

# “Go for Soap”—the Lemon Soap for the Irish Conscience or the Pears’ for the British Conquest in *Ulysses*\*

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## I

I should like to organize the young men of Dublin into clubs for the purpose of reading *Ulysses* so that they should debate the question “Are we like that?” and if the vote was in the affirmative, proceed to the further question: “Shall we remain like that?” which would, I hope, be answered in the negative. You cannot carry out moral sanitation any more than physical sanitation, without indecent exposures. . . . If a man holds a mirror to your nature and shows that it needs washing—not whitewashing—it is no use breaking the mirror. Go for soap and water. (qtd. in Ellmann 576)

As the playwright G. Bernard Shaw recognizes, *Ulysses* is “a mirror” showing the Irish that they are in need of “moral sanitation,” just as *Dubliners* is intended

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to be a “nicely polished looking-glass” for the Irish with “the special odour of corruption” floating over the stories in it (*SL* 79, 89). If *Dubliners*, as “a chapter of the moral history” of Ireland, is “the first step towards the spiritual liberation” of Ireland (83, 88), *Ulysses*, portraying the “washing” of Irish nature for the discovery of the “uncreated conscience of [the] race” (*P* 253), is the next step towards the achievement of Irish spiritual sovereignty. With “indecent exposures” of Irish colonial life that is necessary for their moral hygiene, *Ulysses* urges the Irish to “go for soap” to clean up their character.

*Ulysses* suggests a specific soap for Irish psychological or spiritual washing: a bar of “sweet lemony” soap that Bloom buys and brings home (*U* 5.512). He takes a bath with the lemon soap and carries it around all day in his “hip pocket” where the “latchkey” is supposed to be if he had not changed for the funeral (4.72). Bloom, having forgotten to take the latchkey with him, carries the lemon soap in its place, emphasizing the symbolic meaning of the lemon soap: Irish spiritual sovereignty, for which the lemon soap works as a medium, is a prerequisite for Irish political independence, which the key may symbolize. With the lemon soap and his freshly-washed conscience, Bloom, the “competent keyless citizen,” comes safely back into the house; he returns “like the king of” Ireland (17.1019; 18.931).

The lemon soap that Bloom carries with him represents his consciousness of faithful love, which is required to create the conscience of Ireland, as “the lemon is a symbol of fidelity in love” (qtd. in Gifford 98). Bloom recognizes that colonial Ireland “needs washing” with love that will endure or embrace the dirt generated by a lengthy history of foreign domination that renders Ireland as “the only Western European country that has had both an early and a late colonial experience” (Deane 3). Thus, as the symbol of an all-embracing love that will wash off the colonial dirt from Ireland, the lemon soap on Bloom’s body is perceived or noticed about ten times throughout the day after Bloom buys it from Sweny the chemist in the morning. The lemon soap is once removed from the hip pocket to the “inner handkerchief pocket” when the Jewish-Irish Bloom feels uncomfortable “sitting on something hard,” sitting with the Irishmen who express anti-Semitism while riding

to Dignam’s funeral (*U* 6.495, 22). As the Catholic Irish casually talk of the sins of suicide and infanticide, the Jewish-Irish Bloom becomes too conscious of his bitterness towards his father’s suicide and his son’s premature death to keep the lemon soap in his hip pocket – that is, to faithfully love or embrace the Irish bigots. Nonetheless, at the newspaper offices, recognizing that colonial “Ireland” is the “country” for him to love, the ad-canvasser Bloom tries to post the Keyes ad with the “innuendo of home rule” in the newspaper; he puts the lemon soap back, “buttoned, into the hip pocket,” careful not to “lose it” (7.87, 150, 227-28). In the meantime, heading to the National Library in the afternoon after catching a glimpse of Boylan – his wife Molly’s suspected lover who is to visit her that afternoon – Bloom desperately searches for the lemon soap to remind him that “life is a stream,” “never the same,” which he cannot “own,” although he still loves Molly; he finds the lemon soap “safe” in the hip pocket: “Ah soap there I yes” (8.94-95, 1192-93). Yet, a couple of hours later in the Ormond bar, Bloom again sees Boylan leaving for the Blooms’ to meet Molly. While considering Molly’s affair as “[his] fault perhaps” and thus bearing “no hate” towards either Boylan or Molly, Bloom feels anxious about their upcoming meeting; as he “sweats” and struggles to keep his love, the lemon soap feels “rather sticky behind” him (11.1066-68, 1127-28).

