

The trope of water in Ulysses used as a tool in reading the city of Roskilde

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Abstract

This article attempts a reading of Roskilde, a Danish provincial town with a long history as the former capital of the kingdom of Denmark. The city was founded with the aim of exploiting the unusually large number of springs – an exploitation both the church and kings and merchants benefited from. The reading of Roskilde is based on James Joyce's *Ulysses* and to a particular extent on the water motif in this novel. *Ulysses* is used as an objective or a lens through which the importance of water for the development of the city becomes clear. Water is not simply a material element in the production of cities, but also a critical dimension to the social production of space and place and it continually interacts with political, socio-economical (in relation to gender, medicine, age, drink, power) or religious spheres, as the case of Roskilde shows. Joyce makes it clear that water is not just water. Water's inherently ambiguous character, as well as its phenomenological dimensions, including its powerful affective and sensual features, makes this trope an effective tool in the study of the relationship between literature and place.

Keywords

Place • Water • Joyce • Trope • Roskilde

1. Introduction

In this article, the trope of water in James Joyce's classic work *Ulysses* is used to interpret the heritage

city of Roskilde and its history. Dublin (as a stage for Ulysses), and the Danish city of Roskilde, exhibits a large number of common features associated with the aquatic element, as well as other liquid substances. It seems quite reasonable to put the two cities in relation to each other: Roskilde and Dublin were for a while twin cities and in this connection, a number of links were established, both real and symbolic. Both cities celebrated their 1000th anniversary (Roskilde in 1998, Dublin in 1988) through events that connected the cities. In Roskilde, a marathon reading of *Ulysses* was carried out, where a number of cultural personalities took turns reading the work over a period of 36 hours. The reading was transmitted via loudspeakers throughout the city. Dublin held its first Viking Festival in connection with its anniversary, with direct reference to a reconstructed Viking ship, which called at Dublin after traveling across the North Sea from Roskilde. When the Viking ship, with the name "The Sea Stallion from Glendalough", returned to Roskilde, a time capsule was brought on board, filled with letters from Irish children to Danish children. The time capsule, which also contains a letter from the mayor of Dublin to his colleague in Roskilde, will not be opened until many years from now.

My reading of Roskilde will be framed by focusing attention on what is both a central theme in *Ulysses*, and one of the most primordial elements, the one which pre-Socratic philosopher Thales of Miletus (c. 620-546 B.C.E.) claimed the whole universe to be made from: water. The purpose of this article is, via a reading of the motif of water in Ulysses, to shed light on the meaning of water in the reading of the city of Roskilde. Joyce is thus used as a kind of lens through which the city's close relationship with

the water motif is read. Roskilde, on the other hand, is chosen because of the many allusive connections between this place and Dublin.

As we will see, to properly understand the historical emergence and development of Roskilde, as well as certain essential contemporary aspects of this city, a look at water in its various dimensions (socio-political, economical, symbolic, religious/mythological, therapeutic) is indispensable. Furthermore, analyzing the ways in which James Joyce stages and reflects upon the themes/motifs of water (in addition to water carriers, like containers and vessels) in his works – in *Ulysses* particularly the episode *Telemachus* and to a lesser degree other episodes such as *Nestor*, *Lotus Eaters*, *Ithaca* or *Penelope* and other works such as *A portrait of the artist as a young man* or the poem *All day I hear the noise of water* – will not only shed more light on the above-mentioned dimensions of water, but point upon other sociological, political, economic, religious or medical analyses of water left unexplored. I am thinking about water's inherently ambiguous character, as well as its phenomenological dimensions, including its powerful affective and sensual features.

2. The Complexity of Water

Among the old natural elements, as these are perceived in the western world (earth, fire, wind, water), water is undoubtedly the most significant when talking about the foundation of society. Earth provides food, with fire food can be processed and land cleared and the wind makes contact across the sea possible. But only with control over water, the basis for the continuity of civilizations can be established. As J.C. Cooper claims in her encyclopaedia of symbols, water is the source of all development, central to the existence of all things in the universe, both creator and destructor, the undifferentiated; the intangible, the first form of matter¹. In *Ulysses* water is not just water, but liquid as well as fluid and juice. It is also matter, run, suppurate, bile and it is flowing, floating, and fluent, and it is steam, vapour like and saturated.

