the chapter, his descriptions of his movement in relation to the concepts of *nacheinander* (one after the other in succession) and *nebeneinander* (side by side) begin his intimate relationship with the landscape:

Stephen closed his eyes [. . .] I am, a stride at a time [. . .] Five, six: the *Nacheinander*. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the *Nebeneinander* ineluctably! I am getting on nicely in the dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it: they do. My two feet in his boots are at the ends of his legs, *nebeneinander*. Sounds solid: made by the mallet of *Los Demiurgos*.
(*U.* III. 10-18)

Stephen's eyes are closed at this point in the text, as he is attempting to add to his visual experience with the sensations of touching and hearing in the darkness. Henke comments on Stephen's gathering of sensory data as a means of returning to the principles of gathering knowledge in order to shape his moral landscape: "Stephen returns to the basic sensory data apprehended by the mind and attempts to judge the first principles of human knowing."⁴⁰ His use of the *Nacheinander* and the *Nebeneinander* in conjunction with "I am, a stride at a time" illustrate Stephen's attempt at navigation through the landscape through a variety of stimuli that results in a very subjective perception of the landscape.⁴¹ As a result of gaining these varieties of stimuli, Stephen becomes able to construct his vision of a moral landscape because of his ability to place stimuli on a four-dimensional plane. This creative power is exemplified by his use of the

⁴⁰ Suzette Henke. *Joyce's Moraculous Sindbook: A Study of "Ulysses."* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978: 53.

⁴¹ These concepts derive from a 1766 essay by Gottheld Lessing that deal with differences in physical art versus literary art. Lessing's thesis is that physical art is viewed all at once (the *Nebeneinander*) whereas literary art is viewed in succession (the *Nacheinander*, e.g. one word after the other) and that these forms cannot depict the other accurately due to spatial limitations. See Gifford, 45.

phrase “*Los Demiurgos*,” which points to Stephen’s creator power that “throws forth the forms of the world.”⁴² “*Los*” refers to William Blake’s *The Book of Los*, describing Los as “a smith, with furnaces, an anvil, and a hammer,”⁴³ while the term “*Demiurgos*” comes from the Platonic concept that illustrates the power to create the material world.⁴⁴ Stephen, as the smith of the landscape, now assumes a degree of authority and agency over what he perceives. He is able to craft his perception of the landscape in order to fit his needs. Consequently, he is now able to apply his own moral experience to the landscape in order to create a personalized moral geography⁴⁵ instead of relying on the moralized experience of others to fill the landscape. The relationship between landscape and morality here is found in the gestation of creative agency, which is the first step in the process of creating the moral landscape.

The internal monologue that Stephen produces presents a vision of human experience that is complex and volatile, echoing the Protean nature of the chapter. Proteus, a character in Book Four of Homer’s *Odyssey*, was a minor Greek sea god who assumed many changing shapes. The nature of moral geography in “Proteus” is indeed quite Protean because of the permutability of the physical landscape and the variability of Stephen’s internal monologue. The Protean moral landscape is presented in the text via the vacillation of Stephen’s thoughts and the ever changing landscape. Just as the tidal flats of Sandymount are modified with every tidal cycle, so do Stephen’s thoughts ebb and flow in a tidal formation. As Stephen encounters the incredibly

⁴² Joseph Campbell. *Mythic Worlds, Modern Words: On the Art of James Joyce*. Edited by Edmund L. Epstein. 1st ed. Harpercollins, 1993: 68.

⁴³ Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman. *Ulysses Annotated*. Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1974: 45-46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Because moral geography is multi-historical and temporal due to the fact that everyone creates their own moral mapping of the universe, it can be seen as assuming an element of “hybrid history,” where a collectivized moral landscape is formed by uniting the past experiences of all of those who interact with landscape. See McClintock, 84.

variable landscape of Sandymount Strand, his monologue reflects this by providing a spectrum of human experience in his mind, including the operation of several thought processes at once, such as when Stephen is attempting to write a poem near the end of the chapter: “Paper. The banknotes, blast them. Old Deasy’s letter. Here. Thanking you for the hospitality tear the blank end off” (*U.* III. 403-405). Stephen’s act of reading the letter Mr. Deasy gave him in “Nestor,” the second chapter of *Ulysses* (see *U.* II. 406-425), is being performed as Stephen is ripping off a corner of the blank part of the page in order to write a poem.⁴⁶ Simple as it may seem, reading is a complex activity for both Stephen and the reader, and performing this action as he physically performs another shows that Stephen is able to operate several processes at once in his mind.

In his crucial 1930 study of *Ulysses*, Stuart Gilbert commented on this, remarking that “we do not think on one plane, but on many at once,” indicating that moral geography is both multi-spatial and temporal.⁴⁷ This rejection of a singular and linear existence is embodied in the chapter by its intertextual nature, linking the text onto earlier forms of itself. The memory the text has of itself acts as a rejection of a singular and linear existence because the nature of it interrupts conventional narrative and works in a way similar to the human mind, connecting what we perceive in the present to memories from our past. This occurs in “Proteus” numerous times, including when Stephen thinks about birth and his mother and thinks “Gaze into your *omphalos*” (*U.* III. 39). In the next paragraph, when thinking about the Garden of Eden and Eve, he thinks “Gaze.” and then thinks of Eve as having no navel (*U.* III. 41). Maud Ellmann remarks that the navel is significant in the memory of trauma,⁴⁸ and thus the lack of Eve’s navel signifies the lack

⁴⁶ This piece of paper comes up again later on in the text in “Aeolus” (*U.* VII. 517-521) and in “Nausicaa” (*U.* XIII. 1247-1248).

⁴⁷ Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce’s “Ulysses”: A Study*. New York: Vintage Books, 1958: 15.

⁴⁸ Erica Gene Delsandro. “The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud by Maud Ellmann (Review).” *Modern Fiction Studies* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 194–95.

of these elements. More importantly, this highlights the lingering memory of Stephen's mother and the trauma Stephen experiences as a result of it. The effect of these instances of moral geography allows for memories and their moral implications to be resurrected from the past and planted in the present. The juxtaposition of memories into the present also creates an opportunity for the gestation of multiple regions of moral geography to exist at once.

This phenomenon occurs in "Proteus" when Stephen is looking across the strand and sees a woman on the beach, who he believes to be a midwife that he knows of. The thoughts of this woman possibly being a midwife leads to thoughts of his mother that first appeared in the text in "Telemachus." It is unclear whether or not this woman is in fact a midwife, though in spite of this lack of clarity, Stephen's imagination begins to take over. At this point, not only is Stephen experiencing the visual stimulus of the woman, who to him appears to be the midwife "Mrs Florence MacCabe" with "her midwife's bag," but also the unpleasant and grotesque memories of his mother and thus a resurrection of his guilt (*U. III. 33-34, 32*). Stephen is also carrying with him the residual metaphor planted in his psyche by Buck Mulligan in "Telemachus": "*Thalatta! Thalatta!* [The sea! The sea!] She is our great sweet mother" (*U. I. 80*). This understanding of the sea as mother and the placement of this episode on the shoreline with both the midwife and Stephen walking on it is of immense importance because it posits and affirms the relationship between geography and the morality, demonstrating how the landscape is symbolic of Stephen's thoughts and vice versa.

Stephen is drawn to the idea of the woman he sees as "MacCabe" because of her supposed profession of midwifery, thinking that "one of her sisterhood [fellow midwives] lugged me squealing into life," with his focus on "the navelcord [. . .] Gaze in your *omphalos*" (*U. III. 35, 36, 39*). This woman may or may not be the woman that Stephen thinks she is; yet Stephen's

memory transposes his thoughts regarding what she could be onto who she actually is. This juxtaposes an aspect of Stephen's memory, which John S. Rickard notes as Stephen's "most powerful psychic force,"⁴⁹ with the physical landscape in order to form a bridge between Stephen's mental geography and the physical geography of Sandymount Strand. The woman Stephen sees on Sandymount Strand is included as part of the landscape in order to function as a catalyst for Stephen thinking about his own origins as both a physical and spiritual being:

Heva, naked Eve. She had no navel. Gaze. [. . .] orient and immortal, standing from everlasting to everlasting. Womb of sin. Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten. By them, the man with my voice and my eyes and a ghostwoman with ashes on her breath. They clasped and surrendered, did the coupler's will.

(*U.* III. 41-42, 43-47)

At this point in the text, Stephen has probably shifted his physical gaze from the midwife and Sandymount to his own navel, as predicated by "Gaze into your *omphalos*." Stephen then comes to an understanding of himself as deriving from the "Womb of sin." His focusing of his gaze from the landscape onto himself in effect centers himself in the landscape. Michael Seidel observes that "if the *omphalos* centers the body, it is also geographically orienting."⁵⁰ In light of the "Telemachus" passage that offers the reading of the sea as a motherly figure, Stephen can be seen to be in a physical "womb" created by the tidal flats of Sandymount. This vacillating watery realm offers a physical connection to "*Thalatta! Thalatta!*" and the mother, defining the shoreline as an area controlled by the mother. Stephen's physical location in this area affirms the

⁴⁹ John S. Rickard. *Joyce's Book of Memory: The Mnemotechnic of "Ulysses."* Durham: Duke University Press, 1999: 102.

⁵⁰ Michael Seidel. *Epic Geography: James Joyce's "Ulysses."* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976: 138.

control his mother still has on him from the grave and thus perpetuates his guilt.⁵¹ Mrs. Dedalus's control over Stephen can be seen as a colonizing force in Stephen's mind, as her presence continues to control him from beyond the grave and influence his thoughts. Stephen's attempt to separate himself from his mother can be seen as a venture into the postcolonial realm.⁵² This postcolonial element comes to fruition in the "Circe" chapter, where Stephen confronts an apparition of his mother in order to decolonize himself from her and regain agency over the attempted creation of his moral landscape. This link created in Stephen's mind — that of the ocean and the shoreline to his mother — helps to demonstrate the guilt he harbors, for presumably the "sin" he speaks of in "Womb of sin" is how he did not pray with his mother on her deathbed.

This passage illustrates the interconnection between what we see and what we feel. This interconnectivity is not confined to this passage in "Proteus" but continues on, and even is heightened in later passages in the text. As we reach the middle of the chapter, Stephen finds himself far out on the tidal flats, walking to where the mucky sand meets Dublin Bay:

He had come nearer to the edge of the sea and wet sand slapped his boots. The new air greeted him, harping in wild nerves [. . .] his feet beginning to sink slowly in the quaking soil. Turn back.

Turning, he scanned the shore south, his feet sinking again slowly in the new sockets. The cold doomed room of the tower waits. [. . .] A shut door of a silent tower, entombing their blind bodies, the pantherashib and his pointer. Call: no answer.

(*U. III.* 265-266, 268-271, 276-279)

⁵¹ This points towards Stephen's recognition of his own mortality and of himself as a "being-towards-death," a Heideggerian term that indicates that a being is undergoing a traumatic event in order to gain a genuine perspective on his worldview.

⁵² Postcolonialism in Joyce is a prominent subset of the field, especially in modern Joyce studies. Vincent Cheng's *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (1995) explores this widely. In reading Joyce, postcolonial theory can be applied vis-à-vis the political or psychological realm; here, I focus on the psychological aspects of it that affect Stephen's relationship with his mother.

