

Ceylon as an Exotic Escape in James Joyce's Ulysses

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Abstract

James Joyce's Ulysses has been recognized as a literary masterpiece and has been interpreted in terms of many aspects. Being a quintessential Modernist novel, the novel brings out several post-colonial themes and concerns. Joyce writes about Ceylon in the episode "Lotus- Eaters" and his viewpoint is different from that of the common English perspective of his era. Many critics have interpreted this episode in terms of materialism and the colonial quest of acquiring resources and some critics have recognized the exotic Ceylonese symbols to be connected with psychology and sexuality. A new interpretation of this episode can shine a light on Joyce's unique narrative techniques and his ability to transcend perspective. Therefore, this study would consider Joyce's perception of Ceylon in terms of exoticism as presented by Victor Segalan in *Essays on Exoticism* and Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* while exploring how Joyce attempts to radically challenge the Western view of the Far East which was solely based on the acquisition of resources and financial gain.

Keywords: Ceylon, Colonialism, Exoticism, Modernism

INTRODUCTION

Fiction related to post-colonial literature often bases its stories on the themes of the asymmetrical distribution of power between the colonized and the colonizer and also on the constant struggle for freedom and resistance of the colonized entities. However, as travel towards the East expanded, colonial exoticism was introduced as a new ideology developed by Western travelers who did not seek methods to instill power and fear in their colonized lands but to discover the hidden beauties of the newfound world and the secrets of its eccentric civilizations. Thus, colonial exoticism strives to accentuate the polarities of difference and the friction caused by the continuous power struggle in a colonized state. Most scholars have identified exoticism as a form of appreciating hidden cultures, as an ethnic homogenization and it is also seen as a fundamental concept within the social space where cultures are met with the intention of acquiring power within a society where human values are depleted and power rules everything.

Exoticism was identified by early critics as a geographical concept but critics started to expand the idea into the development of eccentric characters bound by individual cultural norms and landscape. For Romantic and Victorian writers, the exotic world served as an example of the fantastical with an undisturbed natural world that was alien to the heavily industrialized and modernized world, they lived in. Early writing that depicted the East as an exotic landscape attracted a wider readership. *The Arabian Nights* are one of the early writings that depict the Arabian cities and their

dwellers as living alongside magical elements, great treasures of gold hidden within previously unknown landscapes which are vastly made up of sand dunes, mountains, and desert lands. Early fiction from the East served as "...illustrators in shaping the first visual forms of Exoticism, dealing with the field of cultural representation in one of its early visual forms" (Khalid, 2011, p. 47).

Thus, critics were familiarized with the idea that exoticism can serve as more than a geographical limitation and function and that it was often defined as a concept that can awaken inner human thoughts and bring in a sense of freedom and act as a tool that facilitates escape from the banal modes of life which were common in the Western world. There is a significant change in some of the canonical English literary works of the 18th century as writers incorporated details about this unknown world into their texts. In Jane Austen's 1817 novel *Mansfield Park*, Sir Thomas Bertram travels to the West Indies where he manages and establishes his authority at a plantation that was established by British colonial rulers. There are no detailed descriptions of his work or the surroundings in which he lives but Austen brings in the existence of this other world that the English readers are not familiar with. In *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, the convict Magwitch is sent to Australia where he is able to work and prosper. Later in the novel, it is revealed that Magwitch is their benefactor of Pip and has been helping him to achieve his dream of becoming a gentleman. Magwitch describes his life and his series of short-lived vocations to Pip,

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"I have been a sheep farmer, stock-breeder, other trades besides, away in the new world, many a thousand mile of stormy water off from this" (Dickens, 1994, p.291). Similarly in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* first published in 1847, Mr. Rochester narrates the stories about his life in the West Indies, its difficulties, and how he had to marry Bertha Mason not knowing of her psychological condition. Brontë's descriptions of Mr. Rochester's life in the West Indies are full of obscure and dark imagery and she fails to bring in any sense of admiration for the colony.

The fiction of many English canonical writers included descriptions of the colonial world but these were often brief and not detailed. As the colonial project was expanding it was a necessity to include these alien nations in their fiction to create a sense of enigma and curiosity in the reading public who were residing in England. The fiction writers gathered details of the colonies through travel writing of those who traveled to these lands for state and business purposes. Thus, the canonical English novelists portrayed these colonies only as sources of income and as a path for the English to flourish and establish financial stability. Thus, Dickens in *Great Expectations* writes about Australia in terms of profit gathered through the labor of English prisoners who worked in the colony, in *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen, the West Indies is depicted as a place with many resources and the presence of an Englishman, Sir Thomas Bertram is a necessity to establish a sense of stability in the colony and in *Jane Eyre*, Mr. Rochester's life spiraled down into darkness and misfortune because of his stay in the colonies. Thus these writers have completely discarded the aesthetical sense which lies within these lands as they were unable to witness it through first-hand experiences and the travel reports and narratives of the British colonial officers were only written with the intention of explaining available resources, profit maximization, and with a sense of contempt at the natives.