Taking a closer look at Roskilde, through the lens of *Ulysses*, and with water as a tool seems obvious,

since “water is always a metaphor of social, economic and political relationships – a barometer of the extent to which identity, power and resources are shared” (Strang, 2004: 21). Joyce lures his reader into *Ulysses* by emphasizing traditions of nation and church, and expounding his matters through metaphors of water. Thus, water is never *only* water, neither ontologically nor epistemologically. Water is not simply a material element in the production of cities, but also a critical dimension to the social production of space and place and it continually interacts with political, socio-economical or religious spheres, for instance.

Moreover, another highly relevant aspect of water serves not only as context, but also as an underlying force in this chapter – the question of gendered water. Water and gender seem to be connected in several ways, in fact in so many ways that we cannot deal with all of them. But as it will become clear, by reading *Ulysses* as a lens through which we look at place, gender and water appear as distinct tools in making Roskilde legible.

Articulating herself in a way that probably would have thrilled Joyce, Strang argues that “[c]hanges in material culture generate and reflect changes in meaning: there is a fundamental difference between carrying (female) vessels of water from the (female) well, and pumping an ejaculative stream of it out of the earth through a (male) spout” (Strang, 2004: 24). Widening the argument put forward by Wittfogel (1957)², Strang claims that “the control of water resources effectively helped to establish male dominance in political, economic and religious terms, and helped communities to embark upon a set of technological and cultural changes which led to contemporary social and environmental relationships” (Ibid.). The very last word in the first chapter of *Ulysses* – Stephen's exclamation “Usurper”³ – could therefore be seen (among countless other meanings) as a reference to the conquest of and control over water.

¹ J.C. Cooper (1978). *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*. London: Thames & Hudson. For similar positions see also G. Bachelard ([1942] 1983), *Water and dreams: An essay on the imagination of matter*. Dallas: The Pegasus Foundation and M. McMenamin and D. McMenamin (1994), *Hypersea: Life on land*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

² K. Wittfogel (1957). *Oriental despotism: A comparative study of total power*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Several scholars criticize Wittfogel's reductivism though (i.e. his identification of a single factor (control of irrigation) in the genesis of Oriental despotism) and attempt to provide more nuanced accounts of hydropolitics, taking into account the complexity of the various processes at play. See e.g. K. Butzer (1976), *Hydraulic civilization in Egypt: A study in cultural ecology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; S. Lansing (2006), *Perfect order: Recognizing complexity in Bali*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

³ For an insightful discussion of this issue see R. Spoo (1989), ‘Usurper: A Word on the Last Word in ‘Telemachus’. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 26 (3), 450-451.

Another important aspect that will be taken into consideration in this paper is the relation between water and medicine. The therapeutic use of water has been recorded in ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilizations, but it became increasingly popular as part of the Romantic movement in Europe⁴. Hydrotherapy, formerly called hydropathy, is a part of medicine and alternative medicine, in particular naturopathy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, that involves the use of water for pain relief and treatment. This medical field encompasses a broad range of approaches and therapeutic methods that take advantage of the physical properties of water, such as temperature and pressure, for therapeutic purposes, to stimulate blood circulation and treat the symptoms of certain diseases⁵. Connected to this, but more surprisingly, in her interesting investigation of people's perception of water in the Stour Valley, in Dorset England, Strang found that people's accounts often echo popular beliefs that water sounds replicate those "heard" or "felt" in the womb and therefore sound recordings of waves, heartbeats and streams can be soporific (Strang, 2004: 53).