Notably, Bloom the Jewish-Irish who suffers persecution twice as much as the Irish under British rule is aware of the necessity of unwavering love for all of the persecutors and the betrayers, all of the “usurpers” and the “imposters” in the colony. Notwithstanding his position as the doubly-oppressed by the Protestant English and the Catholic Irish, he advocates love:

- But it’s no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That’s not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it’s very opposite of that that is really life.
- What? says Alf.
- Love, says Bloom. (12.1481-85)

Bloom recognizes that “love,” the opposite of “force, hatred, history,” is “life,” “a

stream” that cannot be dominated or violated. In other words, “love” can create a sovereign, indomitable Ireland by giving life to the dead, dominated Ireland. Thus, instead of fighting against the militant citizen’s abuse of Jews, Bloom gives him a “soft answer [that] turns away wrath”: “[Your] God, I mean Christ, was a jew too” (16.1084-86). In this respect, Bloom identifies a way that the long-colonized Irish can create or discover their conscience, “the loveliness which has not yet come into” colonial Ireland (*P* 251). The beauty or conscience of Ireland can be created only when the Irish, like the Jewish-Irish Bloom, perceive the oppressive colonial reality with “love” that “turns away” or melts the long-lived and hardened anger and bitterness of the dominated.

## II

Appropriately, Bloom and the lemon soap, representing all-enduring-love-wash, are “a capital couple,” as the soap sings in Bloom’s fantasy: “We’re a capital couple are Bloom and I / He brightens the earth. I polish the sky” (*U* 15.338-39). The lyric is a parody of an advertising slogan for Brooke’s Monkey Brand Soap, which was published in 1891: “We’re a capital couple the Moon and I / I polish the Earth, she brightens the sky” (“Monkey 20”). The parody of the soap ad connects the lemon soap to Brooke’s Soap, which was claimed to be “the world’s most marvelous cleanser and polisher” (“Monkey Brand Soap”). Yet, interestingly, Brooke’s Soap, which “polishes the earth” in the ad, is replaced by Bloom who “brightens the earth” in the parody and the moon that “brightens the sky” in the ad by the lemon soap that “polishes the sky” in the parody. In British Ireland where people’s mentalities are pivoted on racial and religious prejudices resulting from the lengthy colonial experience, the Irish “hemiplegia or paralysis” (*SL* 22) renders the land as dark as the world of the dead and the “Irishman’s house” “his coffin” (*U* 6.822). Corresponding to this, the dark earth is brightened by Bloom who, freshly cleaned with the lemon soap, can clean the moral dirt spread over the colony like

Brooke's scouring soap. It is worth noting that Brooke's soap had been produced and sold in the United States until 1899, when its production was transferred to British Lever Brothers, currently one of the world's largest soap companies – Unilever. So, the 1891 Brooke's ad slogan, which Joyce deploys and associates with the lemon soap, served to promote the American Brooke's soap, whereas *Ulysses* is set more than a decade after the ad once Brooke's manufacturing was transferred to the British company. It is legitimate to assume that cleansing the dregs of British colonial rule with British-produced Brooke's soap is highly contradictory, as "there was a direct correlation between [the] commodity production and [the] territorial expansion" of the British Empire (Richards 130). In contrast, the American-produced Brooke's soap, especially the one that was consolidated into British soap merchandise much like the Irish were forced to be absorbed into British subjects, rightfully helps purge the abusive colonial inheritance and create a conscience for the Irish. It is not accidental, then, that Bloom recalls that he bought "American soap" for Milly when she was little (*U* 8.172).

Interestingly, both Bloom and Brooke's Soap cleanse the earth of British Ireland and are from foreign countries: neither Bloom the Jewish who is "from a place in Hungary" (12.1635) nor the scouring soap from the US is native Irish. Bloom, the Hungarian-Jewish, one of the most oppressed in the British colony, suggests a third perspective distinct from both the dominating English and the dominated Irish: "life" is not "force, hatred" but "love." And Brooke's soap, the American product that was sold to the British company, is renowned for its cleansing power, which is "marvelous" enough to clear the conflicts between the English and the Irish or the Protestants and the Catholics. In other words, in order for the Irish to take "one good look at themselves" (*SL* 89), they need a third and completely new perspective, as the Irish have been entangled too long in the mental waste accumulated as a result of the continued colonization of their land. The Irish need a "looking-glass" to reflect and show them their polluted mind. The Jewish-Irish Bloom, therefore, acting as the mirror on which the mental or verbal abuses of the colony are most inflicted, cleanses the abuses with love like the marvelous

American scouring soap.

