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JOYCE STUDIES IN ITALY

22

JOYSPACE
JAMES JOYCE AND SPACE

Edited by
Roberto Baronti Marchiò

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*Volume pubblicato con il contributo
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MAPPING THE UNKNOWN, CHARTING THE
IMMARGINABLE, FATHOMING THE VOID: SPACE,
EXPLORATION AND CARTOGRAPHY IN *FINNEGANS
WAKE*

Abstract: “Mapping the desert” is one of the capacities in which Joyce finds himself involved since his beginnings as a writer. He will have to ‘dislocate’ and ‘dislocate’ language in order to ‘make space’ for art, building up his own polyhedric “paperspace”. Following Darwin in his explorative, “beagling” journey round the world, meeting and facing stormy seas in the “ouragan of spaces”, i.e. his ‘origin of species’, Joyce felt he had first to ‘remount’ time and space (“ere commence commencement”!) in order to reach the original nucleus of transformations, sketching his own Tree of Life. Just as all explorers he will set up and resort to maps that are both geographic and aesthetic or ‘literary’, in which memorable *gesta* are inscribed. In his ‘map of wonders’ of the world, trying to shape the “immarginable”, to scan the invisible, to fathom the void, blending material and immaterial elements, his geography will have to include the fantastic. His ‘expanding universe’ will need very sophisticated charts resembling the flexible navigation maps of the Marshall Islands in wooden sticks, that only mark wave swells and currents, in which orders are constantly “othered” according to navigation needs, that take into account ‘real absence’ and black holes, as well as multiple points of view at a time. As Genette has it, (the text being with Joyce “a perfect signature of its own”): “Le langage s’espace, afin que l’espace, en lui devenu langage, se parle et s’écrite”.

Keywords: Mapping, Making space, Exploration journeys, Time, Space, Paperspace

His father once observed that if Joyce were dropped in the middle of the Sahara he would sit down and make a map of it¹.

Remounting alittle towards the ouragan of spaces. (*FW* 504.14)

Of the highly perceptive remark his father had made, Joyce would retain the challenging idea of charting a desert, but certainly not the idea of “sitting down and making a map” of it, establishing fixed and stable points of view for surveying the territory or calculating distances (“mensuring” them *FW* 331.22)². As a modern Renaissance man, (not a monk in the Middle Ages), Joyce had abandoned “the idea of solitude, of terror before unfamiliar animals, before the unknown of the Middle Ages when “uncertain regions” were indicated by the vague formula, ‘*Hic sunt leones*’ and stated that “our age points to something different: we are avid for details” (*OCPW*, 189) and would certainly not resort to the ‘vague formulae’ of old cartographers.

The concept and the method for surveying the desert could also apply to other realities. Charting Dublin, itself a ruined and desertified city, unsound and unstable at all levels, (specially if explored below the surface, in its depths), would be no less demanding or challenging than charting a desert and would imply the adoption of very sophisticated methods of presentation and of newly fabricated scientific instruments.

The grandiosity of space of exploration opened up in *Finnegans Wake* by Joyce’s ‘dislocated’ language and literary construct, mixing up physical and mental, subverts and undermines the possibility of the rendering of details in plain depiction, moreover, in the modality of “scrupulous meanness”.

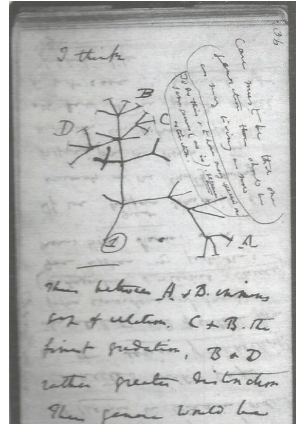
In order to map the desert Joyce would have to redefine conceptually both ‘desert’ and ‘map’, approaching them at the same time aesthetically and geographically, physically and symbolically. Rather than adopting a stable point of observation or resort to systematic archaeological excavations, Joyce would have to recreate the desert in his mind, by showing desertification in progress, using the powers of imagination and

¹ C.G. Anderson, *James Joyce and his World*, London, 1967, 14.

² The wakean spelling, “mensuring” could evoke Dicuil, Irish monk and astronomer of the 8th century, reader of Homer, Hecateus and Herodotus, whose *De mensura Orbis terrae* was a highly influential work.

memory to reproduce, from afar and in exile, the incongruities, the ‘lacunae’, the black holes lurking in the map. Joyce would have to intertwine and combine a static method of meticulous observation with a more dynamic apprehension of things.

Darwin’s *Voyage of the Beagle*, a voyage round the world lasting almost five years (1831-36), which aimed, literally, at “remounting” time and space, by navigating along the coasts of South America, in stormy seas: (“ouragan of spaces”) and by exploring geologic formations, conflicting cultures and clashing spaces, rendering them in their historical and geographic diversities, will eventually attain the dynamic nucleus, the ‘origin of species’, intended as the common principle of the evolution of mankind, ideally placing it even beyond time: “Remounting alifflle towards the ouragan of spaces“ (*FW* 504.14), as we can see in the mental scheme-diagram-map of the Tree of Life (1837), (possibly referred to as “Tree taken for grafted” *FW* 221.31)³.



1. Charles Darwin, The Tree of Life (1837) in B notebook, *Transmutation of Species*, 36.

By singling out the modalities of the voyage referred to as “beagling” and the Darwinian method of elaboration of the theory of evolution: “with renounced urbiandorbic bugles” (“Gundogs of all breeds were beagling with renounced urbiandorbic bugles”, *FW* 96.36-97.01), Joyce also wanted to stress, in Darwin and in himself, a shared method of consistent observation and gradual (almost geologic) conceptual, linguistic, and terminological elaboration.

Joyce would know that, in order to start his voyage of exploration and set up his comprehensive map, he would first have to locate and inscribe himself in space, right at the centre of his map and ask himself basic questions of narrative import: “Where are we at all? And whenabouts in the name of space?” (*FW* 558.33), mapping temporal and spatial movements, (also by inventing geographic fancy names, notations or

³ The first ‘Tree of Life’ diagram, the first enunciation of a general law of evolution, is introduced by: “I think”

concepts: “then-on-sea”(FW 539.24), or “antipodes, in the past” (FW 472.17), or “motto-in-lieu”, FW 139.29, even making characters out of places or places out of characters: HCE as Howth Castle and Environs), stressing the point where space and time, geography and history get entangled and mingle, in endless “miscegenations” (FW 18.20).