3. The Streams of Joyce's imagination

Before discussing further the present and past water flows connected to Roskilde in their multiple dimensions, let's turn our attention to Joyce. Although the trope of water in *Ulysses* is well documented among Joyce experts, there are always some new aspects to

4 Interestingly, right up to the 1800s, in medicine (which was influenced by cosmology) one could encounter the view that man's character or temperament is a result of the four body fluids, corresponding to the four elements:
Choleric: yellow-red bile / fire / summer
Melancholic: black-green bile / earth / autumn
Phlegmatic: slim / water / winter
Sanguine: blood / wind / spring
and
Masculinity / Active: air and fire
Femininity / Passive: soil and water.
For an account of temperament from biological, philosophical and psychological perspectives, see J. Kagan (1998), Galen's Prophecy: Temperament in Human Nature. New York: Basic Books.

5 For an overview of the principles and practices of hydrotherapy see M. Campion (1997), *Hydrotherapy: Principles and practice*. Butterworth-Heinemann; and for an investigation of the theories, practices, medical and social philosophies, institutions, and the most important proponents of the water-cure movement in the nineteenth century see S. Cayleff (2010), *Wash and be healed: The water-cure movement and women's health*. Temple University Press.

explore⁶. Water is a crucial element in *Ulysses* and is often seen as connected to travel – to travel on water. This is the approach taken by Danica Igrutinović (2013) in her comment on water as a metaphor in *Ulysses*:

"The novel can be seen as a journey over water on several levels. The ubiquity of the sea and the river in *Ulysses* is quite literal. Tracing the wanderings of Odysseus and Telemachus, Bloom's and Stephen's water journeys are symbolic. Both Stephen and Bloom are in a way exiled from their true homes and wander in search of them and each other. Both, to their horror or amusement, discover the material and maternal basis of life, most often experienced and expressed through water, and are finally immersed into the chaotic watery hell of 'Circe,' from which they emerge unscathed, if not radically altered" (Igrutinović, 2013, p. 58).

But as we will see, the situation is much more complex. The first chapter of *Ulysses* is widely characterized by uncovering / detecting the Catholic Church's way of understanding the relationship between father and son (and the Holy Spirit). The references to the church meeting in Nicaea (325 CE), the sermons of Arius (ca. 256-326), Valentin (died ca. 166), Sabillius (lived ca. AD 220) and Photius (820-891)⁷, are all discussing whether Jesus is of the same "kind" as the father, and trying to elucidate the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the unity of the church, the profession of faith and so on. But all this rather masculine business is entirely overlaid (or at least made less significant) by the feminine angle related to water and the Great Mother. HE gets his ontological safety from HER: "His eyes sought answer from the river and saw a rowboat rock at anchor on the treacly swells lazily its plastered board" (*Ulysses* 2922/2010, p. 111)⁸. Ships and boats

6 This article is part of a research project on the use value of literature to shed light on themes such as homelessness, water in urban development, cultural heritage, etc. See Buciek, K. (2019), *Soundscape and Heritage: The Sonic Environment in Roskilde Juxtaposed with James Joyce's Ulysses*. *GeoHumanities*, 5 (1), 86-102. See also Buciek, K. (2021), *Ambiguity and (colonial) control in the hydrology of James Joyce's Ulysses*. *Academia Letters*, 1406. This article draws to a large extent on that work..

7 For details about this see D. Gifford and R. Seidman (1988): *Ulysses annotated*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 11-29.

8 There are numerous discussions of *Ulysses* in terms of gender. See for example: V.S. Bailey (1987), *Joyce's Feminism beyond Gender: Or, Maternity Reconceived. Works and days: Essays in the socio historical dimensions of literature and the arts*, 2(10), 45-62 // C.R. Lamos, *Cheating on the Father: Joyce and gender justice in Ulysses*. *James*

are loaded with feminine connotations. Here already, the intricate interrelationships between religion and gender are foregrounded. As we will further see, water also plays a fundamental role in this.

