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# Mapping the Unmappable Dublin: The Breakdown of Space and Place in James Joyce's "Two Gallants"

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## [Abstract]

By defining space as the physical location itself and place as a way in which space is socially, culturally, politically, and historically organized, this paper argues that James Joyce's "Two Gallants" does not simply signify the paralytic and colonial situation of Dublin. Whereas the anglicized streets and buildings shows that the space of Ireland and the place of England are unified, the unnamed street and the shop connotes that the unification of the Irish space and the British place comes apart. Moreover, with the shop's white letters and Lenehan's food (the green peas and the orange ginger beer), which can be understood as the Irish flag, Joyce hopes to override the place of the British, therefore reattaching the space of Ireland to the place of Ireland.

**Key Words:** James Joyce, space and place, "Two Gallants," Dublin, mapping

## I. Introduction: James Joyce and His Dublin

In 1904, James Joyce made his voluntary exile. Joyce came back to Dublin four times since then, but he left Dublin forever in 1912 and was never to return. Joyce died in a foreign city, Zurich, Switzerland. However, while living in Pola, Trieste, Rome, Zurich, and Paris, Joyce never forgot Dublin and tried to make Dublin live forever in his works. In order to describe Dublin as it was, Joyce used the 1904 British Ordnance Survey map, which was made by the British military in 1904 to effectively control Dublin.

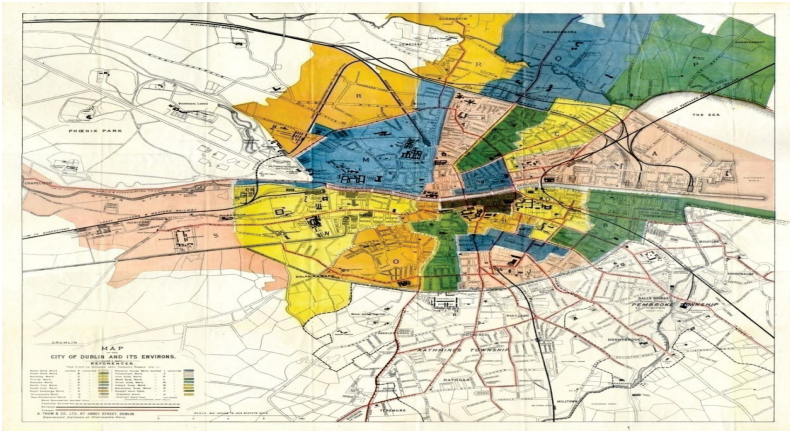


Fig.1 “The 1907 Ordnance Survey map of Dublin” Courtesy of The University of Tulsa

Although this Ordnance Survey map immensely helped Joyce make his cartographic description of Dublin possible, he still needed to know the ins and outs of Dublin in very detail. For example, Joyce, in the early of 1920, wrote a letter to his aunt Josephine Murray:

Dear Aunt Josephine: . . . I want that information about the Star of the Sea Church, has it ivy on its seafront, are there trees in Leahy's terrace at the side or near, if so, what, are there steps leading down to the beach? I also want all the information you can give, tittle-tattle, facts etc about Holles Street maternity hospital. (*Selected Letters* 248)

When working on "Nausicaa" and "Oxen of the Sun" episodes of *Ulysses*, Joyce could not remember the Star of the Sea correctly and asked his aunt for detailed information. Joyce told her that he could not continue to write *Ulysses* until he received that information. To Joyce, writing *Ulysses* means his way of remembering and creating his Dublin. Thus, as Joyce once famously stated, he hoped that Dublin can be reconstructed from his works.

To be sure, Joyce's bond to Dublin is well pronounced throughout his works, especially *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*. If *Ulysses* is a somewhat twisted version of the 1904 Dublin because of Joyce's use of topographical errors in depicting Dublin, *Dubliners* is the one that Joyce called his "nicely polished looking glass" (*Selected Letters* 109). Among *Dubliners* stories, I would like to deal with "Two Gallants" in that it is full of cartographic depictions of Dublin. This story is about two seedy Irishmen (Corley and Lenehan), who are never like gallants. Corley, son of a police inspector, is an unemployed and unscrupulous womanizer. Likewise, Lenehan as Corley's sidekick is also unemployed and called "a leech" (39). While Corley tries to exploit a slavey, who is hardworking on Baggot street, Lenehan awaits Corley by walking around Dublin. Oddly enough, however, leaving Corley's exploitation of the girl offstage, the narrator focuses on Lenehan's walking around Dublin. The narrator carefully maps out Lenehan's wandering from north to south through central Dublin. The narrator even kindly mentions street names and building names whenever Lenehan changes his direction. With the help of these sign posts that the narrative

provided, readers know where Lenehan is. In this way, reading this story is much like going on tour of Dublin.