Stephen's act of orienting himself within the world, with Sandymount Strand as his *omphalos*, is contextualized via Joyce's use of the word "Turning." The revolution of Stephen's body in the spatial plane serves to orient himself not only in the physical world but in the map he has internally constructed for himself. Stephen's hydrophobic reaction to water causes him to turn as he does in the narrative, therefore functioning as a means to pivot the narrative and direct Stephen along a different path away from the sea, "the great sweet mother."

The tower spoken of is the Martello Tower, first seen in the "Telemachus" chapter, where Stephen had taken up residence for the past night, and during the night, one of those also sleeping in the tower — Haines, the Englishman who has taken up residence in the Martello Tower along with Buck Mulligan — fired a shot near where Stephen was sleeping, claiming that a black panther was haunting him in his dream. Stephen had then refused to stay in the tower unless Haines vacated it for good.

Physically, Stephen is at a crossroads, represented by the symbolism of the *omphalos*, which recalls not only Stephen's past trauma but also his tethering to the memory of his mother. He has reached the border of where he is able to go on the Strand, with the sea forming a boundary to the unknown. The reading of the sea as mother is important here because of one of Stephen's thoughts regarding his toes beginning to sink into the sand where the water meets the shore: "Turn back." In light of his guilt and internal quarrel with his mother's spirit, Stephen realizes that he cannot go on further spiritually or physically. This boundary is then representative of the current limits of Stephen's reality,⁵³ for though he can see the sea and acknowledge its existence, he cannot return to it, and thus it remains "other" to him. The conscious or unconscious movement towards the sea is representative of a desire to reconcile

⁵³ John Freccaro. *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986: 60.

with the mother and thus a desire to purify himself morally and rectify his guilt. The subtlety of the reflection of Stephen's internal battle in the landscape helps to come to a fuller understanding of this place in Stephen's moral space.

His inability to complete this attempted reconciliation is directly correlated to his action of "Turning" and "scann[ing] the shore south". Stephen looks towards the Martello Tower where "the cold doomed room of the tower waits," and with the memory of his mother still in his mind, he envisions the Tower as a giant coffin, "entombing their blind bodies." The Tower's location on the sea, as well as its confining and protective aspects, juxtaposes a contradiction in Joyce's moral geographical vision. The history of the tower's existence as a British structure built to resist the threat of Napoleonic invasion suggests the protective aspects of the structure. While it does offer Stephen security (and thus the ability to be sheltered from his moral shortcomings that make themselves evident on Sandymount Strand), it also restricts, confines, and imprisons Stephen ineluctably inside of it, leaving little possibility for the reconciliation he desires with his mother.

If any conclusive remark can be made about the moral geographical landscape of "Proteus," it is that it embodies moral liminality. Moral liminality is best described as a when a character is faced with a moral dilemma where there is no clear path to a moral conclusion, which is exhibited by Stephen "Turning" to orient himself in a different manner. This is reflected in the landscape of "Proteus" with the placement of Stephen on the shoreline, which is constantly in a state of flux during tidal cycles. The very essence of moral liminality implies the intersection of a variety of moral regions, which is exactly what occurs in "Proteus"; Stephen arouses the moral landscapes in his memory that were placed in "Telemachus" and "Nestor." In those places, he was confronted with the unpleasant social dynamic in the Martello Tower as well as with the

negative, anti-Semitic nationalism of Mr. Deasy at the school in Dalkey. The style of the chapter — “the male monologue,” as Gilbert writes⁵⁴ — provides the mental locale for the intersection of all three moral regions to exist at once and to converge on Sandymount Strand, ebbing and flowing like the tide. The presence of moral liminality and the lack of an either conclusively positive or negative moral landscape affirms the Joycean notion of the variety of human experience and thus the pluralistic nature of the moral landscape.

Stephen has now arrived at a moral impasse that will determine his future encounters with the moral landscape to come in *Ulysses*. This moral crossroads on Sandymount Strand exposes his moral shortcomings and his desire to carve out his own moral space in the geographical landscape, is emblematic of his struggle. This struggle is characteristic of how the literary critic Harold Bloom describes his theory of the “anxiety of influence” in that influence is not an inspiring force but rather one that elicits the opposite response.⁵⁵ This anxiety only perpetuates Stephen’s reliance upon his mother in this context, allowing her to assume a controlling role over Stephen’s attempted construction of a moral landscape. This proves to be extremely difficult for Stephen at this point in the text, as J. Mitchell Morse writes in his essay on “Proteus”:

... [Stephen] begins to achieve the extremely difficult self-resolving contradiction of genius: to identify with the beast but retain his critical consciousness: to reach an understanding like that of Jonah, who experienced the beast from the inside but was not absorbed by it.⁵⁶

Stephen is in much the same moral predicament as Jonah; his position on the beach echoes this, especially since he is viewed as being in an area still controlled but not yet absorbed by the

⁵⁴ Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce’s “Ulysses”: A Study*. New York: Vintage Books, 1958:31.

⁵⁵ Harold Bloom. *The Anxiety of Influence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

⁵⁶ J. Mitchell Morse. “Proteus.” In *James Joyce’s “Ulysses”: Critical Essays*, edited by Clive Hart and David Hayman. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977: 41.

mother. The image of the *omphalos*, embodied by the geography of Sandymount Strand, echoes this attachment; if Stephen is to overcome this moral inadequacy, he must leave Sandymount. In order for Stephen to surmount his moral shortcomings, it is necessary for him to completely reconcile with his mother's ghost, as Stephen himself states in Chapter 9 "Scylla and Charybdis": "Where there is a reconciliation, Stephen said, there must have been first a surrendering" (*U.* IX. 334-335). However, Stephen has not yet reached this point of reconciliation, and thus he is still wandering in this area of moral liminality. Like the Pilgrim in the opening canto of *Inferno*, Stephen is "lost in the dark wood / where the straight path was lost" (*Inf.* I. 2-3). His search for meaning in a world of tremendous variety and ambiguity is admirable and inspiring, just as the Pilgrim's search for redemption was. The parallels between the Pilgrim and Stephen, at least at this point in the text, are strong; both are encased in a moralized past that coffins and confines them into a particularly difficult moral space. It is in this space that Stephen experiences the liminality of the shoreline, just as the Pilgrim experienced the moral liminality of the shoreline as he mentally emerged from "the sea so cruel."

At the termination of "Proteus," the narrative deviates from the viewpoint of Stephen Dedalus and switches over to the primary protagonist of the novel, the everyman Leopold Bloom. The next chapter we see Stephen Dedalus as playing a primary role in is "Scylla and Charybdis" — the ninth chapter of *Ulysses* is famous for its placement in the National Library of Ireland. However, it is in the fifteenth chapter of *Ulysses* that attention will be shifted to now, in order to present the intense and jarring moral landscape that is produced when a phantasmagoric dreamscape is layered over Dublin's red light district. This chapter also involves both Bloom and Stephen, and their interaction with the moral landscape is nothing less than jarring. In shifting from "Proteus" to "Circe," the style and presentation of both the text and moral geography

undergo metamorphoses, leading to a vision of a moral landscape that is even more mentally oriented than “Proteus.”

Moral Geography in “Circe”

*Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on.*

-Hamlet, Act III Scene II, 419-425⁵⁷

Ulysses reaches its narrative climax in the “Circe” chapter, where the physical landscape is interlaced with the phantasmagorical dreamscape that is the product of the collision of not only the mental and physical landscapes but also the conscious and unconscious realms of the mind. This dramatic explosion and expansion of the variety of human thought and existence takes place within the geographical area that Dubliners called “Monto” and Joyce called “Nighttown.”⁵⁸ This was historically Dublin’s red light district and where an array of socially lewd and lascivious activities took place. The literal level of the geography of Nighttown is a heterotopia, or an area where the “other” is demarcated and forced to exist in separation from the rest of the society.⁵⁹ It is here that the society creates a physical space in which to deposit people and ideas which are undesirable to the general public. In this case, this amounts to licentious activities that do not agree with what is publicly conceived of as morally acceptable. It is precisely this heterotopic environment that allows for the “bursting forth” of the mental geography of “Circe,” and it is because of the physical geography of Nighttown that the events of the chapter could not have taken place anywhere else.

⁵⁷ William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Folger Shakespeare Library. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012: 161.

⁵⁸ Dublin residents called it Monto because it was located on what was then Montgomery Street, which has since been re-named Foley Street (which intersects with James Joyce Street).

⁵⁹ This concept was generated by the French philosopher Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* (1970).

The time of “Circe” is midnight⁶⁰ — “the witching hour” as written in *Hamlet*⁶¹ — and comes after Bloom and Stephen have each undertaken exhaustive days. The time of day is important in understanding the moral landscape of the chapter because the night time allows for the repressed to come to the surface. Bloom has attempted to come to terms with his cuckolding, attended a funeral, went to some pubs, purchased an erotic novel for his wife, Molly Bloom, pleased himself on a beach to the younger Gerty MacDowell, and has most recently spent time in a maternity hospital. Stephen, on the other hand, has taught a class on history, walked along Sandymount Strand, wandered around the city of Dublin, visited the National Library, met his younger sister, visited the maternity ward with Bloom, and has visited a number of pubs. The incredibly busy days of these two characters prefigures the even more intense action of “Circe” that inverts the world in the text.

The phantasmagoric nature of “Circe” inverts and parodies many pre-conceived notions of some core tenets of existence, such as gender, sexuality, religion, politics, and the end of times. This wide variety of action can be attributed to the “bursting forth” of repressed elements of the mind. These repressed elements are most apt to reveal themselves in the nighttime when the guise of the repressive elements of society are not able to see what is being repressed, allowing for a resurrection of these elements. Declan Kiberd comments on the resurrection of the repressed, noting that “Much that has been repressed or denied in the daylight hours can be brought to the surface at night.”⁶² Kiberd’s comment implies that what is being “brought to the surface” must inevitably become repressed again once the daylight hours return, which is reinforced by the essence of the text itself, which aims to encapsulate the essence of existence

⁶⁰ Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce’s “Ulysses”: A Study*. New York: Vintage Books, 1958: 30.

⁶¹ William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Folger Shakespeare Library. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012: 161.

⁶² Declan Kiberd. *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living*. London: Faber & Faber, 2009: 223.

within a single Dublin day.⁶³ The release of these repressed elements occurs at the conclusion of the second and longest portion of *Ulysses* that is known in Joyce's descriptions as "The Wanderings of Odysseus" (Chapters 4-15). The build-up of the internally repressed elements of the psyche throughout the chapters leading up to "Circe" causes the moral explosion that is present in the chapter. This wide variety of action makes "Circe" a complex chapter to deduce moral understanding from, and therefore a complete understanding of the moral geography of this chapter is not sought after, but rather a glimpse into aspects of the geography that will provide the ability to ground the reader in a narrative that is quite complex.