All the elements – wind, earth, fire and water – are part of *Ulysses*. But James Joyce was extremely preoccupied with water as a motif and uses water references in both *A portrait* and *Ulysses*. Already in the first chapter of *Ulysses*, there are water references on virtually every page. The word water occurs 16 times (232 times in the whole book) and aqueous references such as “stream”, “liquid”, and “sea” recurrently appear. The first chapter is tied to the succeeding one through two parallel phrases: 1) “A sleek brown head, a seal’s, far out on the water, round” (*Telemachus*) and 2) “A thing out in the water. A kind of a bridge” (*Nestor*). In other words: “On the water – in the water”. The bridge may have the textual function of reminding Stephen of his failure in trying to leave Ireland across the sea. The story takes place in a tower on the coast, originally built by the occupying British forces to avoid the risk of the French Navy attacking Ireland. Built to control the waters around Ireland, the Martello tower was in fact never put to use. However, it stands as an important geo-political symbol as well as a museum and tourist attraction.

To go back to the gender issues though and their connection to religion and mythology: three female figures – all mothers – appear in this chapter. There is Stephen’s deceased mother, there is the old woman who sells milk (an important cultural symbol) and there is the sea around the tower, which is also described as a mother. But at the same time, there is the recurrent longing for a father (a set-up taken from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*)⁹.

Joyce’s fascination with the elements (water, wind) and their connection to gender, especially femininity, is often overlooked in Joyce related research. Thus, for example, the renowned Joyce interpreter Terence Killeen, in his reader’s companion

to *Ulysses* (Killeen, 2012) indeed mentions the milk motif, but besides this, he only describes the *Telemachus* episode as a variant of and a comment on the sacraments and the Catholic Mass, Irish history and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (the father-son relationship). On the contrary, I would argue that the well-known father-son motif can only be comprehended in the context of a more general “great mother” frame. Even the son-and-father-meet-and-talk scene – the Ithaca episode – contains countless references to water, including Bloom making cocoa: Water boiling, cooling, washing, purifying, steaming, mixing... In this context, we can also observe the description of the progress of water from the reservoir to Bloom’s kitchen tap – in the style of a catechism,¹⁰ that is, a row of formal questions and specific answers in the style of dry scholastic logic. The episode parodies the realist or logical search for truth - the point being that in real life there is no natural hierarchization of concepts, models, and theories, but rather a flow of many potentially significant elements.¹¹

If we go back to the three feminine figures from *Telemachus* I mentioned above we can initially notice that the sea and the milk are both elements connected to nourishment, hinting toward rich mythological-religious structuring frameworks. In biblical mythology, the promised Land is “the land flowing with milk and honey” (2 Mos. 3, 8). In Hindu mythology “the milk ocean” is the source of the gods’ immortality and in the Nordic creation-mythology, the cow Audhumbla nourishes the giant Ymer with her milk. In ancient Egypt, the image of the goddess Isis breastfeeding a pharaoh is well known, and in Christianity Virgin Mary breastfeeding Jesus is one of the central motifs. All of these “women” are connected to the water motif – the woman is the archetypal “water carrier”, a motif that occurs through centuries of European cultural history (see e.g. the artworks by the Polish / Danish painter Elisabeth Jerichau). In *Ulysses* though, in addition to the milk-seller and the sea surrounding the Martello tower reminding us of these mythological references, there is another, more ominous, element: Stephen’s mother is brutally connected to water through the porcelain bowl on her deathbed

Joyce in context. Ed. Vincent J. Cheng and Timothy Martin. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 91-99 // E. Poder, Molly, Is Sexuality: The Weiningerian Definition of Woman in Joyce’s *Ulysses*. *Jews & gender: Responses to Otto Weininger*. Ed. Nancy A. Harowitz and Barbara Hyams. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995, pp. 227-35 // D. Henderson (1989), Joyce’s Modernist Woman: Whose Last Word? *Modern Fiction Studies*, 35 (3), 517-528.

⁹ For an analysis of Telemachus in relation to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* see M. Seidel (1983), Nabokov on Joyce, Shakespeare, Telemachus, and *Hamlet*. *James Joyce Quarterly*, 20 (3), 358-359.