In the meantime, the lemon soap, which is used for love-washing to create the Irish conscience, is parallel to the moon that “brightens the sky” in Brooke’s soap ad: “[In] the east, a cake of new clean lemon soap arises, diffusing light and perfume” (*U* 15.335-36). The moon-like lemon soap not only brightens but also “polishes the sky” that reflects the dark oppression of the Irish land by both the British and the Roman Church: the “two [secular and spiritual] masters,” “an English and an Italian” of the land (1.638). The Irish sky is covered with “maroon clouds” over the “green earth” of colonial Ireland (*P* 15). The reddish clouds, on the one hand, signify the cannibalistic exploitation of the British imperial power “sucking red jujubes [Irish blood vessels] white” (*U* 8.3-4). On the other hand, the crimson clouds symbolize the fire burning in darkness in the colonial hell of Ireland, the dark green world of the dead: the Church, like the “foul demons” guarding the dark hell-fire, are not designated as the “voices of conscience” to lead the Irish souls away from colonial hell but simply to render their suffering more painful (*P* 123). Thus, the sky, which is tainted with the smell of Irish blood sucked by the English and the soot of Roman hell-fire, needs to be washed with the “light and perfume” of the faithful-love lemon soap.

The blood-smelt and sooty sky cannot be cleared without first brightening the dark green earth, as the land is paralyzed by the hatred and envy of “a third” master of Ireland – “a crazy queen, old and jealous” of the two other English and Roman masters, demanding the Irish to “kneel down before [her]” (*U* 1.638-41). The “third” master, “an abject queen” upon whom “madness is come and death is coming” (*CW* 82), represents the “poor old Ireland” defended by the Anglo-Irish Protestants or nationalists who are in conflict with the Irish-Irish Catholics or the Church who is hand-in-hand with the English dominator (*U* 15.4588). The “third” authority, though resisting the two other political and religious masters, is no less oppressive to the colonized Irish, as the crazy queen is notoriously compared to “the old sow that eats her farrow” (15.4581-82). The “third” master of the Irish nationalists with their “coffined thoughts . . . in mummycases” characterizes the

mummified life of the Irish (9.352), who like the dead, waste away from self-pity and prejudice to strangers: the poor-old-woman image of Ireland restrains instead of strengthening the spirit of the Irish people. Therefore, without first overthrowing the "third" domestic bondage that petrifies the earth, the foreign yoke that damages the sky will not end.

Bloom and the lemon soap, as "a capital couple" who are to remove the colonial dirt from the Irish earth and sky, function as the medium of love through which the Irish can gain spiritual sovereignty, ultimately bringing about political independence. Bloom, the Jewish-Irish, as both the most suffering in the colony and the most qualified to give a detached yet sympathetic perception of colonial reality, is the most vulnerable to love, as he is induced to buy the lemon soap. Bathing with the lemon soap that is produced in Ireland by "John Barrington and Sons" (Gifford 570), he therefore starts the chain of the all-embracing-love-wash: "Love loves to love love" (*U* 12.1493). The conscience of Ireland is created when the Jewish-Irish Bloom, endowed with an objective perception of Irish reality, works with the lemon soap—the Irish-initiated love dissolving the accumulated mental waste on the Irish mind.

### III

In *Ulysses*, however, the Irish do not benefit from the lemon soap that helps create their conscience and spiritual freedom. The Irish are both mentally and economically hindered from buying the Irish lemon soap. First, the long-dominated Irish are not particularly keen on moral or physical hygiene, as embodied in the expression "dear dirty Dublin" (*D* 73). Predictably, Stephen declines "Bloom's offer" of the "Barrington's lemonflavored soap . . . (still unpaid for)" to wash his hands; the self-appointed artist to create the conscience of Ireland is even a "hydrophobe," "his last bath having taken place" nearly eight months ago, which signifies the nearly eight centuries of English-Roman domination corrupting the

Irish mentally and physically (*U* 17.231-39). Instead of revitalizing Ireland as a spiritual sovereign, Stephen judges, “We can’t change the country,” and declares, “Let my [exhausted] country die for me” (16.1171; 15.4473). Undoubtedly, the Irishman, like Stephen, does not understand “love,” the “word known to all men”: the “majority of” the Irish have “not a particle of love in their natures” (9.429-30; 18.1058-59). The Irish, “loveless and sinless” (*P* 221), need the lemon soap even more to wash their mentality, to make them feel love.