The visual appeal of maps and their cognitive value were such for Joyce that, in his use of maps he exhibited, in his own works, an entire series of different experimental stages. His first inscription on the map is apparently in *Portrait*, in the concentric geography of the virtual map that could be drawn after the passage written on the flyleaf of his copybook:

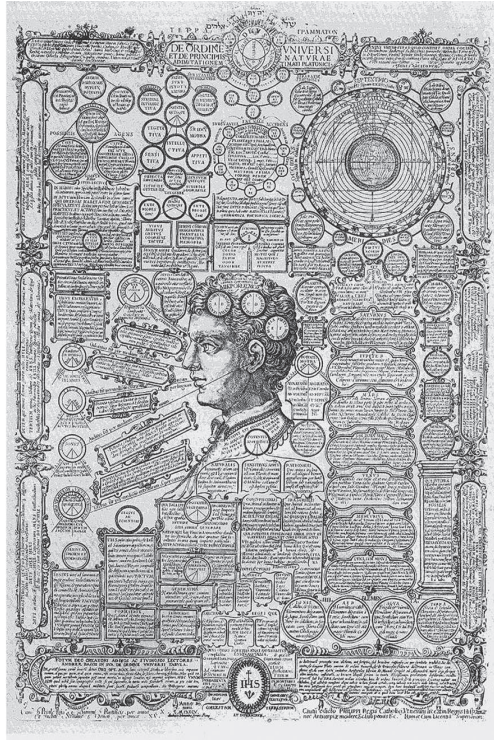
Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe

Already anticipated in the 1904 “Portrait of the Artist” in which the portrait appears to be sketched according to an “individuating rhythm[...] the curve of an emotion” (Scholes and Kain 1965: 57), in *Portrait* the centre becomes the symbol of the concentration of the spiritual energy necessary for the inscription of the artist’s name on the map: “Every part of his day[...] he circled about its own centre of spiritual energy” (*P* 148), which opens up for him the possibility of decoding and recreating the “skeleton” map of the city, blending centre and margins, (or, centre and circumference, as Giordano Bruno had suggested), heaven and earth, identifying the vocation of the artist for extreme adventures and navigations outside the limits of the known world:

In the beginning he contented himself with circling timidly round the neighbouring square [...] but when he had made a skeleton map of the city he followed boldly one of the central lines. (*P* 69)

Stephen Dedalus will, most appropriately, see himself acting in a primordial “oceanic silence” (P 230), from which he will start to elaborate his own identity and find the energy to affirm it, while at the same time engaging in creating “the uncreated conscience of his race”.

All sorts of maps fascinated Joyce and because of the reference, in *Portrait*, to religion and to his Jesuits’ education (whose art of “arranging things in such a way that they became easy to survey and to judge” Joyce thought of having retained, as he told the sculptor August Suter, in Budgen, 1956, 533), the most pertinent map to represent *Portrait* could be the wall map in use in the



2. Andrea Bacci, *De ordine universi et de principiis naturae*, Rome, 1595.

schools of the Jesuits, reproduced in Andrea Bacci, *De ordine universi et de principiis naturae*, Rome, 1595, that, through a hierarchic presentation of all human forms of knowledge (including religion), beautifully sums up the idea of a mental order (the real focus of Jesuits’ education: the head being placed at the centre of the map).

It would also be pertinent, to show the very first world map, the *Imago mundi* map (or the *Babylonian world map*), that could be assumed as the map that, illustrating the progress of Stephen Dedalus in the world, ultimately projects him into the Universe.



3. *Imago mundi* (or *Babylonian World Map*), crude clay tablet, 7th century BC. First map of the world.

the map of Dublin in *Ulysses*. The map is in a moulded baked clay tablet written in cuneiform alphabet (“best unbaked bricks in bould Babylon” *FW* 139.11-12), an embodiment of “Uru”, Sumerian ideogram for ‘city’ (“Uru, a house he has founded to which he has assigned his fate” *FW* 136.11), (related to a Sumerian poem on Paradise, *FW* 136.11), in which the Euphrates course is featured together with canals, dams, gardens, all in sexagesimal calculus for better calculating angles and distances. Certainly moulded and drawn for practical administrative reasons, it looks, for its accuracy, exhaustive and highly realistic.

If the working method and practice, advertised by Joyce himself when he illustrated his work on ‘Wandering Rocks’ to Frank Budgen, seem to be in keeping with the topographical precision and the neat urban

Discovered at Sippur, first deciphered in 1889, dating from the 7th century BC, the tablet in crude clay, featuring a circular area, crossed by the Euphrates, including names of various towns, encircled by the “bitter sea”, the Ocean, having eight triangles stemming from the ocean circle, possibly representing the “regions” that link heaven and earth, eventually reaching out to the universe.

In the same way, another map, from the same area, a map that apparently is the first map of a town, built in bricks, the Sumerian city of Nippur (1500 BC) (Sumerians being the ‘inventors’ of cities), could be assumed, for its accuracy, as the visual example for



4. *Map of Nippur*, baked clay tablet, 1500 BC, first map of a city.

presentation of Nippur in the Sumerian map, it is precisely in ‘Wandering Rocks’, in the risky attempt at rendering simultaneous actions, that time and space do not seem to tally, being at variance, lending themselves to questionable results.

Yet, as Frank Budgen has it, Joyce’s method seemed to be highly scientific and effective:

To see Joyce work on the ‘Wandering Rocks’ was to see an engineer at work with compass and slide-rule, a surveyor with theodolite or with measuring chain or, more Ulyssean perhaps, a ship’s officer taking the sun, reading the log and calculating current drift and leeway. [...] Joyce wrote ‘Wandering Rocks’ with a map of Dublin before him on which were traced in red ink the paths of the Earl of Dudley and Father Conmee. He calculated to a minute the time necessary for his characters to cover a given distance of the city. (Budgen, 1972: 123-25)

If in *Ulysses*, topographical precision and archaeological and historical research seem to represent Joyce’s working method at its best, yet it is possible to detect the germs of a constant process of self-invalidation that comes from the tension to incorporate, together with the certainties, all the inconsistencies and uncertainties inherent and related to map making.