¹⁰ For discussions of this see R.G. Collins (1982), Joyce’s Catechism in ‘Ithaca’. *Dalhousie Review*, 62(1), 70-86 and P.A. McCarthy, Joyce’s (1984), Unreliable Catechist, Mathematics and the Narration of ‘Ithaca’. *English Literary History*, 51 (3), 605-618.

¹¹ For an analysis of the use of scientific discourse in Ithaca see A. Fleishman (1967), Science in Ithaca. *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature*, 8, 377-391, and A.E. Skene (1981), The Poetics of Science: The Bloomsday Myth. *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 7 (2), 56-75.

filled with her green bile. By using such powerful imagery, Joyce points towards what more theoretically inclined symbolic analyses of water generally leave out: the inherent ambiguity of water, its capacity of being both a nourishing, life-sustaining source and an element tightly connected to decay and death.

As the previously mentioned scholar J.C. Cooper argues, “[a]ll waters are symbols of the Great Mother and connected with birth, the feminine principle, the universal womb, prima materia, the fertilizing and refreshing waters and the source of life.” When Joyce evokes the mother in *Telemachus*, this figure is partly related to the protagonist’s character and formation history, but also very much an evocation of “the beginning of everything” (both the work’s beginning and the story’s origin and an emphasis on the universal aspects of the work, a work about all people in all cities). The Great Mother is at once nature itself and the origin of everything, she’s the ruler of the elements. Her symbols are numerous but include in particular all waters, springs and wells, as well as containers, cups, baskets, vases, jars, and jugs. However, as we saw, there are also negative or, at least ambiguous connotations in this symbolism. On a more general level, the whole of *Ulysses* can be regarded as a container where all kinds of matter are mixed together with the purpose of creating something new.

4. Roskilde’s Flows

But can all these elements – aggregated as a kind of “lens” – help us “write” Roskilde as a place and understand (“read”) its intricate connection to water? The first things you encounter when arriving at the train station in Roskilde are three giant vessels on the square in front of the old station. Donated to the city of Roskilde in 1998 by the Roskilde-based “leverpostej”-factory “Stryhn” (making a special Danish version of a “paté”) in celebration of the city’s 1000-year jubilee, the vessels by the Danish artist Peder Brandes contain several important links revolving around water and fluid matter which will be explored here. As you begin your entry into *Ulysses* via the “holy” vessel (shaving bowl) of Mulligan, your entry into Roskilde is marked by similar symbols. The vessels are not the only artwork by Peder Brandes in Roskilde. Peder Brandes is also known for the decoration of the great door of the cathedral in Roskilde which, like the well, provides an example of religiously loaded symbolic manifestations in the city. Inside the newly renovated Roskilde Museum, a painting by Brandes’s wife Maja Lisa Engelhardt decorates a big wall, making a highly gendered allusion. The wife inside the house, and the husband outside - the feminine

painting vs. the masculine stone well – correspond to old gender stereotypic templates. The square where Brandes’s vessels are placed – “The Horse Square” – contains yet another water sculpture, “The Horse well”, created in 1945 by the Roskilde-based sculptor Karl Glem (1906-1976), an artist not that known to the general public (“Glem” in Danish = forget). This sculpture serves the purpose of reminding us that in former times the surrounding square was the old horse market in Roskilde. In that way, Brandes’s vessels and Glem’s well outline the main driving forces in the development of the city: water, religion and business.

As *Ulysses* begins with water, so does the history of Roskilde. It begins with the use of water in connection to religion, i.e. the power of water in baptism. Already the second stanza in what probably is one of the oldest written accounts of the history of Denmark – *The Roskilde chronicle* – from the year 1138, mentions the baptism of one king Harald (“King of the Danes”) in Mainz, Germany, in the year 826 A.D. The fact that Harald’s baptism takes place abroad instantaneously places Roskilde in a wider international perspective, partly linked to the spread of Christianity and partly to the geopolitical games of thrones from Normandy in the south to England, Norway and Sweden.