Second, as highlighted by the fact that the lemon soap has been “unpaid for,” the Irish are economically barred from purchasing the lemon soap, the means to finding their conscience and freedom: psychological self-reliance is accompanied by economic self-sufficiency. The Jewish-Irish Bloom who can afford the Irish lemon soap is qualified to be the spiritual sovereign who recognizes, “Ireland [is] my country”: he is fully aware that “all those wretched quarrels” are basically “a question of the money question which [is] at the back of everything greed and jealousy” – British capitalist imperialism preying on Ireland as a clear example (*U* 16.1111-15). The Irish, acting as “a bad merchant” who “buys dear and sells cheap,” however, cannot afford to have sovereignty over Ireland (16.738). Whereas the Jewish-Irish Bloom “has sense enough not to squander every penny piece he earns . . . and looks after his wife and family,” the Irish Stephen gives away what little money he has (18.1277-79). In other words, as psychological autonomy follows economic competence, economic nationalism, propagated by the Jewish-Irish Bloom, ultimately aims to establish Irish brotherhood or nationhood among all living in Ireland, given that “a nation is the same people living in the same place” (12.1422):

I want to see everyone . . . all creeds and classes *pro rata* having a comfortable tidysized income. . . . That’s the vital issue at stake and it’s feasible and would be provocative of friendlier intercourse between man and man. . . . I call that patriotism. *Ubi patria . . . vita bene*. Where you can live well, the sense is, if you work. (16.1133-40)



Irish nationhood or spiritual sovereignty will be achieved when the people living in Ireland "can live well" with "a comfortable tidysized income" like the proverb, "*Ubi bene, ibi patria*" (Where I am well or prosperous, there is my country) (Gifford 550). Such financial comforts for the Irish can be rendered by fostering Irish economy through the consumption of Irish goods, such as Barrington's lemon soap, which would in turn make the lemon soap or the love-wash available for all the men living in Ireland—that is, it would create "friendlier intercourse" among them. In brief, the Irish have to earn or make economic efforts towards obtaining the lemon soap—including efforts to literally or actually purchase the Irish product Barrington's soap for Irish mental independence from the dominator.

Other than the mental and economic difficulties of the Irish using the lemon soap, the larger and more severe obstruction or threat to Irish soap comes from the British Pears' Soap ad. In fact, as the symbol of British "territorial expansion," the British commodity Pears' is at the root of the Irish anti-sanitarian attitudes and economic poverty. The Pears' ad "Good morning, have you used Pears' soap?" is prevalent in British Ireland, echoing in Bloom's mind when he is looking at an Irishman who "wants a wash," who needs to "take off the rough dirt" (*U* 5.523-25). Pears' Soap, as a "new-style soap" made of "vegetable fats" and not inflicting damage on the human skin, was "translucent and hence seemingly already 'clean,'" which allowed the soap ad to make the "connection between being clean and feeling clean"—that is, to create the feeling of cleanliness from the clean image of the soap (Twitchell 40-41). By "appealing to both rational and emotional concerns" or satisfying both "utilitarian needs" and "psychological or emotional needs" of consumers, Pears' Soap took "a strong brand" position, providing consumers with "multiple access points to the brand" (Keller 99-100). With its image successfully connected to "feeling clean," the British Pears' ad attracts the advertising-man Bloom, who is very interested in "the modern art of advertisement," which is "to arrest involuntary attention, to interest, to convince, to decide" (*U* 17.581-84). Conscious of the significance of Irish economic "patriotism" and "friendlier intercourse" among the Irish, Bloom faces strong British competition with regards

to the Irish lemon soap. Therefore, before going to bed, he “habitually” contemplates “some one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop in wonder, a poster novelty” for the Irish product, such as Barrington’s lemon soap, to enable it to prevail in British Ireland (17.1769-71).

