

Title	"[H]e daren't show his nose with the Molly Maguires looking for him to let daylight through him for grabbing the holding of an evicted tenant": Ulysses, the cattle economy, and the unwritten agrarian code
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Publication date	2022
Original Citation	Laird, H. (2022) "'[H]e daren't show his nose with the Molly Maguires looking for him to let daylight through him for grabbing the holding of an evicted tenant": Ulysses, the cattle economy, and the unwritten agrarian code', James Joyce Quarterly, 59(2), pp. 211-229. https://doi.org/10.1353/jjq.0.0183
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	10.1353/jjq.0.0183
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Download date	2026-09-24 15:16:13
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/17588

“[H]e daren’t show his nose with the
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and the Unwritten Agrarian Code

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In a 1907 prose piece titled “Ireland at the Bar,” a young James Joyce famously invoked the image of his Gaelic-speaking namesake, Myles Joyce, speechless and powerless in a British court, as a potent metaphor for Anglo-Irish power relations and Ireland’s disadvantaged position on the world stage more generally: “The figure of this dumbfounded old man, a remnant of a civilization not ours, deaf and dumb, before his judge, is a symbol of the Irish nation at the bar of public opinion. Like him, she is unable to appeal to the modern conscience of England and other countries.”¹ Myles Joyce, the figure at the center of this metaphor, was one of the men accused of a horrific multiple murder that took place at Maamtrasna, County Galway, in the late nineteenth century; on the night of 17 August 1882, five members of one family were brutally killed, some shot and some bludgeoned to death. When the counsel for the prosecution, James Murphy, was summing up for the crown in the trials of Myles Joyce and the other men who were charged with these crimes, he placed considerable emphasis on the witnesses, focusing in particular on their willingness to cooperate with the authorities: “It is some healthful sign of the times . . . [that] the three honest peasants who had lived their simple and homely lives in faith and honesty in that part of the countryside are now communicating with the magistrates and the police.”² Public assertions of this kind were to become less frequent, however, when it was discovered that not only had the state withheld information that brought into question the credibility of the witnesses and the information they had supplied, but that two of the men sentenced to be hung were claiming that the third man, Myles Joyce, had no involvement in the murders at Maamtrasna. The editor of the *Connaught Telegraph*, James Daly, who in the immediate aftermath of the trials had argued that “the great crime committed by those men

deserves the extreme penalty of the law,"³ was by 1884 describing Myles Joyce as "a murdered victim to the misdoings and miscarriages of that wholesome 'British Law.'"⁴

It is hardly surprising that Joyce would have chosen a legal metaphor to outline the unequal nature of Anglo-Irish power relations. By the time he was composing "Ireland at the Bar," the official system of law had long been established as one of the main mediums for the implementation of English rule in Ireland. Law and conquest in Ireland were most overtly linked in the penal laws, which, in the eighteenth century, inscribed colonial power structures into a legal system controlled by a settler-dominated magistracy. The statutes that comprised the penal code stemmed the economic, political, and cultural power of Catholics, essentially reducing the majority of the Irish population to the status of legal nonentities. Earlier policies, such as "surrender and regrant," similarly demonstrate the importance that was placed on legal issues, in this case relating to property ownership, in the colonial consolidation of Ireland. The Irish chiefs who, from the 1540s to the early seventeenth century, entered into "surrender and regrant" agreements were required to give up their rights and lands as defined by Gaelic custom and receive them back from the crown in a form of absolute ownership more compatible with English property law. This policy, though less blatantly unjust than the later penal laws, nonetheless constituted an aggressive attack on the Gaelic polity and the system of succession and landholding that underpinned it.

Resistance to an official legal system that could so easily be associated with the conquest of the country included a widespread refusal to engage with that system, thus creating a space for the establishment of alternative legal concepts and structures that monitored and regulated the behavior of Irish rural communities. These included such diverse practices and institutions as the unwritten agrarian code, also termed unwritten law; boycotting; Repeal Association arbitration courts; Ribbon Association courts; Land League courts; National League courts; United Irish League courts; and Dáil courts. References to alternative courts and other subversive legal practices in official and non-official accounts of the country indicate that alternative law was a component of rural Ireland since at least the emergence of Whiteboyism,⁵ one of the earliest examples of Irish agrarian insurgency, in the 1760s.⁶ While considerable scholarly attention has been paid to the many references to official law in Joyce's writings,⁷ allusions to alternative legal concepts and structures in these works have been largely ignored.⁸ This essay seeks to address the omission by teasing out the relevance of the unwritten agrarian code to *Ulysses*, linking it to the novel's broader themes. More specifically, it argues that viewing what is often considered to be a quintessential urban text through this particular rural lens draws our attention to tensions over

land and resources at the time of the novel's setting and composition and complicates our understanding of its treatment of colonialism and anti-colonial nationalism, including its critique of both.

The unwritten agrarian code was a set of undocumented rules of behavior that was generally known and understood, particularly by poorer members of Irish rural communities. The code existed separately from the alternative court systems, such as the Ribbon courts of the mid-nineteenth century and the Land League courts of the 1880s, but, with the notable exception of the Dáil courts, could provide the basis for finding someone innocent or guilty in those courts. Alternative courts were intermittent, and there were some differences between their concerns and operations, but the code was relatively consistent. Throughout the nineteenth century and even beyond, those who took over evicted holdings—land and property from which a tenant had previously been evicted—were considered the most significant violators of the unwritten agrarian code. In 1836, George Cornwall Lewis noted that “no prescription seems to give a title where the party has taken land in contravention of the Whiteboy rules.”⁹ In *Realities of Irish Life*, W. Steuart Trench refers to a mid-nineteenth-century notice urging “good friends and neighbours” not to “censure agents, for positively they must show waste land or rent, and never shall there be an Agent shot any more. But every person who shall occupy said place without the blessing of the family who was dispossessed of it shall mark the consequence of the family who shall attempt to dwell.”¹⁰ Such persons, referred to by Michael Davitt in 1904 as “the worst foe of the struggling tenant,”¹¹ were termed “land-grabbers” and attempts to deter them and/or punish them could include the sending of threatening letters, injury to livestock, burning of corn and haystacks, a shot or brick through the window, boycotting or the threat of boycotting, and injury to the self or even death.¹²