When Grant Richards suggested that “Two Gallants” should be taken out from *Dubliners*, Joyce refused this suggestion by writing: “I have agreed to omit the troublesome word [bloody] in Two Gallants. To omit the story from the book would really be disastrous. It is one of the most important stories in the book. I would rather sacrifice five of the other stories” (*Letters* I, 62). Since “Two Gallants” aptly represented Joyce’s feeling of betrayal from his Irish society, Joyce did not want to omit this story. He even ranked this story as his second favorite story after “The Ivy Day in the Committee Room.” As if responding to Joyce’s favor for the story, many critics have constantly read it differently. Focusing on the two directionless Irishmen’s attempt to exploit the slavey girl, Margot Norris writes: “‘Two Gallants’ is porno-graphy insofar as it is a tale of the production of prostitutes—an illustrated etiology of their social construction from economic need and cultural disesteem—that resembles modern pornography” (81). Understanding the relationship between Corley and the slavey as an economic exchange for sex, Norris views this story as a prototype of modern pornography. Paying attention to Lenehan’s blind faith towards Corley, Frank Kerins argues that “Lenehan exists for Corley as a flattering mirror: In Lenehan’s worshipful eyes, Corley becomes what Corley needs to be in his own mind—a powerful, godlike figure” (267). Borrowing Lacan’s theory of the subject, Kerins regards Lenehan as a reversely reflected image of Corley, which helps Corley constantly keeping his false identity.

If these scholars have mainly dealt with the characters, Donald T. Torchiana is attentive to the topography of Dublin such as the streets and the buildings that Lenehan passes by. Observing that these streets and buildings were anglicized, Torchiana argues that “Two Gallants” is about betrayal: “This litany of streets and

places is one of almost unrelievedly black hints of betrayal and extravagance repeated at every turn Corley and Lenehan make" (93). Much like Torchiana, A. Walton Litz writes: "'Two Gallants' goes beyond a dispassionate rendering of Irish 'paralysis' and treats the theme of active betrayal . . . Joyce had left Dublin in 1904 feeling that he had been 'betrayed' by many of his contemporaries . . . When he came to write 'Two Gallants' his sense of personal betrayal was at its height" (64). While agreeing with these critics' readings, this paper argues that the litany does not simply presents the locations of Irish betrayal. Instead, this cartographic depiction of Lenehan's walking shows his attempt to peel off the unification of the space of Ireland and the place of England, therefore reattaching the space of Ireland to the place of Ireland. By the same token, this story is not simply about a sense of betrayal of Corley, Lenehan, and the slavey. Rather, it is an Irishman's frustration resulted from his failure to restore the lost Irish place through his way of walking.

## II. Mapping the Unmappable Dublin

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau writes: "The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below,' below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk—an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmanner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (93). To de Certeau, walking does not simply mean a way of transportation. By taking multiple pathways, aimlessly wandering, and having improvisational walking, a walker can make his or her own way of experiencing the city, therefore producing a different version of the city. Thus, walking is a practice of writing about the city.

Following de Certeau, I want to view Lenehan's walking as writing about Dublin. Most critics have understood that Lenehan's walking is aimless. For example, Madeleine Hamlin states: "Lenehan's walking seems *aimless* but it is the only activity he can find to pass the time while he waits for his friend" (139; my emphasis). Robert Boyle, S. J. also mentions that "he[Lenehan] walks *aimlessly* when he is away from Corley" (102; my emphasis). However, Lenehan does not wander around Dublin for no reason. It is his way of writing about Dublin, a city whose space is not attached to the place of England. Although there have been different understandings of space and place, I, in "Wandering Multiple Pathways: 'Labyrinth-Spiel' and Joyce's Mazed 'Wandering Rocks,'" define space and place:

"space" is the physical location itself, and "place" is a way in which space is socially, culturally, politically, and historically organized. These new definitions specifically categorize how an individual or society grafts meaning onto neutral space, therefore constructing place. When it comes to literary realism, place actually colonizes space. What I mean by "colonize" is that place imposes its meaning on space with a political result. (104)