To solve the “locative enigma” (*FW* 135.26) of Dublin, Joyce would have to use various abilities: to create a location anew, out of a desert and a void, creating an order out of chaos, to scan and sound what is invisible and yet describing it in depth and in detail, at the same time inventing the language for representing it as an event in progress, in continuous “transmutations”, in its multiple dimensions of space and time.

The nature of Joyce’s literary construct in *Finnegans Wake*, with its thick and dense coatings of conglomerated signs and symbols, with the intricacy of its lines that tend to animate a blank space, (paradoxically shown to be teeming with signs), asking to be explored in all its vast extent in an ‘endurance’ test, in the display of a markedly Irish “thole” (*FW* 134.02): “I’ll travel the wide void world over (*FW* 469.11), (in that going back to the origins of the world: “In the buginning is the woid” (*FW* 378.29), or even going back to uncharted times and spaces ‘before’ the time, “Ere commence commencement “ (*FW* 266.24), at the same time sounding the territory in depth “ in all fathom of space “(*FW* 394.10).

To ‘make space’⁴ in the map and in the text, to enlarge, to make it dense and “mounded up”⁵ by cumulating different layers, Joyce had to multiply points of view (“blinkpoint” *FW* 139.18), linking geologic, biologic, historical and ethnographic notations, availing himself of a “comparative accoustomology” (*FW* 598.23) method. making the map heavily dependent on exploratory expeditions and voyages.

As the joycian text advertises itself as a “paperspace [...] a perfect signature of its own” (*FW* 115.08), taking into account the fact that places are moulded by events, as “places remember events”, the joycian map grid that accommodates them all, will unfold and exhibit itself as a gigantic archive of cultures, myths, languages, and signs, constantly transforming themselves and expanding to weave together space and time, geological, geographic, mythological and anthropological information, while at the same time witnessing in its original stage the potential “endlessness of livestories [...] like a waast wizzard all of whirlworlds” (*FW* 17.27-30).

In *Finnegans Wake*, in a prose divested of any representational character, as well as of any systematic and scientific method of presentation, engaged in an imaginative reworking of elements without ever resorting to a neat demarcation of borders, but rather choosing to operate “in the broadest way immarginable” (*FW* 4.19), Joyce adopted map making as the artistic fabrication by which, aware of the impossibility to capture and render ‘facts’ faithfully in his polished glass, he radically questioned his matter in an action of continuous assemblage and disassemblage of elements.

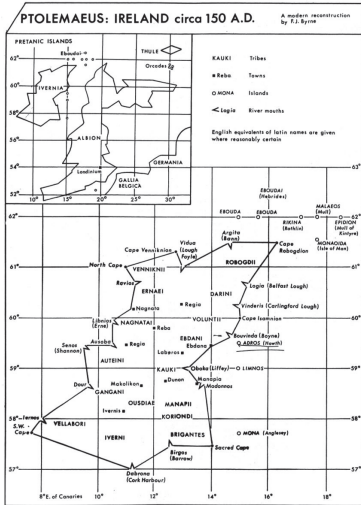
Map making, while superimposing multiple points of view, had to undergo an incessant work of correction and updating, rewriting and reshaping, a presentation both of ‘facts’ and their imaginary projections, striving after a mythical “geographic truth”: locations and their symbolic functions, recreated historical facts and the open series of alternative versions, narratives, legends, myths originated and rooted in their locations (the ‘Aitia’, the ‘causes’ of places, of Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius), are harboured in the text in the attempt to disentangle and reveal,

⁴ Valérie Bénéjam, et alii exhaustively explore the works of Joyce precisely on these terms. *Making Space in the Works of James Joyce*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

⁵ “Exaggerare = to mound up” in *Selected Letters*, Richard Ellmann ed. New York, The Viking Press, 1975, 317.

projected as in *ad infinitum* (curved) parallaxes, the progress of mankind across times.

Lands and waterworlds, solids and liquids, depths and distances, are heaped up and conglomerate in a map that is at the same time multidimensional, polymorphous and polymaterial.



5. Map of Ireland, in *Ireland from Maps*, The National Library of Ireland, map number 1.

they were characterised by a large Clew Bay filled with islands. The coastal detail reflects”, as *Ireland from Maps*, National Library of Ireland, p. 4, has it, “the extent of trade between Ireland and the Continent, Italy, in particular, in the Latin Middle Ages”).

Directly taken from Ptolemy’s works are the mentions of the name for Dublin, “Eblana” (*FW* 46.14) or “Eblanamagna” (*FW* 525.26) and the details referring to the waters of the Liffey “If you would be delited with

In Ireland, the history of cartography starts with the map (reconstructed according to the latitude and longitude of sixty points of the country) of Claudius Ptolomaeus (150 BC, whose *Geography* was circulating in a Latin version during the fifteenth century) but especially with the map depicted by Martin Waldseemuller, for the “*Tabula nova Hibernie, Anglie et Scotie*” included in the new edition of Claudius Ptolemy, *Geographie opus*, Strasburg, 1513 (known under the name of ‘Argentine Ptolemy’, according to the Latin name of Strasburg, Argentoratum), which included twenty new maps that cannot be called, strictly speaking Ptolemy maps since they were derived “from a type of pilot’s book chart then popular in which



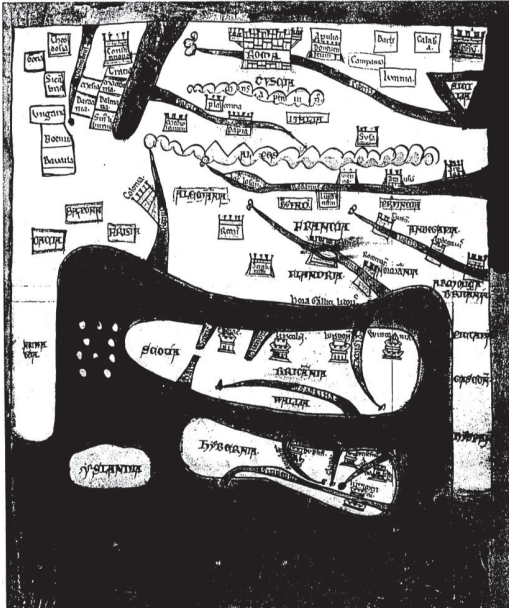
6. Map of Ireland, in *Ireland from Maps*, The National Library of Ireland, map number 3.