In the “Cyclops” episode of *Ulysses*, the unnamed narrator, a collector of bad debts with a decidedly jaundiced view of the world, ruminates as follows while listening to the Citizen pontificate at length on the exalted position that Ireland could yet assume (or reassume) on the world stage:

And he took the last swig out of the pint, Moya. All wind and piss like a tanyard cat. Cows in Connacht have long horns. As much as his bloody life is worth to go down and address his tall talk to the assembled multitude in Shanagolden where he daren't show his nose with the Molly Maguires¹³ looking for him to let daylight through him for grabbing the holding of an evicted tenant.¹⁴

The Citizen has long been a focus for Joycean scholars interested in the treatment of nationalism in *Ulysses*. Indeed it became a truism in traditional Joycean scholarship that, through this character, Joyce depicted Irish nationalism as founded in falsehoods, damagingly insular, and dangerously xenophobic.¹⁵ Emer Nolan, in her 1995 publication *Joyce and Nationalism*, offers a much-needed corrective to the more taken-for-granted versions of this scholarship, persuasively arguing that Joyce's approach to Irish nationalism, even in "Cyclops," is considerably more nuanced than had hitherto been acknowledged.¹⁶ She points out, for example, that the Citizen is not always wrong in his claims, including those concerning the impact of colonialism on industry in Ireland and the draining of the country of its natural resources. She also stresses that some of these claims, though presented in a hyperbolic manner by the Citizen, mirror Joyce's opinion as expressed elsewhere, most notably in his 1907 essay, "Ireland, Isle of Saints and Sagas" (CW 153-74).

Shifting the focus to the accusation of land-grabbing that the narrator of "Cyclops" directs against the Citizen adds a further dimension to the novel's treatment of nationalism. According to this narrator, the Citizen, an overtly nationalist figure who in Barney Kiernan's pub rails against Famine evictions (*U* 12.1365-69), has himself taken over an evicted holding and is, therefore, in breach of the agrarian code. Thus he is a man whose actions contradict an overinflated rhetoric that he could only deliver safely in an urban setting. This accusation—made by a man whose thoughts and comments, though vitriolic, are generally grounded in fact—points to an emerging chasm between mainstream Irish nationalists and agrarian agitators. In the late nineteenth century, agrarian agitation had been the driving force behind the nationalist movement. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the radical combination of forces that had placed the land question at the very center of nationalist politics in the Land War period had begun to break down, with the land question increasingly viewed by mainstream nationalists as a damaging social concern that detracted attention from the more important political issue of the state. The land-purchase acts introduced by the British conservative party in the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century to "normalize" Irish property rights commenced the process of transferring the land from the landlords to those who occupied it.¹⁷ But these acts offered little to smallholders and landless agricultural laborers. The poorer tenant-farmer might now be in the process of buying his or her small holding; however, owning this piece of ground would not make it any more profitable. Neither were smallholders and landless laborers likely to benefit significantly from the Congested Districts Board's land redistribution program;¹⁸ the Board, established by Arthur Balfour in 1891, was charged with

relieving congestion on land in the west of the country, but in its earliest manifestation it could only redistribute land that landlords and farmers were willing to sell to it. Indeed, the conditions of some rural dwellers had deteriorated rather than improving or staying static in that those who had once enjoyed rights of common grazing in untenanted pastures, a practice sometimes termed *agistment*, now found that these lands tended to be in the hands of large-scale cattle farmers commonly referred to as *graziers* or *ranchers*. The extent to which the needs of the poor rural inhabitants had diverged from the priorities of the nationalist leadership was to become particularly apparent during the War of Independence when an alternative legal system was established under the First Dáil to protect substantial farmers based in Connacht from land seizures and agrarian "outrages."¹⁹ The following decree issued by the Dáil in 1920 shortly after the establishment of the "illegal" Dáil courts provides insight into the thinking of those seeking to take over the running of the country: "That the present time, when the Irish people are locked in a life and death struggle with their traditional enemy, is ill chosen for the stirring up of strife amongst our fellow countrymen; and that all our energies must be directed towards the clearing out—not the occupiers of this or that piece of land—but the foreign invader of our country."²⁰

From the early years of the twentieth century to the establishment of the Free State, mainstream nationalists increasingly believed that the land struggle had ended with the passing of the land-purchase acts, in particular the Wyndham Act of 1903.²¹ Thus they considered the smallholders, non-inheriting farmers' sons and landless laborers who were responsible for outbreaks of agrarian violence between the passing of these acts and the founding of the Free State to be out of step with the new priorities of the nation. In the immediate aftermath of the Wyndham Act, the main focus of rural tensions was the non-residential grazer or rancher. Non-residential grazing was the epitome of agrarian capitalism in that it was most often associated with shopkeepers or publicans with surplus capital hoping to make a quick profit through the fattening of beef cattle. This type of farming, which involved the grazing of dry cattle and sometimes sheep over a large expanse of pasture for a relatively short period of time, had long been viewed with hostility by small tenant-farmers and landless laborers. Hence the intermittent reports throughout the nineteenth century of pasture lands being dug up by groups of hundreds or even thousands of poorer rural dwellers so that it would no longer be suitable for cattle grazing and would have to be let out for tillage.²² In Ireland, the "corn to horn" transition, as it is sometimes called, with "corn" standing in for tillage more generally, was not smooth and certainly not welcomed by all. After the passing of the Wyndham Act, the unwritten agrarian code helped legitimize the more intensi-

fied agitation that was being directed against graziers in parts of the country where large grazing farms had been established alongside small "uneconomic" holdings. Employing the code for this purpose did not require any significant revision to it from its principal use in the nineteenth century against "land-grabbers." "The Irish Evicted Tenants," who form a chorus in the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses*, could also be evoked for the purposes of this agitation (U 15.1882). Grazing farms, the majority of which had been established in the latter half of the nineteenth century, were reliant upon two main sources of land: untenanted land that in some cases had been previously occupied by those who had died during the Famine or emigrated as a result of it and evicted holdings formerly held by subsistency tenants. Thus thirty, forty, or even fifty years after these farms had originally been set up, they could be viewed at points in time when competition over resources was particularly heated as the former homes of evicted tenants. For example, in the 1880s, a priest based in the parish of Ross, which includes the site of the multiple murders in which Myles Joyce was accused of involvement, provided the following description of his locale to the Parnell Commission: "There were some extensive graziers who were in possession of lands from which tenants had been evicted in the years 1847, 1848, and subsequently. With these exceptions the destitution of the people was almost incredible."²³ A report published in the *Irish Times* in 1906 tells of a "large assemblage" that had gathered in County Roscommon in response to a placard that formed a link between evicted tenants and grazing farms that trumps even the Citizen's rhetoric in color and spleen:

Men of Kilbride, come in your thousands on Sunday . . . and show by your presence and determination that you are prepared to support the claims of the several evicted tenants of Roxborough lands that no grazier will, with honour and security to himself, lay claim to the lands from which your fathers and their predecessors were ruthlessly evicted without knowing that a united, determined, and a never flinching people are prepared at any sacrifice to have the lands which were theirs before cringing sleuth of foreign origin, or manufactured lickspittle, or heelrubbers of our own ancestry learned how to sell Ireland and Erin's children.²⁴

It was this connection between large-scale cattle-farming and eviction that allowed graziers to be branded as "landgrabbers" and dealt with accordingly under the agrarian code. Public rallies and mass demonstrations were held for "all who wished to smash and finish ranching and land monopoly and to recover the land for the people."²⁵ Ranchers and those in the community who dealt with them socially or in business were frequently declared "obnoxious" at such rallies and subsequently subjected to a range of recognized expressions of

communal disapproval legitimized by the unwritten agrarian code. There was also a sharp rise in agrarian violence, including setting fire to haystacks, firing into houses, and injury to livestock and cattle drives.²⁶

The period leading up to the heightened agrarian agitation against graziers known as the Ranch War overlaps with the temporal setting of *Ulysses*.²⁷ Joyce was very much aware of this agitation, demonstrating an understanding in "Ireland at the Bar" of what motivated it and what it entailed. "[T]wenty-eight years ago," he states, Irish tenant-farmers, "seeing themselves reduced to misery by the brutalities of the large landholders, . . . refused to pay their land rents and obtained from Gladstone remedies and reforms. Today, seeing pastures full of well fed cattle while an eighth of the population lacks means of subsistence, they drive the cattle from the farms" (CW 199). The later surge of agrarian agitation, the seizing of grazing lands that led to the establishment of the Dáil courts, coincides with the writing and publication of *Ulysses*.²⁸ The Citizen is undoubtedly an urban figure, but if the information supplied by the narrator is correct he has taken over a holding of farming land. At this point in time, a person living in Dublin who is renting land in the country is most likely a non-residential grazier,²⁹ a particularly despised figure among the poorer rural community. This would explain his interest in Ireland's beef industry, an interest he shares with the unionist Mr. Deasy.

The first mention of the beef industry in *Ulysses* is in relation to an outbreak of foot-and mouth-disease. In "Nestor," Mr. Deasy has written a letter on the topic that he wants Stephen to use his connections with the press to get published. Mr. Deasy tells Stephen, who is concerned that he will henceforth be dubbed the "bullockbefriending bard," that he has also contacted William Field—an historical figure who was a nationalist politician, one of the most prominent butchers in Dublin, and President of the Irish Cattle Traders and Stockowners' Association—to request that the letter be read aloud at the Association's meeting about the outbreak that is taking place later that day in the City Arms Hotel near the Dublin Cattle Market (U 2.431). In the "Cyclops" episode, the unnamed narrator is brought to Barney Kiernan's pub by Joe Hynes, who is coming from the City Arms Hotel and wants to fill the Citizen in about that meeting. Those in attendance, we discover, included a man intending to run for the position of Lord Mayor of Dublin who was in the company of Field; the cattle-traders are thus established in the novel as an important political constituency.³⁰ It is well known within Joycean scholarship and beyond that Joyce was concerned with accuracy—with getting the details right—when penning *Ulysses*,³¹ though this aspect of the novel can sometimes be exaggerated. The historical City Arms Hotel did have strong links to the Cattle Market, housing, for example,

the offices of the Irish Cattle Traders and Stockowner Association.³² Moreover, Ireland did indeed experience an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the early twentieth century. This did not occur until 1912, however, eight years after the novel is set.³³ Prior to that, "the country had been free of the disease since 1884."³⁴ Why did Joyce change the date of this outbreak so that it could feature in *Ulysses*? The most frequent response to the question is that the temporal modification allows for a Homeric correspondence to the slaughter of Helios's cattle by Odysseus's hungry men: sacred cattle that Odysseus had been warned not to harm if he wanted to return safely to Ithaca. But surely this correspondence could have been achieved solely through the multiple references in the novel to the slaughter of Irish cattle for the British beef market? Another possible response is that including an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease allowed Joyce to bring Henry Blackwood Price into the novel, an historical figure who, during the 1912 outbreak, hounded Joyce incessantly, much to his irritation.³⁵ The aspects of their interchange that were most clearly exploited for the novel include Price seeking from Joyce the address of Field so that he could send him a letter detailing how the disease was being treated in Austria. In addition to, or even possibly as an alternative to, these two propositions, I suggest that the novel's featuring of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, similar to its positioning of the Citizen as a "landgrabber" in breach of the agrarian code, can be contextualized in relation to ongoing tensions between subsistence farmers and agrarian capitalists who were becoming increasingly aligned with mainstream nationalists. Foot-and-mouth disease does not kill cattle. Rather, cattle with foot-and-mouth disease are killed. If treated and, indeed, even if untreated, cattle with foot-and-mouth disease will more than likely recover from the virus, though they may not be as "productive" afterwards. The disease, therefore, is a surmountable problem for small-scale grazing. In contrast, it is potentially detrimental for export-oriented agrarian capitalism. In the latter case, the priority is to prevent an embargo being placed on cattle exports, as happened in 1912, with the large-scale killing of infected animals and those who had been in contact with them a key preventive measure. In *Ulysses*, Mr. Deasy is concerned about a possible embargo against Irish beef though his letter, which references Price and proposes an alternative to the costly and inhumane measure normally taken to avoid such an embargo.