It is only around 1880 that Roskilde got a public water supply – until then, springs and wells provided the basis for life in the city. It can be argued that public water supply represents another important shift in power in Roskilde, the first one being related to the church taking control over the old clan-related structures around the time of the foundation of the city, and the second to the King taking over power from the church during the Reformation. This time it is not a power shift from the “people” / clans to the church or the king, but a shift in power from women to men. This is an argument based on Veronica Strang’s book *The meaning of water* mentioned above. She claims that “the invention of technology to pump water, although it doubtless spared water carriers much hard work, seems to have been largely initiated and constructed by men” (Strang, 2004: 24). In former times generations of women, children (and occasionally men) have gathered around Roskilde’s many springs and wells as informal social meeting places. This stands in a certain contrast to the more formal meetings held under the auspices of the city’s many churches.

Besides these connections between water, religion and gender structuring the development of Roskilde, other important socio-political and economic aspects should also be mentioned. Roskilde regains consciousness and is founded through the utilization of spring water. There are some discussion regarding

the name “Roskilde”. Popular definition is “Roars Kilde” (The spring of Roar - a viking figure), but more likely the name derives from “Spring of Roses” (Rosernes Kilde) - a very important symbol in the catholic universe. During generations, the water from the many springs in Roskilde has been used domestically as well as industrially. Why moving the power from Lejre to Roskilde around the year 1000 if not because of the stable and overwhelming supply of clean drinking water on the slopes of the fjord? The transition between the Viking age and the age of Christianity has to do with access to and control of water. In addition, the discovery of the use of travertine as a church building material contributes to this since it was in ample supply in Roskilde in connection to the water springs. There was also a growing need for water power to drive turbines, a need that was resolved by looking for sources with a sufficient drop height, respectively high-altitude offspring. Maglekilde in Roskilde was one of them and assisted in running several mills (St. Martin’s Mill, Maglekilde flour mill et al.). Maglekilde’s importance can be seen in the fact that it was originally owned by the Cathedral. The transition from collective control of water to the control of the central powers (the church, and later on the King alone) shows that control of water was deeply connected to the change in societal structure that followed the propagation of Catholicism.

Probably Roskilde has more named springs than any other North-European city. Once 24 great springs (including the above-mentioned Maglekilde – “Magle” is an old Danish word for “big”) – together with countless wells – supplied the city with water. Of these springs three were known as “holy water springs”, three were used for washing and four were utilized as power supplies to drive mills and turbines. The most known of these springs is The Holy Cross source (Helligkors Kilden), located south-west of the old city centre, giving the name to both the street running by (Helligkorsvej) and to a neighbourhood called Kildegården. Water from this spring is told to have cured the Danish King Frederik IV, suffering from an unknown illness in 1729. Afterwards, the spring was the official supplier of the royal court until around the constitution (1848). Two other springs are known as holy springs: St. John (Skt Hans Kilde) and St. Jacob (Skt. Ibs Kilde). The former is named after John the Baptist (Johannes or Hans in Danish) and legend states that spending the night of Skt Hans (June 23) at this source and drinking the water could cure severe illnesses. The latter too became an important route of pilgrimage, attracting pilgrims from all over Europe.

There are a number of other perspectives on the role of Roskilde in the history of Denmark, some of

which foreground the above-mentioned connection between water and religion. Many are well-known without the need to being subject to further comments, e.g. the rivalry between Roskilde, Lund/Uppsala and Bremen in becoming the centre of a Nordic diocese. Roskilde used water to establish itself as the most important Danish city - a position the city held for 500 years. What is less known is that Catholicism was banned in Denmark between 1536 and 1848 (from the Reformation to the Constitution) and only in 1902 the first Catholic Church since the Reformation was inaugurated in Roskilde. A Catholic school was built in 1904 along with a Catholic hospital (St. Mary). The inauguration of the current Catholic Church (St. Lawrence) took place in 1914 – the same year that the world “catches fire”, and Joyce ends *A portrait* and starts *Ulysses*. Roskilde was (and still is) one of the strongholds of Catholicism in Denmark and both the city and the Catholic universe revolves around water and the control of water.