William Blake, who himself engraved plates for Dante's *Commedia*, wrote in his book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "Brothels are built with the bricks of religion."⁶⁴ Much of Blake's statement is true with the physical geography of "Circe," whose red light district occupies an area in a city referred to by Joyce as the "Seventh City of Christendom."⁶⁵ This term highlights the perception of Dublin (as Ireland as a whole) as a citadel of Roman Catholicism. In a way, the red light district's existence is dependent upon a vision of the city of Dublin as a "holy city," and the Catholic religion that Nighttown is in contrast to it, at least on a superficial level. There would be no need for the red light district, a subversive social structure, to exist if there was no social structure to subvert. The image of the unholy within the conventional structure of the city of Dublin encapsulates the contrast of the apparent domination of what is perceived of as "moral" versus what is perceived of as "immoral." The "immoral" is then "othered" as it is partitioned off into a region where it is forced to exist in relative isolation from the "moral." The

⁶³ This concept of the cyclicity of the text will be explored at a greater length in the chapter on "Penelope."

⁶⁴ William Blake. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 8. Via Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce's "Ulysses": A Study*. New York: Vintage Books, 1958: 315.

⁶⁵ Seamus Deane. "Joyce the Irishman." In *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, edited by Derek Attridge, Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 37.

injection of Bloom and Stephen into this realm bursts the social membrane that surrounds Nighttown and results in a moral explosion.

Nighttown is intrinsically a socially subversive area of Dublin. It attracts those who wish to rebel against societal norms and gives them a heterotopia in which to enact these socially subversive actions. The landscape of Nighttown allows for the characters to adopt different characteristics and personas that would otherwise be impossible, which resembles the Venetian Carnival to an extent. Both venues offer an escape from the domination of societal structures via the masquerade and humor. Mikhail Bakhtin wrote on this extensively in *Rabelais and His World*, noting that “Carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom.”⁶⁶ Bakhtin’s notions on the “carnavalesque” is used to denote literature that subverts social structures through disorder and humor. The laws of Nighttown are equally as wide-open as those of Carnival, allowing for the great expanse of human activity to exist and flourish. This also greatly expands what is considered “moral” in “Circe” because the structures that create morality are subverted and parodied by the carnivalesque ethos of Nighttown.

The attraction of Bloom and Stephen to Nighttown is no surprise, as they have been involved in acts of subversion throughout the text thus far, including Bloom’s masturbatory episode on Sandymount Strand in “Nausicaa” as well as Stephen’s refusal to submit to his mother’s last request nearly a year ago, which has continued to haunt and paralyze him throughout *Ulysses*. On a literal level, Bloom probably follows Stephen because he is concerned about his level of drunkenness during the previous chapter, “Oxen of the Sun.” However, as Anthony Burgess notes, Bloom is not himself inebriated.⁶⁷ Bloom’s state of consciousness is thus operating on a different level than Stephen’s, whose state blends drunkenness with

⁶⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin. *Rabelais and His World*. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1975: 7.

⁶⁷ Anthony Burgess. *Re Joyce*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1965: 157.

phantasmagoria. On a more symbolic level, their attraction to Nighttown is due to its opposition against a fixed, singular reality. A fixed reality is a way of viewing the world as a static and non-changing entity that elicits a single sociocultural narrative that is not open to a variable interpretation. Stephen's apprehension about a fixed reality began in "Proteus" when he attempted to construct a moral landscape via his sensory perception instead of one based on the perceptions of others. Bloom has been attempting to dodge a fixed reality for the entire day, especially when he tries to quell thoughts of his wife engaging in coitus with Blazes Boylan and when he thinks of his epistolary relationship with Martha Clifford. Stephen and Bloom are both characters that avoid assimilation into molded structures, as the progression of "Circe" will illuminate.

One of the principle societal structures that is subverted in "Circe" is the Roman Catholic Church. Just as we saw in "Proteus," "Circe" utilizes a wide variety of Catholic imagery. The most easily detectable instance of this is the Black Mass that began *Ulysses* (see *U. I. 5*), which finds its culmination in "Circe" (see *U. XV. 4660-4718*). Joyce parodies the Catholic Mass via linguistic inversion and mockery, which is seen throughout the chapter in the parody of the Catholic Holy Week. This is furthermore seen at the end of the Black Mass when God descends from above to usher in the end of time. The end of the Mass mirrors and parodies the first line of dialogue in *Ulysses* when Buck Mulligan held up the shaving bowl in "Telemachus" and chanted "*Introibo ad altare Dei*" (*U. I. 5*). "Circe" parodies this as Father Malachi O'Flynn chanting "*Introibo ad altare diaboli*" as "ADONAI" (Hebrew word for God meaning "Lord" and has a connotation for the Lord's ownership over others) descends from the heavens (*U. XV. 4699*). Joyce further mocks God by having "ADONAI" exclaim "Dooooooooooooog!" before it is reverted back to "Goooooooooooood!" a few lines later (*U. XV. 4713, 4718*). Even in this small

sample of parody, the way that Joyce parodies the Catholic Mass and Catholic religion is subversive yet serious. By mocking the mass in this way and in this setting, he provides a context in which the landscape ushers in a serious discussion of what is sacrosanct and what is buffoonery.

Within the context of the hallucinogenic state of “Circe,” the religious allegory becomes parodied due to the style of the chapter, which invites inversion, reversal, and parody. Joyce’s use of parody in the context of religion is, in fact, quite serious, as parody requires a certain level of understanding and knowledge of a topic in order to properly parody it. Joyce makes it clear throughout *Ulysses* that knowledge is something to be revered, as “Scylla and Charybdis” elucidates: “Coffined thoughts around me, in mummycases, embalmed in spice of words. Thoth, god of libraries, a birdgod, moonycrowned” (*U.* IX. 352-353). The connection of books and knowledge (“coffined thoughts”) to a deific figure (“Thoth”)⁶⁸ affirms the power and importance of knowledge. Joyce views religion, especially Catholicism, in much the same way, as something that should be respected but also parodied to a high degree, since parody implies an attempt to further understand what is being parodied from a different angle. In a certain way, this is reverential and indicates Joyce’s respect for at least the ceremonial and ritualistic aspects of Catholicism. This concept of parody as reverence plays a major role in “Circe” and in determining the moral geography of the chapter because it elicits unorthodox juxtapositions of structures and ideas to create a completely new moral landscape that could otherwise not exist without this context. Therefore, as a result of the parody of religion in “Circe,” we see the sacrosanct becoming seriocomic and the “holy of holies” becoming the brothel.

⁶⁸ Thoth is a major god in the Egyptian pantheon who is associated with law, writing, science, the alphabet, and thought. He is commonly referred to as the Egyptian god of knowledge.

The style of “Circe” is a play,⁶⁹ which allows for the easy implementation of the novel’s past into the present, either physically or through a hallucinogenic vision,⁷⁰ as characters (as well as the physical areas they previously occupied) can enter and leave at a moment’s notice.⁷¹ This occurs at many points throughout the chapter, including when Cissy Caffrey, a young woman from “Nausicaa” episode, is inserted into the play in the very beginning of the chapter (see *U.* XV. 41-75). Because the style of the chapter elicits scenes of intense flux and variability, the stage directions become of immense importance, grounding the scene in the landscape⁷² when the action is abstracted and mystical. Because of the style, much of the literal geography is left out from the dialogue of the chapter. The physical descriptions of Nighttown are gathered from these snippets of stage directions, such as the first instance of this at the opening of the chapter:

** (The Mabbott street entrance of nighttown, before which stretches an uncobbled transiding set with skeleton tracks, red and green will-o'-the-wisps and danger signals. Rows of grimy houses with gaping doors. Rare lamps with faint rainbow fans. [. . .] Whistles call and answer.)*

(*U.* XV. 1-4, 9)

This opening evocation of the landscape opens the physical moral geography level of “Circe.” Joyce uses imagery one might expect to use to describe Halloween or a similarly gothic event,⁷³ with images such as “skeleton tracks” and “rows of grimy houses with gaping doors” facilitating

⁶⁹ Because of the sociocultural milieu Joyce is writing in, there is speculation that this play could also be a film script.

⁷⁰ The hallucinogenic vision of “Circe” bends the laws of nature through inversion and parody. As a result, space and time become distorted, allowing for the expansion and/or compression of events into multiple physical spaces and different lengths of time.

⁷¹ A. Nicholas Fagnoli and Michael P. Gillespie. “Circe”. *James Joyce A-Z: The Essential Reference to His Life and Writings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995: 38.

⁷² As the chapter progresses and the parodic and inversive aspects of “Circe” become more and more pronounced, even the stage directions (and therefore the most concrete descriptions of the landscape) become objects of parody. Their concreteness is somewhat temporary at this stage of the text.

⁷³ Many scholars note the similarities between “Circe” and Goethe’s descriptions of Walpurgisnacht in *Faust* as well as the Madhouse Scene in Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*.

this. The combination of both visual and auditory stimuli creates an unsettling image to open the chapter, prefiguring the wild and unsettling journey that is to come. The threshold into Nighttown via Mabbott Street mirrors the entrance to *Inferno* that Dante and Virgil encounter in *Inf.* III 1-9, suggesting a certain degree of danger and mystery. From this point on, the stage directions become more and more intertwined with the phantasmagoric events, with the literal landscape becoming transfigured into a hallucinogenic view of Nighttown. The physical description of the entrance to Nighttown is representative of the mental states that Stephen and Bloom harbor at this point in the text after their lengthy days wandering around Dublin. This scene thus serves as a precursor of the “bursting forth” that is to come later on in the chapter.

The description of the landscape before the culmination of the Black Mass is a key instance of the “bursting forth” of the unconscious. This scene occurs near the end of the grand hallucinogenic vision of “Circe” and can be seen as a parody of the apocalypse. This grand hallucinogenic vision is the culmination of all the elements that “burst forth” in the “Circe” chapter, thus being representative of the unconscious human psyche. Mapping the chapter’s moral geography in this sense is an effort to create an understanding of the unconscious mind from a religious and psychological perspective. The grand hallucinogenic vision of “Circe” informs our reading of the landscape by challenging notions of a “fixed reality” and allowing what is inside of us to become present in the physical world. The end of the Black Mass is a significant example of this, as it is the ultimate parody in the chapter of the Catholic religion where the Catholic Mass becomes a Black Mass. The precursor to this is the parody of the end of times, where the stage directions play the key role:

(Brimstone fires spring up. Dense clouds roll past. Heavy Gatling guns boom. Pandemonium. Troops deploy. Gallop of hoofs. [. . .] Birds of prey, winging from the sea, rising from marshlands, swooping from eyries [. . .] The midnight sun is darkened. The earth trembles. The dead of Dublin from Prospect and Mount

Jerome in white sheepskin overcoats and black goatfell cloaks arise and appear to many. A chasm opens with a noiseless yawn.