Bloom is also connected in the novel to the meat economy. The Blooms lived for a time in the City Arms Hotel which, because of its proximity to Dublin's Cattle Market, was a popular choice of accommodation for both Irish cattlemen and foreign buyers (*U* 17. 479–84). In "Ithaca," we discover that in 1893 and 1894 Bloom was a clerk in the employment of Joseph Cuffe, a Dublin-based businessman who

makes his money from the sale of cattle and auctioning of pasture lands (U 17.483–86).³⁶ In “Calypso,” Bloom recalls “those mornings in the cattlemarket the beasts lowing in their pen, branded sheep, flop and fall of dung, the breeders in hobnailed boots trudging through the litter, slapping a palm on a ripemeated hindquarter, there’s a prime one, unpeeled switches in their hands” (U 4.159–62). There is a touch of menace in this description of the Cattle Market that becomes more heightened in the account given by Bloom in “Lestrygonians” of the “wretched brutes there at the cattlemarket waiting for the pole-axe to split their skulls open” (U 8.723–24). The jaundiced narrator of the “Cyclops” episode, who is characteristically demeaning in his description of Bloom’s former place of employment as a “knacker’s yard,” claims that he was sacked for “giving lip to a grazier” (U 12.835, 837–38). No other details of Bloom’s confrontation with the cattleman are supplied in that episode, though in “Penelope” Molly gives credence to the allegation by complaining that Bloom is now “pretending to be mooching about for advertisements when he could have been in Mr Cuffes still only for what he did” (U 18.509–10). Molly’s attempt to have Bloom reinstated in his job is unsuccessful with Cuffe apologetic to her but resolute in his dismissal of Bloom (U 18.510–34); Bloom’s inclusion of Cuffe in a list of those who would be willing to supply him with a character reference is clearly overly optimistic (U 15.1008). In “Oxen of the Sun,” we are told that “in the question of the grazing lands [Bloom’s] peevish asperity is notorious and in Mr Cuffe’s hearing brought upon him from an indignant rancher a scathing retort couched in terms as straightforward as they were bucolic” (U 14.925–28). Bloom proclaims himself a one-time proponent of the communal working and ownership of land, more radical in his youth than even Michael Davitt (U 16.1581–93, 17.1645–49).³⁷ Did he have words with the cattleman about the impact of grazing on subsistence farmers? The subsequent accusation of hypocrisy that is addressed towards Bloom in “Oxen of the Sun” for lecturing to the rancher while he himself has “nearer home a seedfield that lies fallow for the want of the ploughshare” is clearly a reference to Bloom’s failure to resume sexual relations with Molly after their son’s death, but it also suggests that Bloom’s antagonistic encounter with the grazier was related to the “corn to horn” agricultural transition (U 14.929–30).

Bloom’s daughter with Molly, Milly Bloom, works in a photo-shop in Mullingar. The land around that town is particularly prized for the fattening of cattle. In her letter to Bloom, Milly tells him that the shop “did great biz yesterday” since it was fair day and all the “beef to the heels” were in town (U 4.402–03). While this term is generally a derogatory way of referring to a woman considered overweight,³⁸ in this context, it could be an allusion to a rural bourgeoisie created by beef-made wealth: Milly’s clients who can afford to get their

photos taken professionally. The "wretched ones" referenced in "Lestrygonians" are destined for the Irish meat market, but most of the animals upon which this wealth is based are "herded off through the streets down along the North Circular Road to the cattle boats moored at Dublin's North Wall."³⁹ The steady stream of beef cattle leaving the country is portrayed in the novel as disruptive to the workings of Dublin city; the funeral cortege making its way from Paddy Dignam's house to Glasnevin Cemetery is forced to stop when a "divided drove of branded cattle passed the windows, lowing, slouching by on padded hoofs, whisking their tails slowly on their clotted bony croups Emigrants, Mr Power said" (*U* 6.385–89). In keeping with his general concern with practicalities, Bloom speculates to himself and others about alternative forms that the cross-city transportation of cattle could take; he is in favor of the establishment of a tramline from the Dublin Cattle Market to the quays (*U* 4.108–10, 6.400–02, 15.1367–68).⁴⁰ In "Ithaca," he considers whether this could be paid for by those who benefit most from Ireland's meat economy: the graziers (*U* 17.1740–43).

In contrast to Bloom, Mr. Deasy's current preoccupation with Ireland's beef industry stems from an abstract adherence to the laissez-faire economic doctrine. Thus he opposes any interference with the market, even an embargo against possibly infected cattle. In "Nestor," he is keen to tell Stephen that he remembers the Great Famine (*U* 2.269), but at no point does he acknowledge the discrepancy between British interference in the market to protect itself from the current outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease and its earlier reluctance to interfere in the market to prevent Irish people from starvation.⁴¹ The steady stream of cattle leaving Ireland in *Ulysses*, transformed in "Oxen of the Sun" into the "horned" component of a ghostly "moving moaning multitude," conjures up an image deeply engrained in the Irish psyche of the foodstuffs that left the country during the Famine (*U* 14.1093, 1095).⁴² The size and significance of Ireland's export-oriented beef economy is not exaggerated in the novel. Included in Joyce's contemporaries who drew attention to it in their own writings was James Connolly. In a 1909 article titled "Capitalism and the Irish Small Farmers," Connolly reminded those naive enough to think it possible to limit Irish affairs to that which took place "within the four seas of Erin" that "one of the chief industries in Ireland today is the rearing and exportation of cattle for the English market": an industry under constant threat by the availability of cheap South American beef.⁴³ A more recent commentator, Peter Adkins, has pointed out that "at the end of the nineteenth century more than half of Ireland's entire land surface was being used for the raising of livestock, most of which was transported through Dublin on its way to England to be slaughtered and eaten": a veritable assembly line of cattle as

