

Queer Animals and Agriculture in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

By

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### Abstract

This thesis will read James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a text that is fundamentally concerned with ecological issues, demonstrating awareness of the land beyond and outside of Dublin. Joyce frequently depicts the colonization of Ireland as centered on the control of land in the form of agriculture, which he brings into the political foreground of the novel's characters. I will argue further that this novel is critical of the violent nationalist rhetoric and insurrections of early 1900s Ireland, a movement which perpetuated the agricultural control of land. As an effective rebellion to this aporia, which Joseph Valente has termed "the metrocolonial double bind," I will read the novel's queer ecology, a non-violent resistance that moves beyond constricting categories of human/animal, urban/rural, and opens up the world for novel ways of living and being.

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For the inimicable Sally Mac, my mother

1948-2012

For James and Charlie (and LGC and Harry, too):

They know perfectly well why

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 1</b>	
“The Filthy Cowyard”: <i>Portrait</i> and Agrilogistics.....	11
<b>Chapter 2</b>	
“The Old Sow that Eats Her Farrow”: <i>Portrait</i> and Violent Resistance.....	31
<b>Chapter 3</b>	
“We are all animals.” <i>Portrait</i> ’s Queer Ecology as Non-Violent Resistance.....	50
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	78
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	80

## Introduction

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road  
and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby  
tuckoo....

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

These words open James Joyce's 1916 novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce's semi-autobiographical account of protagonist Stephen Dedalus's coming into being as an artist in the social, cultural and colonial context of turn-of-the-twentieth century Ireland. This sentence is also surprising for its pairing of classic timeless narratives ("once upon a time") with the sense of immediacy and specificity of place. It also reveals Stephen (and Joyce's) affection with his literary innovations and word-play. Indeed, as William York Tindall states:

[m]any of the motifs that help make *A Portrait* dense and coherent are stated in the first two pages. This prelude, important literally for revealing Stephen's infancy and his delight in all the five senses, introduces road, cow, water, woman, flower, and bird, the things to be elaborated. (Tindall 86)

This group of objects in fact inaugurates the critical thrust of this thesis, which frames the novel as a profoundly and revolutionarily ecological text: it is a portrait of land, space, animals, and Stephen's conception of his place in this ecological network. I argue that road, cows, water, women, flowers and birds are woven throughout the novel's pages, and are the means by which Stephen comes fragmentarily to understand himself as colonized, as a non-violent rebel, and as an animal artist who revels in the dirtiness and potentiality of a chaotic, and ultimately unknowable, earth.

While the critical tradition of James Joyce scholarship has historically focused on more urban, Dublin-based readings and interpretations of his writing, a growing body of scholarship is beginning to consider Joyce in a more environmental way, eschewing critical readings centred on

“confinement to a narrow and purely urban space, and [instead] point[ing] towards the transcendence of those limits” (Nolan 109). That said, little attention has been given to Joyce’s understanding of and political commitment to rural and agrarian spaces, and Dublin’s interconnectedness with these spaces, without resorting to the kinds of urban versus rural binaries, which reassert colonial demarcations of proper or ideal land use. The insights provided by postcolonial criticism of Joyce’s work, such as Vincent Cheng’s foundational work *Joyce, Race and Empire* (1995), help to open up this urban setting that has been hermetically-sealed from the land around it, by showing the network of spaces, places and voices implicated in the British empire of which Ireland formed a part. Indeed, Cheng’s project is “centrally concerned with the relation of race/ethnicity to imperial power” and how this relation is “explored within the Joycean parameters and discourses of otherness, marginality, and exile” (Cheng 7). Cheng argues that Joyce’s writing taken as a collection is a “dialogic locus for the many particular, historically based voices of the variant social discourses within the various levels of both hegemony and resistance” (9). However, Jason Mezey notes how careful reading of Joyce’s depictions of land and geography “provides the opportunity to unravel and examine the knots of colonial tension,” thereby “allowing for an increased understanding of Joyce’s postcolonial literary strategy” (Mezey 348). This thesis heeds Mezey’s call for increased attention to the geography of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* with a reading that brings together postcolonial and ecocritical readings of the novel’s treatment of the land and its inhabitants.

In fact, recent literary ecocriticism is concerned with the role of agriculture and the false dichotomy between urban space and rural areas of which *Portrait* is also critical. John Patrick Montaña notes that the British model of agricultural imperialism was “founded on the production of agricultural surpluses and settlement in cities and permanent dwellings” (Montaña



215). Timothy Morton takes this farther, asserting that the centre of “an agricultural society” forges the Western “city-state” (Morton *Oedipal* 18). Ireland itself is part of an agricultural empire, with Britain as the ostensible stable centre, whose urban power was produced through the domination of Irish agricultural land. Indeed, in his essay “Nationalism: Irony and Commitment,” Terry Eagleton notes how the Irish viewed themselves as an outpost of Britain, “simply denizens of a convenient neighboring island” (Eagleton 29), that can be exploited for agricultural gain. Joyce, through his character Stephen Dedalus, in fact demonstrates much concern for the ecological degradation of areas beyond Dublin, especially through agricultural development. Thus, in this thesis, I will demonstrate that postcolonial readings of Joyce’s novel must be filled out by the consideration of agrarian space. Specifically, I will show how *Portrait* is critical of not only Britain’s control of Irish agricultural land and of the interspecies colonialism inherent in the process of industrialized agriculture, but also of the employment of these same tropes and mechanisms of ecological oppression in the nationalist movements of Joyce’s time.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to explain and summarize briefly the historical background to the colonial control of Irish land, as this history forms the backdrop of Joyce’s novel, and will be taken up in subsequent chapters. The first chapter focuses on Joyce’s novel as a work of decolonization, which is critical of the imperial control of Irish agriculture that was ongoing during Joyce’s lifetime. This chapter will fully realize the links that Joyce draws among the subjugation of the land, animals and people under British imperial rule. Britain as a colonial force had been present in Ireland since at least the early Middle Ages, yet Britain’s rule was only officially established in 1541 during the reign of King Henry VIII, who sought to consolidate “nominal feudal ties into effective administrative ones” (Kee 11). One feature of this

formalization of Britain's control was the seizure of lands held by the Irish (usually Catholic), and the establishment of Protestant plantations. This land confiscation supplanted the Gaelic tribal land ownership that existed previously and installed a system of land title, thereby changing the way the people of Ireland related to the land around them for centuries to come. Measures such as the Penal Laws followed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (19), imposed after Protestant William of Orange's defeat of the Catholic King of England James II at the Battle of the Boyne. These laws variously disenfranchised the nation's Catholic population, prohibiting Catholics "to buy land, obtain a mortgage on it, rent it at a reasonable profit, or even inherit it normally" (19). While the laws were ultimately fully repealed in 1829 by Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation Bill (for which O'Connell is called The Liberator), the Irish were beset quickly thereafter by other sources of agricultural oppression (185-186).

First, prior to the repeal of the Penal Laws, the Act of Union had passed in 1800 after the failed rebellion of 1798; this legislation abolished the Irish Parliament and enshrined a "Parliamentary Union" between the two countries (151). The Act's abolition of Irish parliamentary autonomy, according to Kee, "was not intended as a trap for Ireland although it turned out afterwards to have been one," as it failed to address Ireland's now "historically conditioned land system," with its "lack of acknowledgement of any rights for those who worked the land and lived by it" (160). Its inadequacy with land reform ultimately led to its demise through various pieces of legislation that re-granted self-governance to the Irish, including the fourth Home Rule Bill, passed in 1914, and the subsequent Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921.

The Potato Famine, which ravaged Ireland between 1845 and 1854 emerges as an agricultural crisis, the result of monoculture as an export-centred ideology that not only partitioned Irish land for agricultural gain and control, but also imposed this control so ruthlessly

as to create whole strata of society with no other food alternatives in the first place. Indeed, Morton argues that monocultures are a specific subjugation of the earth under the imperial expansion during this time, creating “unfeasible ecosystems where business produces only one crop” (*Ecology* 92). Of specific relevance for this discussion, Morton adds that “Ireland was the test case, its potatoes transplanted from South America” (92). Beyond the rampant starvation at the time, the Famine clearly demonstrates the suffering of the Irish people under Britain's control of their land, considering that Ireland at the time “was full of food in the form of oats, wheat, butter, eggs, sheep and pigs, all of which continued to be exported to England on a considerable scale throughout the famine” (244). British government’s relative neglect of the issue, as evidenced by the Duke of Cambridge’s statement in 1846, that “they all knew Irishmen could live upon anything, and there was plenty of grass in the fields, even though the potato crop should fail” (quoted in Kee 247), led to the death or emigration of nearly half of Ireland’s population. Land crises and famine scares continued to threaten the island, such as the “disastrously wet” growing season in 1877, and the fears of an outbreak of cattle foot-and-mouth disease, which would yet again have jeopardized a main Irish food supply, during Joyce’s early adulthood (366).

The second chapter will assess the way in which the novel works through the nationalist movements in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and how Joyce (through the experience of his character Stephen) draws connections between the rhetoric of the nationalists and the imperialists, especially as it pertains to Irish land and natural resources. Indeed, the land is often figured as an incitement to violence in this discourse. Robert Kee traces the history of agrarian activism” from the post-plantation period onward, in the form of rural secret societies and clubs called Defenders or Whiteboys (375). These groups often resorted to theft and violence

in order to advocate for peasant rights against British landlords. Kee notes that these movements often betrayed a “lack of sophisticated wider political purpose” yet “this concentration on local day to day conditions, was long to remain a consistent feature of Irish agrarian violence” (24). Agrarian activism continued throughout the Famine period; Kee documents articles in *The Nation*, the nationalist and separatist newspaper at the time, which contain statements such as this: “Better a little blood-letting to show that there is blood, than a patient dragging of chains and pining beneath them for generations leading to the belief that all spirit is fled” (quoted in Kee 248).

However, two separate movements were able to check nationalistic violence in order to achieve legislative change more peacefully. First, Daniel O’Connell’s aims prior to and during the Famine to improve the lives of peasants centered on “the recognition of leasehold improvements and a theory of property which, to landlords at least, seemed revolutionary” (244). Kee further observes that O’Connell’s campaign “was to become the basic argument of the vast majority of nationalist Irishmen for the rest of the nineteenth century and the first sixteen years of the twentieth” (222). A few decades later, the threat of “an agricultural slump” arising from the aforementioned wet growing season marked the political rise Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt, Joyce’s own political heroes, as marked even on the first page of *Portrait* (Kee 366, Joyce *Portrait* 7). Parnell was of the opinion that “the always discordant voice of the Irish peasant should be properly heard” as this population “faced their gravest crisis since the great famine of the forties” (366). Davitt himself “had been born at the height of the famine and his mother and father had been evicted from their smallholding in County Mayo in 1852, when he was five” (370). His own “political preoccupation was with the relationship between nationalism and the land” (370); together with Parnell, he founded the National Land League of Ireland in

1879. They were also able to harness unincorporated rural violence into “above-ground official action” (374). One of their legislative victories was the Land Act of 1871, which enshrined meaningful change and security for Irish farmers through the granting of “fixity of tenure, free sale by the tenant of the tenant’s interest and improvements, fair rent” (378). The role of Parnell’s charisma in his political successes is clear when considering the Kilmainham Treaty in 1881, through which he was able to secure protection for tenants from rent arrears and eviction, and his own release from Kilmainham Gaol, so long as he called off “agitation on the land” and asked for cooperation from Irish farmers (382). Parnell founded the Irish National League in 1882, whose focus was Home Rule, a campaign for a degree of legislative autonomy, which resulted in four bills, and which was only finally passed in 1914. One reason why the campaign was so prolonged is the fallout from Parnell’s affair with the married Katherine O’Shea in the 1880s. The scandal that ensued resulted in his departure from public life, and ultimate death due to illness; Kee argues that “the chances of Home Rule for the next twenty years were buried with him” (411). It is during this time that Joyce was living in Dublin and composing *Portrait*; his mourning for Parnell appears frequently in the pages of the novel, as will be discussed in this chapter.

In addition to the political avenues for nationalist foment, this chapter will specifically look at the discourse of the Celtic Revival, through the works of its famous celebrants W. B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory, and sees *Portrait* as a response to and reimagining of *The Countess Cathleen* (1892) and *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902). The Revival was an important political movement as it crested during the “lull in politics” created by Parnell’s death. The Revival sought to inspire and celebrate ancient Irish culture in literary form: “books, revealing the largely forgotten wealth of Irish historic legend and folk tales” began “to make an

appearance” (427). Moreover, the movement fostered the creation of new works, such as Yeats’s aforementioned plays, and saw the establishment in 1897 of a venue for these cultural works in the Irish National Theatre (later called the Abbey Theatre) (433). The centrality of the Revival in relatively violent and ongoing nationalistic activity cannot be understated. Even the name ‘Fenian’ for the separatist organization had been coined during the early rumblings of the Revival in the mid-1800s by Gaelic scholar John O’Mahony, who “found inspiration in the legend of the ancient Gaelic warrior Fiona MacCumhail and his élite legion, the Fianna” (310). At the turn of the century, Constance Markievicz would be so inspired by *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* that she sought to follow the path laid out in the play, and eventually fought in the Easter Rising of 1916 (457). While the Rising did not occur until after Joyce had completed *Portrait*, the Revival’s rhetoric of violence form part of Stephen’s portrait of politics, and the culture from which he tries to distance himself in the novel.