The Pears’ ads were created by Thomas J. Barratt, often credited as “the father of modern advertising,” who joined Pears’ Soap in the 1860’s (“History of Advertising”). One of Barratt’s efforts to promote Pears’ Soap was to make his slogan a “part of daily language,” which led to the painting of the ad “Good Morning! Have You Used Your Pears’ Soap?” on “blank spaces all over the British Empire” (Twitchell 41). The success of the ad campaign is revealed in the saying that “genteel people were bashful about greeting each other with the ‘good morning’ salutation, lest they be contaminated with [Barratt’s] adverting lingo” (42). Another campaign for Pears’ Soap in the 1880’s, which is considered to be Barratt’s “coup d’advertising,” went so far as to make Pears’ Soap “into a work of art”: the campaign, which took advantage of a painting, *A Child’s World*, renamed later *Bubbles*, by John Everett Millais, the “most popular and famous painter in England,” successfully made the “connection between children = innocence, innocence = cleanliness, and cleanliness = Pears’ soap” (43-44). Thus, the association between cleanliness and the British soap was established “all over the British Empire” through Barratt’s early brand marketing.

Significantly, British modern advertising, which was developed partly through the Pears’ ads, launched “a second colonizing attack” on British Ireland late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Leonard 62). The British ad agencies, as Diane and Geoffrey Hindley suggest, regarded Ireland as “a relatively virgin field for exploitation by [their] advertising clients”: “The Irish gentry still retain their simpleness of heart and a consequent belief in the goodness of mankind; hence they answer advertisements very easily” (qtd. in Leonard 62). In other words, it was easier for the simple-hearted Irish consumer, under the attack of British commercial colonization through advertising, to trust the “cleanliness” image of the British soap that was constantly promoted by the Pears’ ad than to favor the Irish lemon soap, which was

in need of a promotion campaign. Dependent upon the widely-advertised British commodities such as Pears’ Soap, the Irish would never make their own economy flourish or their country independent from the ruling English.

Inevitably, the British soap acts as a medium through which British capitalist imperialism dominates the mentality of the colonized people in the form of aggressive advertising, in addition to devastating the colonial market economy. In many of Pears’ ads, the image of cleanliness associated with Pears’ Soap is linked to civilization, which makes the dominated people, such as the Irish who are exposed to the prevalent ad and do not feel clean, consider themselves not to be civilized like the dominating English. For instance, the slogan Bloom recalls, “Good Morning! Have You Used Pears’ Soap?” promotes “daily washing of the face as something desirable but not universal,” which implies that “daily washing” with Pears’ Soap is regarded as civilized but not adopted by all human beings—that is, not practiced by the savage (*Soap Advertising*). The association between Pears’ Soap and civilization is more explicit in an advertisement published in 1890 that features an African holding a bar of Pears’ Soap: “THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION” (Richards 140). Obviously, the “civilization” referred to in the ad signifies the Western or the White civilization, as testified by the 1899 ad, “Lightening the White Man’s Burden.” Depicting U.S. Navy Admiral George Dewey washing his hands with Pears’ Soap during the Spanish-American War, the ad elaborates: “The first step towards lightening the white man’s burden is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness. Pears’ Soap is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances” (“Lightening the White Man’s Burden: Pears’ Soap Advertisement”). Pears’ Soap supports the civilizing mission known as the “white man’s burden,” quoting Kipling’s poem, although it is not certain whether Pears’ helps clean the “white man” burdened with the task of “brightening the dark corners of the earth,” or if Pears’ helps the “white man” clean dark areas. As a token of white civilization, Pears’ Soap renders the Irish, who are uniquely dominated as the White West European, psychologically more vulnerable than non-White dominated people: the temptation is stronger for the White Irish

than the non-White to “briefly participate in the [same white] dominant power apparatus” through the consumption of the commodity that can make them feel as clean as the civilized dominator (Leonard 62). In other words, the Irish living in the “unique circumstances” of colonial Dublin where “a surface similarity to the ‘First-World’ cities” coexists with “the reality of ‘Third World or of colonized daily life’” (Booker 1), can be manipulated more easily by “advertising that replicates and recirculates the cultural ideologies of imperialism” (Wicke 604)—that is, the ideologies of the White civilization.