Readers and critics have identified James Joyce's fascination with the new world and many references to these lands can be found in his fiction. In *Dubliners*, the short story "Araby" is about a boy who is in his adolescence and experiencing attraction towards the opposite sex for the first time Araby is the name given to the bazaar where he will buy something for her to make her happy. The boy reveals the impact Araby has on him: "The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me" (Joyce, 1996, p.32). The East serves as a place of enchantment and serves as an opening into reality as the protagonist continues to look deeper into the newfound feelings of attraction and once he reaches the bazaar called Araby he realizes his condition, "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger" (Joyce, 1996, p.36). In naming the bazaar as Araby, Joyce also brings in the undertones of trade and commerce but gives prominence to the exotic experience.

Another example where Joyce brings in allusions to the East is the mentioning of Haroun al Raschid in the third episode of "Proteus" in *Ulysses*. He was a benevolent ruler of Baghdad and was regarded as one of the best emperors of the Middle-Eastern territory. Stephen Dedalus, one of the protagonists in *Ulysses* recollects his dream of Haroun al Raschid while he is sitting on the beach of Sandymount Strand. His mind is occupied with many things and shifts from different flashbacks and dreams which he has been having recently. This reference to a figure from the East is used by Joyce to bring in a sense of surrealism and enigma to the dreams Stephen has. Just like the other characters in

Ulysses, Stephen lives and walks about in Dublin but when engaged in reveries, consciously and unconsciously his mind travels to the East.

Joyce extracts from external culture and infuses them in his narration while creating the idea that the orient world has its mysteries and beauty which could be used for the awakening of the consciousness of the West. In fact, Joyce's perception of the East is inclined more toward a celebration of the East in terms of freedom and for the acquisition of a deeper understanding of the human condition and not merely based on commercial prospects.

When James Joyce first published *Ulysses* in 1920, the British Empire has expanded rapidly and the Western reading public was familiarized with details about the colonial countries, their resources, the climate, and the lifestyles. Unlike Austen, Dickens, and Brontë who wrote during the 1800s, Joyce was writing his novel in an era where the Western world's view of the East was gradually shifting. Famous exotics such as Pierre Loti changed the view of the East by rejecting the idea that the West should continue the establishment of power, governance, and authority and replacing this common thought with his ideas of exoticising the East. The proponents of exoticism threw away modernity by becoming a part of the exotic world and ingratiating themselves as they identified with the Other in an attempt to blend in with their unknown cultures. They identified the capitalist expansion which was slowly devouring the colonies reducing the idyllic and free lifestyles which they wanted to safeguard. The sole interest of colonial bureaucrats was to establish plantations and gather native resources through labor and slavery.

This research would take into consideration the problem of the depiction of the Far East in English fiction and how James Joyce takes a radical step in his presentation breaking away from the traditional viewpoints while providing a new interpretation to the Eastern world. The study would look into the commercial perspective of the Western world on the East and how James Joyce blends in both the commercial view and the aesthetic view deviating from the already established perspectives of the West.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature pertaining to the episode "Lotus-Eaters" is often based on the commercial aspects it generates. Critics and scholars have often viewed this episode as enlightening in terms of the sexual orientation of the protagonist, Leopold Bloom as this episode reveals several instances where he communicates with his lover with whom he has an extramarital relationship.

In *Ulysses*, capitalist concerns often appear, especially in "Lotus-Eaters" when Joyce takes a different twist in his narration connecting the enterprise of tea, capitalist viewpoint, and exoticism of Ceylon. Hart (1993) identifies the Oriental motif in "Lotus-Eaters" and writes how this episode presents exotic sensualism, but mostly in terms of sexuality. The study does not consider the role of imagery associated with Ceylon but builds a bridge between the dimensions of exoticism and sexuality. Similarly, Callow (1992) provides a different point of view as the study explores how the chapter "Lotus Eaters" serves as a paradigm to trace the transition of masculinity. The study takes into account how Bloom is depicted as a man who serves and cares well for his wife in the previous sections but when the readers meet him again in Lotus-Eaters he is depicted as a more virile man who is also communicating with a lover through letters. Thus the