The third chapter of the thesis therefore explores how Stephen achieves this distance from the colonialist and nationalist modes of thinking and being. *Portrait* is a novel about Stephen’s escape from the paralysis engendered by the constraints of colonial takeover and nationalist violence, a twinned force that Joseph Valente has termed the “metrocolonial double bind” (Valente *Myth* 19). The focus of this chapter is to read Stephen’s ecological awareness and politics, and his affinity with the land and animals around him as a decolonial strategy to eschew this double bind and to create a new history of artistic liberation. Indeed, he often casts his artistic vocation in earthly and future-oriented terms. His meditation on his name “Dedalus” as a “symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being” demonstrates Stephen’s ecological frame (Joyce *Portrait* 169). The “sluggish material of the earth” is his artistic material and inspiration, his key to

escaping the double bind as heralded by the words “anew” and “new.” Key to his forward-thinking artistic decolonization is his animal imagination. Throughout the novel, Stephen enacts a sympathy with animals, as he thinks of himself in bovine and canine terms. While this theriomorphism challenges the metaphysical divide between human and animals and exposes it as fictional, Stephen’s animal imagination also turns to the lived experience of animals around him. Their respective confinement, abuse and suffering are highlighted by his sympathetic comparison; they, like him, are trapped by the metaphysics of agrilogistics out of which he is envisioning an artistic rebellion. Over the course of the novel, pigs, cows, birds and bats emerge as Stephen’s kin, all kinds of affiliation that upset the supposed boundaries that exist in service of empire, such as between human and animal, urban and rural, straight and queer.

This thesis, and especially this chapter, are strongly grounded in current ecocriticism, especially Timothy Morton’s book *Ecology Without Nature* (2007), and his articles “Queer Ecology” (2012) and “She Stood in Tears Amid the Alien Corn: Thinking Through Agrilogistics” (2013). Morton’s works focus on the colonialism inherent in the concept of “nature,” as it consolidates humanity’s metaphysical fiction of the division between humans and the ecological worlds around us. “Nature” seeks to demarcate space as wild, rural, and urban, each with its own concomitant type of inhabitants (such as people in developed, civilized spaces), in the exact same way that colonial enterprises carve out and delineate space. Moreover, “nature” and “natural” also suppress different possible intimacies and affiliations, seeing some interactions as perverse, while other unions (such as between an adult male and female) are coded as normal, or natural. These theories allow us to approach *Portrait*’s ecological vision, and to see how Joyce’s understanding of how the imperial control of land, as well as the nationalistic use of land as an incitement to violence, each view land, animals and people in nearly identical terms. Morton’s

theories also provide a lexicon for illuminating and comprehending the revolutionary elements of Stephen's ecological awareness, and how a century earlier, Joyce was working through the same ecological crises that are still omnipresent today.

This frame of analysis for Joyce's novel may seem anachronistic, but that should not be the case. First, Vincent Cheng has identified how the relevance of Joyce's writing in more recent literary and cultural theory demonstrates the degree to which his literary works were avant-garde and grappling with theories that are still the focus of critical attention. Cheng writes that

Joyce's works, as a whole, constitute an insistent and consistent critique of such ideological discourses and of the resulting and systematic dynamics, dynamics that can be usefully understood by our own contemporary culture through the social theories of, among others, Frantz Fanon, Antonio Gramsci, and Edward Said. (Cheng 290)

Beyond Joyce's significance in these social and critical discussions, Joyce's demonstrated concern in his fictional writing for the degradation and abuse of land and animals render an ecological reading not only relevant but necessary. Indeed, *Portrait's* ongoing discussion of hunger and famine, and ecological crises such as foot-and-mouth disease are deeply linked to Joyce's awareness of the effects of unchecked agricultural and industrial imperialism. The centrality of crisis to his understanding of the need for a new ecological politics is reflected in contemporary ecocriticism, where the exact same activities and looming disasters continue to demand political courage and change.



## Chapter One

### “The Filthy Cowyard:” *Portrait* and Agrilogistics

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* begins with a portrait of a moocow, a road, and a “nicens little boy” and is everywhere aware of itself as the story of an artist’s growing consciousness about what it means to be and live in a colonized space. Even the fact that the novel is written in the English language is addressed by Stephen Dedalus, who distances himself from the literary lineage of Ben Jonson when he states:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale*, *master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.

(Joyce *Portrait* 189)

The thrust of this chapter, then, is to explore Stephen’s coming into recognition of this outside imperial undercurrent to daily life. His mention of the words “Christ” and “master” are made especially poignant when considering how objects of the “home” and “ale” type are manifest in the novel. That is, how the forces that Stephen sees as imperial and oppressive (Britain, in tandem with the Catholic church) bear on his understanding of the land, resources and animals that inhabit the land alongside him.

The key theoretical entry point into this discussion of colonialism’s seepage into Stephen’s thoughts and actions, his feeling of simultaneous familiarity and foreignness, is Joseph Valente’s concept of the colonial double bind as outlined in his 2011 book *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture: 1880-1922*. Valente suggests that British access to Irish land

and resources was predicated on the systematic delegitimation of Irish access and use of this land, and the double bind was the rhetorical strategy that rationalized this land use. With the patriarchal and sexist assumption of the superiority of the British male citizen as the only legitimate land-holder, the double bind sought to sever Irish land use and self-governance first by positing obedience to colonized law and regulation as indistinguishable from weakness, passivity and acceptance of colonial rule, “all of which signalled the absence or loss of the stalwart masculinity necessary to justify any bid for liberation” (Valente *Myth* 10). At the same time, rebellion to this force, especially violent and aggressive insurrection, “tended to violate the self-disciplinary canons of bourgeois manliness,” to cast the colonized group as savage and subhuman beasts (10). Given that Valente’s concept highlights the imperial control of land, and the discourse of gendered animalization that sustains it, the colonial double bind can be usefully extended into an ecocritical reading that focuses more closely on these elements.

Indeed, Edward Said has stated that “[i]mperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control” (Said 77). For Said then, agricultural exploitation lies at the root of empire. In addition to the control of land, native ecosystems are supplanted by the imperial force. In the case of Ireland, he argues that:

a huge number of plants, animals, crops, and farming as well as building methods invaded the colony and gradually turned it into a new place, complete with diseases, environmental imbalances, and traumatic dislocations for the overpowered natives who had little choice in the matter. (77)

With Said’s words in mind, this chapter will demonstrate that Stephen (and Joyce’s) articulation of the colonial double bind is expressed in ecological terms, a mourning for the degradation to

Ireland's ecosystems which turned Ireland into a new place. It is especially important to note that Joyce was coming to terms with British agricultural policy when he was composing this novel, as demonstrated in his 1907 essay "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages." Joyce's words echo Said's, when he writes that "England sowed seeds of strife among the various races; by the introduction of a new systems of agriculture, she reduced the power of the native leaders and gave great estates to her soldiers" (Joyce *Occasional* 119)<sup>1</sup>. Seeing the novel as a continuation of Joyce's critical concern with the politics of Irish land, and an entextualization of the "traumatic dislocations" of imperial agricultural exploits, this chapter will bring postcolonial and ecological theory together to explicate Joyce's presentation of Irish land, food and politics.

Before proceeding with this reading of *Portrait*, I will first ground this approach to agriculture as imperialism in contemporary ecocritical theory. In addition to understanding colonization as a takeover of foreign land, eco-theorists such as Timothy Morton and Robert Marzec look at agriculture as a colonizing act more generally, as a violent human interruption of ecological space. To clarify, Timothy Morton has theorized that agriculture is the necessary underpinning for the Anthropocene, that is, "the period in which human history intersects decisively with geological time" (Morton *Oedipal* 7). While the Anthropocene is typically linked to the Industrial Revolution, in which human industry began emitting greenhouse gases in sufficient quantities to be measurable in arctic ice (Chakrabarty 8), Morton suggests that even early agricultural practices represent an appropriation of land and way of being-in-the-world that underwrite the metaphysical contradictions at the heart of this ecological crisis. That is, he argues that humanity began "to understand its comportment as a physical force on the Earth" through agriculture, by "opening up a fantasy space, a fantasy space that coincided with actually existing lifeforms such as grass, trees, and herding animals" (10). Agriculture thus is an inherently

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is cited also in Cheng 5.

colonizing act, as by plowing, cutting, planting and harvesting, it “transforms the earth into the human-ready, domination-ready state” (10). Morton’s association of agriculture with the Anthropocene, with its consequent crises of global warming, drought, flooding, polar ice cap melting to name but a few, allows us to approach agriculture too in terms of crisis. Indeed, *Portrait* presents looming threats of such catastrophes, including fears of widespread famine heralded by ongoing rumbles of hunger, and metonymized by Cranly’s *Diseases of the Ox* textbook (Joyce *Portrait* 227). Moreover, according to Morton, agriculture leads to other kinds of crisis and oppression, including gender and patriarchal control, seen in such tropes as “male seed” and “female earth,” not to mention rigid social hierarchies structured along private property and physical labour (Morton “Agrilogistics” 93). Agriculture likewise reinforces Cartesian human/animal dichotomies, by privileging human survival at the expense of the other plants and animals who get in the way of crops or livestock. Agriculture has created categories of productivity and noxiousness, wherein some organisms are reclassified as weeds and are eliminated to pave the way to agricultural success<sup>2</sup>. This impulse to control the land, placing humans at the top of a fictive food chain is what Morton terms “agrilogistics”. In addition to being a violent incursion on the land when viewed this way, agrilogistic thinking underpins imperial projects and the concomitant oppression of other peoples, whether by supplanting other ways of being on the land, or the inevitable plagues and pestilence that come with intensive animal and crop monocultures.

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Crosby, in his book *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* presents a fascinating discussion about how certain plants classified as weeds circulated as a result of European colonialism. That is, seeds from these plants (such as dandelions) travelled with colonialists. These plants were especially adept at growing in strange land that had been altered for agricultural production (145-170). Therefore, in addition to monocultural crop production, the spread of “weed” plants is another edge to what Crosby outlines as the biological homogenization of the earth’s biota under colonialism. Later in the book, he includes a thought-provoking excerpt on the subject: “If we confine the concept of weeds to species adapted to human disturbance, then man is by definition the first and primary weed under whose influence all other weeds have evolved” (269, citing Jack R. Harlan).

In *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature* (2007), Robert Marzec introduces the colonizing impulse of what Morton defines as agrilogistics (*avant-la-lettre*). He links the “rise of the British empire, [to] the land-reformation process known as the Enclosure Movement” (Marzec 1). Enclosure is the term for the land reformation and management movement inaugurated in Britain from the sixteenth through until the nineteenth century. The process of Enclosure involved the transformation of common and public land, effectively shared by a community for subsistence crops and pasture land, into private property. Marzec contends that Enclosure was the fundamental act of imperial agriculture, as the process originated among British landowners on their own domestic soil. Enclosure then was the means by which “the ideology of imperialism became a material reality,” first in Britain and then beyond through “the domestication of foreign lands and peoples” (3). Montaña similarly observes that “cultivated fields and enclosed ground were the *sine qua non* of civilized society (Montaña 1). He describes the domestication of land as it pertained to the British conquest of Ireland, arguing that from the sixteenth century onward, the British “sought to transform the disordered land of Ireland... through the introduction of agriculture, trade, and the civil life associated with walled towns” (1). Both Marzec and Montaña usefully link other cultural practices with the Enclosure of Ireland; specifically, this takeover of the land entailed the imposition of “a coded grammar of architecture and material culture,” the flourishing of “fences, hedges, walls, gates, and houses” (188, 189). Enclosure also introduced “a new discursive system of registration,” that is, the linguistic normalization of imperialism through land titles, tenancy, leaseholding, and other such terminology associated with property law and regulation (Marzec 9). This discourse became the domain of an increasingly prolific bureaucracy, whose main concerns were the measuring, recording, licensing and monitoring of this land (Montaña 70). Marzec understands this

centralized control of the land as following from Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of agriculture and its parcelling of land according to productivity as an "apparatus of capture," and asserts thus that "colonization is inaugurated from the ground up" (Marzec 41-42). This formulation is also addressed by Morton, who asserts that agriculture as a whole (and Enclosure specifically) "turns reality into domination-ready chunks of parceled out space waiting to be filled and ploughed by humans" (Morton "Oedipal" 16). These theories when understood together get at the inherent imperialism at the heart of agriculture broadly, and in the specific historical context of British Enclosure and the conquest of Ireland. Agrilogistics first and foremost denotes a conquering of land, through the violent removal of other inhabitants, and the imposition of private ownership to increase profit-oriented efficiency. Agrilogistics is also then the central focus of imperial excursions, the means of subjugating and displacing indigenous communities and ecosystems.