The streets and buildings where Lenehan is walking denote the unification of the space of Ireland and the place of England. In the beginning of the story, the narrator says: "Two young men came down the hill of Rutland Square" (39). As for Rutland Square, Torchiana explains: "Rutland Square had also been the site of the highly esteemed Lord Charlemont's town, he who though head of the Volunteers nevertheless failed to keep Ireland independent" (95). Lord Charlemont is James Caulfeild, and he was the first Earl of Charlemont. He was the head of the Irish Volunteers, local militias that fight against invasion, but he eventually failed to protect Ireland. Considering this, Rutland Square is the site where the space of

Ireland and the place Ireland were peeled apart.<sup>1)</sup>

Martha Fodaski Black writes: "In 'Two Gallants' two Dublin losers representing a different class, impoverished male street walkers, wander through the streets of fashionable Dublin in area populated by wealthy Anglo-Irish who live in Georgian townhouse forbidden to Lenehan and Corely" (20). Paying attention to these poor Irishmen's relatively low class and poverty, Black argues that they are not allowed to live in this higher-class residence. However, they are not forbidden because they do not belong to wealthy high class people. If we observe the words "Anglo-Irish," then Corely and Lenehan cannot live there because they are colonized Irish people. In this regard, this Anglo-Irish residence can be viewed as part of British territory. In other words, if Rutland Square is the location of the breakdown of the Irish space and place, the streets and the buildings: Stephen's Green, the Kildare Street Club, the Rutland Hospital, Nassau Street, Merrion Square, Trinity College, etc., all signify that the space of Ireland is tied to the place of England. Although it is not my aim here to explain all the anglicized streets and buildings, it is worth looking at some of them. Nassau Street "instantly recalls the Prince of Orange, who later presided over Ireland's defeat at the battle of the Boyne and the broken Treaty of Limerick" (Torchiana 96). In addition, Merrion Street is the location where Corley and Lenehan are supposed to meet after Corley "pull[s] it off" from the slavey (43). Torchiana describes the square : "Merrion Square had been part of the Fitzwilliam lands, the Fitzwilliams being a family through the centuries most loyal to the sovereigns of England" (102). Lastly, Trinity College is a university of the Protestant Ascendancy. The official name of Trinity College is the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Queen Elizabeth near Dublin. Since the university's founder is Elizabeth I and is for Protestants, it worked as an efficient colonial apparatus. Don Gifford explains this university: "Queen Elizabeth I founded the University in 1591 to further

the cause of the Reformation in Ireland” (53). These streets and buildings suggest that the British place overrode the Irish place, therefore making Ireland as a colonized country of England.

This Ireland’s colonial situation is much emphasized when the narrator describes Lenehan’s walking around the Kildare Street Club and his movement according to the harpist’s play. The Kildare Street Club was a membership club only for Anglo-Irish people and regarded as the heart of the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy. In other words, the club is the presence of British colonial power. Interestingly, the harpist plays in front of this club:

He plucked at the wires heedlessly, glancing quickly from time to time at the face of each new-comer and from time to time at the face of each new-comer and from time to time, wearily also, at the sky. His harp too, heedless that her coverings had fallen about her knees, seemed weary alike of the eyes of strangers and of her master’s hands. (43)

Following the narrator’s depiction of the harpist, an Irishman plays the harp for money. But it seems that he does not make much money with this play. He is glancing at people coming and going, as if begging for money. This street musician scene seems to be nothing but a common thing. However, considering that an Irishman plays the harp, a symbol of Ireland, in front of the Kildare Street Club, this scene aptly shows the space of Ireland represented as the harp here is forcefully tied to the British place, therefore suggesting that Ireland is being exploited economically. In addition, the feminized harp emphasizes British colonization of Ireland. Marilyn Reizbaum writes: “this feminized harp recalls the traditional image of Ireland as the Shan van Vocht, the poor old woman that Padraic Pearse, the leading ideologue of the Easter Rising, attempted to transform into a triumphant image of feminine



self-sacrifice" (129). Just like the glorious woman, here this feminized harp also sacrifices herself for money. However, unlike the woman, the harp does not bring any triumph because she is "heedless," "fallen," and "weary." By describing the harp with these somewhat negative adjectives, the narrator insinuates the failure of Ireland to prevent the space of Ireland from being attached to the place of England. Moreover, this failure becomes much stressed because the harp is being played in front of the British power represented as the Kildare Street Club. No matter how Irish people fight against England for their independence, they become "fallen" and "weary."