(U. XV. 4661-4662, 4665-4667, 4669-4672)

Joyce uses both military and apocalyptic images to usher in the parody of the end of time, juxtaposing modern times with ancient religious traditions. This passage functions as a parody in that the physical meaning of the landscape represents one thing whereas the allegorical meaning of it represents its near-opposite. The most humorous of these instances is “*A chasm opens with a noiseless yawn,*” parodying Revelation 6:12-17 and the opening of the Sixth Seal of the Biblical end of time.⁷⁴ Unlike previous chapters in *Ulysses* where the allegorical meaning of the geography was derived from the physical meaning, “Circe” sometimes inverts this into the physical being defined by the allegorical. This is due to the physical details being sparse and that they can be depended on only with dubious reliability as a result of the hallucinogenic nature of the chapter. On a literal level, there is not a gargantuan chasm opening in Dublin; it is more plausible that this chasm is of a smaller physical presence, such as an opening door, a fault in the street, or even someone yawning. In addition to parodying the end of time, this sequence functions as hyperbolically parodying the end of the day and the power that the night has over the day. This also functions as an example of the connection between the literal and allegorical levels of moral geography that Dante writes about in his Letter to Cangrande. Unlike Dante, Joyce presents “Circe” as reversing the traditional method of discerning moral geography, where

⁷⁴ “I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?” (NIV)

the various allegorical interpretations of the landscape now help to inform a vision of the physical, instead of the physical informing the allegorical.

One event in “Circe” that corresponds nicely with previously discussed elements is Stephen’s confrontation with his mother towards the end of the chapter. The apparition of Mrs. Dedalus comes immediately before the culmination of the Black Mass of *Ulysses* and after Bloom’s parodic crucifixion takes place. Stephen’s hallucination of his mother serves the purpose of gaining closure over his moral shortcomings and achieving the reconciliation he needs in order to gain closure. Suzette Henke comments on this in *Joyce’s Moraculous Sindbook*:

By confronting the sins of the past in grotesque, exaggerated caricatures, both men participate in a surrealistic dream-play tantamount to the ritual of confession. They become aware of unconscious guilt paralyzing volition; and in a process similar to Freudian psychoanalysis, they dramatically exorcise the ghosts that haunt their tortured mindscapes.⁷⁵

The exorcism of the past, particularly in Stephen’s case, involves the publicizing of his internal unconscious life, which could only come about through the type of internal exhibition that is a byproduct of “Circe.” Henke highlights the reconciliatory aspect of the chapter and the need for both Stephen and Bloom to engage in such actions in order to progress as characters. “Circe” proves to be almost necessary for the characters to escape the grasp of what burdens them, which for Bloom is his lack of physical and emotional connection with his wife as well as the lingering memory of his son, Rudy. For Stephen, the burden is the one which he has carried with him for his entire Odyssean journey, which is his guilt in relation to his mother. This impacts the moral landscape vis-à-vis Stephen’s unresolved crises. Stephen has been struggling with this situation for the duration of the day, it is brought to the surface at night and brought into the physical

⁷⁵ Suzette Henke. *Joyce’s Moraculous Sindbook: A Study of “Ulysses.”* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978: 181.

landscape. The collision of the physical and mental happens in the physical realm of “Circe” as opposed to primarily occurring in the mental realm in chapters such as “Proteus,” where Stephen’s confrontation with his mother took place inside of himself as opposed to in the landscape itself, though the landscape influenced his thoughts to a great extent.

Previously, Stephen’s interactions with his mother were purely mental and thus a dialogue between the two did not exist. These interactions occurred in “Telemachus,” “Proteus,” and “Scylla and Charybdis.” Because of the phantasmagorical style of “Circe”, the ghost of Stephen’s mother is able to be resurrected from the grave and a dialogue is able to occur between them. The physical landscape of “Circe” and the hallucinogenic style helps to generate this confrontation and creates a further connection between the physical landscape and the consciousness of the characters. Stephen’s mother appears in the text vis-à-vis “THE CHOIR” summoning her with the incantation⁷⁶ used to refer to her throughout the text:

THE CHOIR

Liliata rutilantium te confessorum ...
Ubilantium te virginum

[...]

THE MOTHER

(*with the subtle smile of death’s madness*) I was once the beautiful May Goulding.
I am dead.

(*U. XV. 4163-4165, 4172-4174*)

The liturgical passage that “THE CHOIR” repeats was first used in “Telemachus” when Stephen had his first vision of his mother’s corpse (see *U. I. 276-277*). The variety of the moral possibilities in “Circe” allows for Stephen to come face to face with what is tormenting him as a result of the “bursting forth” of the unconscious. This is able to occur because of the style of

⁷⁶ Translated from the Latin: “May the liliated throng of radiant Confessors encompass thee; may the choir of rejoicing Virgins welcome thee”. This is a prayer normally recited during the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick as part of Last Rites.

“Circe” as well as the landscape it is placed in. This face-to-face confrontation is made possible by a conception of time that Bloom alludes to earlier in the chapter: “But tomorrow is a new day will be. Past was is today. What now is will then morrow as now was be past yester” (*U.* XV. 2409-2410). Because of the hallucinogenic character of “Circe,” all of time is compressed and expanded in the present, which Bloom’s comment echoes. This notion of time as omnipresent means that in “Circe,” all actions of the past and future happen at once, and as a result, Stephen is allowed to confront his mother and gain closure in relation to the events of the past. This sense of closure allows Stephen to regain control and agency over his thoughts because his mother is no longer haunting him to the extent that she was before.

Stephen’s reaction to his mother in “Circe” is quite different than we have seen previously in *Ulysses*. Instead of recoiling into a submissive state where his mother’s corpse has power over him, such as in “No, mother! Let me be and let me live” (*U.* I. 279), he responds to his mother by stating “Cancer did it, no I. Destiny” (*U.* XV. 4187). This presents an important moral juncture in the text, as after this statement, Stephen seems to be freed of the guilt he felt towards his mother, thus symbolically severing the “navelcord” of the *omphalos* seen in “Proteus.” This represents the reconciliation that Stephen spoke of in “Scylla and Charybdis” (*U.* IX. 334-335). On the next page, Stephen yells “*Nothing!*” (meaning “needful” in German) and then “*lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier,*” effectively ending his mother’s influence over him (*U.* XV. 4242-4234). Under normal circumstances, the chandelier is an illuminating object, and the smashing of it would represent a return to darkness and isolation. However, in the conditions that are present in “Circe,” the smashing of the chandelier actually brings out illumination and the removal of Stephen from the isolating and constrictive moral state that was present in “Proteus” and embodied in the existence of the Martello Tower. This

represents the climax for Stephen's character in the text, for it is at this point that Stephen is able to dissociate himself from his mother and his trauma as a vehicle for further understanding himself as a being in the world. At this point in "Circe," Stephen begins to become a postcolonial entity, as without the direct mental presence of his mother, he is able to somewhat untether himself from the "navelcord" of "Proteus" and the influence of his mother on his conception of moral geography. This allows him to presumably regain agency over the attempted creation of his moral landscape and isolates mother away from the central processes of his mind that form the moral landscape.

While Stephen is able to separate himself from his mother, he is unable to completely free himself from the need to have a parental figure to act as a guide, especially given that he is inebriated and unable to find his way back to the Martello Tower in Sandycove. Bloom, whose gender has been questioned and inverted in the dreamscape of "Circe," will guide Stephen out of Nighttown and eventually to his home at 7 Eccles Street in "Ithaca," the penultimate chapter of *Ulysses* (see *U. XV. 1774-1786* for Bloom's gender switch). Stephen's search for a parental figure — as well as Bloom's search for a son — mirrors the relationship between Dante and Virgil in the *Commedia* and has ramifications on the moral landscape. Like the Pilgrim, Stephen does not feel as if he is able to encounter the physical landscape alone, which is represented by the "dark wood" of *Inferno* and the darkness of Dublin after the exit from Nighttown.

Bloom's assumption of this paternal role immediately precedes the apparition of his deceased son Rudy, which closes "Circe." This is one of the most touching and sensitive moments in all of *Ulysses* and exhibits the grief that Bloom harbors inside of himself. The scene where Bloom sees the apparition of Rudy is one where Stephen is semi-conscious after taking a blow to the head from Private Carr (*U. XV. 4747-4750*). After assuming responsibility in

securing Stephen's safety for the rest of the evening, Bloom looks at Stephen and comments that his "face reminds me of his poor mother" (*U. XV. 4949*). Having now taken the role of Stephen's guardian in the wake of the exodus of his mother (as well as having had his gender examined and inverted earlier on in the chapter), Bloom can be seen as beginning to see Stephen as his son. Bloom then begins to murmur phrases that are very reminiscent of the physical geography of "Proteus": "in the rough sands of the sea...a cabletow's length from the shore....where the tide ebbs....and flows" (*U. XV. 4953-4954*). The injection of the image of the ocean resurrects the ever-changing forms of Sandymount Strand in "Proteus," where both Stephen and Bloom have spent significant portions of their days. This Protean movement of the ebbing tide seems to trigger the unconscious Stephen into metamorphosing into the apparition of Rudy. Rudy appears as a young boy who is reading from a text written in Hebrew that could possibly be Hebrew Scripture:

Against the dark wall a figure appears slowly, a fairy boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his hand. He reads from right to left inaudibly, smiling, kissing the page.

(*U. XV. 4956-4960*)

This scene presents an image that resembles what could be Rudy's Bar Mitzvah, where he would be dressed up and reciting the Torah while kissing the scripture.⁷⁷ While the reading from right to left carries a religious meaning, it also serves as a conduit by which the experience of reading is distorted and rearranged, which reflects the landscape of the chapter overall. The juxtaposition of the religious meaning of reading from right to left in relation to Stephen is interesting because *Ulysses* is a continuation of the education and growth of Stephen that began in *Portrait*. Stephen in effect becomes the physical stimulus that Bloom imagines as Rudy. As part of the landscape

⁷⁷ The Bar Mitzvah in Judaism is when a boy becomes a man and typically occurs around their thirteenth birthday; Rudy would have been eleven in 1904, as he was born in 1893.

that Bloom views, Stephen helps to arouse memories of Rudy that cause Bloom grief and possibly guilt.

In general, the moral landscape of “Circe” can be seen as a patchwork of the moral landscapes of the past, present, and future because of the hallucinogenic dreamscape of Nighttown. The landscape that results from the chapter therefore allows the inner demons of the characters to resurrect themselves from the depths of their respective unconscious minds and impact the landscape with moralized implications. This is most present in Stephen’s encounter with his mother and the Bloom’s subsequent adoption of Stephen for the duration of the night. It is the location of this chapter that allows for these events to take place. Furthermore, Nighttown all but guarantees the connection between the characters’ thoughts and the landscape by way of the parody of a vast number of social structures. In essence, the moral geographical nature of “Circe” is one of subversion of society and an explosion of moral possibilities.

After “Circe,” the third and final part of *Ulysses* — the “Nostos,” or “homecoming”— begins. The three chapters of this section (“Eumaeus,” “Ithaca,” and “Penelope”) reflect and refer to the initial three chapters of the text to some extent. As the title “Nostos” suggests, this section is concerned with the return home to 7 Eccles Street that Bloom makes at the end of the day with Stephen accompanying him. Eventually, Stephen leaves Bloom’s company and Bloom is left alone in his house with Molly. The “Penelope” chapter, perhaps the most notoriously censored and challenged chapter of the book (as Kevin Birmingham’s *The Most Dangerous Book* indicates),⁷⁸ showcases the shift in the focus of the narrative from Bloom to his spouse, who is in their upstairs bed. In continuing and extending the geographical tradition established in “Circe,” “Penelope” is quite mental, with details of physical geography therefore being difficult to

⁷⁸ Kevin Birmingham. *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce’s “Ulysses.”* New York: Penguin, 2014.

discern. In spite of this, there are a few instances where the memories that cross Molly's mind project a moral influence over both the mental and physical landscapes in the chapter.