In fact, the Pears’ ad restates more of imperial expansionism than the ideologies of White civilization, which turns out to include the non-White Japanese in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the newly-modernized Japan emerged as the imperial power of Asia. A Pears’ ad from 1904, “The World’s Fair,” which features beautiful women from around the world, shows “a Japanese girl in kimono” “among all the Western women” (*Soap Advertising*). Another ad for Pears’ from 1906, “Matchless for the complexion,” presents a Caucasian mother wearing a kimono and a little girl holding a Japanese doll. Remarkably, as these ads reveal, the non-European and non-White Japanese are regarded as civilized, for which there seems no other reason than the fact that the Japanese are the imperialists, like their European counterparts, who are “reputed to bathe daily” (*Soap Advertising*). It is not surprising, then, that an earlier Pears’ ad “set in northern Africa” and published in 1887 unflinchingly makes the connection between the British soap and British territorial or commercial expansion rather than the advancement of civilization: the ad depicting “a group of ‘dervishes’ looking at a legend, ‘PEARS’ SOAP IS THE BEST,’ chalked on a rock” claims that Pears’ Soap offers “THE FORMULA OF BRITISH CONQUEST,” which was “perhaps the largest promise made by an advertisement in the nineteenth century” (Richards 121). In other words, the “formula of British conquest” inherent in Pears’ Soap signifies not so much the virtues of cleanliness or white civilization as it does British commercial imperialism, which requires the “brutish empire” to expand ever wider and farther (*U* 15.4569). Consequently, the Irish under the fatal influence of the British ad

should be careful when consuming the British soap. Bloom, who perceives that an ad works like a "good salesman" who "makes you buy what he wants to sell," is rightly cautious of the Pears' ad (11.1264-66). He thinks, "Never know whose thoughts you're chewing," and refrains from being "choked" with the "formula of British conquest" as the "last pagan king of Ireland" was with "Christianity" (8.663-66, 717-18).

In this way, Pears' Soap, armed with British modern advertising that promotes its image of cleanliness connected to *feeling clean*, is strong competition for Barrington's lemon soap, which is, as suggested, associated with *feeling love*. In point of "feeling clean" or feeling civilized, which appeals to "psychological or emotional needs" of the dominated consumers, such as the Irish who do not feel as clean or as civilized as the dominating English, it is difficult for the Irish lemon soap to beat the British soap that is so firmly an established brand. Truthfully, however, the soap needed to create the Irish conscience is not so much the one that makes the Irish feel clean, either bodily or culturally, as the one that makes them feel love. Further, feeling clean or civilized, which assumes a distance or separation from the unclean or the savage, is in conflict with feeling love, which removes the distance to the object of love, be it clean or not. The feeling of cleanliness is exclusive and self-centered, whereas the feeling of love is inclusive and other-centered. Logically, Pears' Soap, which claims to make the dominated consumer clean or white as the dominator, tends to leave the unclean or the colored as they are, rather than "lightening the white man's burden" by truly whitening or civilizing them. Just like other British products targeting the colonial world, Pears' needs overseas markets—namely, the unclean or uncivilized—for its "surplus goods" in order "to keep the domestic market functioning smoothly" (Richards 123). Pears' has to constantly *divide* people into the clean (the white and civilized) and the unclean (the colored and savage) in order to *rule* the overseas market of the unclean as well as the domestic market of the clean—that is, in order to claim that Pears' Soap makes the unclean feel clean while ensuring that the clean is separated from the unclean. In this respect, the feeling of cleanliness that Pears'

advocates in the colonial world essentially does not allow the dominated to join or even associate with the dominating power: Pears' cleanliness, in fact, breeds "force, hatred, history" of domination, "the very opposite of that that is really life," which is unconquerable; it breeds the very opposite of "love." Solidifying rather than loosening the boundary between the clean dominator (English) and the unclean dominated (Irish), Pears' cleanliness intrinsically justifies the British conquest of the Irish.

#### IV

The lemon soap is as significant to the Irish as it is difficult for them to attain. The purchase of the Irish lemon soap, at a physical level, contributes to the potential prosperity of the Irish economy at a symbolic level, the feeling-love associated with the lemon soap helps create the conscience of Ireland, ultimately culminating in Irish spiritual independence. Yet the purchase or use of the lemon soap is impeded as the long-colonized Irish are neither particularly economical nor sanitary, as evidenced by the case of hydrophobic Stephen. Worse, the advertising attack of British Pears' Soap has almost religious effects, as Bloom recognizes that the "whole secret" of "an advertisement," just like a religious rite, lies in "repetition": "Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us. Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us" (*U* 12.1147-48; 13.1122-24). Advertising as a "social force" shapes the perception of reality: it "affects the way [the people] think or behave" so as to meet their desire through the consumption of goods (Krugman *et al.* 71). The British Pears' ad targeting Ireland constructs the Irish perception of colonial reality as unclean or uncivilized in order to create a desire to feel clean or civilized, which can be satisfied through the consumption of Pears' Soap. In other words, the feeling of cleanliness connected to Pears' Soap, created by inventing the feeling of relative-uncleanliness about Irish reality, confirms British rule of unclean Ireland.