study considers the sexual and gender dimensions presented in "Lotus-Eaters" and does not only limit to *Ulysses* but also considers the sexual thematic concerns in some of Joyce's well-known short stories such as "The Dead". Similarly, Goda (2006) analyses the visual imagery used by Joyce in this episode and how these images are connected with sexuality, gender, and human psychology. The study principally looks into the natural imagery and symbols which occur in this episode connecting with the sexual and emotional tensions within the characters. Even though most critics have been able to trace exoticism and its connection with sexuality, they have not paid attention to rendering a deeper analysis of the function of imagery connected to Ceylon which spans several consecutive paragraphs. The descriptions of Ceylon are well detailed and he brings in the idyllic view which was commonly associated with the country during its colonial rule. There is no doubt that Joyce's parallels, contrasts, and imagery are remarkable but it serves a higher purpose. Most critics have appreciated and recognized Ceylon as a symbol of exoticism presented by Joyce. Yet the most remarkable aspect of this inclusion has not been widely recognized. The canonical novelists of the 18th and 19th centuries associated colonial countries only with financial implications. Their descriptions were based on the resources and the monetary values associated with these countries and gave the idea that the colonized lands are good sources of income. However, Joyce's mastery lies within his skill in deviating from this commercialization of colonies. He creates an intricate image of Ceylon through a commercial viewpoint which is extended to a more comprehensive and celebrated depiction of the role played by exoticism on this island and its influence on its people. Thus this study would aim to explore the radical view of Joyce as he presents Ceylon not as a country of resources that will generate profit for its colonial rulers but as a place of innocence, harmony, and escape from a world ruled by the chaos of modern development in the West.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The objective of this study is to explore how James Joyce challenges the colonial mission of commercializing the East and how he brings in exoticism as the focal point of viewing the new world. The study would take into consideration the "Lotus-Eaters" episode which appears in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The study refers to theoretical frameworks and ideas presented on exoticism by Victor Segalan in *Essays on Exoticism*. By referring to Segalan's ideas on Exoticism the study incorporates Joyce's perception in building up a new perspective of the East. Theories and ideas presented on the colonial perception of the East as presented in Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* are taken into account to develop the contrasting features between James Joyce's perception of the East and the common views of the Western colonizer. Thus, the study strives to view Joyce's perception of the colonized world in terms of his approach toward exoticism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into two subdivisions. The first category would explore the perspective of travelers who arrived in Ceylon before colonialism. This section would discuss their primary motives to arrive on the island and the events they experienced and their view of the island. The second section would consider the perspective of the travel writers who arrived in Ceylon after colonialism and how these views became crucial to both English readers and novelists in

forming ideas about the Far East. The section would discuss James Joyce's perspective on Ceylon in contrast to other canonical English novelists and how he radically establishes a separate viewpoint.

Ceylon as a Centre of Capitalism

It is important that this study considers the perspective of the West on Ceylon which appears in texts published before the first appearance of *Ulysses* in 1920. In this section, the non-fiction travel writing of several explorers is taken into consideration and this will serve as a fundamental aspect in distinguishing Joyce's view on Ceylon from other previous perspectives.

In the past Ceylon has attracted the eyes of the external world for a long time. The island's geography and resources have been the primary attractions of travelers from both the Eastern and Western nations. Travelers and explorers have been fascinated by the island and its diverse resources even before the arrival of Western colonizers who occupied the nation for decades. Before Ceylon was introduced to the English reading public through fiction, early travelers chronicled their visits in their travelogues. The 13th century Venetian born explorer Marco Polo in his *The Travels* narrates the unique geography of the island as below:

Taking a departure from the island of Andaman, and steering a course something to the southward or west, for a thousand miles, the island of Zeilan [Ceylon] presents itself. This, for its actual size, is better than any other island in the world. (Polo, 1997, p. 224)

In the narration of his travels from 1271 to 1295, Marco Polo gives prominence to the geographical location and resources. He describes the Ceylonese king who was in possession of the biggest ruby in the world and expresses his surprise at the size and the pride of the monarch to be in possession of it. He does not present to his readers the beauty of the island, its climate, or its natural landscape. Instead, he portrays Ceylon as an island rich in resources and a prominent place to establish commercial relationships.

It is clear that early travelers to Ceylon saw only the commercial potential of the island and discarded its beauty and the exclusive lifestyles of its occupants. To them, the Eastern world was a place to gain resources in order to expand their commercial gains. The European economy was continuously expanding rapidly and the needs of Western consumers were also going through new changes. Lifestyles of the people were changing with the rapid expansion of the economical world and newly discovered resources from the East became an added advantage to the ongoing development. For the Western traveler, the ultimate motive was to identify the economic advantages that can be obtained from these lands.