fresh water, the famous river, called of Ptolemy the Libnia Labia, runneth fast by” (*FW* 540.07)⁶. The last quotation is in itself an example of the cumulative technique of detail inscription in maps as well as in texts. Although it harks back to Ptolemy, the quotation is most likely taken from the epigraph to the book of D.A. Chart, *Story of Dublin*, (present in the already quoted “chart expanded”, and, in “Dr Chart”, (*FW* 603.22), in association with George Petrie (1789-1866) who lived at 21 Great Charles Street, address of the Topographical Office of Ireland’s Ordnance Survey, possibly referred to as “petrifake” (*FW* 77.01), in its turn taken from Richard Stanihurst, *A Treatise containing a plane and perfect Description of Ireland*,

included in the *Chronicles* of Holinshed, 1586, where the Liffey appears as “Lybnum”. Joyce was quite aware that the “plane and perfect description of Ireland” was such only in the perspective of the British Empire, ruling the Ordnance Survey map in which Ireland was featured as a colony.

More ancient than the map of Waldseemuller, the map of Giraldus de Barri, (end of XIII century), Cambrensis (i.e. of Welsh origins) included in *Topographia Hibernica*, covered most of Europe and, being East-oriented (as all the maps in the Middle Ages presented the trade routes from England to Rome), as visual illustration of the proverbial phrase “All roads lead to Rome. Joyce seems to read the spatiality of the map presenting the journey (“roaming”) and space itself (German ‘Raum’: ‘Space’) as

⁶ Ptolemy’s name could still be used in a publicity for touring Ireland by car in *The Book of Dublin*, 1929: “From the time of Ptolemy DUBLIN has been a place of increasing interest”.



7. Map of Ireland and England, in *Ireland from Maps*, The National Library of Ireland, map number 2.

changing and moving “Allrouths, austereways or westersways, in roaming run to Room” (*FW* 153.24-25), place of production of “unfallable encyclicling” (*FW* 153.26), literally commenting on the layout of the ‘mappae mundi’ of the time. The high symbolic (religious) potential of this map, however, (Rome = space, all space; urbs = orb, the world) coexists with a very low degree of geographic precision: England and Ireland appearing as grossly simplified, while among the very few geographic terms included are Dublin and

Auenliffus (i.e. Abhainn Liffus, the Liffey).

As there seemed to be no Norman nor native cartographic tradition it was up to English cartographers at the time of Tudor conquest to draw maps that had a military utility: it was an unidentified Englishman who supplied Gerardus Mercator with the materials for a wall-map (*Angliae, Scotiae et Hiberniae nova description*, Duisburg, 1564) that represented a milestone in the development of the map of Ireland, although it was superseded in popularity by the one, derived from it and contained in Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, Antwerp, 1570. The views of fortifications, castles and the recreation of the sites of battles inspired the maps contained in Thomas Stafford’s *Pacata Hibernia* (“Pacata Auburnia”, *FW* 275.04), Ireland appeased and reduced, while John Speed’s highly influential and much copied, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, London 1611, offered apparently accurate, yet fictitious, perspective views of various towns of the Empire.

The “Down Survey” (so called because the data were ‘plotted down’ in map form) led to the publication of a “General Map of Ireland” in *Hiberniae delineation*, London, 1685, in this way bringing to an end the list of foreign surveyors. It was only in the eighteenth century, though, that a generation of Irish cartographers emerged with the military surveys of Charles Vallancey.

Rather than geographer, Giraldus Cambrensis, emerges in *Finnegans Wake* as an authoritative ancient historian (“Gerontes Cambrones” (*FW* 573.20) as he is included in a passage containing a long series of Irish historians (from Ware, to d’Alton, to Gilbert, *FW* 572-573).

The integration of geography and history (and of macro and micro history) was the actual foundation principle of the *Dublin Annals*, the chronological list of historical facts from 140 AD, reproduced in Thom’s *Dublin Directory*, a book that was for Joyce (particularly in the 1904 edition), a precious source of details, as he thought he was, charting Dublin anew, writing a new ‘History of Ireland’ (for which we find evidence in the details included in the final monologue of Anna Livia in *Finnegans Wake*, *FW* 625.28).

If to be able to read *Ulysses* it is advisable to relate the movements of the characters to a map of Dublin (updated and with details coming from Thom’s *Dublin Directory*, 1904) in *Finnegans Wake* it is the text itself that, in a sustained embodiment of modern creativity, becomes the map, the pilot’s book, the topographical pattern, the metaphoric grid, the model and the structure capable of projecting the image of the world onto a screen, on a two-dimensional page in which “projected lines curve, ramify, and cross each other” (*CW* 235), interweaving different perspectives, showing in the medley of distortions, false truths and misplacements (which are for Joyce, as all ‘errors’, “portals of discovery”), the impossibility of a univocal reconstruction of geographical and historical facts (facts appearing to be, on the contrary, examples of “notional gullery”, *FW* 57.21) and of an exact reproduction of reality, is strongly stressed.

Joyce does not rely on recognized official or charted facts but rather on “unfacts” (*FW* 57.16), on marginal aspects that can undermine and dismantle truths, in byways and back alleys in which nor the eye nor the ear proper are at work but the “mind’s eye” and the “mind’s ear” or a blend of the two: “The mar murmury mermers to the mind’s ear, uncharted rock,

evasive weed” (*FW* 18-19), to survey territories, to fathom depths and abysses (down to “Challenger Deep” or “Bartholomew Deep” in the Pacific Ocean, *FW* 367.34-35 and 99.36)

Only by means of this kind of combined eye and ear it is possible to imagine and come to know, to “possess the wonders” of new worlds (cf. Greenblatt 1991), that do not appear in official documents, testimonies of uncertain status (as in *Ulysses* the house of Bloom, the Cabman’s shelter, Bella Cohen’s brothel), that is to say, the innumerable “known unknown locations” (the paradoxically well known unknown lands) on which Daniel Denton, explorer of the east coast of North America, wrote in 1670 (in Davis 1987: 55).

Joyce’s map of Dublin, the town that is, according to Giorgio Melchiori, a “metaphor of the world and of man”, incorporating and embodying doubt and uncertainty, expands (becoming so large as to risk appearing almost devoid of shape and sense), exploring and at the same time ‘exploding’ truth in the name of Nansen, arctic explorer (“Nansen [...] storstore exploder” *FW* 326.23), whose ship, the “Fram”, (*FW* 312.07) is also mentioned) or in the name of Cabot, adventurous vagabond and eccentric “cabotinesque exploder” (*FW* 512.18).