Bloom's imagined tramline suggests (1). Distinctions can be formed, of course, between the departure of the cattle and the Famine-era exportation of foodstuffs. The cattle industry is to the advantage of a greater proportion of the Irish population, most notably the cattle-breeders: Milly's "beef to the heels." But through the brief mention of the agrarian code and the breaking of it by the Citizen, the novel acknowledges those who have been negatively impacted by Ireland's beef economy. The slogan "[r]oastbeef for old England" (*U* 6.393–94), recalled by Bloom in "Hades" when he looks out from the carriage at the herd of cattle that has halted the funeral cortege, points to what Adkins terms "beef's status as a symbol of . . . colonial superiority within the mythology of British Imperialism" (6).⁴⁴ The additional mention in "Hades" of the "juicy ones" on the way to England suggests that this is simply another form that the draining of a colony of its resources can take (*U* 6.394). Bloom, who carries a potato talisman in his pocket (*U* 4.73, 15.3509–20), a further reference to the Famine in *Ulysses*, thinks of the lost "fifth quarter," the potentially highly profitable remnants of the animal that travel to England with the prized meat (*U* 6.394). Live export, which is what England demands, ensures that Ireland loses out on the subsidiary industries of the "dead meat trade" (*U* 6.395–96); Richard Perren has calculated that the "slaughter, butchering, sale, and processing of byproducts" of each animal landing at Deptford, London, in the late Victorian period brought between £5 to £6 to the local economy.⁴⁵ Furthermore, as Adkins argues (5), the structuring of the Irish meat industry at this time meant that while the English working-class had access to relatively cheap cuts of good-quality beef, their Irish equivalents had to make do with potentially dangerous "dicky meat," as it is referred to in *Ulysses*, on the black market (*U* 6.397). The "lost cattle" that Bloom blames in "Circe" for his cramp is likely to be an example of this tainted meat (*U* 15.208). The "juicy ones" on their way to England are being fattened on land that others, the poorer rural dwellers on unsustainable holdings, are seeking to plant for sustenance. The Citizen, who, in the "Cyclops" episode of the novel, pontificates at length about the colonial expropriation of natural resources in Ireland and the skewing of Irish industry under British imperialism (*U* 12.1241–64), has taken over an evicted holding, presumably with the intention of producing yet more "juicy ones" for an English market; the unionist Mr. Deasy is keen to protect access to it.

That this export-oriented cattle economy is simply another phase in the colonial relationship between Ireland and England is further suggested in "Oxen of the Sun." As Maud Ellmann points out, this is the *Ulysses* episode most closely linked to "Homer's fable of imperialism," which tells of Odysseus's men invading an island and stealing its resources; the slaughtered sacred cattle (79). Structurally a

link is formed in "Oxen of the Sun" between English rule in Ireland and the contemporary beef industry in that references to Ireland's meat economy frame the account given of the origins of that rule. Mention is made of the "Kerry cows that are to be butchered along of the plague" (U 14.546-47). "What, says Mr Leopold with his hands across, that was earnest to know the drift of it, will they slaughter all? I protest I saw them but this morning going to the Liverpool boats, says he" (U 14.565-68). "Mr Stephen" tells him of a Doctor Rinderpest with knowledge of foot-and-mouth disease who is coming to Ireland to "take the bull by the horns" (U 14.573-74, 577-78). Mr. Dixon asks if "it is that same bull that was sent to our island by farmer Nicholas, the bravest cattlebreeder of them all, with an emerald ring in his nose" (U 14.582-84). In 1155, Pope Adrian IV, formerly the English Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear, issued a papal bull giving King Henry II control over Ireland, thus legitimizing an invasion of Ireland under the guise of countering moral corruption. He is also said to have given him an emerald set in a gold ring to symbolize this control though there is a question mark attached to the historical accuracy of this claim.⁴⁶ "True for you, says Mr Vincent cross the table, . . . and a plumper and portlier bull, says he, never shit on shamrock" (U 14.584-86). And they dressed the bull "in a point shift and petticoat with a tippet and girdle and ruffles on his wrists and clipped his forelock and rubbed him all over with spermacetic oil and built stables for him at every turn of the road with a gold manger in each full of the best hay in the market so that he could doss and dung to his heart's content" (U 14.599-604). The papal bull that grants England control of Ireland is so pampered that "he would suffer nought to grow in all the land but green grass for himself . . . and there was a board put up on a hillock in the middle of the island with a printed notice, saying: By the Lord Harry, Green is the grass that grows on the ground" (U 14.610-13). The bull that grants England control of Ireland is the same bull that "run[s] amok over half the countryside rooting up with his horns whatever was planted and all by lord Harry's orders" (U 14.616-18).

The Ireland of *Ulysses* is a colonial cattle pasture reminiscent of Sir William Petty's plans for the country. In his 1687 "A Treatise of Ireland," Petty proposed the transportation of a million people from Ireland to Britain, with 300,000 left behind as herdsmen and dairywomen to look after the cattle that would feed England.⁴⁷ While his plan was never implemented, the Famine achieved at least some measure of what he had proposed. Employing a long historical timespan to explore the relationship between Ireland's human and cattle inhabitants, Fintan O'Toole tells us that "between 1841 and 1981, the human population of the 26 counties declined from 6.5 million to 3.4 million while the cattle population rose from 1.8 million to 6.9 million"; "[t]he cattle boat to England, with people on the top deck and

livestock down below" was especially effective, O'Toole states, at "dramat[izing] the link between the growth of the national herd and the decline of the nation."⁴⁸ The post-Famine corn to horn transition is presented in *Ulysses* as a product of an unequal colonial relationship that benefits some in Ireland—and the Citizen is clearly hoping to be included in that grouping—but results in mass emigration for others. Lord Harry—with King Henry II, King Henry VIII, and John Bull (when Harry starts to turn into a bull) conflated in "Oxen of the Sun" to suggest a long stretch of English rule—and the bull of Ireland "were soon as fast friends as an arse and a shirt" (*U* 14.638–39). The principal result of this friendship is that

the men of the island . . . made a wherry raft,⁴⁹ loaded themselves and their bundles of chattels on shipboard, set all masts erect, manned the yards, sprang their luff, heaved to, spread three sheets in the wind, put her head between wind and water, weighed anchor, ported her helm, ran up the jolly Roger, gave three times three, let the bullgine run, pushed off in their bumboat and put to sea to recover the main of America. (*U* 14.640–46)

The vast majority of Irish emigrants in the final years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century were the rural poor whose contribution to land agitation had fueled the nationalist movement. Their departure further allowed those who had gained most from the land-purchase acts, the large and medium farmers, including the "beef to the heels," to consolidate their economic and political power.