In 1344, the Moroccan trader and Sea Explorer Ibn Battuta stepped on the soils of Ceylon and discovered the island to be forfeited and strongly protected by an advanced naval base. He describes a white elephant owned by the king and expresses his surprise at the vast collections of rubies which the locals called "Manikam". Ibn Battuta narrates how these rubies are extracted, polished, and preserved by the locals. He observes the country and its nature from a distance through the viewpoint of an outsider who is on the island for the two main purposes of collecting resources and paying tribute to Adam's Peak.

With the arrival of Western colonial groups, non-fiction writing on Ceylon took a different shift. They were more skilled and unlike the previous arrivals, their intention was to stay on the island, gain its control and establish their

supremacy. Nonfiction writing which appeared in the later years was predominantly based on extensive studies conducted by scholars who came to Ceylon along with the colonial establishments. Elsie Cook's 1931 book titled *A Geography of Ceylon* reveals the hidden secrets of Sri Lanka and she identifies low country and hill country cultivation methods and how settlements have been established by the British colonial officers to ensure efficiency and productivity. James Emerson Tennent's 1859 narrative titled *A History of Ceylon* is a comprehensive narrative about many different facets of the island ranging from religion to culture, geography to climate, and many more.

These non-fictional narratives were well detailed and provided the European reading public with the necessary information on resources and the available potential for commercial growth during a time when the commercial needs of the West were expanding rapidly. Thus, the portrayal of the Eastern world was based on commercialization and deterritorialization. This portrayal slowly stepped onto the narratives of many canonical English novelists whose fiction reached the English readers from the 18th century onwards. They described to the English reading public the plantations that were established by the Western colonizers, the prosperity of these lands, and a new world that was opening up with many possibilities and profit.

Seeing Ceylon through James Joyce

The "Lotus-Eaters" episode in *Ulysses* begins with its central character walking through the busy streets of Dublin on a warm morning. Leopold Bloom is looking at the streets near him and the shops nearby. He sees the building which houses the Belfast Oriental Tea Company and Joyce narrates to his reader that the day is exceptionally warm and different from the usual weather in Dublin. The repetition of "warm" intensifies the atmosphere within which Bloom is placed and the reader also witnesses how he slips a card into his waistcoat pocket. It is revealed later that the card is from Martha, the woman with whom he is having an extramarital relationship.

Joyce (2000) shifts his narration to a collection of descriptions about Ceylon tea appreciating the "... the choice blend, made of the finest Ceylon brands..." (p.86) Joyce's introduction to Ceylon is a candid appreciation of the tea manufactured in the island and through his descriptions, the readers can also understand the importance given to Ceylon tea during the colonial period. His imagery extends from the warm morning to Bloom's secret love affair to the finest tea brands imported from Ceylon. This complex interconnection that extends between several images touches upon the larger theme of the commercialization of colonial lands. It is the sight of Ceylonese tea which awakens their senses in Bloom and transports him to the warm climate of Ceylon. Readers of James Joyce's *Ulysses* are familiar with its characters' struggle to escape the banality of life through different forms. Some escape through illicit human affairs, some by turning towards art, and some characters through their imagination. Thus, escaping life and routine is a fundamental feature in Joycean characters. In this episode of "Lotus-Eaters", Bloom escapes the banality of modern life in Dublin by awakening his mind and soul to the relishing effects of exotic imagery of Ceylon. Many modern critics have identified exoticism with Bovaryism as both these concepts deal with the act of escaping from banal ways of living while seeking an external world with carefree individuality and limitless freedom. Bovaryism is often identified as a personal feeling

which prioritizes escapism through daydreaming while imagining oneself as capable of becoming the protagonist, the hero, or the heroine of a romance refusing to pay attention to everyday realities. Thus, the two concepts share many similarities which involve the human mind and escape through imagination. Bovaryism has been defined as one of the best possible ways through which "...we accommodate our inner or our true selves to the bruise and press of society" (Blackmur, 1951, p. 476).