In the following section, we will see what a co-reading of *Ulysses* and Roskilde can offer us with regard to another aspect of the above-discussed washing / cleansing issue – between water and medicine/therapy. I claim that literature can offer us different kinds of insights into hydrotherapy than either theoretical or practical/medicinal approaches, i.e. it can stage a phenomenology of the experiences related to such therapeutic practices, a phenomenology richly descriptive in terms of the affective involvement of these establishments’ users.

5. Curdled milk, bandage and cold showers

A dull parking lot in the middle of Roskilde carries witness today to a story that pulls threads from the early city formation during European cultural history to contemporary issues of order, power regimes and cultural technology. On the site stood – until 1972 – a building complex from 1846, designed by the famous Tivoli architect Harald Conrad Stilling (1815-1891), built to house Roskilde’s first and only water-sanatorium, “Maglekilde Vandkuranstalt”, a hydropathic establishment, i.e. a place where people received hydropathic treatment. Although commonly built in spa towns, where mineral-rich or hot water occurs naturally, cold-water-based establishments have a long history too. The location of the spa resort at this particular place is related to the fact that here springs Roskilde’s largest water source: Maglekilde.

The Maglekilde health spa took as its point of departure the so-called Priessnitzke water-cure-method that basically worked with the use of clean and

fresh (and cold) spring water, both internally and externally – that is, both as drinking water and bath. The method was named after the self-pronounced nature doctor and farmer Vincenz Priessnitz (1790–1851) from Gräfenberg, Germany, who, from the 1830s, became the model for those who believed in the healing effect of water. GP Becker's book about "the grand and strange healing force of cold water" was published in Danish in 1833 and became a bible for the use of cold water to alleviate both physical and mental disabilities, including the stimulation of sexual life. As one of the advocates of hydrotherapy – the Danish / Icelandic doctor ("landfysikus") Hjaldelein – described in a report from a study trip to German health spas, where he had seen water used to "cure all kinds of digestive, abdominal and pelvic diseases, hemorrhoids, skin diseases, allergies, arthritis and nerve diseases" (Haugsted, 1994, p. 53, my translation from danish). In 1845 Hjaldelein established the Klampenborg Vandkuranstalt located in Tårnbæk, which, after the German model, combined spa and sea-baths with rides, good food, entertainment and tobacco!

As already mentioned, Maglekilde Vandkuranstalt was designed by architect Harald Conrad Stilling, who at the time was about 30 years old and already quite well known, especially for his work with Tivoli. The spa resort was built as a large, partially coherent complex, with the main wing facing north and overlooking the fjord, and three north-south going wings, closed together at the south by a transverse. The design resulted in gardens, an atrium and a courtyard between the wings. The southernmost wing contained the bathhouse, built close to Maglekilde. Here there were also kitchens. In the north-south wings, there were rooms for patients / guests. The front building contained a restaurant. In front of the main building to the north was a garden ("spa gardens"). Connected to the institution there was a laundry, hired out to a tenant. In the courtyards there were latrines. The building complex was built on one level, but with brick-built basements in parts of the complex. The facade was covered with painted clinker boards and windows with Dannebrog windows (many with 8 glasses). Slate roofs were used, however, the bathhouse (the southern transverse building) had a tin roof. The main house overlooking the meadows and the fjord had two towers and an open area (loggia) in front of the restaurant-hall. Also, the bathhouse to the south had erected towers – in this case, to establish sufficient drop height for showers. The water from Maglekilde was mechanically pumped into a water reservoir.