This subjugation of communities inherent in the colonial project, and here specifically as a function of Ireland's annexation, is what Marzec deems "the locus of violence of colonization and empire" (Marzec 75). Morton accounts for this violence as imperial agriculture's clear-cutting mentality; agrilogistics ensures that "fields should be shorn of weeds, voles, and any other life-form or geographical feature that gets in the way," which includes, of course, indigenous populations as well (Morton "Agrilogistics" 97). Marzec excerpts a description of the ecological and cultural networks of these communities prior to British colonization, not only as a way of undermining the inevitable narrative of agricultural development and progress on "primitive" land, but also as a means by which to throw the violence of colonial agrilogistics into relief. Instead of being "underdeveloped" and "backwards," indigenous communities demonstrate a wealth of:

local resources, of traditional knowledge of these resources, and a skill in making use of them, of living in a place which had meaning and significance for its inhabitants, or work that still, for the great majority, completely satisfied their creative impulses, of governing themselves through their fellows. (72, citing W.G. Hoskins)

The British colonization of Ireland demonstrates this very supplantation of local relations with the land. Kee contends that the British took over Irish land management systems and customs, and the citizens thereafter maintained “dim folk-memories of a Gaelic system in which the common people had certain rights of common ownership in the soil” (Kee 21). Indeed, British colonial envoys needed to dismantle any indigenous claims to common land; a major strategy by which to accomplish this seizure of land was the dehumanizing discourse of bestialization, a language which shows how imperialism operates and provides its own built-in justifications. Reminiscent of Valente’s colonial double bind, Montaña details how from early Tudor colonial expeditions onward into the twentieth century, the Irish were routinely depicted as wild, savage, and violent, unfit to cultivate the land productively, living on mere “wasteland” (Montaña 6). This image was then contrasted with the stability and agrarian purposefulness of the British plantation (19). Postcolonial Joyce scholars have picked up on this discourse as well: Cheng documents the many British satires of Irish peasants as beasts of burden, or wild apes (Cheng 33). Likewise Valente discusses how “the burden of simianization was to throw into question whether the Irish properly owned any political rights in the first place” (Valente *Myth* 13). This animalizing discourse rendered the colonized Irish indistinct from the land and animals who were (and are) subjugated by agricultural production.

The clear-cutting mentality of colonialism extends beyond the delegitimation of land

claims and prior ownership, and includes actual violent incursions on the land itself. In addition to the proliferation of natural resources and lumber, the British encountered actual pre-existing agricultural enterprises in Ireland. Montaña details how Tudor-era planters discovered “cultivated fields...large stores of grain...impressive store buildings” (Montaña 8), instead of the image of the vast wasteland that constituted reports of Ireland at the time. Therefore, in addition to the delegitimation of the Irish through simianization, the British colonial strategy centered on the destruction of crops and other agricultural industries (especially sheep and cattle raising) to subdue the population.

It is especially noteworthy that Joyce was aware of this agrarian destruction twinned with defamatory characterizations, as he points out in his essay, “Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages:”

The English now laugh at the Irish for being Catholic, poor and ignorant: it will seem hard, for some, however, to justify this disdain. Ireland is poor because English laws have destroyed the industries of the country, notably the woollen one. (Joyce *Occasional* 119)

In this essay, Joyce continues his line of inquiry about the English destruction of Irish land and industries in his discussion about the potato famine. He also sees British wilful ignorance of the plight during this time as a clear-cutting imperial strategy, when he states that “in the years in which the potato crop failed, the English government left the flower of the people to die of hunger” (119). In addition to this destruction of existing agricultural industries, with its genocidal depopulation, the network of British bureaucratic and law-enforcement mechanisms (curfews, property laws, and so forth) worked in tandem to reinforce this violent takeover of Irish land. Thus, British agrilogistics opened up “a territory’s earth so that it may be inserted into a larger global apparatus of exploitation” (Marzec 116). As Marzec asserts, through colonization, land



was rendered into “an entity to be devoured,” and became the domain of the “mechanized food industry,” the world of monocultures and agrilogistics (57).

Therefore, in the spirit of Valente’s theory of the colonial double bind, I am reading empire and enclosure as forces behind the development of Joyce’s novel *Portrait*, and am arguing that his profound obsession and concern with imperial agriculture emerges in the novel in terms of what I am calling “the agrilogistic double bind.” That is, Joyce’s novel exposes the violence behind British agrilogistics, in a semi-autobiographical snapshot of daily life and artistic expression in turn-of-the-twentieth-century occupied Ireland. Given Cheng’s assertion that the “hegemonic, discursive terminology is written all over the face of Ireland and of its cultural constructions, and thus forms the hour-by-hour subtext and context of all [Ireland’s] thoughts and experiences,” Joyce’s stylistic innovations, such as stream-of-consciousness, arise as forms of resistance to reveal how imperialism is “woven into the very texture and fabric of the pages” (Cheng 164, 224). This novel, which opens with a moocow, is rife with even passing references that emerge around Stephen’s fragmentary but growing awareness of a world under colonial, and therefore agrilogistic, control.

In a discussion on the steps of the University library, Temple jokingly asks Stephen: “Do you know what Giraldus Cambrensis says about your family?” (Joyce *Portrait* 230). The Cambrensis to whom Temple is referring was a “Welsh ecclesiastic and chronicler who wrote two books about Ireland, *The Topography of Ireland* and later *The History of the Conquest of Ireland*” in the late 1100s (Gifford 271). He had been sent to Ireland as an emissary for Henry II, and became a “prime apologist of the [Anglo-Norman] invasion of Ireland” (Montaño 30, citing Kathy Lavezzo). Cambrensis believed in “transforming the natural world...to create cultural meaning through land use”; ultimately, his works demeaned the Irish as beastly, and their lands

as therefore unoccupied and eligible for colonization (30, 32). The joke here then, is that beyond the fact that obviously “the Dedalus family is not mentioned in either of [Cambrensis’s] books” Cambrensis would also not have had anything “good whatsoever to say about the native Irish” (Gifford 271). Thus, even a small passing remark in the novel gestures towards this British history of the agricultural conquest of Irish land. Moments such as this scene demonstrate that imperial oppression is deeply felt everywhere for the novel’s characters.

Joyce pays attention to frame land as contentious agrarian space in the novel, which is key to the novel’s project of decolonization. Stephen’s journeys take him outside of Dublin into the wider colonized Ireland; the reader sees Stephen as a child on a walk past the village of Stillorgan, or as an adolescent on the train to Cork, when Stephen notes “the darkening fields slipping past him” with “unpeopled fields and the closed cottages” (Joyce Portrait 62, 87, 81). Even his time as a young student at Clongowes Wood College is suffused in earthy language; Stephen recalls the oddness of the smell of old peasants at Sunday mass, “a smell of air and rain and turf and corduroy” (18). Likewise, after being comforted by the Clongowes rector because he was disciplined by his teacher, Father Dolan, Stephen feels “happy and free” as he enjoys “the soft and grey and mild evening,” and is further comforted by “the smell of the fields in the country where they digged up turnips to peel them and eat them” (59). At the same time, Stephen is also aware that he is in colonized space and seeks to re-order the world around him. One such scene demonstrates Stephen’s early and childhood preoccupation with land and space, as a student at Clongowes:

He turned to the flyleaf of the geography and read what he had written there:  
himself, his name and where he was.

*Stephen Dedalus*  
*Class of Elements*

*Clongowes Wood College*  
*Sallins*  
*County Kildare*  
*Ireland*  
*Europe*  
*The World*  
*The Universe (Joyce Portrait 15)*

Stephen's list is poignant as it presents an artist's portrait of space, an alternative means of making sense of the world around him, an unravelling of colonialism "from the ground up." It allows him to envision himself on a different scale where small, local affiliations and networks are paramount to his sense of space, as well of himself as part of that space. The zooming up to the global and universal scale allow him also to discredit narratives of colonization: Jason Mezey provides a fruitful reading of this aspect of Stephen's geography in his article "Ireland, Europe, the World, Universe: Political Geography of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*" (1999). He suggests that this moment demonstrates how the novel is an "ongoing drama of place and displacement" (Marzey 337). Stephen acknowledges how Ireland is occupied territory by deliberately omitting this imperial country, and in "excluding the United Kingdom as an incorporating term, he thus unwittingly produces a text that rends a gaping hole in the fabric of British colonial history" and is a key moment in Stephen's burgeoning artistry as linked to his "fledgling political consciousness" (337, 348).

Moreover, Stephen's elision also constitutes a reversal of the colonial implications of maps and geography. Montañó shows how map-making and surveying were part of Britain's imposition of "material culture" during the Tudor period, in that "the map... substituted for the land itself, a representation that remove[d] social and cultural diversity and replace[d] it with a cartographic message increasingly accepted as accurate, scientific and factual" (Montañó 188, 196). As Benedict Anderson posits, the map is one of the "colonial state's style of thinking about

its own domain” (cited in Cheng 235). The idea that maps can stand in for land, making it seem empty and open for colonization is what Montaña terms “cartographic silence” (196, citing J.B. Harley). In this scene, then, Stephen demonstrates an understanding of the imperialistic significance of maps. His elimination of Britain makes his list an act of cartographic silence in response, as it is a decolonial strategy of emptying Ireland of the geopolitical forces in which it swept up, and a way of mourning for times and places before and beyond this imperialistic presence altered Ireland’s geography.

Portrait’s work of mourning extends to acknowledge the violence inherent both in agriculture itself and in Britain’s enforcement to maintain agricultural control. Timothy Morton argues that contemplating agriculture is inherently a melancholic act, largely because of the enormity of the “agricultural age” which has been ongoing “for several thousand years” (Morton *Oedipal* 16) “let alone its hundred-thousand-year future” (Morton “Oedipal” 16, “Agrilogistics” 108). Additionally, agriculture’s “self-destructive tendency” necessarily involves the “conquest of space, [and] the subjugation of non-human species,” making every agricultural product a marker of the violence that fertilized it (“Oedipal” 16). Moreover, he notes that melancholy historically (in Galenic medicine) has been associated with the earth (Morton *Ecology* 76). One means by which Stephen demonstrates this two-fold mourning in the text is in terms of presentations of famine and hunger. The famine represents the violence inherent in colonial agrilogistics, in that potatoes were acquired in British colonial exploits in South America and transplanted to Ireland as a monoculture (92). Moreover, the famine served, as aforementioned, as a means of enforcement to decimate the restless Irish peasant population in a kind of “sinister” ground-clearing (Montaña 197). The famine was ever-present for Joyce; Seamus Deane notes that the famine occurred “only forty-five years before Joyce was born” (Deane 31); Miriam

O’Kane Mara contends that a long-standing result of the famine is that “Irish attitudes about food, land, and bodies were seriously altered” and that “starvation...becomes a metaphor for English colonial behaviour... [which] shapes all discourse on food that follows” (Mara 95). Emer Nolan discusses Joyce’s treatment of the famine, pointing to Joyce’s satirical treatment in *Ulysses* of The Citizen’s aggressive “familiarily Irish nationalist charge of genocide against the English” (Nolan 98), but notes that Joyce’s opinion would have been more nuanced, noting that his earlier statements in his “Ireland” essay (quoted above) and in his early journalistic work were more sympathetic to this view.

Furthermore, Joyce’s writing in *Portrait* reflects this link between food and British colonization, in that he presents “characters who restrict their food intake in particular social and political situations” (94). For example, Stephen is frequently depicted as hungry or underfed, at meals composed of “second watered tea” and “discarded crusts and lumps of sugared bread” (Joyce *Portrait* 163). Later, we see Stephen has “drained his third cup of watery tea to the dregs and set to chewing the crusts of fried bread that were scattered near him” (174). Helen O’Connell suggests that Joyce’s writing “engages with a consumer culture in its most ordinary and mundane of manifestations...in humble domestic settings” (O’Connell 128). This not only depicts a humble side to Stephen’s daily life, but also in this way Joyce the urban writer, and his would-be cosmopolitan protagonist Stephen demonstrate a sympathetic solidarity with “rural Ireland and the poor who inhabited it” (144). Put another way, the increasing poverty of the Dedalus family in *Portrait*, which reduces their available diet to watery tea and bread crusts connects Stephen’s “conditions of thinness and hunger...to rural Ireland and its particular history of food and malnourishment” (135). Stephen’s meagre diet then can be read as an act of sympathetic mourning for the starvation which links urban centres with rural inhabitants in colonial Ireland.