Creating Moral Space in the Geography of “Penelope”

Joyce distinctly chose to end *Ulysses* with the internal monologue of a woman. When Molly ends her day by going to bed in the wee hours of the night, which is the end of the day for *Ulysses*, the sun rises at 3:30 am on June 17, 1904, suggesting the cyclical nature of life vis-à-vis the cycle of the day. Joyce’s deliberate choice of having a woman be the way by which this is presented is an ode to not only the process of birth and re-birth but also to the value of different non-masculine narratives. By giving Molly Bloom the final word of *Ulysses*, Joyce expands the agency of creating moral landscapes to the other gender in an attempt to portray a larger expanse of human emotion and existence.

In “Circe,” Nighttown functioned as a physical heterotopia for the prostitutes, gamblers, and what was otherwise deemed as socially unacceptable. The heterotopic element of “Penelope” is based around the same premises — that of confining what is deemed socially unacceptable by the society to a particular realm — but is portrayed in a different manner. Molly, who is in bed in her Eccles Street home, is forced by her contemporary society to withhold aspects of her humanity from the public eye, which acts as a denial of the existence of those facets of her being. Molly’s heterotopic environment is not within the physical realm but is instead mental. Since her way of viewing the world is so radically different from the norm, she has been forced to repress these elements in order to be able to function as a member in society. Declan Kiberd’s proposed idea that “much that has been repressed or denied in the daylight hours can be brought to the surface at night”⁷⁹ shows how Molly’s repressed thoughts are able to be given prominence in “Penelope.” This is especially important considering that Molly is on the cusp of falling asleep

⁷⁹ Declan Kiberd. *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living*. London: Faber & Faber, 2009: 223

and slipping into a realm where the unconscious has near total control over the conscious processes of her psyche and of her mind.

The style of “Penelope” is, as Stuart Gilbert notes, the internal female monologue,⁸⁰ which is the feminine counterpart to Stephen’s internal male monologue in “Proteus.” While Molly is not related in any way to Stephen, the purpose of her internal monologue is similar; both monologues epitomize the confinement felt by Stephen and Molly, though Molly is able to remove herself from her confinement at the end of the chapter, at least to some extent. Like Stephen, Molly does not use an internal filter to sort through her thoughts, and as a result, her internal monologue is an unadulterated view into her humanity. Because of the style of “Penelope,” it is perhaps the most morally dynamic chapter in *Ulysses* due to the way in which it challenges pre-conceived moral structures and attempts to subvert them. Even in “Circe,” some degrees of hesitation regarding subversion were evident, such as when Bloom refused to acknowledge that he committed mental or epistolary adultery with Martha Clifford (see *U.* XV. 751-781). In “Penelope,” Molly’s encounter with Blazes Boylan is described with no such reprehension: “I can feel his mouth O Lord [. . .] I wanted to shout all sorts of things fuck or shit or anything [. . .] Thursday Friday one Saturday two Sunday three O Lord I cant wait till Monday” (*U.* XV. 583, 588-589, 594-595). While Bloom seems almost ashamed of his expression of sexuality and his impotence, Molly uses her sexuality as a vehicle to assert her agency over her body in the heterotopia that she has been forced to occupy by society. In spite of Molly’s confinement, she is able to harness her humanity and use her confining space to her advantage. Even though all of this takes place within her mind and has no tangible presence in

⁸⁰ Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce’s “Ulysses”: A Study*. New York: Vintage Books, 1958: 30.

the world, her control over her mind in her heterotopic environment shows how this agency is exhibited.

Molly's agency bookends the chapter with a life-affirming essence; both the first and last words of the chapter are "Yes" (*U. XVIII. 1, 1609*). That the first and last words of the chapter are the same are significant in multiple ways. The use of "yes" in the chapter has a variety of meanings, including a willingness to explore the world inside of oneself without any moral premonitions. As a result, it demonstrates Molly's openness to human experience and the plurality and morality. It also opens the discussion on not only the cyclical nature of the chapter but also of the cyclical structure of *Ulysses*. If the last word in the chapter is the same as the first, it is plausible that one of Joyce's possible intentions was to create an infinitely cyclical world for Molly to inhabit, in effect commenting on the heterotopic environment she is forced to be confined into. It also harkens back to notions of the text's awareness of itself, and reading the "Yes" at the end of the chapter prompts the reader to turn to the beginning of the chapter to visualize the link that Joyce has created. In *Ulysses on the Liffey*, Richard Ellmann comments that Molly's "final affirmation is a victory of strong resistance."⁸¹ Molly's resistance against the domination of a masculine-oriented society opens and closes the chapter in a dominant manner that allows her to hold control over her inhabiting space even though it was engineered by the very society that her thoughts subvert.

Additionally, this cyclical nature also suggests that since the book is an attempt to recreate a single Dublin day, it can be seen as encapsulating the universal in the particular. This was a major component of Joyce's modus operandi in writing *Ulysses*, and Joyce himself echoed this: "For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can

⁸¹ Richard Ellmann. *Ulysses on the Liffey*. Oxford: Oxford, 1972: 164.

get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal.”⁸²

Joyce’s vision in “Penelope” can therefore be seen as a voyage into attempting to understand the female sex and how they operate in a moral landscape. Joyce’s attempt to do this expanded into his attempt to portray women accurately in the “Penelope” chapter, though Joyce acknowledged the difficulties of this since he was, in fact, a man.

In the Gilbert schema to *Ulysses*, “Penelope” is ascribed the symbol of the Earth. In the Linnati schema, “Penelope” is not ascribed a symbol at all, perhaps gesticulating towards how the allegorical representation helps to define the physical. In spite of this, if any symbol is appropriate to the chapter, it is that of the bed, which is the only area that Molly physically occupies during her slumber. In “Calypso,” the only other chapter of *Ulysses* where she is given dialogue and shown directly, Molly is also lying in bed, either half-asleep or talking with Bloom about “met him pike hoses” (*U. IV. 336-343*). In *The Odyssey*, the bed — as well as the rest of the house — used by Penelope was built from the trunk of an olive tree, symbolizing stability and confidence. When viewed within the context of moral geography, the bed is the literal aspect of the geography whereas the Homeric parallel is one of the allegorical implications. The significance of Molly’s bed lies in its many purposes. It is an area of “conception and birth, of consummation of marriage and of breach of marriage, of sleep and of death.”⁸³ It is where Molly and Bloom have created their two children, presumably mourned the death of their firstborn son Rudy, where Molly has recently committed adultery with Blazes Boylan, and where their moral personas interact in the realm of the unconscious. The variety of moral regions that intersect over the bed is a microcosm of the many moralized microcosms in greater city of Dublin. The bed

⁸² Maria Tymoczko. *The Irish Ulysses*. Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1997: 260.

⁸³ Richard Kain. *Fabulous Voyager: A Study of James Joyce’s “Ulysses.”* New York: Viking Press, 1959: 237.

may be misconstrued as a place where only sexual activity takes place, but this reduction limits the experiences that one has in bed, particularly the mental experiences and those that do not involve sexual activity. Notably, this includes sleep, where Bloom and Molly's unconsciousnesses intertwine in the dreamscape. This joint nocturnal existence may begin as early on as the end of "Ithaca" with the dot at the end of the chapter, which acts as the conduit by which Bloom and Molly enter the realm of the mind, signifying the shift in consciousness and the entrance into the realm of the dark.

This is supported by the way in which Bloom and Molly end up lying in bed — with Molly's head on the pillow and Bloom's head at her feet — which brings to mind the symbol of infinity and a symbolic representation of the yin-yang. The symbolic significance of this is that despite their inability to be on the same terms sexually (Bloom and Molly have not engaged in intercourse since their son Rudy died in 1893), Molly and Bloom are in sync on a more cosmic and spiritual level, perhaps as result of their ability to coexist in the same household despite the years of turmoil and strife that has existed in their household with them. Molly's adulterous sexual relations with Blazes Boylan does not seem to destroy this relationship, as Bloom still crawls into bed with her at the end of the day and Molly still thinks of Bloom as the last thing on her mind before she falls asleep.

The Blooms' bed serves as the border between the conscious and the unconscious. The bed can be seen as where the unconscious minds of both Molly and Bloom interact and merge into one. Consequently, one might see the final scene of *Ulysses* as the intersection of the latent desires of both Molly and Bloom. It acts in a similar manner to the liminality of the shoreline in "Proteus" in the sense that physically occupying the bed means that one is either fully awake, falling asleep, or totally asleep. In that sense, the bed is an area of moral liminality, where

multiple planes of moral geography intersect and coexist to form an area that is neither entirely morally good or bad. In relation to “Proteus,” this instance of moral liminality is more mental and less affected by the physical landscape that Molly occupies.

One of the primary functions of Molly’s heterotopia is to reclaim the lost elements of her femininity and her humanity, which have been denied and forcibly repressed by Irish and European society. In regards to the censorship history of *Ulysses*, the most notoriously criticized it is one of the most heavily criticized aspects of the chapter as it is one of the focuses of Molly’s internal monologue.⁸⁴ This represents an attempt to reclaim agency over her body and mind during a time when the culturally-oriented body and mind were dominated by the masculine world. Molly’s disgust with this is made very clear in the chapter:

I dont care what anybody says itd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it you wouldnt see women going and killing one another and slaughtering when do you ever see women rolling around drunk like they do or gambling every penny they have and losing it on horses

(*U. XVIII. 1434-1438*)

Molly’s complaint with the male dominated world is that it is overly violent and, to a degree, uncivilized. Clearly stifled by her society, Molly is forced to withhold thoughts like these within herself, with their only outlet being within her internal monologue. Her critique of the sociocultural landscape around her is reminiscent of what Nietzsche writes in *On the Genealogy of Morals*: “Let us articulate this new demand: we need a critique of moral values [. . .] the value of these values must first be called into question.”⁸⁵ Molly does precisely this, critiquing the moral values of the society that have forced her to withhold aspects of her humanity from the

⁸⁴ While not solely attributed to this chapter, it can be argued that the history of the ban of *Ulysses* in many English-speaking countries (it was banned in the United States until 1933 and in Australia until midway through the 1960’s) was premised upon “Penelope” and “Nausicaa.” See Kevin Birmingham’s *The Most Dangerous Book* (2014) for a deeper investigation into the censorship history of *Ulysses*.

⁸⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. New York: Random House, 1969: 20.

society. It is this critique that allows Molly to gain control of her heterotopic space and construct it in the manner that she desires. Molly's reclamation of her space brings to mind Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space," where Molly is able to separate herself from her oppressors in order to be freed from them, at least temporally within the realm of her mind.⁸⁶ From a postcolonial standpoint, this can be seen as Molly attempting to decolonize her mind in an effort to construct this "Third Space" within her heterotopic environment. In this case, this elicits a reinterpretation and a subsequent redefinition of what cultural standards regarding femininity should be.