Joyce’s idea of ‘life’ “suspended in doubt like the world in the void”, a phrase that clearly reveals its cartographic origin (Ellmann 1982: 557), comes very close to Victor Bérard’s idea of the “sentiment of distances”⁷ in Homer, a pathos, a sentiment which animates the otherwise merely enumerative Phoenician pilot’s books, a sentiment by which man himself (Odysseus) becomes, in his reading the ‘signatures’ of things, the ‘measure’ of a polytropic and plastic space (otherwise, how to conceive of the ‘omphalos’ of the sea, in Book I of the *Odyssey*, of the paths of water, both material and immaterial, in Book IV, or the “vortex of Charybdis”?)

The map of Joyce included the fantastic, his geography was a geography of the imaginary. As R.G. Kelly has it: “The real world was for Joyce larger than for most men. His map of the world was dense with figurations and names that other people found fantastic and esoteric and that had to be looked up in books” (Kelly 1966: 5). And, more specifically in relation to *Finnegans Wake*, Klaus Reichert notices the ‘expansion’ of the text in every direction, limits and borders being constantly erased and

⁷ Victor Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l’Odyssee*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1902.

blurred: “The non-representative writing of the *Wake* is the creation itself of things uncreated, whereby the God given boundaries and distinctions are being blurred and replaced by any kind of overstepping, transgressing infringement: manmade hybrids, chimeras, grotesque monsters that keep growing, rapidly and limitless, in every direction” (Reichert 1986: 274).

In Joyce’s mind, geography is essentially “Geoglyphy” (*FW* 595.07), an exercise in notation of “anaglyphics” (*FW* 419.19), the scanning of inscribed, sculpted and storied places, marked and shaped by the presence of man, filled with signs and tracings, a relief map, a “graphplot” with hatched signs (*FW* 284.07), that reveal and deploy a vast and polymorphous “landscape” (*FW* 595.04), the mosaic of cultures and languages that is the world itself, whose richness and intricacy evoke the graphic shape and the visual impact of the *Book of Kells*.

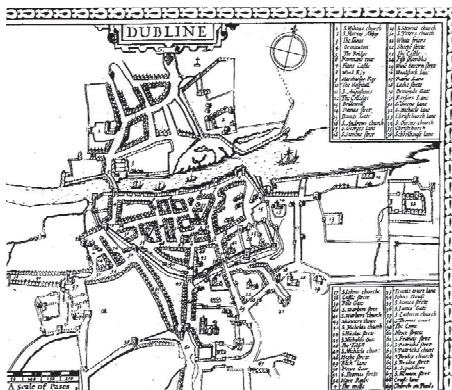
The idea conveyed by *Ulysses*’ geography, the ‘epic geography’ illustrated in the “sunto, chiave, scheletro, schema” sent to Carlo Linati, the “storiella” of a day and the recreation of a myth in modern times, where the human figure and astronomical projections are attained starting from “the courage of particular things”, a quotation from Aristotle, *Etica Nichomachea*, (to the point of letting us see, touch and smell the sooty aspect of Dublin: “dear dirty Dublin”): the work represents Stephen and Bloom as astronomical bodies, Molly as earth, that has no ends really because it’s round and that rotates incessantly around her axe.

In Joyce the recreation of place starts from and evolves from an aesthetic apprehension of maps (including even the maps of “Wonders”) and their evolution in time, their deciphering includes the reading of instructions and of the booklets usually attached to them in modern times, as in his presentation of the map of Galway to the Triestine audience, a map: “rich in symbolic expressions and engravings” (“The City of the Tribes”, 1912):

All the margins of the parchment are heavy with the heraldic arms of the tribes and the map itself is, basically, a topographical symphony on the theme of the number of tribes. Thus, the mapmaker enumerates and depicts fourteen bastions, fourteen towers on the walls, fourteen principal streets, fourteen monasteries, fourteen castles, fourteen lanes, and then, sliding down to a lower level, enumerates and depicts seven climbing paths, seven altars for the procession of Corpus Domini, seven markets and seven other wonders. (*CW* 235)

Joyce's ability is also that of reading in maps and in navigation routes, both the growth and success of the Galway line steam navigation (in which some of the ships, had, together with Irish names, names referring to the Argonauts' expedition: from *Argo*, to *Jason*, to *Golden Fleece* and included songs related to the preposterous transatlantic vocation of Galway: "We are destined time out of mind/ To rule the Atlantic Ocean,/ For nature placed us in the west", 1913), but also the waning of it, its "heroic failure" (a ship named "The City of the Tribes" had been scrapped in 1912). He was certainly aware, because of the many references to him, in songs and in the press ("That man of worth and pride of earth,/ Brave Father Peter Daly"), as far-sighted Fr. Daly (alias Warden Daly) had prophesied: "worse and worse says Warden Daly", *U* 18.1220; "woe on woe, says Wardeb Daly, *FW* 526.20) (Collins 2002 : 81; 209; 214).

Joyce's map expands and unfolds progressively, intertwining views and perspectives as well as different techniques: from early maps that focused on distance and direction (as *Tabula Peutingeriana*) or that depicted bi-dimensional views ("profusely fine bird's eye view[s]", *FW* 564.08), not taking into account reliefs ("relief map" *FW* 564.10) and different layers of geologic formations, opposing more elaborated and 'artistic' relief maps (through *hachures* that could evoke the "sepiascraped" Leonardo da Vinci's ones, *FW* 182.32) that aptly signal variations in height and in depth, as well as in mass ("our mounding's mass", *FW* 08.01).



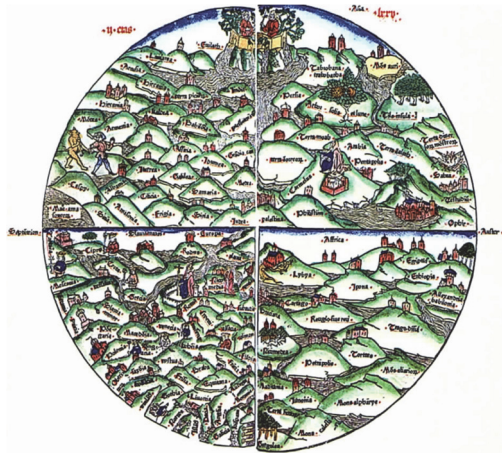
8. Map of Dublin, bird's eye view, The National Library of Ireland, map number 6.