The novel's manifestations of the British aggression employed to maintain agrarian control demonstrates the degree to which this history is in the political foreground of the novel's setting. One such example occurs when Stephen goes with his father to the bank to cash the prize he has received for an essay; as they leave, Simon Dedalus remarks that they are "standing in the house of commons of the old Irish parliament" (Joyce *Portrait* 97). The dissolution of the Irish parliament and its transformation into a bank would have been a sore point in early 1900s Ireland, as the British Act of Union of 1800 was the cause of the Parliament's abolition (Gifford 174). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Act of Union had the effect not only of reducing Irish autonomous self-governance, but of causing an exodus of wealthier Irish landlords to Britain, while "the land and peasants were pillaged by land agents left in charge by the absentees" (19). The land agent system makes an appearance again, when Stephen finds himself outside the upscale Maple Hotel, and "imagined the sleek lives of the patricians of Ireland housed in calm. They thought of army commissions and land agents: peasants greeted them along the roads in the country" (Joyce *Portrait* 238). *Portrait* also refers to the more violent side of British enforcement: for example, in a discussion about his lapsing Catholic faith, Stephen says to his companion Cranly: "I fear many things: dogs, horses, firearms, the sea, thunderstorms, machinery, the country roads at night" (243). Shortly thereafter, Cranly asks if Stephen would commit the sacrilege of "false homage" in the "penal days" (243). The penal days to which Cranly is referring are as outlined in the introduction, where William III set about "an elaborate program for the final suppression of Roman Catholicism in Ireland" in 1690-91 (Gifford 277), whereby Catholics were banned from various facets of public life, and property was confiscated and thereafter "planted" by "those who informed on them" (278). The Penal Laws resulted in "life in a penal colony" (278), and would indeed make the country roads an

unwelcoming place at night. It is interesting to note that the Laws were only repealed totally in 1829, which renders these laws still in effect only a generation or two before Joyce's birth (278). At another point in the novel, Stephen contemplates his friend Davin, and sees in the other character "the dull stare of terror in the eyes, the terror of the soul of a starving Irish village in which the curfew was still a nightly fear" (Joyce *Portrait* 180-181). Here, Stephen is referencing another repressive measure used after William III's Penal Laws: curfews were legislated "during the Rebellion of 1798 and again during the Great Famine in the late 1840s" to curtail peasant resistance (Gifford 230). The curfews imposed strict guidelines as to when peasants could be out of doors or have lights on after dark, which laws were "brutally enforced" and "much-abused" by authorities (230). In these ways, then, the novel makes present not only the lingering fear that enforcement caused historically in British control of Irish land, but also the ongoing effect these laws and measures had on the daily life of *Portrait's* characters; the novel can be seen then as an ongoing work of mourning for the changing relationship to the land surrounding the agrilogistic double bind.

A key moment for Stephen's grief over the agrilogistic control of land poignantly involves the subjugation of animals, specifically his bovine avatar. Stephen's realization of ecological loss occurs during his childhood summer in Blackrock. In this episode, Stephen and his friend Aubrey often "drove out in the milkcar to Carrickmines where the cows were at grass" and would take turns "riding the tractable mare round the field" (Joyce *Portrait* 63). In contrast to this image of a happy childhood memory in a pastoral setting, Stephen then remarks:

But when autumn came the cows were driven home from the grass: and the first sight of the filthy cowyard at Stradbrook with its foul green puddles and clots of liquid dung and steaming brantroughs sickened Stephen's heart. The cattle which

had seemed so beautiful in the country on sunny days revolted him and he could not even look at the milk they yielded. (63)

This scene almost seems to enact the transition between pasture land and enclosed land as outlined by Montaña and Marzec. It is an image *par excellence* of monocultural degradation. The land enclosed during the Tudor period and beyond had typically been used for subsistence-based communal farming with pasture land (Montaña 2); pasturing cattle was seen as a typically Irish form of land use (Montaña 2, 36). This type of farming, Montaña indicates, was viewed as the locus of “cultural difference” among British colonial authorities, who posited that “disorder, violence, and disobedience were...products of the culture that pastoralism encouraged” (16). In other words, the kind of scene with which the *Portrait* reader is presented, of cows at large, and at grass, presents a symbol historically wielded against the Irish as an indication of their wildness and improper use of land. It is interesting that when the cows appear revolting to Stephen is when they have been *enclosed*, in a cowyard; the imposition of fences and the corralling of otherwise beautiful cattle certainly seems analogous to the process of enclosing Irish pastureland. Moreover, Montaña notes that British colonial ideology invoked scatological imagery to describe their agrilogistic efforts in Ireland: the correct use of manure, harvested for an intensive crop fertilizer instead of being unproductively deposited in pastureland was termed “manurance,” where etymologically “manure” means “to improve” (59). Thus, the “foul green puddles and clots of liquid dung” which “sicken Stephen’s heart” are actually a sign of agrilogistical success. Here, again, Stephen seems mournful for the violence on the land and animals, which also supplants other, pastoral, ways of being. This unease is reflected in the title of this chapter: Stephen is grieving the fact that Ireland has been reduced to a mere manure pit, “a filthy cowyard.”



Cows and cattle agriculture are associated with key moments throughout the text. I follow from Maureen O'Connor's keen observation that Joyce's "well-documented concern about the treatment of cattle was at least partly the result of his anticolonial position" (O'Connor 103). Specifically, the fact that "Joyce identifies the Irish with their oxen as fellow-victims of imperialism" (103, citing Maud Ellman) renders the novel's many confluences of Stephen with cows is even more poignant. The novel beginning with Stephen's childhood memory of a story told to him by his parents has him interacting with a "moocow" (unenclosed and freely walking about, it is worth noting); many critics have pointed out that the cow refers to the phrase "silk of the kine," "the most beautiful of cattle, an allegorical epithet for Ireland" (O'Connor 103, Gifford 131). Later in the novel, Stephen is teased by his fellows about his name, as they refer to him as "Bous Stephanoumenos!" and "Bous Stephaneforos!" (Joyce *Portrait* 168). These jibes refer to oxen bearing a garland, and prepared for ritual slaughter and sacrifice in ancient Greece (cited also in Gifford 220). Stephen hears the jokes and notes that "his strange name seemed to him a prophecy" (Joyce *Portrait* 168): a macabre prophecy that, as Joyce elsewhere has noted, if Stephen (and Ireland as a whole) are the silk of the kine, then it is only to be "devoured by the English 'beefeater'" (O'Connor 103, citing Joyce). The ongoing references to cattle work to reinforce the subjugation inherent in colonialism, in a way that is reminiscent of Morton's theory that the inner life and intricacies of a colonized object (human, animal or otherwise) is irrelevant to agrilogistics, an observation which he expresses in animal terms, when he states "that the appearance of a thing – it moos and has horns, for instance – is strictly irrelevant to its useful, and possibly delicious essence" (Morton *Agrilogistics* 97).

*Portrait* gives voice to the full spectrum of the agrilogistic double bind, in that the agricultural control of Irish land is not always in the hands of a foreign imperial power. That is,

he details moments where this agrilogistical control of animals, especially cattle, occurs from within Ireland and not as a function of specifically English imperialism. For example, Cranly, whom William York Tindall describes as Stephen's "critic" is at one point reading a book entitled "*Diseases of the Ox*" (Tindall 88, Joyce *Portrait* 227). The text seems to point to the discourse of animal science, a growing discipline post-enclosure that centred on a "disciplinarity which valorized greater efficiency and precise knowledge" (Marzec 52), where use value has a higher value than animal well-being<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, milk played a surprising role in the nationalist movement during Joyce's time; while the strategies of Irish nationalism the Revival movement are taken up in the following chapter, it is relevant to this discussion that the system that lies behind the odd dairies that Stephen encounters in the novel<sup>4</sup> is based on agrilogistic models. O'Connell notes that promoters of the dairy industry, including Irish author George Russell (AE) were not opposed to "mass production and industrialization" nor the employment of "the latest industrial techniques" or a "factory-based system" (O'Connell 136) to ensure their product's success. Finally, in addition to the discrepancy between Joyce's sympathetic use of cow symbolism and the agrilogistics of the nationalist dairy movement, the Catholic Church can be seen to maintain a humanistic attitude towards animals that underwrites their exploitability. To wit: the sermon on sin during the Jesuit retreat that causes Stephen's heart "slowly to fold and fade with fear like a withering flower" seeks to debase earthly life by chastising the boys for various sins, including "to yield to the promptings of [their] lower nature, to live like beasts of the field, nay worse than the beasts of the field, for they, at least, are but brutes and have not reason to guide them" (Joyce *Portrait* 107, 123-124). In this way, the Catholic Church seems to

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<sup>3</sup> Joyce's concern about bovine health carries over into *Ulysses*, where there are ongoing references to a potential foot-and-mouth disease outbreak (see Cheng 205). Moreover, in 1912, Joyce published an editorial in the *Freeman's Journal* entitled "Politics and the Cattle Disease." While this essay is more concerned with economic and political effects, he notes that English politicians' "object is not the security of English herds, but the prolonged exclusion of Irish cattle from the English markets" (Joyce *Occasional* 206).

<sup>4</sup> Joyce *Portrait* 177 and the cowyard example above.

tie in with colonial Britain in terms of circulating the philosophy which undergirds the agrilogistic double bind; perhaps this link can further elucidate Stephen's growing lack of faith over the course of novel as he heeds the prophecy of his strange name.

In addition to domestic land use and animal agriculture, *Portrait's* allusion to other colonial spaces, and the circulation of colonial food and products in the pages of the novel reinforce the homogenizing impulse of colonial agrilogistics. The reader encounters products clearly imported from other British colonies, including chocolate and curry (196, 210). These albeit passing references help demonstrate Morton's assertion that food studies are of central importance to ecological politics, noting that "[a] direct approach to the object – where did it come from, where is it going?" helps to create a sense of ecological space and the functions of agrilogistics (Morton *Ecology* 151). Stephen's meagre diet as outlined earlier may also come into play here: his reticence about food is an act of sympathy with Ireland's participation in colonial food circulation, because, as Mara points out, Stephen is concerned about his body as a "landmass" which is "susceptible to invasion" (Mara 102). The references to other colonies in the novel are a synecdoche of larger violations, of the large-scale abuse of bodies to pave the way for consumption. For example, Stephen recalls a jibe from his father about Dante O'Riordan: "he had heard this father say that she was a spoiled nun and that she had come out of the convent in Alleghanies when her brother had got the money from the savages for the trinkets and the chainies" (Joyce *Portrait* 35, cited also in Cheng 61). Stephen later recalls a Latin lesson "clearer and brighter than any ivory sawn from the mottled tusks of elephants" (179). He thinks of different languages' words for the product, "*Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur*" and then remembers "[o]ne of the first examples that he had learnt in Latin had run: *India mittit ebur*" (179) (that is, "India exports ivory" (Gifford 228)). Moreover, again, as with animal exploitation, the Catholic

church is also involved in overseas colonized space; during the disturbing retreat sermon, the rector notes the Catholic presence in “the Indies” and “the burning tropics” (Joyce *Portrait* 109). All of the scattered references and images occur as Stephen’s preoccupation with the domination and abuse of animals. These instances open up the urban space of the novel to enact the way in which agrilogistics recasts colonized land and territory into a “global apparatus of exploitation” theorized by Marzec, an apparatus which reduces people and animals to products. Moreover, Joyce’s treatment in the novel also shows the ways in which the Irish people are caught up or complicit in the circulation of colonial byproducts.

Joyce’s novel presents the reality of British colonial incursions on Irish land; words, passing remarks, scenes, and the form itself demonstrate how deeply Stephen and the people around him are affected by imperial agrilogistics, and mourn for other ways of being. Joyce’s depictions of ruined land, exploited cattle, and references to the places and object of foreign colonization tie together the deep histories of anthropocentric agricultural aesthetics, the specific functions of British imperialism, and the loss of Irish definitions of and engagements with the earth. As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, these images and depictions are largely bound up with his distaste for aggressive nationalist insurrection, as well as with the enactments of his non-normative lived experience.

## Chapter Two

### **“The Old Sow that Eats Her Farrow:” *Portrait* and Violent Resistance**

Just as *Portrait* illuminates and works through the colonial history of Ireland, it is likewise moving through the history of ongoing nationalist resistance and how this history forms part of Stephen’s growing understanding of the world around him. Even fleeting moments, such as Stephen’s excitement for the “big plumpudding...[with] a little green flag flying from the top” at Christmas, or the “green square of paper pinned round the lamp” which “cast down a tender shade” onto Stephen’s breakfast at Belvedere school, serve as insignia for Ireland’s assertions of nationalist autonomy and identity (Joyce *Portrait* 30, 146). However, these intricate and powerful pairings of Irish green and Stephen’s food hint at how Stephen does not see a great difference between nationalistic and colonialist politics. Indeed, in the same way that the novel, in terms of form and content, is critical of the discourse of agrilogistics as it is tied to imperial control and imposed enclosure, Joyce’s novel also provides a critical take on the dominant forms of contemporary resistance to the British colonization through this same agrilogistical lens. To clarify, Timothy Morton’s term “agrilogistics” describes the metaphysical underpinning behind human incursions into land and space, both in terms of growing food at the expense of other organisms, and as a colonial takeover of foreign land. While the last chapter focused on the agrilogistics at the core of Britain’s control of Ireland, this chapter explores the agrilogistic resonances of nationalistic discourse, whose violent means to secure control of the land reinforce the very gendered and ecological oppressions central to imperial agriculture, thereby undermining this movement’s decolonial potential. The novel’s critique of this masculine, agrilogistic nationalism is thus another part of the artist’s portrait of politics.