Molly uses a Nietzschean framework in order to call into question traditional moral perspectives on sexuality. This is prevalent very early on in the chapter when Molly ruminates on why there is a need to confess sins, particularly for sins of a sexual nature. Molly's questioning of this showcases her ability to work within the confines of her heterotopic environment in order to subvert the social apparatus she is in opposition towards. Evidence of this is presented within the first few pages of the chapter:

why cant you kiss a man without going and marrying him first you sometimes
love to wildly when you feel that way so nice all over you you cant help yourself I
wish some man or other would take me sometime when hes there and kiss me in
his arms theres nothing like a kiss long and hot down to your soul almost
paralyses you then I hate that confession when I used to go to Father Corrigan he
touched me father and what harm if he did where and I said on the canal bank like
a fool but whereabouts on your person my child on the leg behind high up was it
yes rather high up was it where you sit down yes O Lord couldnt he say bottom
right out

(*U.* XVIII. 102-111)

It is possible that one of the reasons Molly is challenging these moralized societal structures is that even within the confines of her heterotopia they attempt to control her. Molly is upset in this

⁸⁶ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004: 55.

passage because even as she goes into confess her sins to Father Corrigan, he refuses to say “bottom right out,” instead referring to it as an area of the human body used for a function rather than it as a thing in itself or as a part of the body. Molly is disgusted because Father Corrigan, who is representative of the masculine and clerical society that he is a part of, views her body as parts that are either morally good or bad instead of viewing Molly as the sum of her parts, as Saint Paul mentions in the Second Letter to the Corinthians.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.⁸⁷

Molly recognizes the irony of Father Corrigan’s inability to recognize this, and this further disillusioned her from about societal structures that claim to possess total moral understanding. This sort of social critique is able to be placed within “Penelope” because there is no physical space from which Molly can be ostracized from; her thoughts are unable to be penetrated by the outside world, and thus she has complete ownership over her internal moral geography. Her rejection of these social structures further allows her to attempt to create a vision of the world through a moral understanding that she arrives at within the environment she has been relegated to by society. In essence, this means that Molly possesses a role that is akin to the author creating a work, where she has sole authority in the attempted creation of her own moral landscape. Molly’s reclamation of the sexual aspects of her being is thus the result of her desire to find an inner truth rather than an outer one.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 26-27 (NIV).

⁸⁸ Marilyn French. *The Book as World: James Joyce’s Ulysses*. New York: Paragon House, 1993: 260.

Frank Budgen, who spent much of World War I with Joyce in Zurich, Switzerland, writes that Molly's heterotopic environment is "a region where there are no incertitudes to torture the mind [unlike Stephen's on Sandymount Strand] and no Agenbite of Inwit⁸⁹ to lacerate the soul, where there are no regrets, no reproaches, no conscience and consequently no sin."⁹⁰ Budgen's statement regionalizes Molly her heterotopic environment as well as immediately asserting her as being the opposite of Stephen, who does not lose his "Agenbite of Inwit" until "Circe," and even at that point, Stephen is knocked unconscious, so it is difficult to say whether or not Stephen fully exorcises his demons. Even so, Molly's heterotopic space, where she can exercise her agency and freedom, does not allow for similar demons to impose on her conscience.⁹¹ This idea is reflected in the physical location that Molly occupies because she is completely in control of her inhabiting space. This represents a control over her emotions and over her conscious mind.

The placement of "Penelope" at the end of *Ulysses* juxtaposes a relationship with the beginning of the text due to the somewhat cyclical nature of the chapter. This cyclical nature, propagated by the placement of the affirmative "Yes" at both the beginning and end of the chapter, prompts the return to return back to the beginning of the chapter and of the text. This, in addition to Molly's effort to rely on an inner truth rather than an outer one, seems to refer back to Stephen's attempt to discover some sort of truth when he was on top of the Martello Tower and walking "into eternity along Sandymount Strand" (*U.* III. 18-20). This is reflected in the

⁸⁹ Agenbite of Inwit is a phrase from Middle English that Joyce uses repeatedly to signify a remorse of conscience. This is particularly ascribed to Stephen's relationship with his mother.

⁹⁰ Frank Budgen. *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972: 265.

⁹¹ There is the case of Rudy, who Molly mentions several times in "Penelope," including *U.* XVIII. 1448-1454, but Molly does not seem guilty in regards to Rudy's death. On the contrary, her grief magnifies her humanity.

construction of the landscape of Howth Head in the scene where Bloom proposes to Molly and they copulate.

The final scene of *Ulysses* commences after Bloom has joined Molly in their bed. In thinking about her husband, Molly begins to think about the early aspects of their relationship and how they became engaged. In one of the most touching and empowering moments in the entire text, Molly describes the area of Howth Head⁹² in a way that can be seen as her vision of an Earthly Paradise or Garden of Eden. This can be seen in the abundance of flower imagery that fills the chapter as well as in the use of the seedcake as an empowering representation of the forbidden fruit. The flower is used primarily as a symbol of physical and spiritual fertility in this chapter, as it has previously had a phallic component to it (*U. V. 570-572*: “the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower”) in addition to the feminine attachment it receives in “Penelope.” The plethora of flower imagery that is placed within the chapter postulates this area as one of fertility, prosperity, and bliss. The use of flower symbolism in “Penelope” in order to help create a vision of the moral landscape is a further use of the way Joyce constructed “Circe,” which was to have the allegorical meaning of the landscape help define the physical.

Additionally, the flower has been used in a wider variety of ways throughout the text, including Leopold and Molly’s surname, Leopold Bloom’s alias of Henry Flower, the letter from Martha Clifford that spoke of the “language of flowers” (*U. V. 261*), and the motif of the lotus in the fifth chapter, fittingly named “Lotus Eaters.” The phrase continually thought of by Molly throughout this chapter is appropriately “a flower of the mountain.” She frequently associated herself with this flower, purporting herself as a figure whose role is related to Eve, the original mother in the Biblical tradition, whom Stephen thought about in “Proteus” when thinking of the

⁹² Please refer to Appendix J.1. for a map of Howth in relation to Dublin proper.

omphalos and his mother (*U.* XVIII. 1576, 1602). Molly does not necessarily use this association with Eve as giving her religious authority, but rather as a means to represent the life-affirming essence that was gestated in the very first line of the chapter with the word “Yes”. Her use of the phrase “flower of the mountain” perpetuates this essence and reminds her of her own beauty not only as a woman but also as a human: “so we are flowers all a womans body yes” (*U.* XVIII. 1576-1577). Previously a symbol of intoxication and paralysis in “Lotus Eaters,” the flower now represents this life-affirming essence and a portal into Molly’s memory and her construction of a moral landscape within her heterotopic environment.

Molly’s vision of Bloom’s proposal to her occupies the geographical area known as Howth Head, a peninsula northeast of Dublin proper, where the Hill of Howth and Bailey Lighthouse are located.⁹³ Howth Head can be further seen as Molly’s vision of an Earthly Paradise based on the “seedcake” that she gives to Bloom (*U.* XVIII. 1574). The transference of this symbol of the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden to a symbol of sexual empowerment further highlights Molly’s ability to take control over her morally dynamic heterotopia. If Molly’s moral landscape was dictated by outside societal structures, this symbol could be interpreted as a harbinger of the Fall of Man. Since Molly does not rely on outside structures but rather relies on an inner truth, as Marilyn French notes in *The Book as World*, the transference of the seedcake from Molly to Bloom can be seen as representing the transference of the ability to rely on oneself to create a moral landscape instead of relying on outside sources to create the landscape instead. This harkens back to the notion of the personalized moral landscape that

⁹³ Bailey Lighthouse (and thus Howth) were mentioned in “Nausicaa” when Bloom was walking along Sandymount Strand as night was falling (see *U.* XIII. 1068-1080). It is interesting to note that Bloom thinks of Molly in a very tender manner following this passage and that these passages geographically mirror each other, with Bloom looking across the bay and thinking of Molly in “Nausicaa” and Molly looking across the bay and thinking of Bloom in “Penelope.”

Stephen attempts to create in “Proteus,” an attempt that is continued here by Molly in her heterotopia.

The physical location of Howth Head and Molly’s vision of an Earthly Paradise is directly across Dublin Bay from where Stephen was during the “Telemachia” and where Bloom was in “Nausicaa.” In her memory, Molly is very aware of the geographical significance of the Hill of Howth in relation to these other areas, as she makes a direct gaze across the bay towards Sandymount Strand after Bloom proposes to her: “I wouldnt answer first only looked out over the sea and the sky I was thinking of so many things he didnt know” (*U.* XVIII. 1581-1582). From a literal standpoint, Molly is thinking about “Mulvey, and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors,” though her gaze across the bay signifies a unconscious thought process that brings to mind the opening of *Ulysses* (*U.* XVIII. 1582-1583). This final scene of *Ulysses* mirrors the opening scene of “Telemachus” where Stephen and Buck Mulligan stand atop the Martello Tower as Stephen ruminates on the physical geography of Dublin Bay and the repressed guilt he has in regards to his mother’s death. The poignancy of “Penelope” is that this scene presents almost a complete reversal of the moral geographical landscape found in the “Telemachia,” as Molly’s life-affirming essence is in partial opposition to the moral liminality showcased by the areas Stephen inhabits in the beginning of *Ulysses*. Perhaps Molly is picturing her future self as a mother and is connecting the sea (“*Thalatta! Thalatta!* She is our great sweet mother”) to her potential surrogacy as Stephen’s new mother.

While Molly’s stream of consciousness narrative refers back to the opening chapters of the book and even back onto itself, there is no doubt that the fluidity of Molly’s consciousness is

representative of “time’s moving stream” as Suzette Henke denotes it as.⁹⁴ It does not reflect upon itself like Stephen’s narrative does, brooding over the past and bringing it into the past in a negative manner. The progressive flow of Molly’s narrative is reflected in the landscape she imagines of Howth Head, where the waves blow onto the shore, the wind blows onto the land from the sea, and the night moving in to take over the day. This is affirmed by Joyce’s deliberate omission of punctuation within the chapter, as punctuation indicates a differentiation of thought and a pause in the flow of mental movement. These motions advance the cyclical nature of the chapter and the text as a whole.

“Penelope” is a morally dynamic chapter that operates within the confines of a heterotopia created by the social structures that Molly is attempting to subvert. Her subversion takes the form of her internal monologue, where she has been confined in order that her thoughts do not corrupt the society she is trying to subvert. This is reflected in the geographical structures placed in the chapter, specifically the physical structures of her house and bedroom on 7 Eccles Street, and her imagined version of Howth Head, which leads to an allegorical interpretation of the landscape that is intensely fluid and variable, allowing for the promotion of a multiplicitous life-affirming narrative instead of a fixed narrative or reality.

⁹⁴ Suzette Henke. *Joyce’s Marvellous Sinsbook: A Study of “Ulysses.”* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978: 236.