In this respect, Lenehan's movement according to the harp melody becomes significant. The narrator says: "The air which the harpist had played began to control his movements. His softly padded feet played the melody while his fingers swept a scale of variations idly along the railings after each group of notes" (45). While listening to the song, Lenehan becomes the harpist and the harp. Lenehan is the harpist because his fingers play the notes by tapping the railings, therefore producing variations of the notes. Lenehan is also the harp because his feet automatically move to the melody by the harpist. As for Lenehan's becoming the harpist, Reizbaum believes that Lenehan is "the puppet of the music," thus signifying "the flimsiness of his delusions of agency". By the same token, Lenehan's becoming the harp, as Reizbaum suggests, is Irish people's "susceptibility to the seductive music of national self-pity" (130). While agreeing with Reizbaum, I would like to argue that Lenehan's metamorphosis, if I borrow Reizbaum term, shows the painful and mournful paralytic situation of Ireland and Irish people. As I have argued somewhere else, the harpist exploits the harp, which suggests that Ireland is being extorted by England. But Lenehan's becoming the harpist denotes that this exploitation happens even among Irish people, which is well shown through Lenehan's nickname: a leech. Just as the

harpist makes money by exploiting the harp, Lenehan lives off his Irish people: “he had a brave manner of coming up to a party of them in a bar and of holding himself nimbly at the borders of the company until he was included in a round” (39). But Lenehan’s becoming the harp insinuates that he himself cannot be an exception of this extortion. While England extorts Ireland, Irish people exploit Irish people. As long as the space of Ireland is tied to the place of England, these double-exploitation will continue.

However, when Lenehan comes to “a poor-looking shop,” the place of England does not seem to work anymore. After walking by Duke’s Lawn, Stephen’s Green, Grafton Street, and again Rutland Square, the narrator does not explain where Lenehan is: “He turned to the left when he came to the corner of Rutland Square and felt more at ease in the dark quiet street, the sombre look of which suited his mood. He paused at last before the window of a poor-looking shop” (45). Until Lenehan comes to this shop, the narrator has carefully and kindly explained Lenehan’s route by presenting the names of the street and buildings. However, when it comes to the poor-looking shop, the narrator all of sudden stops naming the location of the shop.<sup>2)</sup> Neither the street nor the shop is named. Without presenting the name of the shop, the narrator simply describes the shop’s appearance: “the words Refreshment Bar were printed in white letters. On the glass of the window were two flying inscriptions: Ginger Beer and Ginger Ale” (45). Since ginger beer and ginger ale are common drinks in Ireland, it would be impossible to identify this shop with this less-helpful information. Michael Begnal writes: “Joyce’s use of specific place names in the fiction, the fact that these names were not chosen at random, and how they often become veiled indications of Ireland’s position in a postcolonial environment” (xvii). As Begnal argues, Joyce carefully chooses anglicized streets and buildings for the story to show that the space of Ireland aligns

with the place of England. Considering this, Joyce does not make a mistake of not naming the street and the shop. Rather, it seems that Joyce intentionally does not name them. Berard Benstock writes: "In a narrative in which so many of the street names are meticulously catalogued, every one of them known to have strong associations with the British hegemony in Ireland, the silent but ghostly significance of this 'dark street' . . . is a gnomonic omission" (45). As Benstock suggests, this omission could be a Joycean gnomon. Considering that naming is a way of organizing space socially, culturally, politically, and historically, naming can be understood as place. In this respect, these unnamed street and shop suggest that they are not anglicized or refuse being anglicized. In other words, the Joycean gnomon insinuates the unification of the space of Ireland and the place of England comes apart with these unnamed street and the shop.

If these unnamed street and the shop connote the breakdown of the unification of space and place, Lenehan's meal at the shop shows his desperate attempt to re-attach the space of Ireland to the place of Ireland. As Lenehan has not eaten anything, except some biscuits, since breakfast, he is very hungry and goes into this unnamed shop. Lenehan orders "a plate of peas" and "a bottle of ginger beer" (46). It is likely that Lenehan orders cheap food because he is not financially well off. But a close examination of the words Refreshment Bar and Lenehan's food suggests that they consist of three colors: white (the words), green (the peas), and orange (the ginger beer). Without a doubt, these three colors recall the Irish flag, which consists of green (left), white (middle), and orange (right). By ordering the food in that shop where the space and place begins to peel off, Lenehan attempts to re-unify the space of Ireland and the place of Ireland. In doing so, Lenehan, as the words Refreshment Bar suggests, wants to refresh the by-gone glorious Ireland. As if proving this, Lenehan, who wants to revisit this shop, "made a note of the shop mentally" (46).