Biographers and critics of Joyce underline Joyce’s ongoing, and vocal, interest in Irish

politics, even while an émigré in continental Europe. Vincent Cheng describes Joyce's political leanings, noting Joyce's support of Sinn Féin founder Arthur Griffith, and his "non-extremist brand of nationalism" (Cheng 4, citing Richard Ellman)<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, Don Gifford suggests that the "political and cultural climate in Ireland at the turn of the century" is key to understanding *Portrait* (Gifford 6). This political climate is deeply intertwined with the land and ecological politics. After all, Charles Stewart Parnell, Joyce's (and Stephen's) hero, founded with nationalist Michael Davitt the Land League of Ireland in 1879 as a political vehicle to advocate for Irish tenant rights, but also as a response to renewed concerns of another famine, which was forecasted based on an excessively wet growing season in 1877 (Kee 373, 366). The Land League sought to transform Irish land by re-enfranchising Irish tenants and farmers, using a "combination of above-ground official action and underground violence" (374). Indeed, the nationalist movement boasted a long-standing history of being bound up with violence and aggression; failed armed uprisings in 1798 and 1848, among others, had become part of the collective mythology of national rebellion. Other movements closer to Joyce's time demonstrate the urge for violence voiced in masculine and patriarchal terms, such as the Gaelic Athletic Association, founded by Michael Cusack in 1884 to address a "decline in national virility" by replacing English sports such as cricket and tennis with Gaelic football and hurley (426, citing Archbishop Croke). This association was also widely viewed as a training ground for armed resisters, a fact that Joyce parodies in *Portrait* with Stephen's quip to Davin about "mak[ing] the next rebellion with hurleysticks" (Joyce *Portrait* 202).

Another muscular cultural movement had its beginnings in this period as well, the nationalist literary movement inaugurated by the Irish-Ireland movement and the Gaelic League.

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<sup>5</sup> Emer Nolan provides a reminder, however, that Joyce would not have been sympathetic with all of Griffith's beliefs and policies, noting that Griffith held some racist views that would have jarred with Joyce's cosmopolitanist politics (Nolan 21-22).

W. B. Yeats celebrated that, with the revelation of “the largely forgotten wealth of Irish historic legend and folk tales” a very political as well as “a true literary consciousness – national to the centre – seems gradually to be forming” (427, citing Yeats). However, these cultural movements are not so easily parsed as decolonial, when considered through Valente’s outline of the metrocolonial double bind of masculinity. If the “exercise of self-restraint and self-discipline” by the colonial subaltern demonstrates not masculine rational self-control, but instead femininity and passivity, then the reverse is also true about violent resistance (Valente *Myth* 10). Indeed, Valente states that “the forms available to the subaltern subject or group for the direct assertion of masculinity per se, whether as violent force or aggressive virility, tended to violate the self-disciplinary canons of bourgeois [English] manliness” (Valente 20). To clarify, British colonial rule in Ireland is justified by the colonial double bind, which not only challenges the legitimacy of Irish self-governance by the rhetoric of bestialization and feminization as outlined in the previous chapter, but also succeeds in coding armed resistance as wild, unmanly and ungovernable. Moreover, Valente questions the success of self-fashioned virile forms of resistance by noting how they perpetuate colonial stereotypes or other forms of oppression. Thus, the focus of this chapter is to assess Joyce’s critique of violent, virile resistance as it appears in *Portrait*, and contrast his novel with two nationalistic dramas by Yeats, *The Countess Cathleen* (1892) and *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902), as these works make an appearance in the novel. They are also important to consider alongside Joyce’s novel as these two plays were important cultural works in nationalist discourse formation. By focusing on Joyce’s treatment of the rhetoric of land, the subjugation of animals, and the politics of food in Irish resistance, this chapter will read Joyce’s unease with this nationalist movement alongside Valente’s theory of the colonial double bind, and will demonstrate how Joyce’s critique of nationalist virility appears in ecological

terms.

Irish land is often figured as a trope and an incitement to (violent) political activity in politics and Revival literature. In this way, Revival authors and nationalist politicians in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Ireland were reacting against the takeover of their land by British colonialism, however, unlike in Joyce's works, this figuring of the land fell into a symbolic pattern wherein "the landscape came to be personified as Mother Ireland" which "associated women with passivity" (O'Connor 109, citing Heather Ingram). In turn, the role of the male nationalist was to defend and honour the gendered land through noble rebellion and sacrifice. This characterization of the land as female had been a feature of Gaelic mythology; Valente details the history of the Sovereignty myth, whereby a prospective sovereign would undergo a "mating ritual in which the Sovereign Hag (Erin, the Poor Old Woman, the Shan Van Vocht, the Cailleach Beare, Cathleen)" who would then transform "into a beautiful young woman," as a test of the prospective ruler's worth and authority (Valente 95). Thus, already a mainstay in the Irish folkloric imagination, the Revival returned to this image as a means of political persuasion. An earlier Victorian example, which appears in Joyce's writing, is James Clarence Mangan's "My Dark Rosaleen," in which Rosaleen "figures for Ireland herself" (Cheng 92). The most famous literary examples include some of Yeats's drama, such as *The Countess Cathleen* (1892) and *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (1902), which Yeats co-wrote with Lady Augusta Gregory; these plays form the especial focus of the nationalist land trope in this chapter, as not only are they contemporaneous to Joyce's writing of *Portrait*, these plays make appearances in his writing and figure into his conception of land, nationalism, and literature.

In Yeats and Gregory's collaborative telling of the Sovereignty myth in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, the setting is reimaged in a Killala cottage in 1798, the night before the failed



French landing and rebellion of that year. Cathleen appears in the Gillane household the night before the elder son, Michael's, wedding, seeking succour and shelter. Not only does the play contain references to various insignia of muscular nationalism such as a mention of a hurling match (155), but it also reads as a piece of agrarian activism. The land figures prominently in the old woman's distress: she famously complains of "[t]oo many strangers in the house" who have taken her "four beautiful green fields," thus, obviously, of British control of Irish land (160). She links famous (and dead) Irish heroes with these four lands, telling Michael of:

a red man of the O'Donnells from the north, and a man of the O'Sullivans from  
the south, and there was one Brian that lost his life at Clontarf by the sea, and  
there were a great many in the west, some that died hundreds of years ago, and  
there are some that will die tomorrow. (161)

With regards to those who "will die tomorrow," Cathleen is seeking help from a man who "must give [her] himself, he must give [her] all," and prophecies that "[t]hey that have red cheeks will have pale cheeks for my sake, and for all that, they will think they are well paid" (162, 164). Michael chooses to go with Cathleen, to lose his blood for the sake of getting her land back, thereby forsaking his earthly marriage to his betrothed, Delia. His sacrifice to be her hero prompts Cathleen, at the end of the play, to appear as a "young girl" who "had the walk of a queen" (165). Valente demonstrates how this telling deviates from the folkloric sources, in that the myth is "remodel[ed]...in a manner that served to reinforce the prevailing gender system" (Valente 96). That is, the gendered Ireland figure appears as "less of a kingmaker and more of a supplicant" (96); Cathleen is no longer a bestower of authority upon "sexual congress," but is instead a passive recipient of "the heroic self-immolation of blood sacrifice" (96). This form of the myth was very popular among the Dublin public, and succeeded in "creat[ing] a model for an

entire renewal of Irish patriotic thought” (Kee 434); in fact, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* was taken as a battle-cry to many prominent nationalists at the time, such as Constance Markievicz, and Patrick Pearse, leader of the Easter 1916 Rising, for whom the image of blood-sacrifice was very potent, as evidenced when he states “[t]he old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of the battlefields” (cited in Kee 531).

Joyce himself picks up on how the *Cathleen* brand of nationalism formed the zeitgeist in Ireland at the time, both in his critical writing and his early fiction. In his 1901 essay “The Day of the Rabblement,” Joyce critiques Yeats and Gregory’s Irish Literary Theatre for staging plays of the *Cathleen* ilk, chastising their “narrow nationalism” (Barry xlv); in this piece, he contrasted the Theatre’s previous commitment as a “movement of protest against the sterility and falsehood of the modern stage” with their succumbing to “popular will,” thereby making it “the property of the rabblement of the most belated race in Europe” (Joyce *Occasional* 50). He also censures Yeats in particular, as he states: “Mr Yeats’s treacherous instinct of adaptability must be blamed for his recent association with a platform from which even self-respect should have urged him to refrain” (51). Later, in his 1905 *Dubliners* story “A Mother,” the zealous stage-mom Mrs Kearney is the embodiment of this kind of “narrow nationalism,” as evidenced by her relationship with her eldest daughter Kathleen, in that “[w]hen the Irish Revival began to be appreciable Mrs Kearney determined to take advantage of her daughter’s name” (Joyce *Dubliners* 137). Cathleen also makes an appearance in *Ulysses*, in the episode which lampoons “The Citizen” and the muscular brand of national pride, as The Citizen echoes Cathleen’s lament about “strangers in the house” (Cheng 230).

With these critiques in mind, Edward Said offers a more reparative reading of Yeats’s writing about the land in these terms as a form of decolonization, in that “the recovery of the

land...because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, is recoverable at first only through the imagination,” and enables the land to be “seen again... in a state that antedated its alienation by imperialism” (Said 77, 78). Yet, he also expresses uneasiness with the “excessive romanticism” of nationalist poetics (78). Valente elaborates on this shortcoming, arguing that “the identification of blood sacrifice with chivalric heroism promised to square the double bind of (colonial) manliness,” but ultimately only reinforces the colonial logic, which casts man as a steward of the female/land (Valente *Myth* 100). Thus, he argues that the presence of “Anglified gender grounds only goes to show that a separatist ideology is no guarantee of ideological separatism” (73). In other words, this variety of decolonization only reaffirms and reimagines the logic and hierarchy implicit in and underwriting Ireland’s colonized status.

*Portrait* shares the critiques of gendered nationalism that Joyce outlined in the aforementioned writing. The way in which he works through agrarian activism in terms of gender adds another layer to Valente’s assessment of how the Cathleen trope is not ultimately able to escape the colonial double-bind. After all, as Morton argues, other forms of oppression serve as consequences of agrilogistical development, including “gender stratification” (Morton *Agrilogistics* 93). The masculinist tradition in Irish nationalism’s figuration of the land as incitement deploys many of the strategies implicit in agrilogistical colonization. For example, the land is featured as a whole, pure, organic thing, one who needs protection to ensure its purity, a concept which Marzec links to the agrilogistical underpinning of the nation. In this kind of decolonization that replicates a colonial order, Marzec sees “a sociosymbolic order that wishes to homogenize the diversity of land in order to fabricate a national identity” (Marzec 154). The homogenizing impulse also flattens the lived experience of the rural deprivation associated with Irish colonization. As Elizabeth Butler Cullingford argues, while Yeats’s play does shed light on

the grounds for Irish resistance, the image of “the visionary maiden lamenting her colonial status has little to do with the poverty-stricken rural mother watching her children die of starvation,” with the result that “[t]he price of insight into one injustice may be blindness to another” (Cullingford 172). In this vein, Marjorie Howes notes as well that this nationalism likewise “insists on an absolute distinction between the colonizer and the colonized” (Howes 207). In this instance, her observation reinforces the argument that the strategies employed by the Celtic Revival authors, namely Yeats, to reimagine Ireland and its land according to old myths and folklore often had the same “othering” effect as colonial agrilogistics, in that they insist on a difference between nations articulated in terms of species, and hierarchized as such. Joyce disliked this project centered on “xenophonic nationalisms,” and did not like the false myth of a stable or pure centre, itself an institution of agrilogistics, which to Joyce denoted a desire for a “pure racial/ethnic Irish essence,” instead of seeing Ireland more realistically and productively as a “*bricolage* of ethnically mixed diversities and shared cultures, exhibiting the multicultural characteristics of Mary Pratt’s ‘contact zone’” (Cheng 233, 132).