Diving into the *Wake*: Beyond *Ulysses*

As *Ulysses* draws to a close, Molly falls asleep, and just as one book closes, another opens. *Finnegans Wake* — Joyce’s “book of the dark,” as John Bishop fittingly titles his work⁹⁵ — takes place entirely within the realm of the night. The fluid nature of Molly’s soliloquy continues into Joyce’s next literary foray, an endeavor that would take him seventeen years to complete. *Finnegans Wake*, which opens with the famous line “riverrun, past Eve and Adam’s, from swerve of shore to bend of bay,” operates in a similar vein to the “Penelope” chapter, though it goes above and beyond and previous conception of language and style of any previous work of the English language (*FW*, 3). However, like *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake* operates within a geographical framework that allows for moral geography to exist. The physical geography in *Finnegans Wake* is much more difficult to discern because of the linguistic style Joyce chooses to use as well as its placement within the dreamscape of the book. Even within the first line of the text, an allegorical vision of the landscape is presented that shows aspects of moral geography being continued into the *Wake*.

⁹⁵ John Bishop. *Joyce’s Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

Conclusion

Through his intensive and detailed reading of Dante, Joyce noticed Dante's wide and detailed use of the concept of moral geography, and in writing *Ulysses*, he renegotiated the boundaries of what moral geography could be as a result of his different social milieu that erupted out of the surging wave of modernism and secularism. While the chapters selected for this thesis elucidate the operation of a moral landscape to some extent in *Ulysses*, the study is by no means complete. Consequently, this thesis does not aim to be comprehensive in a study of the entire text, but rather provide a window of insight into particular facets of Dante's moral geography, Joyce's adaptation of the concept, and his implementation of it into his magnum opus. Opportunities for expansion regarding this project are vast and offer the reward of the possibility of gaining a greater understanding of the adaptation of Dante's moral geography in *Ulysses* as well as gaining a fuller understanding of Joyce's moral leanings and fluctuations. Each instance of Joyce's use of moral geography arrives with further questions, such as if there is a moral right to pleasure, how the physical landscape operates in the realm of the mental, how secular beliefs impact an understanding of the moral landscape, and many others.

One major opportunity for expansion that arises from this research is a postcolonial reading of *Ulysses*. A postcolonial reading of moral geography is extremely relevant in a scholarly conversation of Joyce today in a modern context, especially in the wake of Vincent Cheng's milestone work of *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (1994). The Irish landscape that Joyce uses was one that was ruled by the English from the Norman invasion of the 12th century until the early 20th century. Joyce bore witness to the decline of English rule in Ireland, albeit from continental Europe. While the movement for Irish independence occurred when Joyce was living in continental Europe, *Ulysses* takes place fifteen years before the Easter Uprising of 1919.

This separation of Ireland from England creates a fissure in the interpretation of the moral landscape due to the colonial interpretation being diametrically opposed to the colonized interpretation. Joyce's decision to further exacerbate this divide is evident in the choice of his protagonist of Leopold Bloom as a Hungarian Jew who constantly feels out of place in the landscape.⁹⁶ There is even a feminized element of this postcolonial interpretation in "Penelope," where Molly's mind had previously been "colonized" by the masculine society that had attempted to curtail Molly's thoughts and desires.⁹⁷ Molly's creation of her heterotopic environment acts as her mentally de-colonizing herself in the midst of an oppressive and masculine-dominated environment. Stephen's moral landscape can also be viewed from a postcolonial perspective, as struggles with a mental colonization as a result from his perceived moral inadequacy in relation to his mother's death. The impact of this postcolonial element on the moral geographical landscape of *Ulysses* is vast and deserves further consideration, especially in the postmodern context that it is read in today.

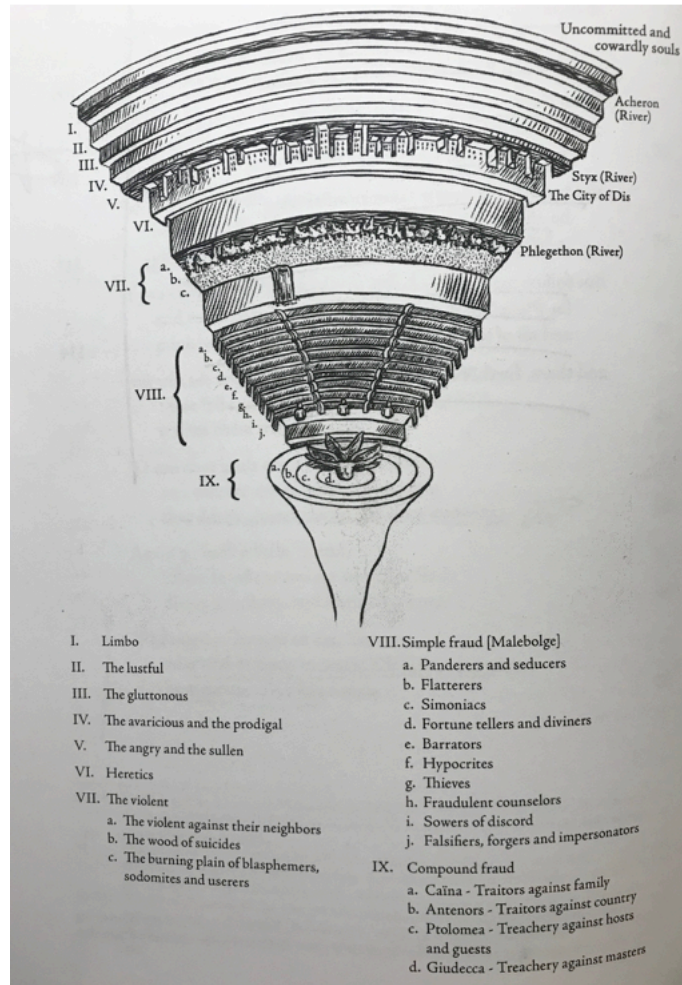
A conclusive reading of the moral geographical landscape of either Dante or Joyce is impossible due to the intrinsic variability of the moral landscape, and the interpretation provided within these pages is certainly not one of absolute authority. Rather, I hope that my work points towards the existence of the moral geographical landscape within Joyce as a result of my new reading of the text. My addition to the eternal discussion of Dante and Joyce offers the possibility of expansion throughout the rest of *Ulysses*.

⁹⁶ There are several chapters in the text where being Jewish is discussed at length. Almost all of these instances have a negative connotation in relation to Bloom. See "Nestor," "Cyclops," and "Circe" for instances of this in *Ulysses*.

⁹⁷ To some extent, Molly exercises a postcolonial gaze on her home of Gibraltar in a quasi-Orientalist fashion that others her homeland and, in effect, herself from those who are attempting to colonize her mind. See Edward Saïd's essay "Orientalism" (see Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, 2nd ed., p. 1866-1888) and Emmanuel Levinas' *Time and the Other* for more.

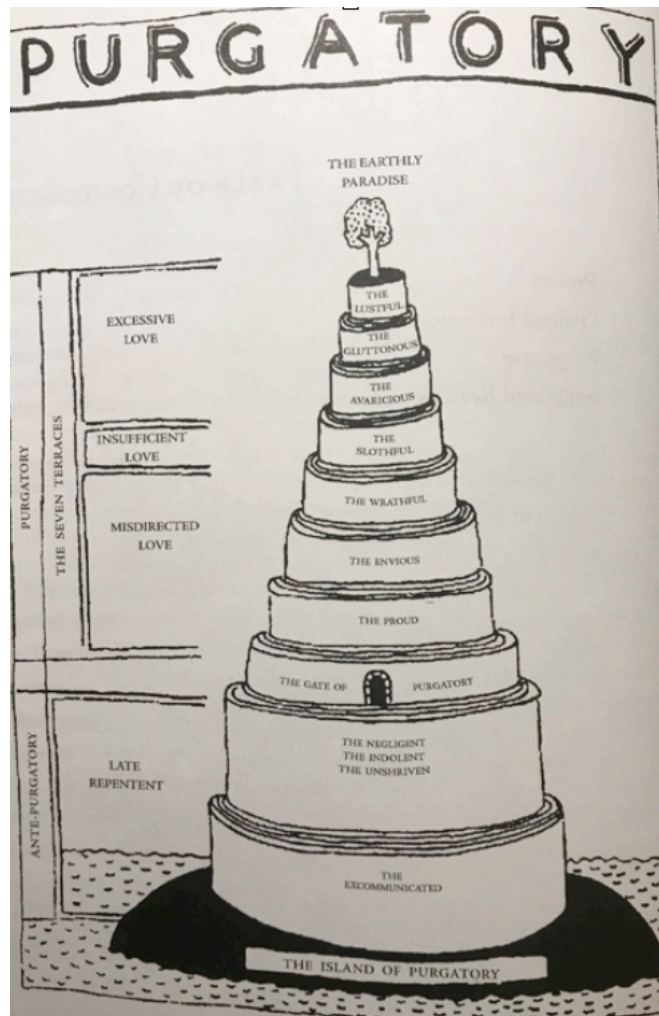
Appendices

Appendix D1 — Map of Inferno



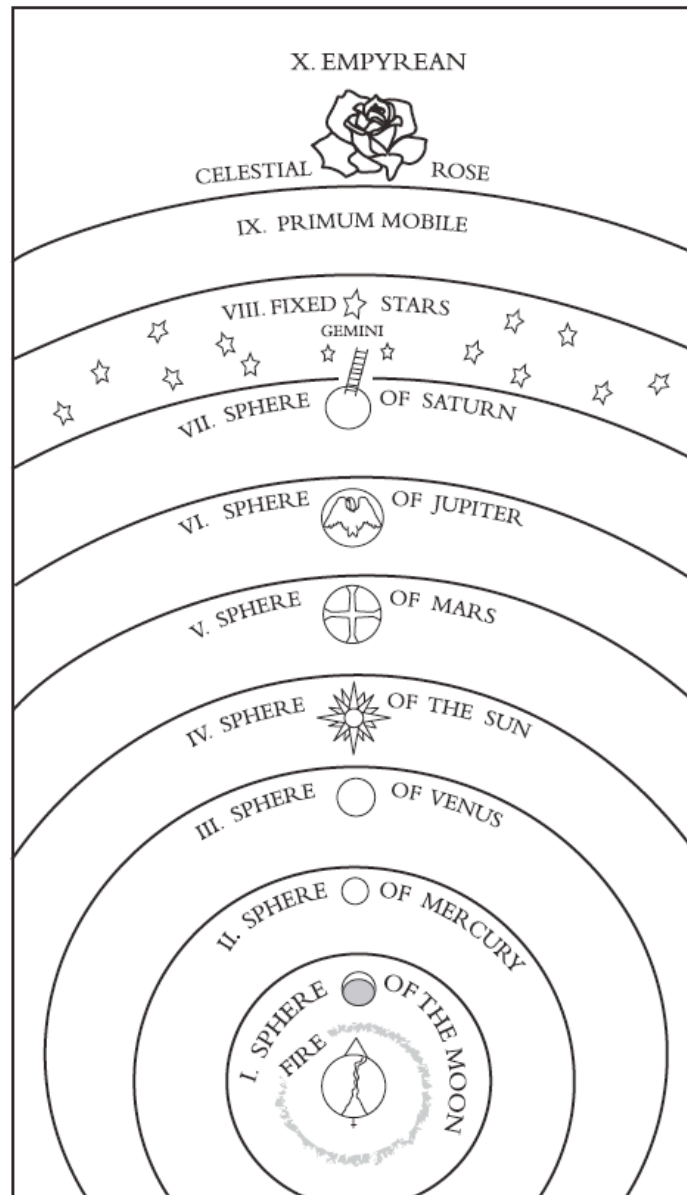
Alighieri, Dante. *Inferno*. Translated by Tom Simone. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2007: 96.