Exoticism was developed first as a term that was used only to denote geographical separation. It carried the idea of the geographical differences between the two worlds: the West and the East. It was an identification of this geographical separation based on the idea of an elsewhere driven by geographic unfamiliarity. In the act of defining the East, the term "exoticism" acquired the sense of deterritorialization where boundaries were put up by scholars to identify the group of static lands which existed outside the touch of modernity. As a result of the redefinition and reinterpretation of this term, a group of people from the West known as "Exots" identified that exoticism can serve more than geographical limitations and function as more of a tool to awaken the inner thoughts and touch on the human awareness of the world. As a result, a group of people known as "Exots" came to the forefront with the intention of identifying themselves with the Other in an attempt to blend in with unknown cultures. They discarded modern lifestyles and became a part of the exotic world itself by ingratiating themselves in their respective nations. One of the most popular and highly regarded exot was the French traveler and writer Pierre Loti who opposed the colonial bureaucrats and identified the world of the Other as a place of culture and lifestyle and not in terms of commodity-based ideology.

Victor Segalan (2002) identifies exoticism as an important movement in history and expresses his opinion that it should be treated in the same light as other historically important movements such as Renaissance or Surrealism. He writes that it should be felt and experienced individually and does not believe of plural exoticism. Thus, Bloom's feelings on exotic Ceylon are individualistic and personal to him. The activation of a series of thoughts that move from climatic conditions to financial matters and finally to the exotic land of Ceylon through a stream of consciousness is distinctive to Bloom and may differ from other characters. It is Bloom's mind that yearns for freedom and relaxation in Ceylon and it is his desire to abandon and forget all his worries through this exotic escape. Therefore, exoticism is a human feeling which should be felt by both the human spirit and intellectuality.

Joyce (2000) reveals how Bloom stops by the window of the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company the words which come to Bloom's mind are "warm" and "choice blend made of the finest Ceylon brands" (p.86). Through the stream of consciousness, Bloom's mind quickly shifts from one aspect to another as the imagery around him triggers certain aspects of his imagination connected to the Far East. Bloom embodies the exot who yearns to be ingratiated in the eastern land and to live his life as a person belonging to the east away from the cumbersome lifestyle of Dublin. Bloom approves from the words of the exots, he believes that escape from the struggles of modern life can be achieved by establishing a connection with the other world: this connection was physically possible to be achieved by the exots as they were able to travel to these lands whereas Bloom attempts to initiate an escape for a short period of time through his imagination. To Bloom Ceylon is "...the garden of the world" (p.86) rich in

nature and vegetation. Yet life in Dublin keeps him dragging back to reality as he is met with daily happenings in the busy streets as the readers see how "His right hand came down into the bowl of his hat. His fingers found quickly a card behind the headband and transferred it to this waistcoat pocket" and repetitively "His right hand once more slowly went over again" (p.86) as the presence of the card in his pocket reminds him that he has to hand it over to the post office in order to receive the letter from his lover. Although Bloom tries to escape into the east through his imagination, his life in Dublin keeps preventing him from achieving that. He has to continuously remind himself to step onto Ceylon and he visualizes the "...big lazy leaves to float around" (p.87). Imagery connected to water is used throughout this episode to convey the lightness of being in an exotic land. "Where was the chap I saw in that picture somewhere? Ah, in the dead sea, floating on his back, reading a book with a parasol open (p.88)." Joyce sees that life beyond the streets of busy Dublin could be relaxing and that the Eastern world is seen as a source of euphoria and pleasant experiences with a calming effect on the human mind. Segalan (2002) writes about this connection as, "There is an odd opposition between the feeling for Nature and Life in Nature. We do not see, feel, or taste nature with great aesthetic joy until we have experienced a separation or a difference from it" (p.31).

Segalan (2002) believes in the idea that to experience the truest forms of nature one should be away from it and that the feeling of separateness will help an individual to visualize the differences between being with nature and being away from it. When an individual is away from nature, he understands and realizes the greater value of being with nature. An individual feels the greatest need for something when he is away from it. Similarly, Bloom's exaggeration of the Ceylonese lifestyle and the limitless freedom which he yearns for is magnified due to his monotonous existence in Dublin. Bloom is depicted as a character who is moving about in Dublin, talking to his acquaintances and contemplating his relationships and life with the inability to reach for a life that consists of the aestheticism his soul yearns for.