In addition to ratifying the patriarchal overtones of agrilogistics, the Revival’s turn to Celtic myth becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of Matthew Arnold’s othering of Ireland through “the feminizing discourse of Celticism,” (Valente 11), a slice of Victorian rhetoric which served to continue to justify Britain’s colonial rule over Ireland. Masculinist nationalism presents further connections to agrilogistical tenets beyond these gendered pitfalls; the concept alone of Irish male blood serving as a fertilizer for the land is an obvious agrilogistics metaphor. Moreover, Morton’s theory of the privileging of “constant presence” is useful here: just as agrilogistics support the ongoing increase in human population as the ultimate success, no matter how miserable the policies of this population are, and no matter what other organisms need to be

displaced, so too does the principle behind this violent sacrificial nationalism (Morton “Agrilogistics” 93). Only here, the ideal constant present is the nation; Cathleen’s land full of dead men, and more who will die tomorrow, are thus *fertilizer* to ensure the ongoing presence of a nation’s concept of itself. Read in terms of agrilogistics, then, the Literary Revival trope of the land as a feminized object which needed heroic defence demonstrates Marzec’s contention that often nationalism “only resolidifies the problematic of imperialism” (Marzec 152). Stephen in *Portrait* appears cognizant and critical of the sacrifice demanded by violent nationalism. He succinctly states to Davin: “My ancestors threw off their language and took another.... They allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them. Do you fancy I am going to pay in my own life and person debts they made? What for?” (Joyce *Portrait* 203). Accordingly, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, and the discourse it represents, all work to form the portrait of Stephen, as they come into his consciousness and become concepts that he has to work through, but ultimately not allow to define him. His statement is a recognition that sacrificial nationalism is not able to liberate the colonized from the metrocolonial double bind, because it is founded on the same agrilogistical tenets, those of violence, patriarchy, and constant presence, all of which underwrote Irish colonization in the first place.

Further references to the discourse of land-based national resistance abound in *Portrait*, demonstrating the degree to which this discourse is the background of Joyce’s novel. For example, during the Christmas dinner scene from Stephen’s childhood, we learn how Stephen’s own family is caught up in violent resistance, when Uncle Charles points to a portrait on the wall of Stephen’s grandfather, and notes that “he was condemned to death as a whiteboy” (Joyce *Portrait* 38). A whiteboy was one term for an “agitator for land and tax reform,” who often employed violence in the quest for independence (Gifford 147). Stephen’s friend Davin mentions

a “mass meeting” in Castletownroche, which was a strategy inaugurated by Daniel O’Connell for “arousing public sentiment and of demonstrating to the English overlords Irish political unanimity on key issues” (Joyce *Portrait* 182, Gifford 232). Stephen also jokes about the war cry “fianna!” which was a signature of the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (Joyce *Portrait* 202, Gifford 245-246). Amidst these passing references, Stephen also recalls a childhood memory wherein he would partake of a Sunday “constitutional” with his father and Uncle Charles. Young Stephen “lent an avid ear” as “his elders spoke constantly of the subjects nearer their hearts, of Irish politics, of Munster and of the legends of their own family” (Joyce *Portrait* 62). Here, the triumvirate of the Irish revival are present in the older men’s speech: they have linked Irish politics, and a reclamation of antique Irish folklore, with a designated area of land, Munster, which is “southern of the four ancient provinces of Ireland,” that is, one of Cathleen’s “four green fields” (Gifford 158). As Gifford notes, that part of the country “had a long history of vigorous resistance to British dominion and were well-storied with accounts of reprisal and repression” (158). In this scene, moreover, Stephen gestures to the artificiality and performance behind mastering this discourse of nationalism as presented by his father and uncle: “[w]ords which he did not understand he said over and over to himself until he had learned them by heart: and through them he had glimpses of the world about him” (Joyce *Portrait* 62). The masculine version of nationalism appears to Stephen as a script he has to master, one which seeks to form the world around him, but which he struggles to comprehend. He is aware that this discourse is part and parcel of a normative masculine relation to the land when he notes that “[t]he hour when he too would take part in this life of that world seemed drawing near” (62). In this way, Stephen is depicting how the doctrine of masculinist nationalism is a discourse that is taught and shared with the expectation that (male) citizens will take up the mantle of protecting

Irish land in agrilogistical terms.

Joyce's frustration with how nationalist violence loops on the colonial double-bind is centred for me on Stephen's famous line about Ireland: "Do you know what Ireland is? asked Stephen with cold violence. Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow" (Joyce *Portrait* 203). Here, as I wish to stress, Joyce has conflated bloodshed in the name of rebellion with an image that encapsulates the violence inherent in the animal agriculture imposed on Ireland. This utterance of Stephen's succinctly entextualizes the inescapability of the colonial double-bind, which leaves no real room for other ways of living and being. In this image, O'Connor suggests that Joyce is drawing on satires of Irish people, in which the "pig was the dominant representation of the Irish as animal," a fact which also hints at the agrilogistical reverberations of Stephen's comment (O'Connor 104). O'Connor is concerned, then, not only that the statement "reasserts traditional stereotypes of the Irish as cannibals and swine," but also that it is "potentially misogynistic" (110). However, when violent nationalism is seen as akin to agrilogistics, the misogynistic and self-depreciating tone that O'Connor detects is recast as a locus for a subtle and nuanced critique of the Irish nation-state. Indeed, what Joyce seems to be saying is that in fact the ideological background of this Yeatsian nationalism is what reasserts the pejorative stereotypes: as Valente suggests, the portrayals of men bleeding for the nation amounted to "cannibalizing political failures as cultural achievements in the name of Irish glory," an Irish glory which depends upon gender hierarchies and colonial logic (Valente *Myth* 81). This rhetoric calls for "heroic self-nullification" (98), for Irish citizens to volunteer to become the sow's piglets, and which crafts Ireland into the female figure that demands that blood, all for the sake of the nation's constant presence. Read in this way, Joyce's sow image shows "how the ideological tools of decolonization liberation can also prove instruments of self-imprisonment"

(139), by giving voice to the double bind inherent in resistance wherein the colonized is either blood-victim or blood-thirsty.

The novel also links this agrarian violence with the treatment of the inherent subjugation of animals and the violence of eating. One such example is the Dedalus family's heated discussion of national politics which occurs over a Christmas dinner scene. Here, Stephen's father Simon "heaped up the food on Stephen's plate and served uncle Charles and Mr Casey to large pieces of turkey and splashes of sauce. Mrs Dedalus was eating little and Dante sat with her hands in her lap" (Joyce *Portrait* 32). Miriam O'Kane Mara has read this scene instructively in terms of its gender politics; these politics in turn reflect the same masculinist oppression inherent in agrilogistical thinking. In this scene, the elder male characters argue with and offend the female characters regarding their political beliefs, resulting in their growing silence and their ultimately exiting from the table. O'Kane Mara links the women's relative political silence with their reduced food consumption, which is made especially more clear by the males' voracious eating. This eating, as demonstrated in the passage above, consists of hefty portions of meat, which is highlighted by the frequently repeated "adverb 'hungrily'" in the description of the scene (Mara 97). This scene then replicates the colonial double bind, where, in O'Kane Mara's words, "nationalist efforts seek to regain masculinity through hypermasculine discourse" (97). Here, nationalism is a zero-sum game, as "the male narrative of nationalism" is dependent upon not only "the inability or refusal of women to speak," but also the voracious consumption of animal flesh (97).

Stephen also engages in this violent eating as an older student in the milieu of his Catholic schooling. For example, he looks out "through the dull square of the window of his schoolroom" and daydreams about that night's dinner, for which he "hoped there would be



stew...turnips and carrots and bruised potatoes and fat mutton pieces to be ladled out in thick peppered flourfatted sauce. Stuff it into you, his belly counselled him” (Joyce *Portrait* 102). This instance of Stephen’s voracious appetite for meat reflects Valente’s observation that the Catholic church underwrote a masculinist vision of “a more rugged, forceful manhood in a respectable form” (Valente 192)<sup>6</sup>. That is to say, Stephen is enacting this Catholic vision of a hearty population by engaging in the heteronormative act of voracious eating under the auspices of the Church. This scene reverberates further with the subjugation of women, in that immediately after his reverie about dinner, Stephen begins planning his “devious course” through the “squalid quarter of the brothels” (Joyce *Portrait* 182). Prostitutes are also linked to another source of animal subjugation in the novel: as Stephen is growing older and less convinced by the Revivalist rhetoric, his nationalist friend Davin tells a story of a peasant woman who tries to seduce him, when he encounters her in the Ballyhoura hills (182). A young woman, who is “half undressed as if she was going to bed” (182) comes to the door of a hut where Davin has stopped for water, and offers him “a big mug of milk” (182). Stephen vacillates between thinking of the woman as a candid sexual agent, and more critically as a “type,” indistinguishable from the “figures of the peasant women whom he had seen standing in the doorways at Clane as the college cars drove by,” thereby identifying her as the mascot of the Revival’s empty fetishization of rurality (183). To that end, O’Connell links this scene with George Russell’s campaign for a national diet of milk to promote Irish industry, as briefly mentioned last chapter. Stephen is thus satirizing the Revivalist logic, wherein a citizen “was to be as much fulfilled by a diet of milk as by the plays – often with rural themes – produced by the Irish National Theatre (O’Connell 136). This relationship between “the poor old woman, cattle and the nation” is what O’Connell terms

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<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Butler Cullingford also links the Catholic church with masculinist (violent) insurrection, noting the valences of the Catholic “iconographic emphasis on the tortured male body” (Butler Cullingford 173).

“dairy nationalism” (142). This brand of nationalism, then, does not simply replicate the agrilogistical double bind by mirroring the subjugation of women, animals and the land for the creation of a product, it also points to a quest for “organicism” (136), a homogenization of the land as a symbol of purity, of which Stephen has elsewhere been critical. Stephen’s casting of Davin’s woman puts a satirical edge on the Revivalist rhetoric, from which Stephen further distances himself with his diet of watery tea (135).

However, in addition to these critiques of masculinist nationalism, as well as *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and the violent insurrection it exhorts, *Portrait* also presents moments where Stephen is thinking about or working through Yeats’s nationalistic work in a more nuanced way<sup>7</sup>. This less critical view is primarily focused on Yeats’s 1892 play, *The Countess Cathleen*, which unlike *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, focuses on a female protagonist taking action (and not exhorting it) against a colonized, and in this case, famine-struck, land. In this play, the Countess Cathleen hears tell of her country-folk selling their souls to two travelling merchants (who represent the English), in exchange for money to buy food. While her lover, the poet Aleel, encourages her to flee the twinned menaces of the merchants and the famine, she endeavours first to provide succour to the Irish people by sharing her treasure, and sending away for cattle and meal. The merchants deceive her in order to thwart her attempts at assistance, first by raiding her coffers, and then by allowing her to believe that the ships carrying cattle and meal were destroyed. Thus, left with no choice, she sells her soul to the merchants to spare the country; for her sacrifice, she is apotheosized. This play certainly deals with colonial agrilogistics in a way that resonates with *Portrait*’s treatment: in the play, “the swine and cattle, fields and implements/Are all sold and

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<sup>7</sup> Yeats also begins to think critically about the political overtones of *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. Kee notes that Yeats ultimately grows “disillusioned with the political side of Irish revival” (Kee 452) and expresses “bitter condemnation” when the iconography of Cathleen is taken up by nationalists such as Markiewicz (457). Valente also offers a reading of Yeats’s 1904 play *On Baile’s Strand*, noting that “it mounts a critique of the sacrificial politics that Yeats himself espoused in *Cathleen*” (Valente 177). I have chosen however, to limit my focus to the Cathleen plays as they both detail land-based activism, and were taken up by Joyce variously in his writing.

gone” (Yeats *Countess* Scene 1), and thus, the Countess’s “land is famine stuck” (Scene 1), which aligns with Joyce’s presentation of a hungry, underfed Stephen as a reminder that the famine is a memory that affects the ongoing daily life of Irish people. Moreover, like Stephen’s “filthy cowyard,” the presence of the British merchants and their treatment of the Irish soul as a “marketable thing” has created a sense of decay and filth, here demonstrated by a “yellow vapour creeping about the fields” (Scene 2, Scene 3). This play would have further resonated with Joyce as well because of its critical treatment of the Catholic Church; the peasants see no problem with selling their soul in the play, because as the character Shemus states: “What has God poured out of his bag but famine? Satan has money” (Scene 1). Indeed, when the play makes its appearance in *Portrait*, it is when college-student Stephen is disgusted at the protests the play received from the Catholic/nationalist crowd. Stephen recalls the opening night of the play at the Irish Literary Theatre, and hears how the “catcalls and hisses and mocking cries ran in rude gusts round the hall from his scattered fellowstudents” (Joyce *Portrait* 226)<sup>8</sup>. The charges from these “fellowstudents” blend Catholic and national loyalty, such as “A libel on Ireland,” “We never sold our faith,” and “No Irish woman ever did it” (226).

In addition to his pessimistic treatment in literary form, Joyce also refused to engage in real-world backlash against the play: as Nolan notes, Joyce refused to sign a petition that his colleagues at University College, Dublin had written as “a letter of protest to the national newspapers” (Nolan 26). Joyce’s distaste for the protest, and his enjoyment of the play, can be understood in agrilogistical terms. To clarify, the play gestures to the messiness that occurs as a result of the colonial double bind, in that citizens suffer for the sake of their nation, or appear to “sell out” to the colonial force. The play demonstrates that the idea of a stable central power is fictitious, whether in terms of a colonial power (here reduced to itinerant merchants) or a pure

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<sup>8</sup> Don Gifford records the opening date of the play as May 8, 1899 (Gifford 269).

national image. Joyce's refusal to participate in the protest, Cheng argues, is just this frustration with the myth of national purity, as Joyce "refuses to see the world through shamrock-tinted glasses which would deny any possibility of Irish immorality or even imperfection" (Cheng 63). In addition to not thinking critically about their own perpetuation of agrilogistical frameworks, Richard Ellman suggests that Joyce's exasperation with this protest was his recognition that their protests (and nationalistic beliefs) "were half-measures or off the point," and that "the real problems were not touched" (Ellman 2). Read in this way, then, Yeats's play resonates with Joyce because it touches on many of the issues Joyce himself is working through, including land ravaged by colonial takeover, and the complicity of the Irish people in these frameworks. Instead of thinking critically about these issues, Joyce's "fellowstudents" reinforce the colonial double bind by not being able to see their way out of it.