A whole late medieval tradition of mapping a symbolic world is summed up in the phrase: "To make mountains of molehills" ("To make a great fuss about trifles". Cicero: *Ex cloaca arcem facere*), acted out by Joyce as "They hopped it up the mountainy molehill traversing climes of old times gone by the days not worth remembering" (*FW* 474.22). Map making is precisely making mountains out of molehills but, also,

conversely, making molehills out of mountains. Moreover, in the map, mountains are not proper mountains but countries, depicted as mountains, set side by side, distributed in four sectors and imbricated in a fish scale pattern (see Ambrosiak 1999).

An example of relief map we could take the map of Dublin, derived from the *Atlas* of Mercator, which had been inserted in the work of John Speed (*The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, London, 1611), where the architectural structure, also by introducing human figures, animates and shapes, deforms and ‘explodes’, with the continuous opening of different perspectives, the space of any traditional or commercial map of Dublin⁸.

If, as Joyce has it, in *Ulysses* “the ports of call were known in advance” (*Let.* I.204), the texture of pilots’ books is in *Finnegans Wake* is far different: the “Gran Phenician rover’s” navigation (*FW* 221.32), although it starts on “the boat of life”, from the Ivernian Ocean (the Irish sea in Ptolemy’s maps: “the harbourless Ivernikan Okean”, *FW* 197.30), although it wanders, at the beginning, at the mouth of the Liffey, will have to navigate all seas, to encounter the actual “ouragan of spaces” (*FW* 504.14), circumnavigating the globe, reaching the antipodes (New Ireland or new Meclenburgh, or, with a native name, Tombara), will have to build his own surveying instruments, his competence in reading signs, (“signlore” *FW* 36.17) with which to spot the salient traits of the new lands and the most favourable places for landing (“he spied the loom of his landfall” *FW* 197.30-31), studying the new routes in a zigzagging that



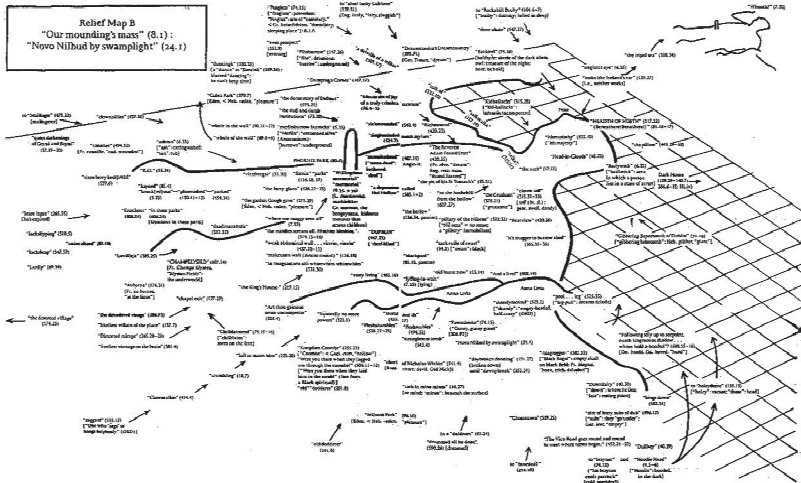
9. ‘Mountains as Molehills’, in Brian M. Ambrosiak and Jeffrey R. Ambrosiak, *Infinite Perspectives*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.

⁸J. Speed, *Dublino*, 1610, *Historic Dublin Maps*, The National Library of Ireland. Historical Documents, 1988.

could even follow Vico's "corsi e ricorsi", Vico being, with Bruno, the best guide to reconstruct, in the *Wake*, the map of human movements and flows that have impressed a cultural form on the globe.

America, where "toll stories go proudest" (*FW* 427.24) could represent a good example of cultural forms exhibited in maps as 'merveilles', together with various mounds or tumuli, "horned cairns" (*FW* 594.24), somewhere in Ireland, graffiti, "white horses" (*FW* 132.12)) sculpted on the slopes of hills, "macroliths" in circles (*FW* 594.22) or 'standing stones' ("stanserstanded" *FW* 594.22), the 'speaking stones' of the old continent.

In the case of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce could adopt as map the one reconstructed by John Bishop: it is a case of anthropomorphic geography which presents the buried giant, his "mounding's mass" (*FW* 08.01) with



10. Relief map B, "our mounding's mass" in J. Bishop, 1986, *Joyce's Book of the Dark. Finnegans Wake*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

his head as Howth cape and feet at Phoenix Park: "Finn his park" (*FW* 564.08), (in this way also 'correcting' Ptolemy's mistake that presented Howth as an island), a skeleton and pattern that at the same time reads and deciphers the original shape of Dublin, the centre from which all the other geographical notations depart and acquire meaning (Bishop 1986: 34-35).

If for Leo Knuth “the circle and cross [...] represents the shape both of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, a circular tale, divided into four parts” (in that also accommodating Vico’s ‘corsi’), the pertinent cartographic reference could be to the so-called T-in-O maps, that we see adopted in a medal by Francesco Laurana that depicts “a planisphere divided into four parts”, according to the four cardinal points [...]: Europe, Asia, Africa and Brumal”⁹, Brumal being the north-west (and, in Arabic language, ‘sham’).

“Brune in brume” (*FW* 271.21): in *Finnegans Wake* Joyce approached the representation of ‘Brumal’ (the twilight area of the west, where “the solid world [...] was “dissolving and dwindling” (‘The Dead’) with the surveying instruments that Eugene Jolas had called “the language of the night”, a language that allowed Joyce to explore the radical strangeness of faraway lands and the mysteriousness of the unconscious, as the language of the day characterized by a simplified basic grammar and syntax (“cut-and-dry grammar and go-ahead-plot”, *Let.*, 1926), “dully expressed” (*FW* 500.15), was considered as clearly inadequate.

It was fundamental for the drawing of his expanded map to project himself into high seas assuming in writing the risk and the audacity (of which he had told Arthur Power (Power 1974: 95) and at the same time the dreadful character of some explorations: as in the case of the fatal journey of Vasco de Gama: “to the vast go the game” (*FW* 512.15).