Joyce wrote *Ulysses* in 1920, during a time when Dublin was changing rapidly; economically, politically, and socially. He lived in an era during which Irish migration was at its highest and people were moving towards colonies in search of opportunities and financial stability. However, in this episode of "Lotus-Eaters" Joyce disregards the commercial basis of journeying towards the east. Segalan's *Essays on Exoticism* was first published in 1955, 35 years after the publication of *Ulysses*. Exoticism began to take shape as an ideology only after Segalan's publication of his essays. In 1920 when Joyce first presented Ceylon through exoticism the readers have not familiarized with the concept and to most readers and critics this portrayal of Joyce of the Far East displayed his attitude towards establishing imperial resistance. Joyce becomes an advocate of the exots and their ideology of exoticism as he opposes the early English canonical novelists whose main concern was to bring in the Western-trained mindset of commercialization, commodification, and the deterritorialization of the east as a part of the project of capitalism and the propagation of the open market system. To Charles Dickens, Australia was the colony of the gold mines and to Jane Austen, Antilles was the land of plantations, and the life of the British officers in the East India Company was portrayed with a dark and somber outlook. Yet, Joyce subscribes to exoticism and its obsession with viewing human

existence through a newly discovered perspective even before the term "exoticism" has been fully developed. This new point of view of Joyce is a remarkable aspect of his writing as he breaks away from the canonical English novelists of his era and secures his place as one who sees the aesthetic of the east. When the European colonizers stepped onto the New World, their intention was to create civilization for they believed they have arrived at places where morality and spirituality were unknown and they continued to believe that subjects such as technology, medicine, and philosophy could only be understood only by them as well as subjects beyond human knowledge such as astronomy. They failed to notice that the lands that were captured by them already owned certain technologies, moral values, and developed civilizations. Edward Said sees how writers like Dickens and Austen used the imperial world to create the two ideas of "home" and "abroad" on their quest to give England a specific identity while contrasting with the other world. He presents this aspect of creating a different identity as follows:

... we must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence, and system of external relationships, all of them coexisting and interacting with each other. (Said, 1994, p.32)

Through Joyce's depiction of Ceylon, the western reading public would witness a glimpse of the unseen world in a different light. The readers would no longer view the east as a place through which the West can rise up and develop further but as a place of cultural richness and a feeling of otherworldliness that they have never heard or seen before. Thus, a different version of the cultural otherness is formed amidst the imperial backdrop.

Segalan (2002) rejects all commercial implications associated with the east. He belittles the colonial bureaucrat and condemns his involvement. He believes that the colonial bureaucrat is blind and deaf to the aesthetic of the east and he predicts that this commercialization will have detrimental effects for years to come. He writes about the colonial bureaucrat with contempt:

Sweep away: the colonial, the colonial bureaucrat. They are nothing like Exots! The former comes into being with the desire for native trade relations of the most commercial kind. For the colonial, Diversity exists only in so far as it provides him with the means of duping others. As for the colonial bureaucrat, the very notion of a centralized administration and of laws for the good of everyone, which he must enforce, immediately distorts his judgment and renders him deaf to the disharmonies (or harmonies of Diversity). Neither of these figures can boast a sense of aesthetic contemplation. (p.35)

The English canonical writers of the 18th and 19th centuries often gleaned their facts about the Far East from the travel writing or reports which were commonly circulated in England. James Joyce was also one of the writers who never had the chance to visit Ceylon or the eastern countries. He was a traveler but only limited to central European countries. This is apparent in his writing as Bloom tells his readers about Ceylon: "...lovely spot it must be..." "cactuses, flowery meads, snaky lianas they call them", "...wonder it is like that..." (p.87). Both Bloom and Joyce have developed a specific image of Ceylon in their own minds while subscribing to the collections of reports and nonfiction writing written on the island. They assume a land of wonders and as Ceylon was often depicted by English colonial officers as an island where

nature was preserved, both Bloom and Joyce imagine the island as a natural paradise. During a time in which the Dublin city streets were getting overwhelmingly crowded and society mainly centered on the commodification of everything, Joyce saw the need for spiritual human freedom.

Joyce's descriptions of the Ceylonese climate and its effect on the people add more to the essence of exoticism. His imaginary Ceylon is possibly prompted by the descriptions of the climatic conditions of Ceylon written by English travelers. An example from James Emerson Tennent who writes his first-hand experiences of the Ceylonese climate as:

In the low country, ingenuity has devised so many expedients for defense from the excessive heat of the forenoon, that the languor it induces is chiefly experienced after sunset, and the coolness of the night is insufficient to compensate for the exhaustion of the day; ... (Tennent, 1859, p.110)