Beyond Joyce's more favourable presentation of *The Countess Cathleen* in *Portrait*, Stephen's thinking about the play also represents a re-working of its climax and dénouement. Immediately before Stephen's recollection about the catcalls at the play's opening at the Irish Literary Theatre, Stephen watches the flight of a group of swallows as he stands outside the library (Joyce *Portrait* 224). He notes that they must have "come back from the south," which he links to his own planned exile from Ireland, when he thinks that "[t]hen he was to go away for they were birds ever going and coming, building ever an unlasting home under the eaves of men's houses and ever leaving the homes they had built to wander" (225). This link of the birds' migration to his own forthcoming flight reminds him of the Countess Cathleen's final lines before her death, "*Bend down your faces, Oona and Aleel, / I gaze upon them as the swallow gazes*" (225). However, the swallows seem to gesture to another moment in the play, when Aleel tries to convince Cathleen to flee both the famine and the merchants; his exhortation to flee is

inspired by a vision he has of a fire, “and in the fire One walked and he had birds about his head” (Yeats *Countess* Scene 3). Stephen thus muses on the swallows that encircle him (and that Cathleen invokes) as a “symbol of departure or of loneliness” (Joyce *Portrait* 226); unlike Cathleen, however, he heeds Aleel’s call, choosing “silence, exile, and cunning” as the “only arms [he] allow[s] himself to use” (247).

This exile represents a non-violent alternative to anti-colonial resistance that does not replicate Cathleen’s self-immolation for the sake of the nation<sup>9</sup>. Stephen’s non-violent exile forges a connection between his character and his (and Joyce’s) political hero, Charles Stewart Parnell, both in terms of Parnell’s more pacifistic political strategies, but also how Stephen avoids repeating Parnell’s downfall by escaping. Cheng records that Parnell and Michael Davitt were both heroes of Joyce (which trait was passed on to Stephen in *Portrait*) (Cheng 69); Parnell and Davitt both appear on the first page of the novel when Stephen recalls the two brushes which Dante has “in her press,” one commemorating each politician (Joyce *Portrait* 7). In addition to Parnell forming one of young Stephen’s earliest memories, he also mourns Parnell’s ultimate death throughout the novel as well. Parnell died in 1891; he had grown ill after a scandal wherein he had been caught in an extra-marital affair with Katherine O’Shea, the wife of a Home Rule Member of Parliament (Kee 382). The revelation of the affair pitted his national popularity against Catholic mores, between which alliances the Irish people were forced to choose (410), rendering nationalist groups and the Church complicit also in the rhetoric which surrounded his public downfall. His successes in advocating for forward-thinking land and agricultural policy, such as tenant reform and Home Rule bills seemed to pass with him, leaving behind “a squalid and internecine warfare that lasted the better part of ten years” (411). Stephen picks up on the

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<sup>9</sup> Cheng (65, 69) and Nolan (113), among others, also view Stephen as a pacifist, and argue that *Ulysses* (especially through the character Leopold Bloom) show that Joyce continued moving the same non-violent ideas forward.

bitterness left in Parnell's wake: he mourns the death of Parnell in a vision where he hears "a wail of sorrow...from the people" (Joyce *Portrait* 27); later in the novel, he thinks to himself that the "Ireland of Tone and of Parnell seemed to have receded in space" (184). Beyond these references to Parnell's life and death in the political background of the novel, Stephen's flight is a manoeuvring away from the futility of Parnellian destruction, which links Parnell with the Countess Cathleen as personages who needlessly sacrificed themselves for the nation. In this way, Stephen's exile mirrors one of Parnell's particularly successful, and land-based, political strategies, the boycott. Parnell and the Land League inaugurated a successful campaign against landlords who bought up farmland from those who had been evicted from it; the strategy centered on "isolating a man from his kind" as a protest against such callous acquisitions (Kee 377). In the eponymous famous instance, a Captain Boycott in County Mayo was refused assistance with harvesting his crops, and even denied services from local proprietors (377). Valente suggests that this strategy "managed to be aggressive without being at all violent and so respectable in its very assault on the respectable status quo of colonial landlordism" (Valente *Myth* 44). Stephen's exile, then, is this same kind of non-violent critique of the status quo of colonial Ireland: he removes himself from his kind in a re-imagining of a Parnellian boycott.

Cheng argues that Joyce, through his literary and critical writing, seeks to "deconstruct the mythology of Romantic Ireland," and *Portrait* is a text which clearly demonstrates this deconstruction (Cheng 310). By presenting the violence and futility of nationalist insurrection in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Ireland, Joyce demonstrates how masculinist forms of resistance perpetuate the cycles of agrilogistical oppression which manufactured colonization in the first place. As Valente notes, "the burden of Joyce's treatment of masculinity is to expose, explain and help to end Irish participation in this self-defeating circle;" to effectively defeat this self-

reinforcing loop, “the terms must be changed” (Valente *Myth* 196, 236). Joyce indeed seeks to change the terms: by re-imagining resistance through exile as an Parnellian agrarian boycott instead of violent insurrection, *Portrait* gestures to novel, non-violent ways of being in the world, and in Ireland, and sets up Stephen’s non-participation in the forces which form the agricultural and colonial double bind. These ways of being form the focus of the following chapter.

### Chapter Three

#### **“We are all animals”: *Portrait’s* Queer Ecology as Non-Violent Resistance**

If we approach *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a profoundly ecological text, the novel’s beginning with a young Stephen being greeted by a moocow becomes especially significant. This is the same species of animal that Stephen later attributes to his calling as an artist. Hearing his schoolmates’ calls of “Bous Stephanoumenos!” and “Bous Stephaneforos!” as prophetic, Stephen then invokes “the name of the fabulous artificer,” his namesake Dedalus (Joyce *Portrait* 168-169). What is especially poignant about Stephen’s moniker is that in the Greek myths about Dedalus, he is known for making a beautiful brass bull for Queen Pasiphaë: thus Joyce (as Stephen) and the mythical Dedalus both make cows into art, and art into cows. After this invocation, Stephen continues to see his artistic vocation in ecological terms, as he thinks of this prophecy as

a hawklike man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being. (169)

The earth emerges as art’s energy, an animalistic inspiration that soars, but does not leave or transcend the earth. Joyce’s ecological and political engagement in this novel arises out of these references, of soil and animals as symbols of his creative work. Indeed, if a text, artwork, or political movement at large is to be successfully decolonial, then the colonial double bind, and here, the agrilogistic double bind, need to be side-stepped altogether. Avoiding the perpetuation of the violent control of land and its myriad inhabitants through imperial agriculture as well as through the aggressive rhetoric of nationalist insurrection needs to be the goal. In order to



achieve this, the terms, as Joseph Valente suggests, of Joyce's decolonial efforts in *Portrait*, will have to be changed. Instead of the colonial logic of masculine heroism transforming Irish soil (by the British imperialist on the one hand, and on the Revival playwright on the other), Joyce puts forward a non-violent and humble poetics which lay out in this novel a wholly different conception of the land, animals, space and Stephen's place in this world. By "thinking and practicing weakness rather than mastery, fragmentariness rather than aggressive assertion, [and] multiplying differences," to use Tim Morton's words, Joyce moves beyond the politicizations and aestheticizations of land as explicated in the previous chapters, in order to envision something new, a different way of thinking ecologically and being in the world ("Queer" 278).

Tim Morton's aforementioned quote is excerpted from his 2010 *PMLA* article on "Queer Ecology," in his discussion of the kinds of intimacies and strategies required to rethink the human violence entailed by the dominance and conquest of a (capital-N) Nature as a crucible for masculinity, and the equally problematic "biological essentialism" and gender separatism represented by ecofeminism (274). This theory demonstrates that not only has contemporary ecocritical thought given us the language to discuss and appreciate Stephen's ecological imagination in *Portrait*, but that Joyce was working through these ideas *avant-la-lettre*, and that this novel offers a practical and worldly look at the ways of being for which this contemporary criticism calls. This chapter then reads queer ecology as Stephen's key to escape the agrilogistic double bind. It will explore Stephen's queerly ecological being first in terms of the experimental forms of the novel, and second, in what I am calling Stephen's politics of proximity. Lastly, I will turn to Stephen's theriomorphic imagination as a decolonial strategy.

Queer ecology, I contend, is a politics of non-violence in Joyce's *Portrait*, which I will first further ground as a concept, before exploring how it is illuminated in this novel. Morton's

theory of queer ecology outlines the many ways in which a queerly ecological theory would take shape in daily life, and these subversive tactics are represented aesthetically in Joyce's novel. For example, Morton characterizes experience as "liquid life," as "catastrophic, monstrous, nonholistic, and dislocated, not organic, coherent or authoritative," as well as an "open-ended concatenation of interrelations that blur and confound boundaries at practically any level: between species, between the living and the nonliving, between organism and environment" (275-276). Here, Morton is ably moving beyond hegemonic concepts of Nature: as a reflection of man that reminds man of his authority, and of the holism and purity, and therefore total understandability and conquerability of a female earth. Stephen lives this liquid life, as we see him repeatedly blur and confound the line between human and animal, between cow and artist. He undermines the concept of authority as one who creates and orders the world. Instead, the world and the environment, the "sluggish matter of the earth" ground Stephen and his art, and are co-creators of his "new soaring impalpable imperishable being." Even the words on the page enact this subversive liquidity, as they flow together without commas or breaks. For Morton, though, queer theory and ecocriticism or ecology are more closely related schools of thought. They share the critique of biological and gendered essentialism, wherein the category of "Natural" underpins the supposed inevitability and compulsivity of heterosexuality, as it also creates images of "[r]ugged, bleak, masculine Nature" with its concomitant depictions of a victimized, pure Mother Nature (279). Both theoretical approaches also reimagine communities and belonging, refocusing on politics of alternative affiliation at the ecological instead of national or global level, ecological intimacies centred on "love, warmth, vulnerability, and ambiguity" (280). This "politicized intimacy," in Morton's words, reinforces the decentering of the fiction of human supremacy over other beings, by opening up room for kinships with other

kinds of creatures that do not “fit in a straight box” (278). Donna Haraway’s communion with her dogs, and Derrida’s cat come to mind as examples of these decentered relations. Collectively, these theoretical overlaps prompt Morton to state that “fully and properly, ecology is queer theory and queer theory is ecology” (281). Their shared critique of the stable, human subject and the rendering problematic of the narrative of “Nature” and “Natural” ways of being, make this wholly unstraight union of queer theory and ecology a fruitful tool to move beyond the constricting categories (of male as conqueror, female as land; England as male, Ireland as female). These are the rigid binaries that allow for the flourishing of the agrilogistic double bind, and it is necessary to read and understand Stephen’s queer strategies and affiliations as a rebellion to these terms.

While ecocritical readings of *Portrait* specifically, and Joyce’s writing more generally, only constitute a small and relatively recent approach in Joycean scholarship<sup>10</sup>, more foundational queer readings of Joyce engage profoundly with ecology and ecocriticism, without necessarily using this theoretical vocabulary or identifying itself as such. Indeed, the core foci of the 1998 volume *Quare Joyce*, edited by Joseph Valente, seem to anticipate Morton’s twinning of the two disciplines nearly ten years later: Valente writes that the volume seeks to *denaturalize* desire from its “patriarchal and imperialist culture” (“Introduction” 4). The collection’s reading of Joyce’s “aptitude for queering the dichotomy between “queer” and the “square/straight,” for unsettling the normative and hierarchical distinctions between different modes of sexual expression” (4) also demonstrably cross over to include different modes of interspecies and ecological affiliation. Such double readings are evident in Valente’s own essay (“Thrilled By His

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<sup>10</sup> While a recent volume edited by Robert Brazeau and Derek Gladwin, *Eco Joyce: The Environmental Imagination of James Joyce* (2014, Cork UP) seems promising, the overarching focus of the volume appears to centre on “nature” in Joyce’s writing, thereby upholding the binary categories of nature versus culture, of urban versus rural or wild, that arguably Joyce’s writing, more recent ecocriticism, as well as this thesis, are attempting to overcome.