Appendix D2 — Map of Purgatorio



Alighieri, Dante. *Purgatorio*. Translated by Tom Simone. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2014: vi.

Appendix D3 — Map of Paradiso

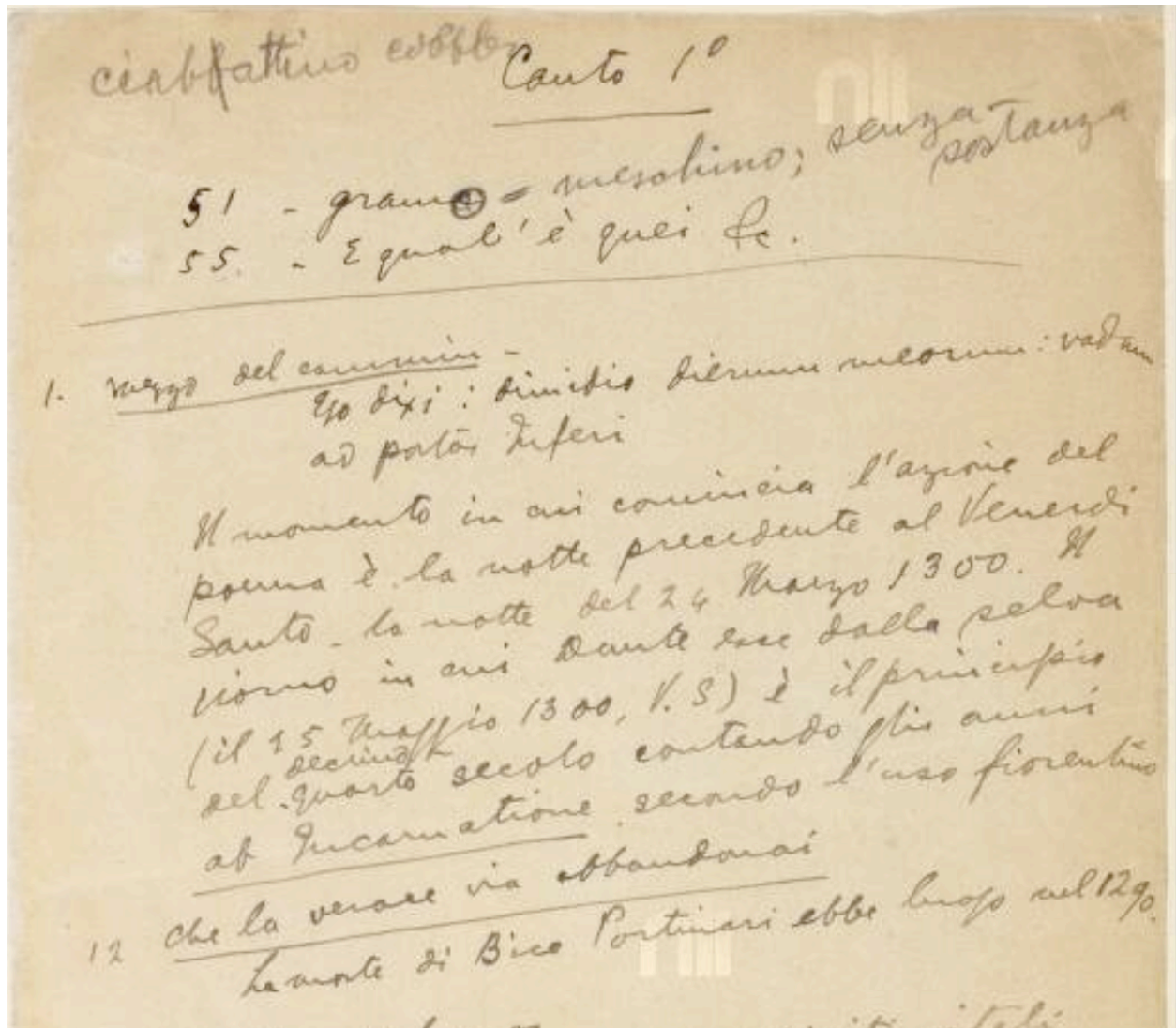


Dante Alighieri. *Paradiso*. Translated by Tom Simone. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2017.

Courtesy of Prof. R. Thomas Simone.

Appendix DJ1: Joyce's Dante Notebook
From the National Library of Ireland Online Database.
<<http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000356985#page/2/mode/1up>>

Joyce, James. "Transcriptions from and related annotations to 'The Inferno' of Dante's Divina Commedia; also, notes on Italian words and phrases." Notebook, c.1903-1928. MS 36,639/1: 2.



This particular note is in regards to the first line of the *Commedia*, "Nezzo del cammin di nostra vita". An attempt at the transcription of some of these notes is provided here:

"Il momento in cui comincia ___ del poema è la notte precedente al Venerdì Santo. La notte del 24 marzo 1300. Il giorno in cui Dante ___ della selva (il 15 ___ 1300, V.S.) è il primi ___ del quarto secolo contando..."

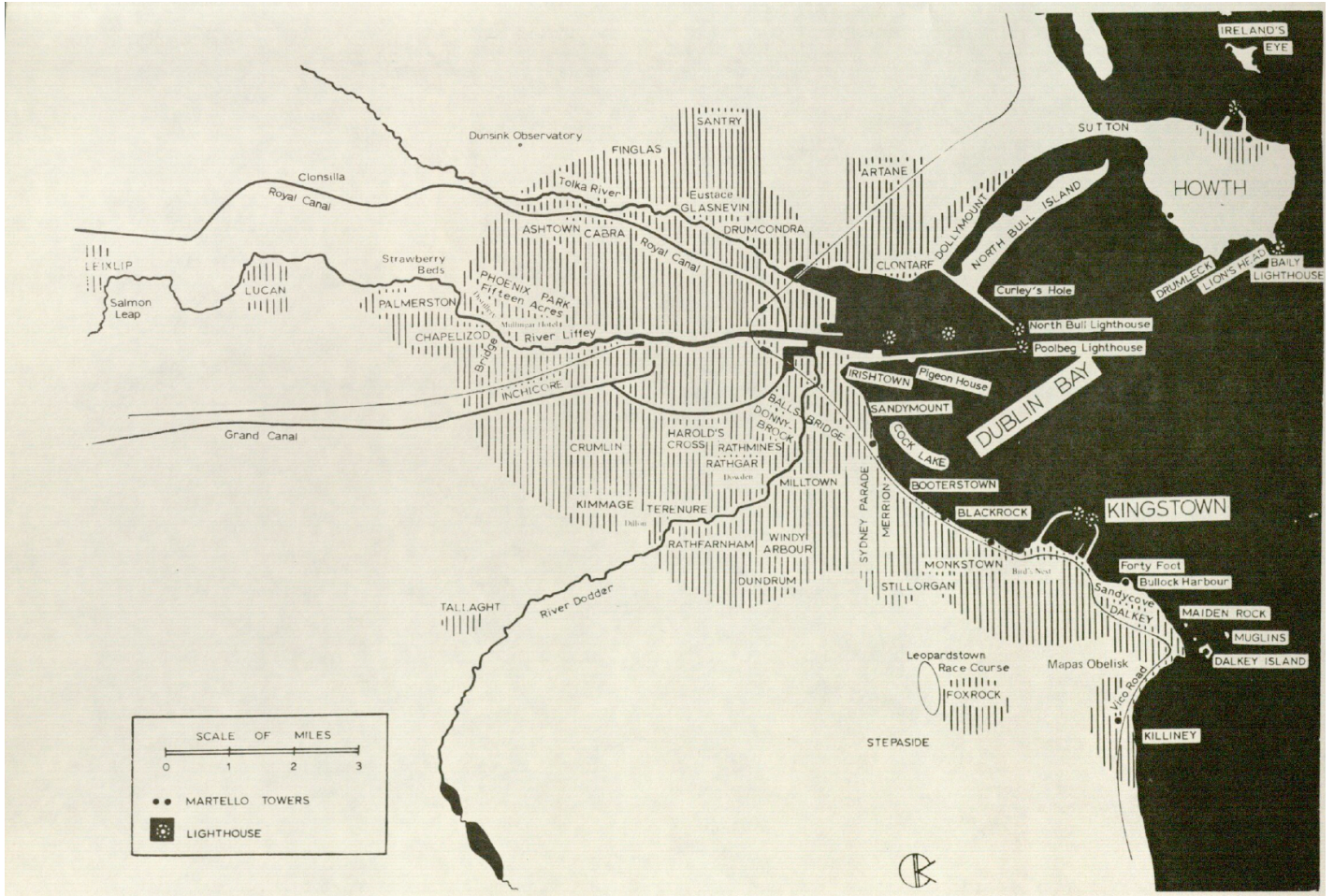
Appendix J1: Gilbert Schema for *Ulysses*

Title	Scene	Hour	Organ	Colour	Symbol	Art	Technic
Telemachus	The Tower	8am	-	White / gold	Heir	Theology	Narrative (young)
Nestor	The School	10am	-	Brown	Horse	History	Catechism (personal)
Proteus	The Strand	11am	-	Green	Tide	Philology	Monologue (male)
Calypso	The House	8am	Kidney	Orange	Nymph	Economics	Narrative (mature)
Lotus Eaters	The Bath	10am	Genitals	-	Eucharist	Botany / chemistry	Narcissism
Hades	The Graveyard	11am	Heart	White / black	Caretaker	Religion	Incubism
Aeolus	The Newspaper	12 noon	Lungs	Red	Editor	Rhetoric	Enthymemic
Lestrygonians	The Lunch	1pm	Oesophagus	-	Constables	Architecture	Peristaltic
Scylla and Charybdis	The Library	2pm	Brain	-	Stratford / London	Literature	Dialectic
Wandering Rocks	The Streets	3pm	Blood	-	Citizens	Mechanics	Labyrinth
Sirens	The Concert Room	4pm	Ear	-	Barmaids	Music	<i>Fuga per canonem</i> ^[a]
Cyclops	The Tavern	5pm	Muscle	-	Fenian	Politics	Gigantism
Nausicaa	The Rocks	8pm	Eye, nose	Grey / blue	Virgin	Painting	Tumescence / detumescence
Oxen of the Sun	The Hospital	10pm	Womb	White	Mothers	Medicine	Embryonic development
Circe	The Brothel	12am	Locomotor apparatus	-	Whore	Magic	Hallucination
Eumaeus	The Shelter	1am	Nerves	-	Sailors	Navigation	Narrative (old)
Ithaca	The House	2am	Skeleton	-	Comets	Science	Catechism (impersonal)
Penelope	The Bed	-	Flesh	-	Earth	-	Monologue (female)

For in-text version of the schema, please refer to:

Stuart Gilbert. *James Joyce's "Ulysses": A Study*. New York: Vintage Books, 1958: 30.

Appendix J2:



Hart, Clive, and Leo Knuth. *A Topographical Guide to James Joyce's Ulysses, II: MAPS*. Colchester: A Wake Newslitter Press, 1976.

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