The idea that Ceylon is a country with mixed climatic conditions was popularized during the colonial era and Joyce subscribes to the exact views of the colonial travelers. The colonial view of the Ceylonese climate is mirrored in Joyce's writing. Bloom visualizes the Ceylonese climate as warm and tender. He imagines a world where the people are in a state of relaxation and tranquility "... Cinghalese lobbing around in the sun, in dolce far niente" (p.87). The Ceylonese are portrayed as doing nothing and in a state of extreme relaxation under the warmth of the sun. Joyce sees Ceylon only through the lens of an admirer of the hidden aesthetic freedom. The human experience is mixed with sensations while the mind is transported to a place of recluse and tranquility. The idea that the Ceylonese are doing nothing and merely idling under the warm sun was definitely a development of previous statements provided in non-fiction travel writing on the island as some English travelogues often presented the colonized groups as lethargic and always resting. Edward Said elaborates on this problematic outlook which was widespread in the West using an example where Freidrich Engles spoke of the Moors of Algeria as a "timid race" merely echoing previous statements presented by colonial officers as "When on September 17, 1857, Engles spoke of the Moors of Algeria as a "timid race" because they were repressed but "reserving nevertheless their cruelty and vindictiveness while in moral character they stand very low" (Said, 1994, p.168).

The idea that the natives are lazy was propagated by the colonizers while disregarding their historical and socio-cultural background. They were reluctant in supplying their labor to their rulers and this was easily perceived by the colonizers as disobedience and laziness. Said refers to the words of John Bowring who was both a colonial officer and writer:

The impressions made upon him [the native] are transitory and he retains a feeble memory of passing or past events. Ask him his age, he will not be able to answer: who were his ancestors? He neither knows nor cares... His master vice is idleness, which is his felicity. The labor that necessarily demands he gives grudgingly (Said, 1994, p.167).

These words presented to the Western world an image where the natives needed to be coaxed and forced into labor. It gives the impression that the presence of Western rulers was a necessity for the progress of the native. Exoticism rejects this aspect of the colonial project. Victor Segalan's quest to make the world familiarized with exoticism was derived from his personal desire of exposing the sensations which were within the colonial countries. The differences and diversities in these countries were new to him and he attempted to bring in the aesthetic of these countries to

be blended with the modernized nations where this same aesthetic was continuously challenged, fractured, and on the verge of complete erasure. The exotics and the proponents of exoticism challenged every existing perspective on the East and propagated the effect exoticism had on the human mind by taking into consideration the experience of shock in discovering an unexpected style of living and the vastly different landscapes and climatic conditions. The brilliance of exoticism is in its ability to capture the other world and introduce its luster and glory to a world where industrialization, modernization, and financial gain were the main concerns.

To further analyze James Joyce's perspective of the exoticism of Ceylon it is necessary to identify the association of other recurrent imagery used later in this episode. As Bloom snaps out from his reverie, the reader sees him walking down the streets of Dublin and arriving at the post office. He takes out the card from his right pocket and hands it over to the postmistress who in turn gives him a letter sealed in an envelope addressed to a person called Henry Flower which is the name used by Bloom to communicate with his lover, Martha. The name "Henry Flower" resonates with the essence of his last name "Bloom".

Joyce (2000) has previously disclosed to his readers that Bloom is aware of the fact that his wife is having an affair with another man. This extramarital relationship has the undertones of excitement and limitless freedom away from the struggles of his domestic sphere. He is aware of his wife's illicit affair and his daughter rarely sends home a letter with the news. Bloom is already struggling with his social life in Dublin and this relationship he has with Martha serves as an escape from the turbulences of his life. He is aware that the exotic escape to the far east can be attained only through his imagination and at moments when his senses are awakened whereas this connection which he has formed with another woman lies in his range of possible achievements. As he observes the people around him, Bloom sees a "... recruiting poster with soldiers of all arms on parade..." (p.88), and through his stream of consciousness, it is revealed that these soldiers are enlisted to work "... overseas or half seas over empire..." and they were "Half-baked they look: hypnotized like" (p.88). The images of the east continue in the episode and it is clear that Bloom's mind throughout "Lotus-Eaters" is imbued with the fascination for exotic lands. He has transformed himself into an exot: thinking, feeling, and viewing the world in terms of exoticism. Segalan (2002) writes about this psychotic change in the human mind: "This world is exterior to us. It includes a series of phenomena that occasion the awakening of the mental world. These phenomena are vibratory . . . nerves . . . centers. . . ." (p.27).

As Segalan (2002) suggests, the escape into the exotic world leaves with the individual an emotional change; a psychosis defined by freedom and escape, release and recluse from materialistic bondage. Throughout "Lotus-Eaters" it is apparent how this emotional transformation has gripped Bloom as his mind wanders to the imagery of the Far East and tries to bridge a connection with the world he is living now and the world beyond his reach. Exoticism redefines and reshapes the act of looking at things, from the perception of the observer (the protagonist in concern) to that of the interpreter (the reader/the critic), exoticism involves a transformation of the mind.