Past the proverbial Hercules Pillars, the navigation runs out into the Atlantic Ocean, taking Ireland, the extreme western land as the ideal starting point to face a nautical enterprise in the “billowy way”, by definition a measure of virility and of heroism (“He can prapposterus the pillory way to Hirculos pillar”, *FW* 16.03-04), leaving behind him ‘Thule’, “Finishthere Punct” (*FW* 17.23), “Endsland” (*FW* 304.21) at the same time gathering a whirling series of testimonies and stories.

The form assumed by the voyages of exploration is that of a glaring “photophoric pilgrimage to [...] antipodes in the past (*FW* 472.17-18), to antipodes that are in space and in geography, but also in time and in history, reaching out for the “roaring forties” (the “rolling forties”, an area in the Pacific between 40 and 50 degrees of latitude south, *FW* 506.08), the New Ireland of Melanesia or Australia, (in slang “down under”, *FW* 321.32), in a map that, as it includes the infinite series of “polar anthisishis” (*FW*

⁹ Jacques Heers, *La découverte de l’Amérique*, Paris: Editions Complete, 1991, 134.

177.33) represents a “grand continuum, overlorded by fate and interlarded with accidence” (*FW* 472.30-31).

If the voyages of exploration start from Jason’s “cruise” (*FW* 89.34), from the African periplus of Hanno (“unbrookable script”, *FW* 182.20), from the navigation of St Brendan: “High Brazil Brandan’s Deferred” (*FW* 488.25), whose mythical traits are emphasized by the possibility of linking two clamorous ‘false discoveries’: the isle of St. Brendan and Hy-brazil, an isle that we could detect in the map of Waldseemuller, off the western coast of Ireland, from that of Mael Duinn (*FW* 4906.09), down to the exploration of Leif Ericson of north America (*FW* 316.27), the history of exploration must necessarily start from Columbus.



11. Map of South America, Piri Reis (1513), in C.H. Hapsgood, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*, Philadelphia & New York: Chilton Books, 1966

“magellanic clouds” of astronomical import); in Ponce de Leon, discoverer of Florida (*FW* 321.34); in Antonio Herreras y Tordesilla, first historian of the conquest, (whose method is singled out as “herreraism”, *FW* 512.18); in Piri Reis, “pirigrim” (*FW* 600.35), Turkish navigator that surveyed the coasts of south America and in 1513 set up a map (that was discovered and

The audacity and determination of Columbus, considered as having Hispanic traits, as in “Crestopher Carambas” (*FW* 512.07), lies on his project of reaching the East navigating from the West (the famous phrase ‘buscar el levante por el poniente’, can be read in “on his levantine ponenter”, *FW* 480.10), but there is also determination in Cabot, discoverer of Newfoundland, “explorer”, although also seen by Joyce in the shape of a strolling actor (“cabotinesque explorer”, *FW* 512.18: from the French, ‘cabotine’), but embodied in the couple of actors from the ’30ies, Cabotino and Tenorino (Frank 1969: 57); in Magellan (“the Megalomagellan of our winevattswaterway” *FW* 512.05, a name that also appears in

could be studied only from 1929); in the explorers of the Arctic and of the Antarctic, from the Irish Shackleton (*FW* 317.15) to Nansen (*FW* 326.23), to Amundsen (*FW* 325.22), to Charcot (*FW* 479. 28-30)

Adhering to the spirit of the first explorations, “antisipiences” and “recognizances” (*FW* 261.19), philosophical positions and prejudices, historical truths and legends (*FW* 261.19) had an equal role, imaginary lands are set on maps side by side or superimposed on actual discoveries, from Atlantis (“Atlant’s”, *FW* 132.03) (cf. Dévigne 1923), to the ‘Purgatorium Sancti Patrici’ (*FW* 177.04), in the north of Ireland, to Hybrid, in the map of Waldseemüller, to the “isle of women”, in the navigation of Mael Duinn, to the isle of St Brendan (“isle of the seven cities”), to the coast of south America in the map of Piri Reis¹⁰, east bound (in a way that lent itself to be considered as the north coast of the Antarctic), in homage to Ptolemy that had represented the Indian Ocean as landlocked.

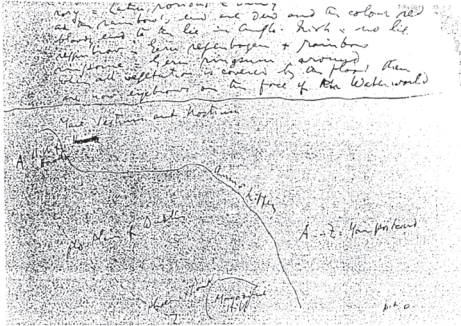
It is a matter, both for Columbus, reader of Marco Polo, of Pierre d’Ailly, of Ptolemy, and for Joyce, of laying out a virtual map, a “literary” one (such is the definition that I found in the *Ireland from Maps*, National Library of Ireland), adopting the method of ‘a navigation in books’ as well as on the oceans, a navigation that represents an experience fully anticipated (and misrepresented) by books, maps and diagrams.

Seriality, scales and cosmic amplification, as well as tragicomic traits are present in a text that proceeds “seriolcosmically” (*FW* 263.24), starting from the already discovered America, rediscovered only because of Columbus’ miscalculations, as he kept thinking of it as Asia (“the undishcovery of americle”, *FW* 326.31), a consideration also made by Joyce, in “The Mirage of the Fisherman of Aran” (1912, *CW* 235): “Christopher Columbus [...] is honoured by posterity because he was the last to discover America. A thousand years before the Genovese navigator was derided at Salamanca, Saint Brendan weighed anchor for the unknown world from the bare shore which our ship is approaching, and, after crossing the ocean, landed on the coast of Florida”, to the ‘artistic’ (“cabotinesque”) wandering of Cabot, to the odorous exploration of the ‘Spice Islands’ intended as smelly “privy closets“, to the exploration of the

¹⁰Piri Reis, Map of South America (1513) in C.H. Hapsgood, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*, Philadelphia and New York, Chilton Books, 1966, Note 3.

unknown made evident by the name of the ship of Charcot, the “Pourquoi pas” (a ship that was wrecked in 1936): “our ship that never returned” (*FW* 479.28-30).