Resisting all these difficulties, however, Bloom helps spread the lemon soap among the Irish. The Jewish-Irish Bloom is aware of both the economic and the spiritual or symbolic necessity of the lemon soap: he is endowed with "the proper spirit" of being "practical" as well as being "perversely idealistic" (16.1124-25; 15.1781). And the ad-cavasser Bloom can allow the Irish to have access to the "wandering soap" by creating "a poster novelty" that would defeat British Pears' (15.1946). Thereby the Irish lemon soap carried in Bloom's hip pocket around the British colony ends its "wandering" and performs the "moral sanitation" of the Irish, making them feel love and bringing them back to life.

Concomitantly, coming home with the lemon soap, Bloom revives the long-dead marriage between the adulterous wife and the cuckolded husband, which signifies the long-dead Ireland with the king deserting the queen who courts the "conquering hero" (11.340). As Stanislaus Joyce notes, "A number of generations of Irish history have been superimposed one on another" in *Ulysses* (Stanislaus Joyce 19). And according to early Irish history known from *The Book of Invasions*, the last of the six succeeding invaders of Ireland were the Milesians, the "descendents of Noah" (Tymoczko 26), who thereafter settled in Ireland as the "ancestors" of the royal clans of Ireland" (Gifford 356): "the oldest flag afloat" in Ireland, "three crowns on a blue field," refers to the "three sons of Milesius" who led the last invasion (*U* 12.1308-10). In this context, *Ulysses* is truly an "epic of two races (Israelite-Irish)" (*SL* 271): Bloom acts not merely as the Jewish-Irish ad cavasser but also represents the Milesian, the Jewish-descent king of Ireland who appears "not Irish enough" in contrast to Molly who has "the map of it [Ireland] all" over her face (*U* 18.378-79). The marriage between the Milesian king and the queen of Ireland has been dead and left lifeless since the invasion of the English and Roman conquerors, which the suicide of Bloom's father and the inopportune death of his heir Rudy may symbolize. For "10 years, 5 months and 18 days," since Rudy died "aged 11days," "carnal intercourse" between Molly and Bloom has been "incomplete" (17.2282-83), while the queen of Ireland Molly needs "to be embraced 20 times a day almost to make her look young [life-giving] no matter

by who so long as to be in love or loved by somebody" (18.1407-9). She blames Bloom for her adultery: "Its all his own fault if I am an adulteress," "living with him so cold never embracing me" (18.1516, 1400).

Bloom's prolonged impotence, the symbol of the long-dominated Ireland, which is mocked in a variety of ways in the fantasy world of the "night town," is caused by the premature death of the son. The father fears the life-giving sexual activity that may bring about another defeat for him: "If it's [the baby is] healthy it's from the mother. If not from the man" (6.329). The psychology underlying Bloom's impotence may be illuminated by the protagonist, nicknamed Bird, who fears sex in the novel *A Personal Matter*, set in Japan after WWII. Suffering from social and personal losses in the aftermath of the war and having a new-born son believed to be dying from an abnormality, Bird is impotent: "I'm afraid of the dark recesses where the grotesque baby was created. . . . My baby got hit in solitary battle inside a dark, sealed hole. . . . I can't send my weakling penis onto that battleground!" (Ōe 82). Both Bloom and Bird, with names symbolic of something lovely yet frail, feel guilty about the dead or dying son, which, proving their incapacity, justifies the oppressed reality of colonial Ireland and defeated Japan respectively. Although the lovely men feel sympathy for the dead or dying son who represents the frustrated reality, they concurrently feel responsible for the death or the defeated reality, which induces the frail men to blame the death on the women with the "dark recesses," the life-giving "link between nations and generations"; inevitably, the women in the colony are the "adulteress" or the "ma'amsir" who seduce or rule the men with the "weakling penis" (*U* 15.4648, 2880). Molly recognizes that Bloom would "never have the courage with a married woman" and that "that's why he wants me [her] and Boylan," who is "neither first nor last" to visit her, to see each other (18.1253-54; 17.2130). Moreover, the daughter Milly is "well on for flirting," "imitating" Molly, whereas the son Rudy is long dead (18.1023-24).