Ulysses is undoubtedly an urban text, but one with an important rural context. Viewing the novel through a rural lens reveals further nuances in its treatment of Irish nationalism and the colonial relationship between Ireland and England. Key to the novel's critique of Irish anti-colonial nationalism is its acknowledgment, through the mention of the Citizen's violation of the unwritten agrarian code, of the breakdown of the relationship between mainstream nationalists and the poorer rural dwellers who had been the driving force behind the nationalist movement in the late nineteenth century. Key to this critique is the novel's recognition of a growing alignment between mainstream nationalism and agrarian capitalism. Irish agrarian capitalism, which is linked in *Ulysses* to both the nationalist Citizen and the unionist Mr. Deasy, is revealed in the novel to be reliant upon a bloated cattle industry grounded in Ireland's colonial relationship with England and thus subservient to the latter's requirements.⁵⁰

Joyce's *Ulysses* is not mentioned in Conor McCabe's recent analysis of the decisions that shaped the Irish economy, but its treatment of Ireland's cattle industry is relevant to McCabe's account of the

deep-rooted structural issues that resulted in a highly dependent and, therefore, excessively volatile Irish economy; until at least the 1980s, McCabe states, "cattle was to Ireland what the car industry was to Detroit."⁵¹ The scale of the cattle industry, McCabe argues, ensured that, even after Ireland gained partial independence in 1922, its economy remained closely intertwined with that of Britain (7). Moreover, the nature of the industry—export-oriented and over-inflated—meant that Ireland's economic relationship with Britain continued to be underpinned by a power imbalance. While Ireland was an important food source for Britain, the cattle industry was not under Ireland's control. McCabe cites multiple governmental communications that testify to this, including an agreement made by an Irish delegation to London in 1947 that the total number of cattle to be exported from Ireland to continental countries following the establishment of an Irish Republic would be the subject of consultation between the Irish government and the British Ministry of Food (90). It is by now relatively commonplace for Irish commentators to note the irrelevance of Ireland to the Brexit vote. The focus in such discussions tends to be on the potential impact of Brexit on the peace process. But the vote also demonstrated a lack of awareness or concern about the extent to which, even after formal independence, Ireland's economy was shaped around Britain's needs. In *Ulysses*, Joyce uses cattle to expose the uneven benefits of Irish nationalism and to explore the colonial relationship between Ireland and England. After formal independence and even to this day, the cattle economy remains a relevant lens through which to examine the legacies of that relationship.

NOTES

¹ James Joyce, "Ireland at the Bar," *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1959), p. 198. Further references to this compilation will be cited parenthetically in the text by CW and the page numbers. While the sharing of the surname "Joyce" denotes a kinship of sorts between the author of "Ireland at the Bar" and its subject, dissociation is evident, as Margaret Kelleher argues in a recent publication, in the patronizing tone employed by James Joyce in his portrayal of Myles Joyce as a monoglot rural man—see Kelleher, *The Maamtrasna Murders: Language, Life and Death in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Univ. College Dublin Press, 2018), pp. xxi, 200–05.

² James Murphy is quoted in Jarlath Waldron's *Maamtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery* (Dublin: E. Burke, 1992), pp. 102–03.

³ James Daly, "Editorial: The Maamtrasna Murders," *Connaught Telegraph* (25 November 1882), n.p.

⁴ Daly, "Editorial: The Law-made Murder," *Connaught Telegraph* (30 August 1884), n.p.

⁵ On a visit to Cork as a child in 1894, Joyce was told that his great-grandfather, also named James Joyce, was a Whiteboy who had narrowly escaped execution for his involvement in agrarian insurgency—see John Wyse Jackson and Peter Costello, *John Stanislaus Joyce: The Voluminous Life and Genius of James Joyce's Father* (London: Fourth Estate, 1997), pp. 16–17. This story finds its way into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* when Simon Dedalus refers to his Whiteboy ancestor during the Christmas dinner scene—see Joyce, “*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*”: Text, Criticism, and Notes, ed. Chester G. Anderson (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 38. In *Joyce's Ghosts*, Luke Gibbons, acknowledging Joyce's supposed familial connections with the Whiteboy movement, draws attention to a less obvious influence of Whiteboyism on his writings: “in keeping with his family background, [Joyce's writings are characterized] by a linguistic Whiteboyism, resisting enclosures of language, whether by dominant groups or egotistical subjects”—see Gibbons, *Joyce's Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 101.

⁶ In a 1998 article, Donald Jordan provides a brief overview of these references, drawing our attention, in particular, to Select Committee Reports from 1825, 1831–1832, 1852, and 1871—see Jordan, “The Irish National League and the ‘Unwritten Law’: Rural Protest and Nation-Building in Ireland, 1882–1890,” *Past & Present*, 158 (1998), 146–71. Moreover, much of the agrarian violence recounted in testimonies contained in the archives of the Department of Irish Folklore at University College Dublin is interpreted as just retribution for obvious injustices or acts that transgress accepted norms of behavior—see, for example, IFC MSS 1234; IFC MSS 1213; IFC MSS 782; and IFC MSS 485.

⁷ See, for example, the special issue of the *JJQ* entitled *Legal Joyce*, 50 (Summer 2013), edited by Jonathan Goldman; Adrian Hardiman, *Joyce in Court: James Joyce and the Law* (London: Head of Zeus, 2017); and Goldman, ed., *Joyce and the Law* (Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2017). Moreover, the recently published *Counterparts*, edited by Danielle McLaughlin and subtitled “A Synergy of Law and Literature,” takes its title, McLaughlin tells us, not just from a legal term but from Joyce's short story of the same name—see McLaughlin, ed., *Counterparts: A Synergy of Law and Literature* (Dublin: Stinging Fly Press, 2018), p. xvi.

⁸ Joseph Valente convincingly argues that Joyce's engagement with concepts of justice can be usefully contextualized in relation to Ireland's multitegal society—see Valente, “Justice Unbound,” *James Joyce and the Problem of Justice: Negotiating Sexual and Colonial Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 1–48.