Later in the episode, Bloom is struggling to look for seclusion away from human interaction. He tries to avoid being noticed by another Dubliner as he thinks "M'Coy. Get rid of

him..." (Joyce, 2000, p.89) but eventually has to engage in conversation with M'Coy which clearly depicts his inability to avoid daily conversations and commitments he has. His mind often rests on the contents of the letter from his lover even though he is in conversation with M'Coy.

Joyce's intention in naming this episode "Lotus-Eaters" is also remarkable. The structuring of *Ulysses* was based on Homer's *Odyssey* and Joyce adheres to the chronology of the episode parallels and chooses Ceylon as the central place. To Homer who wrote during an era when exoticism or colonialism was not known, he described in his "Lotus-Eaters" episode about the people who lived on an island visited by Odysseus as:

They left at once and met the Lotus-eaters,
who had no thought of killing my companions,
but gave them lotus plants to eat, whose fruit,
sweet as honey, made any man who sampled it
lose his desire to ever journey home
or bring back word to us—they wished to stay,
to remain among the Lotus-eaters,
feeding on the plant, eager to forget
about their homeward voyage (Homer, & Johnston, I. C, 2007, p.170)

The Lotus is presented by Homer as a pleasure-producing plant and the men who traveled with Odysseus are quickly fascinated and attracted to this particular plant and begin to consume it. The people of this island are gentle and kind. They introduce Odysseus and his men to the Lotus plant and request them to eat the fruit of the plant. The group of men who consume the lotus fruit face an oblivious experience and soon forget the tasks they were assigned and especially the task of going back home. They prefer to stay on the island and live within the sleep-induced effect and never return home.

A similar effect is achieved by Joyce in *Ulysses*. Joyce transcends his readers to Ceylon a country where lotus flowers are grown in abundance with endemic varieties. The lotus flower is symbolic of many Ceylonese traditions and customs and the island is connected closely with the flower. Just like the people of the island visited by Odysseus, the people of Ceylon also consume the lotus fruit. Even though Joyce personally never visited Ceylon, he has been able to gather details about its geography, climate, and essentially the aesthetic at the heart of the island.

Thus James Joyce blends in exoticism into his descriptions of Ceylon and conveys the idea that the perspective of the West on the East was flawed and that it needed to be changed. As a Modernist writer, he has been able to invent this new perspective in a world where the other canonical English novelists secluded their views only to the most common views of the East. Joyce is radical in his statements, his interpretations of the East as well as in his ability to revolutionize existing world views.

CONCLUSIONS

The study identified the place occupied by the non-Western world in English fiction to be solely based on commercialization and the travelers who arrived at the colonized lands viewed these countries through deterritorialization as they did not look at these nations as individuals and unique. However, James Joyce deviates from this portrayal and pays more attention to the aesthetic of Ceylon. His imagery of

Ceylon begins with commercialization at the backdrop but extends towards the aestheticism of the island.

The study brought into focus a topic on Joycean studies which has not been discussed extensively before. Through that, it is possible to view Ceylon in a different light: a changed perspective for the West not only to look at Ceylon as a country full of resources and a point of profit generation but as a country rich with a wonderful and unique aesthetic. This individualization of Ceylon was achieved by James Joyce successfully and the study analyzed this aspect using the ideas put forward by Victory Segalan on exoticism. Both Segalan and Joyce possessed the same attitude towards the East and their perspectives challenged the initial goals of the colonial project. The study also referred to Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* to explore the most common Western attitudes of the East and the causes behind them. One of the key ideas Edward Said presents in his *Culture and Imperialism* is the concept that Occidentalism and orientalism are not concepts that can be understood only by people of non-Western origins but both these concepts can be grasped by anyone despite their original roots as they are universal and common to human experience. Joyce's presentation of Ceylon in *Ulysses* is a fundamental example to support Said's statement as the Dubliner Leopold Bloom awakens his senses and his mind through the images of the far Eastern Island of Ceylon which occupy his imagination.

For further research with regard to Joyce and colonial studies, the field of exoticism can be analyzed in terms of psychoanalytical theory. Moreover, the colonial references which appear in *Ulysses* can be analyzed in a comparative study with the short fiction and other novels of James Joyce as well.

Thus, the study explored the role played by exoticism in analyzing the "Lotus-Eaters" episode in *Ulysses* and how by viewing this section through a different lens would position James Joyce as a radical and innovative writer of his time who was able to change perspective and challenge existing thought.

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