The “seriolcosmic[ally]” (*FW* 263.24) and tragicomic epitome of



exaggerare = to mound up
 themselfe = another Dublin 5000 inhabitants
 Isthmus of Sutton a neck of land between Howth Head and the plain
 Howth = an island for old geographers
 passencore = pas encore and *ricorsi storici* of Vico
 rearrived = idem
 wielderflight = wiederfechten = refight
 bellowed = the response of the peatfire of faith to the windy words of the apostle

12. Map by James Joyce, in *Selected Letters*, ed. R. Ellmann, New York: The Viking Press, 1975

Joyce’s exploration of the world in maps is represented by the map Joyce himself drew in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver (15 November 1926), in which he was asking approval of a ‘sample’ writing of *Work in Progress*. The sample contained a commented list of words and a map in which the sea between England and Ireland was defined as “Mare Vestrum and Nostrum”, to stress the Janus-faced nature of all things (“Thormendoso”

cape (*FW* 312.08) being at the same time the Cape of Good Hope). The infinite series of reversals and reamalgamations achieved in wars and conquests (the absurdity of “Irish lands [...] included in the dowries of the girls of Denmark [...] which they [the Danes] dream of reconquering” (*CW* 237), negotiations over the ages, are all inscribed in a map that is plastic and mobile, collapsing all barriers and that finally turns into a pacific, undifferentiated “Garden of Idem” (*FW* 263.21), where no land nor sea is ever claimed.

The law of a continuous ‘changing hands’ (and, inherently, of a mock “*veni, vidi, vici*”) is enunciated in *Ulysses*:

Cityful passing away, the other cityful coming, passing away too: other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piledup bricks, stones. Changing hands. This owner, that. Landlord never dies, they say. Other steps into his shoes when he gets his

notice to quit. They buy the place up with gold and still they have all the gold. [...] Piled up in cities, worn away age after age. Pyramids in sand. Built on bread and onions. Slaves. Chinese wall. Babylon. Big stones left. Round Towers. Rest rubble, sprawling suburbs, jerrybuilt, Kerwan's mushroom houses, built of breeze. Shelter for the night. No one is anything. (*U* 8.484).

In the same spirit one of the first examples of Italian language, a testimony of the possession of land by Benedictines: “Sao ko kelle terre per kelle fini che ki contene trentanni le possette parte Sancti Benedicti”¹¹: “Soa koa Kelly Terry per Chelly Derry lepossette” (*FW* 484.32) is turned, through the embedding in the quotation of the name of Terence Kelly, Dublin pawnbroker, into a provisional pawnshop receipt.

The ethical dimension of Joyce's artistry in *Finnegans Wake* that defines the colonial adventure unambiguously as “coglonial” (*FW* 488.31) and singles out dignified explorers labelling them as ‘bastards’: “dubblebasterd navygaiters” (*FW* 320.07), seems to be in the tradition of Bruno's relativism, upsetting every established order: “In the Universe there is no middle nor circumference but in everything is the middle and at every point one can take part of some circumference in relation to another middle point or centre” (*De l'infinito, universo e mondi, Dialogo V*).

Joyce's method was that of including both certainties and conjectures, the imaginable and the unimaginable, to deprive of meaning and to reassign it, as with Mercator: “This land is certain but its dimensions and its extension are unknown”¹² or as with Shackleton who, experiencing the resistance of things to come into focus in the “white unknown”, wrote on the fantasmic ‘Great Ice Barrier’, concluding in a disarming way by saying that all that can be said is that “it is mainly made of snow” or that, about the three islands Emerald, Nimrod and Dougherty, that do not seem to exist anymore, nevertheless it seemed better “to continue to include them in maps until their nonexistence is not proved”¹³ or with Charcot, who gave a name to an iceberg: “Pallas-Athéné”¹⁴.

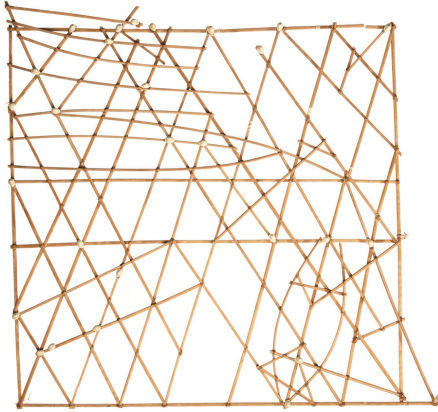
¹¹ See Wikipedia: Placiti Campani.

¹² Mercator's Map (1569) in R.A Skelton, *Explorers Maps*, London, Spring Books 1970, 203.

¹³ E.H. Shackleton, *The Heart of the Antarctic*, London, Heinemann, 1909, viii.

¹⁴ M. Emmanuel, *J-B Charcot. Le “Polar Gentleman”*, Paris, Editions Alsatia, 1945, photograph facing page 145.

“Browne yet noland’s” (*FW* 300.29), in his expanding universe, following Bruno, in a series of exercises at the end of his tether, Joyce has made possible to conceive of the coincidence of the opposites, of “real



5. Map in wooden sticks, nautical chart, Marshall Islands, XIX century

absence”, shaping the “immarginable” with space triangulations that go beyond Euclid (*FW* 286.18), in the direction of space curvatures studied according to the geometry of Riemann and Lobachevsky (in Herring 1979: 474)¹⁵, following in physics Plank (*FW* 505.28), Einstein (“Winestain”, *FW* 149.28), Poincaré (“pointcarried” *FW* 304.05) and Eddington, *The Expanding Universe* (*FW* 263. 27), going beyond Hercules’ Pillars, wandering in territories that are at

the same time in space and in time, by that extending the four dimensions: “severalled its fourdimmansions” (*FW* 367.27), making of his cosmic map a “chaosmos” (*FW* 118.21), or a flexible navigation map made of wooden sticks, signalling only wave swells and currents, like the navigation charts of the Marshall Islands¹⁶, in a sustained testimony of the plurality of orders (“order is othered”, *FW* 613.14), at the same time always focussing on the moment in which, in a redefinition of both reading and writing, as Genette has it “le langage s’espace afin que l’espace, en lui devenu langage, se parle et s’écrive” (Genette 1966: 108).

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¹⁵ See also Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Joyce upon the Void. The Genesis of Doubt*, Basingstoke, Hampshire & London: Macmillan, 1991.

¹⁶See Wikipedia Navigation chart (rebbelib), Marshall Islands maps.

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