⁹ George Cornewall Lewis, *Local Disturbances in Ireland* (1836; Cork: Tower Books, 1977), p. 223.

¹⁰ W. Steuart Trench, *Realities of Irish Life* (1868; London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1966), p. 151.

¹¹ Michael Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland; or The Story of the Land League Revolution* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1904), p. 165.

¹² As can be surmised from this essay, the person who took over the evicted holding was more likely to be targeted than the landlord responsible for the eviction. There are a number of possible reasons for this. He or she was from the community bound to the code, and, therefore, the breaking of it was likely

to be considered more significant in his or her case. Moreover, the person was an easier target for agrarian agitators; landlords, particularly at times of heightened agrarian agitation, were often quite well protected. Also, from a pragmatic point of view, the outcome was likely to be the same. The end goal, after all, was to discourage landlords from evicting tenant-farmers; a landlord would hesitate before embarking on an eviction if it was going to prove difficult to get someone else to rent the holding after the eviction.

¹³ The term "Molly Maguires" or "Mollies" has a long and complex history. Its primary use is in relation to a mid-nineteenth-century agrarian secret society, but sometimes, as in this instance, the term was applied generically in Ireland to all those engaged in agrarian agitation.

¹⁴ Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler et al. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 12.1311-16. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text by U and the episode and line numbers.

¹⁵ See, for example, David Hayman, "Cyclops," *James Joyce's "Ulysses": Critical Essays*, ed. Clive Hart and Hayman (Berkeley: Univ. Of California Press, 1974), pp. 243-75.

¹⁶ See Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1995), pp. 96-100.

¹⁷ These land-purchase acts were designed less to bring about an inversion in land ownership in Ireland, though that is the aspect of them that tends to be emphasized, than to restore absolute property rights. Some previous land acts, most notably those of 1870 and 1881, contained measures that monitored the relationship between landlord and tenant and recognized the rights of occupancy that the Irish tenant-farmer believed he or she had to the land. It was in part a concern that ambiguous property relations in Ireland could create a precedent that would unsettle property law and rights in England, Scotland, and Wales that led the British political party, which claimed to represent landlordism, to set in motion a series of acts centered on the purchase of land by Irish tenant-farmers.

¹⁸ In *Ulysses*, an employee of the Congested Districts Board who is lodging with Bertha Supple's family decorates his walls with pictures of dancing girls (U 13.701-06).

¹⁹ These farmers had previously sought help from the Royal Irish Constabulary but had been informed that the police had neither the time nor the manpower to protect their land and animals. For further details on the establishment and operations of the Dáil courts, see Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution: The Dáil Courts, 1922-24* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994), and Heather Laird, *Subversive Law in Ireland, 1979-1920: From "Unwritten Law" to the Dáil Courts* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 123-27.

²⁰ The decree is cited in Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh's "The Land Question, Politics and Irish Society, 1922-1960," in *Ireland: Land, Politics and People*, ed. P. J. Drudy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), p. 171.

²¹ Nine million acres of land were transferred to the occupiers as a result of the 1903 Wyndham Act and its sister act of 1904—see W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland, 1848-1904*, *Studies in Irish Economic and Social History*, 2 (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1984), p. 39.

²² See, for example, Lewis's *Local Disturbances in Ireland* (p. 184).

²³ The priest's account is cited in Kelleher, *The Maamtrasna Murders* (p. 16). While such economic and social conditions could clearly give rise to agrarian tensions, the motive behind the murders at Maamtrasna is still a source of speculation. The men responsible for the deaths wore white flannel vests, long associated with agrarian societies in Ireland, which suggests that they may have perceived their actions to be in line with unwritten law, though it is possible that they were simply using the agrarian code for the settling of personal grievances. As pointed out by Kelleher, the most prevalent theory in the immediate aftermath of the murders was that a member of the Joyce family had recently acted as a police informer—see *The Maamtrasna Murders* (p. xvi). Given that non-cooperation with the official legal system was a core component of unwritten law, informing could certainly give rise to negative repercussions, though I am sure few in the locality would have considered that it justified the deaths of five people.

²⁴ See "U.I. League and Grass Lands: Meeting Suppressed by the Police," *Irish Times* (13 November 190), n.p.

²⁵ According to the *Irish Times* article, "Anti-Ranch Meeting in Westmeath," (10 October 1906), n.p., this was the stated purpose behind a gathering held at the Downs in County Westmeath.

²⁶ Removing cattle from a farm and either driving them to the grazier's house, placing them on another farmer's land, or leaving them on a road some distance from that farm was a common tactic employed against graziers or ranchers during the Ranch War of 1906–1909 and afterwards. "The road for the bullock and the land for the people" was a popular contemporary refrain.

²⁷ For an analysis of the origins of large-scale grazing farms in Ireland, and an overview of the opposition directed against graziers during the Ranch War from 1906 to 1909, see David Jones, *Graziers, Land Reform and Political Conflict in Ireland* (Washington: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1995).

²⁸ For further information on Irish agrarian agitation in the period leading up to the establishment of the Free State, see Fergus Campbell, "Land and Revolution in the West of Ireland, 1918–1921," *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), and Jones, "The Issue of Land Distribution: Revisiting Graziers, Land Reform and Political Conflict in Ireland," *Land Questions in Modern Ireland*, ed. Fergus Campbell and Tony Varley (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2013), pp. 117–48.

²⁹ This is a further link between the Citizen and Polyphemus, Homer's Cyclops, who grazes goats and sheep.

³⁰ "Who is the long fellow running for the mayoralty, Alf? says Joe. Friend of yours, says Alf. Nannan? Says Joe. The Mimer? I won't mention any names, says Alf. I thought so, says Joe. I saw him up at that meeting now with William Field, M.P., the cattle traders" (*U* 12.823–28). This is a reference to Joseph Patrick Nannetti, an historical figure who was Lord Mayor of Dublin from 1906 to 1908.

³¹ For example, the claim that Joyce is supposed to have made that if Dublin were ever demolished in some catastrophe it could be rebuilt using *Ulysses* as a guide is commonly cited in both scholarly writings and promotional material stemming from the Joyce-related tourism industry—see Joyce to Frank Budgen, as quoted in Budgen's *James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses"* (1934; Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 67–68.