Vapor baths, Turkish baths and other spa baths were amongst several hydropathical processes developed as alternative forms of medical treatment during the nineteenth century. Joyce was probably well aware

of such institutions. Dr Richard Barter (1802–1870) is claimed to have introduced the vapor bath to Ireland, having come under the influence of David Urquhart's account of hot air baths in "The Pillars of Hercules" (1850). It was the well-known Captain R. T. Claridge who was responsible for introducing and promoting hydropathy in Ireland and Britain, first in London in 1842, then with lecture tours in Ireland and Scotland in 1843. His 10-week tour in Ireland included Limerick, Cork, Wexford, Dublin and Belfast, during June, July and August 1843, with two subsequent lectures in Glasgow. It is safe to assume that Joyce was aware of the existence of such baths and maybe occasionally used them himself.

The "mosque of baths" to which Bloom refers to in the *Lotus eaters* episode was probably in Lincoln Place in Dublin's city centre. It was one of the first to be established by the inventor of an "improved" version of the Turkish bath, Dr. Richard Barter and had been opened for over sixty years before Joyce wrote his novel. The minarets and onion domes of the baths in Bloom's city have long since disappeared, as have their counterparts in Bray, Co. Wicklow and St. Ann's Hill in Blarney, Co. Cork. During their existence, they became part of the leisure world of Victorian Ireland, one of the attractions offered to the growing numbers of middle-class tourists visiting from both Ireland and England.

But let's have a closer look now at the way they appear in *Ulysses*. Here are Bloom's thoughts about these baths in the *Lotus eaters* episode: "Enjoy a bath now: clean trough of water, cool enamel, the gentle tepid stream. This is my body. He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward, lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower." (Joyce, [1922] 2010: 77)

Bloom describes a highly sensual experience, conjuring up an image of erotic encounters in the midst of grey city streets. Indeed, the Turkish bath in *Ulysses* seems to function as a metaphorical place apart from Joyce's depiction of Dublin as a place of cultural paralysis, a site where his character can seek out "consolation in an inner world of fantasy" (Kiberd, 2009, p. 270). Yet, as expressed by Breathnach, it is difficult to reconcile such an image with the restrictive norms we associate with middle-class Victorian society for whom these baths were first established (see Breathnach, 2004). Nevertheless, a reading of such passages once more shows Joyce's capacity to pass beyond more general, theoretical accounts of

hydrotherapy and touch upon issues left largely unexplored. In *Ulysses*, hydrotherapy becomes much more than the simple use of water as a cure. It becomes also an opportunity to explore intense affective elements, characterized by an immense sensuality and a strong sense of transgression. Bloom again: “Time to get a bath round the corner. Hammam. Turkish. Massage. Dirt gets rolled up in your navel. Nicer if a nice girl did it. Also I think I. Yes I. Do it in the bath. Curious longing I. Water to water. Combine business with pleasure. Pity no time for massage.” (Joyce, [1922] 2010: 75, my underlining)

This feature adds yet another level of complexity and ambiguity to Joyce’s rendering of the water motif in *Ulysses*. It is not only the case that water should be seen as potentially both a positive and negative thing, i.e. in terms of cleansing vs. pollution, but also that the negative aspect itself (pollution) can sometimes have positive connotations. Literature, thus can open the ways toward phenomenological descriptions of man’s intricate relationship to water.

6. Final remark

Maglekilde water culture sanatorium in Roskilde existed only for a few years. Since then the buildings were used as a mineral water factory and finally as a metal factory – corresponding to water in *Ulysses* being more and more polluted through time / throughout the novel. The buildings were demolished in 1972. There are probably several reasons why it did not go so well for the spa resort, but maybe it had to do with the fact that it was the strict and puritanical version of the water cure method that was practiced there – the so-called Priessnitzke cure. Lots of fresh air, early to bed, early rising. A strict diet consisting of sour milk and bread in the morning and evening, heavy meat dishes (without spices) with vegetables and fruit for dinner and no alcohol, coffee or tea. Furthermore, cold ablutions, ingestion of large amounts of cold water and cold bandages / wraps of wet cloth were in use. Such a strict cure was apparently not very welcome by the upper and higher middle class that frequented spas in Denmark at this time. They would rather have the “cure light” – i.e. seaside hotels with dancing, wine, socializing and so on. Who can blame them for that?

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