Still, Bloom, who acknowledges the faithful-love lemon soap, faithfully loves Molly the queen of Ireland: he has "washed his wife's undergarments," as women do a man's "if they really love him" (16.716-19). Bathing with the lemon soap and



seeing his male organ, "the limp father of thousands" floating "lemon yellow" like "a languid floating flower" "in a womb of warmth," Bloom remembers the life-giving "warmth" of Molly's "womb" that he has long forgotten (5.567-72). At that moment, Molly is transformed from the life-devouring "dark recesses," or in Stephen's words, the "old sow that eats her farrow" or the "batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness" (*P* 183), into the life-giving "warmth" of love. In truth, Bloom, feeling fresh with the lemon soap, fresh with his faithful love, recognizes the queen of Ireland as he did "16 years ago" when he proposed to her, as the "flower of the mountain," beautiful and self-surviving: "Yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life" (*U* 18.1575-77).

Abandoned by the king, the queen of Ireland who goes to bed with the English and the Roman conquerors is self-surviving rather than adulterous. If she were adulterous, the stain of adultery on the queen would never be eliminated by British Pears' Soap regardless of how persistently the ad claims that Pears' makes the Irish feel clean: the stain that is the mark of the British conquest of Ireland only gets darker by polishing it with the "formula of British conquest." The queen's cuckoldry goes away only when it is perceived with faithful love by the Irish—that is, when they use the Irish lemon soap. Accordingly, bringing home the lemon soap as the token of his faithful love, Bloom blooms the mountain flower, "brighten[ing] the earth," by marvelously removing the moral dirt of adultery and betrayal from colonial Ireland like Brooke's Monkey Brand Soap. The beautiful and free-spirited queen is born as the newly-created conscience of Ireland, transformed from the "old and jealous" queen, the "third" master paralyzing the land. The mountain-flower-like, self-sovereign queen promises to be faithful to her people as well as to herself: "Yes I will Yes" (18.1608-09).

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## Abstract

“Go for Soap”—the Lemon Soap for the Irish Conscience or  
the Pears’ for the British Conquest in *Ulysses*

Hye Ryoung Kil

Just as *Dubliners* serves as a looking-glass to show the corruption of the long-colonized Irish, *Ulysses* suggests a soap with which to wash the perverted mentality. Leopold Bloom, the oppressed-yet-loving Jewish-Irish, buys and carries a lemony soap with him all day around Dublin. The lemon soap that may work for the spiritual liberation of Ireland represents the Irish self-consciousness or love that will eventually remove the moral dirt of racial and religious prejudices generated by a lengthy history of foreign domination. The Irish-manufactured lemon soap is compared to the American Brooke’s Soap—the famous Monkey Brand Soap—which is featured in the 1891 ad slogan, “We’re a capital couple the Moon and I.” In Joyce’s parody of the slogan in the text, the lemon soap parallels the moon that “brightens” the Irish sky, which reflects the dark oppression of the Irish land by both the British and the Roman Church, while the loving Bloom, like the Brooke’s Soap, “polishes” the Irish earth that is paralyzed by the colonial abuse and violence. Thus, the capital couple Bloom and the lemon soap work for love to create a conscience and spiritual freedom for the Irish. The British Pears’ Soap ad, however, posits a strong threat to the Irish lemon soap. The Pears’ ad, “Good morning, have you used Pears’ soap?”—echoing in Bloom’s mind—is prevalent in British Ireland, constructing the Irish perception of reality as unclean or uncivilized. The feeling of cleanliness connected to Pears’ Soap, created by inventing the feeling of relative-uncleanliness about Irish reality, confirms British rule of unclean Ireland. The soap that is needed to create the Irish conscience, however, is the one that makes the Irish feel love for one another, by recognizing and embracing the truth

of colonial reality, rather than the one that makes the Irish feel clean like the dominating English.

■ **Key words** : advertising, commercial imperialism, Joyce, lemon soap, Pears' Soap, *Ulysses*

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