Still, this shop refuses being named; rather, it is named only in Lenehan's mind. His effort to learn the ship by heart suggests that he does not want the shop to be named, therefore being attached to the British place.

### III. Conclusion: A Failure to Map Anglicized Dublin

Throughout the story, Lenehan spends time walking around Dublin: Dorset Street, Shelbourne Hotel, Capel Street, Donnybrook Tram lines, Hume Street, Trinity College, Stephen's Green, Nassau Street, Westmoreland Street, Merrion Street, Merrion Square, Dame Street, Rutland Square, Earl Street, Soth Circular Road, City Markets, Pim's, Grafton Street, etc. These streets and buildings connote that the space of Ireland is tied to the place of England. Moreover, Lenehan often passes by the same streets and buildings again and again, therefore making a circle. Gifford writes: "Lenehan traces a large circle north, then west, then south, and finally east around the center of Dublin" (55). Observing the circle that Lenehan's walking makes, Hamlin suggests that "a reader familiar with Dublin's geography will understand that Lenehan's path 'round Stephen's Green and down Grafton Street' is a circular one (Joyce 2000: 41). In its circularity, Lenehan's walking functions metaphorically, conveying the state of cultural frustration that Joyce aims to uncover. By doubling back on himself, Lenehan physically enacts this paralysis" (139). As Hamlin argues, Lenehan's circle suggests that he cannot map out this anglicized Dublin, therefore failing to attach the space of Ireland to the place of Ireland.

However, Lenehan's walking does not necessarily "enact this paralysis." The Joycean gnomon—the unnamed street and building that his strolling makes—insinuates: the British place fails to colonize all the Irish space. In other words, there

is a gap where the space of Ireland does not align with the place of England. By putting a hole in the circle, Joyce tries to peel off the unification of space and place. Moreover, Lenehan's feast, unlike the paralytic circle, attempts to override the British place, therefore reattaching the space of Ireland to the place of Ireland. In this respect, if Joyce peels off the unification of the space of Ireland and the place of England by inserting some topographic errors in depicting the 1904 Dublin in *Ulysses*, Joyce in *Dubliners* restore the glorious and independent Dublin through the gnomon and Lenehan's feast.

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#### Notes

- 1) Interestingly enough, Rutland Square is now called Parnell Square. Charles Stewart Parnell fought for Irish independence and was the leader of the Home Rule League. Considering, this new-named square suggests the unification of the Irish space and place, as we know now that Ireland is a free country.
- 2) Gifford assumes that the Refreshment Bar would be located on Gt. Britain (Parnell) Street (96).

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국문초록

지도화할 수 없는 더블린 지도화하기:  
제임스 조이스의 「두 건달들」에 나타난 스페이스와 플레이스

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비록 스페이스와 플레이스에 대한 정의는 학자마다 다르지만, 본 논문에서는 스페이스를 물리적인 장소 그 자체로 그리고 플레이스를 스페이스가 사회적, 문화적, 정치적, 그리고 역사적으로 의미화되는 것으로 정의 내린다. 이 스페이스와 플레이스의 정의를 이용해서, 본 논문은 제임스 조이스의 「두 건달들」에 나타난 레너헌의 걷기가 단순히 당시 더블린의 마비된, 식민지화된 상태만을 강조하는 것이 아니라고 주장한다. 레너헌이 걸을 때 보여주는 식민지화된 도로와 건물들은 아일랜드의 스페이스가 영국의 플레이스에 의해서 잠식된 것을 보여준다. 그러나 조이스는 단순히 이런 식민지화된 건물만을 보여주는 것이 아니라, 이름 없는 도로와 음식점을 보여줌으로써 영국의 플레이스가 아일랜드의 모든 스페이스를 식민지화하지 못했다고 주장한다. 이와 더불어, 레너헌이 이 이름없는 식당에서 먹는 녹색 콩과 오렌지색 진저비어가 아일랜드의 국기를 상징하는 것을 통해서, 레너헌이 영국에 의해서 빼앗겨버린 아일랜드의 플레이스와 스페이스를 재결합하여, 독립된 아일랜드를 만들고자 하는 염원을 보여준다. 즉, 레너헌의 더블린 걷기는 단순히 식민지화된 더블린만을 보여주지 않는다. 오히려, 비록 그 계획이 실패하더라도, 레너헌의 걷기는 식민지 이전의 독립된 아일랜드를 찾기 위한 그의 필사적인 노력이라고 보아야 한다.

주제어: 제임스 조이스, 스페이스와 플레이스, 「두 건달들」, 더블린, 지도화



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