³² See Peter Costello, *Leopold Bloom: A Biography* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981), p. 53.

³³ *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, cited earlier, includes a 1912 *Freeman's Journal* sub-editorial on the actual outbreak titled "Politics and Cattle Disease" supposedly written by Joyce (CW 238–41). More recently, however, Terence Matthews has successfully challenged the long-held assumption that Joyce was the author of this piece—see Matthews, "An Emendation to the Joycean Canon: The Last Hurrah for 'Politics and Cattle Disease,'" *JJQ*, 44 (Spring 2007), 441–53.

³⁴ Brian Ó Súilleabháin, "The Bullockbefriending Bard: *Ulysses* and the Foot and Mouth Disease," *Irish Veterinary News* (November 1986), 4.

³⁵ See Maud Ellmann, "Ulysses: Changing into an Animal," *Field Day Review*, 2 (2006), 81. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

³⁶ Joseph Cuffe is one of many historical figures featured in *Ulysses*. In addition to his cattle-related business, he owned an estate near Ballacolla, County Laois—see Costello's *Leopold Bloom* (p. 53).

³⁷ Michael Davitt, one of the most prominent leaders of the Land League, was a social radical who, concerned about the potentially uneven impact of the "revolution" that was "the repossession of the soil of the country," espoused land nationalization—see Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland* (pp. xii, xiii), and "The Irish Social Problem," *Today*, 4 (April 1884), n.p.

³⁸ See, for example, Bannion's description of Milly Bloom in "Oxen of the Sun" as "big of her age and beef to the heel" (U 14.502–83). Bloom's use of the phrase in "Lestrygonians" and "Nausicaa" when referring to a woman with "thick feet" who is up from the country and wealthy enough to shop in Grafton Street brings together the two connotations attached to it in *Ulysses* (U 8.614–18, 13.931–32).

³⁹ See Costello's *Leopold Bloom* (p. 54). The main speaker in "Tilly," the 1904 poem that opens Joyce's unpaginated poetry collection *Pomes Penyeach*, is a cattle drover "urging" a herd "along a cold red road . . . above Cabra"—Joyce, "Tilly," *Pomes Penyeach* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1927).

⁴⁰ In a recent article, Peter Adkins argues that Bloom turns to economic concerns in "Hades" to displace the unsettling cries of the animals. It is easier for him, Adkins contends, to ponder the practicalities of the dead-meat industry than focus on the animals' fear—see Adkins, "The Eyes of That Cow: Eating Animals and Theorizing Vegetarianism in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," *Humanities*, 6 (2017), article 46, 55–56, <<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/6/3/46/pdf>> (accessed 1 October 2019). Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. While acknowledging that ethical issues relating to non-human animals are important to *Ulysses* and while recognizing that Bloom is depicted in the novel as being particularly empathetic to his non-human counterparts, I suggest that this passage, in keeping with other aspects of the treatment of cattle in the novel, is primarily concerned with establishing, through Bloom's reflections, some key characteristics of an export-oriented cattle industry grounded in colonialism.

⁴¹ For a passionate and insightful account of the function served by political economy and, in particular, the laissez-faire doctrine in the colonial relationship between Ireland and Britain, see Tadhg Foley, *Death by Discourse?: Political Economy and the Great Irish Famine* (Hamden: Quinnipiac Univ. Press, 2016).

⁴² In "Cyclops," the Citizen references this Famine-era exportation of food products out of Ireland (U 12.1369–71).

⁴³ James Connolly, "Capitalism and the Irish Small Farmers, 1909," *Collected Works* (Dublin: New Books, 1988), 2:231. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. In a recent *JJQ* essay, Robert Brazeau discusses a number of important publications in colonial ecology that demonstrate a similar awareness of the global nature of the meat food chains that sustained the imperial diet in the late nineteenth century—see Brazeau, "'The Sassenach wants his morning rashers': The Colonial Market and the Commodified Animal in 'Telemachus,'" *JJQ*, 58 (Fall 2020–Winter 2021), 26.

⁴⁴ In "Oxen of the Sun," the English are characterized by "beer, beef, business, bibles, bulldogs, battleships, buggery and bishops" (U 14.1459–60). For a detailed overview and analysis of food words in *Ulysses*, see Felicity (Flicka) Small, "The Semiotics of Food in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" (Ph.D. thesis, University College Cork, 2021).

⁴⁵ Richard Perren, "Filth and Profit, Disease and Health: Public and Private Impediments to Slaughterhouse Reform in Victorian Britain," *Meat, Modernity and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*, ed. Paula Young Lee (Lebanon: Univ. of New Hampshire Press, 2008), p. 145. Perren's information is cited in Adkins's "The Eyes of That Cow" (p. 5).

⁴⁶ This is one of a number of references to emeralds or green stones in *Ulysses*. The first appearance of this recurrent image for Ireland is also linked to colonialism: the green stone that decorates Haines's cigarette case (U 1.615–16). That the case is held in Haines's hand and offered to Stephen indicates the Englishman's sense of ownership of Ireland. The content of the case, cigarettes, is a reminder of the link between colonialism and industry.

⁴⁷ Sir William Petty, "A Treatise of Ireland, 1687," *Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. Charles Henry Hull (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1899), 2:549–621.

⁴⁸ Fintan O'Toole, "Too Many Claims About Irish Beef are Pure Bull," *Irish Times* (6 July 2019), n.p.

⁴⁹ This raft, of course, corresponds to the raft that Odysseus must make for himself to escape Helios's island after his men slaughter the sacred cattle. Thus in Joyce's reworking of this aspect of *The Odyssey*, the men are contradictorily figured as both invaders and of the island.

⁵⁰ And, indeed, at the time the novel is set, the cattle industry accounted for two-thirds of Ireland's wealth—see Adkins, "The Eyes of that Cow" (p. 4).

⁵¹ Conor McCabe, *Sins of the Father: The Decisions That Shaped the Irish Economy*, rev. ed. (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2013), p. 7. Hence, we note the exceptional level of political influence exerted by the beef industry on Dáil Éireann, as revealed by the 1990s Beef Tribunal. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.