Touch: The Aestheticizing of Homosexual Panic in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*”), including his analysis of Stephen’s reverie about a green rose, the “symbol of Stephen’s Irish art” to compete with the red and white roses of Britain (Valente “Thrilled” 52, Joyce *Portrait* 12). Valente links the green rose with Oscar Wilde’s “famous ‘green carnation’,” itself both a marker of symbolist artistry, and “a badge of homosexual subculture” (52). Stephen’s thought that “you could not have a green rose. But perhaps somewhere in the world you could” is an ecological symbol for covert or subversive desire, but it also points to the process of decolonization, the creation of not-yet-existent places beyond the reach of colonial politics (Joyce *Portrait* 12). Valente’s essay also links Stephen’s simultaneous fear and attraction to water (especially dirty, stagnant water) with the possibilities of homoeroticism, as evidenced in Stephen’s memories in passages along these lines:

the white look of the lavatory made him feel cold and then hot. There were two cocks that you turned and water came out: cold and hot. He felt cold and then a little hot: and he could see the names printed on the cocks. That was a very queer thing. (11, quoted also in Valente “Thrilled” 53).

The interplay between fear and desire and the link between water and queer desire is fairly clearly encoded in his passage through Joyce’s deployment of the double entendre (53).

Tim Dean picks up on this watery theme, arguing that Stephen’s thrilling in “soft liquid joy” is a very physical, and queer, joy which brings Joyce’s art, the words on the page, back down to earth by reminding the reader of their material dimension (258). Gregory Castle’s essay “Confessing Oneself: Homoeros and Colonial Bildung in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*” sees Joyce’s novel as challenging the heteronormative impulse “that emerges out of classical humanism” (160) by engaging instead with “the bestial and the corrupt...that are linked

to the unspeakable desire of homoeroticism” (168). Therefore, just as *Quare Joyce* sought “to reconfigure the economy of Joyce studies through the importation of a queer theory perspective” (Valente “Introduction” 1), this chapter seeks to reconfigure this economy through a queer ecological perspective. Moreover, I seek to redress the relative silence regarding praxis and daily experience in much contemporary ecocriticism. To clarify, Morton, for example, frequently includes statements, such as in *Ecology Without Nature* (2007) that there is “no way out of the paradoxes outlined in this book” (143), no way to decolonize the concept of Nature. Another example appears later, in his 2013 “Agrilogistics” article: while noting that “ridiculous” forms of thinking are required to get outside of agrilogistics, he also jokes that “I am not advocating a dismantling of actual agricultural forms. I am not suggesting that we go back to foraging for nuts and berries or subsistence farming” (100). With these gaps in the theory in mind, this chapter thus explores the kinds of non-agrilogistic thinking and being that abounds in *Portrait*. I argue that Joyce’s novel *is*, in fact, an envisioning and an entextualization of the ways out of the paradoxes of the colonial double-bind, which revel in Stephen’s future-oriented, queer, dirty, ecological “entanglement in and with life-forms” (to use Morton’s words, “Queer” 279), without regress to theoretical pessimism or primitivism.

One aspect of Joyce’s escape from the double-bind that is manifested in the novel is found in his experiments with modernist form. Foundational Joyce and Irish modernism scholarship has already linked postcolonial politics with modernist textual practices, for example Frederic Jameson’s contention that “the structure of imperialism also makes its mark on the inner forms of that new mutation in literary and artistic language to which the term modernism is loosely applied” (Jameson 44). Yet this reading of modernist experimentation can be expanded to include, at least in *Portrait*’s case, the presence of an ecological engagement as part of decolonial

politics. Marzec also argues for a linking of the two approaches, when he suggests that access to “a nonexploitative ontology of land” necessitates “a change in the way we produce knowledge and in the way we think about space,” a shift which has bearing on literary production, as it “also requires a rethinking of representation itself” (Marzec 144). One of the ways in which Joyce rethinks representation in this novel is at the level of words and language. Specifically, Montaña has documented the various ways in which language was used to control and order the world in colonial expeditions more broadly, but especially in the English conquest of Ireland. He traces the “coded grammar” in the growing material culture surrounding the colonization of Ireland from the Tudor period onward (188). He classifies the ways colonial doctrine manifests itself “as linguistic-based practices unified by common deployment in management of colonial relationships, including all forms of writing”, as evidenced by words such as “view, description, account, survey,” among others (154). Joyce’s word play and linguistic innovations seem to rebel against this world-constricting coded grammar by aestheticizing the pleasure of words. Tim Dean provides a thoughtful reading of one such example in *Portrait* (as discussed above), in his reading of Stephen’s thoughts as he contemplates the swallows flying over the library in the novel’s final episode:

A soft liquid joy flowed through the words where the soft long vowels hurtled noiselessly and fell away, lapping and flowing back and ever shaking the white bells of their waves in mute chime and mute peal and soft low swooning cry....

(Joyce *Portrait* 226)<sup>11</sup>

As Dean suggests, the liquidity of Stephen’s joy actually “flows through the words” by means of “the assonant power of ‘soft long vowels’” and “heightened acoustic effects” (Dean 258). These devices “subordinate the words’ referential functions to their material dimensions,” which for

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted also in (Dean 258).

Dean is a locus of Stephen's (and Joyce's as the author) non-normative material pleasure.

However, this materiality also has ecological ramifications as well; here Joyce's words are not deployed in order to create and order the world according to a colonialist logic, but instead *are* the world, as they take on aquaceous life, lapping and flowing as they do through the novel. In addition the rematerialization of words, Dean also discusses the sexual power of the

"oxymoronic 'mute chime and mute peal' that represent the nonmimetic effect these sounds are supposed to represent" (258). That is, the oxymorons in this passage embody the impossibility for Stephen of representing certain kinds of transgressive joy and desire, by being a "specific mode of...resistance to representation" (258), a kind of Wildean love that dare not speak its name. This paradoxical language also serves to undermine the meaning-making of the views, descriptions and plans associated colonial discourse. Instead, Stephen's materiality and contradictory language no longer underwrite the agrilogistic control of land, but instead re-endow agency and voice to the land and its inhabitants. It is worth remembering, further, that this fragment of Stephen's thoughts and artistry occurs in a larger meditation about the swallows that are flying over him; thus, his engagement with a decentered and linguistic ecology are tied in with a larger non-violent protest, his escape and exile from Ireland that the swallows signify. Stephen's ecological joy here represents yet another layer to his pacifistic politics.

Another textual means by which Joyce challenges and rethinks representation, thereby creating ecological and decolonial resonances, arises in his use of the stream-of-consciousness technique in this novel. Joyce developed this technique, wherein he presents "the cross-section of a mind (combining sensation, memory, and thought)" as Stephen's narrative voice, a form he perfected and manipulated in his later fictional works *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* (Tindall 61). Sensation and memory as narrative types seem especially relevant in discussions of post-colonial

experience, and indeed Emer Nolan has drawn the link between this existence and stream-of-consciousness in Joyce's writing, noting that the "ambiguities and hesitations testify to the uncertain, divided consciousness of the colonial subject" (Nolan 130). That is, the fragmentariness of the form testifies to the splintered consciousness of the artist living under colonial rule. A poignant example of this broken stream and voice occurs early in the first section of *Portrait*, where young Stephen is sick in the infirmary at Clongowes. First, he is somewhat soothed as he contemplates the fireplace:

The fire rose and fell on the wall. It was like waves. Someone had put the coal on and he heard voices. They were talking. It was the noise of the waves. Or the waves were talking among themselves as they rose and fell. (Joyce *Portrait* 26)

His visions of the wave-like fire transform into a vision of actual waves; he sees then a "multitude of people gathered by the waters' edge" who begin to wail "Parnell! Parnell! He is dead!" (27). In this scene, Stephen's drifting thoughts while he is unwell touch on a number of themes of relevance to a decolonial and ecocritical reading: his potentially subversive rendering of life and agency to the flame, and to the waves of the ocean, is checked by the horror and sorrow of Parnell's untimely death and the ramifications on Irish politics for years to come thereafter. Moreover, Stephen's slippage between the interior, domestic and the outdoor, public spaces hints at how colonized experience challenges the rigidity of these binaries, showing how different kinds of places and groupings can be equally affected by colonial tragedy and disaster.

At the same time, however, Valente presents a more active and purposeful understanding of the stream-of-conscious technique, arguing that it denotes a strategic shift from mimesis, the traditional narrative voice of realist fiction, to "assemblage as the dominant representational strategy" (Valente *Myth* 128). Read in this way, the stream-of-consciousness voice of Stephen's



narrative is also, then, not simply a collection of fragments from a colonized imagination, but also deliberate ways to decolonize the world. Right on the first page of the novel, Stephen remembers: “He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt” (Joyce *Portrait* 7). This snippet from Stephen’s memory moves between Stephen, his animal imagination, and the kinds of specific recollections that ground this narrative in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Ireland. Breaking free of traditional realist narrative composition, these sentences move between one another in a *mise-en-scène* manner that mirrors the overall structure of the text, which is composed of five sections each made up of scenes. Joyce’s technique demonstrates the growth of the artistic consciousness of his protagonist in this particular space, beset as it is by the fragmentary symptomatics of colonized experience. But it also challenges the colonial impulse of narratives which seek to make the world coherent, and it further defies this meaning-making by making the act of reading and comprehending less straight-forward. Indeed, Dean posits that Joyce’s stream-of-consciousness in the novel represents an “aberrant commitment to art for the purpose of thwarting exploitative or appropriative movement” (Dean 263). Joyce’s development of the technique in *Portrait* then, is an artistic innovation, and a non-violent rebellion with ecological reverberations, as he reclaims and tells of space and time in his own way.

*Portrait*’s reworking of the traditional realist novel form and plot contains also an ecologically decolonial design. In his discussion of the culture of Enclosure movement in Britain, Marzec observes that another form which parallels the rise of this land management strategy is the realist novel (Marzec 1). He writes that a number of novels “from the eighteenth to the twentieth century contain a surprising number of significant references to enclosures and to the chaotic nature of unenclosed ‘savage common lands’” (3). The putting of land and its

representation into *plots* connotes “logocentric acts of discursive homogenization” (83); that is, the linking of stability and success with controlled land both in terms of agricultural mastery, but also as it concerns literary representation, narration and action. For its part, *Portrait* is a multivalent rebellion to this hegemonic and colonial form of enplotment. The novel resists the traditional narrative arc of the bildungsroman where the climax represents the conquest of land, and the mastery over self and environment. Instead, at the end of the novel, Stephen remains utterly unenclosed by the nation as he chooses exile as one of his decolonial arms, as I show in the previous chapter. This transnational movement is especially iconoclastic to narrative form, given Marzec’s assertion that “nomadic desire” is one of the elements to be overcome and contained in a successful enclosure plot (4). In addition to Stephen’s escape, the episodic, mise-en-scène format also undoes the traditional narrative arc of climax followed by dénouement. Specifically, Jean-Paul Riquelme points out that while at the end of each of the parts in the novel “Joyce uses elevated language to suggest that Stephen achieves a momentary insight and intensity through a transforming experience,” nonetheless at the beginning of each subsequent part “Joyce ironizes the intensity...by switching unexpectedly to a realistic style,” thereby highlighting the not-always-pleasant “daily context and...frame of reference for Stephen’s aesthetic ambitions” (Riquelme 117). This rhythmic shift between purported artistic sublimity and domestic humility is thus a re-imagining of the realist arc as a consolidator of authorial stability and mastery.

Joyce’s alternative plot of non-mastery is also reflected in Stephen’s eating habits over the course of the novel. Younger Stephen’s thoughts often turn to his voracious appetite, especially for meat, for example when he hopes that “would be stew for dinner.... Stuff it into you, his belly counselled him,” and later, when he “ate his dinner with surly appetite and, when

the meal was over and the greasestrewn plates lay abandoned on the table, he... clear[ed] the thick scum from his tongue and lick[ed] it with from his lips” (Joyce, *Portrait* 102, 111). Yet over the course of the novel, Joyce presents an alternative to Stephen’s would-be carnophallogocentrism, to use Derrida’s term<sup>12</sup>. That is, Stephen does not submit to the culture centred on the violence of eating meat, as it is bound up with patriarchal and linguistic control. Instead, Stephen’s development as an ecologically critical artist is twinned with an increasingly meagre diet, of “watery tea” and “crusts of fried bread,” or half-eaten soupbowls of rice (Joyce *Portrait* 174, 218). His diet, while poor, is more ethical, as it side-steps the agrilogistic devouring that subordinates land and animals to satisfy the unsatiable human diet.

Joyce’s undoing of the narrative form and plot extends beyond Joyce’s eschewing of the colonial trajectory of enplotment, and includes Stephen’s sexual politics as well. Beyond all of Stephen’s sexual encounters with prostitutes, and his ruminations on his unrequited attraction with E.-C.-, Stephen also has a would-be climactic interaction with an unnamed girl on the beach at the end of the fourth section, after he has joyfully decided to reject a career as a priest. Stephen feels “unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life” (Joyce *Portrait* 171), when he sees the girl:

A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane’s and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon her

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<sup>12</sup> “Carnophallogocentrism” is Derrida’s portmanteau word for the “sacrificial structure” which underwrites “carnivorous virility” (“Eating Well” 112-113). That is, the seeming authority of the Western male subject is bound up in the “idealizing interiorization of the phallus and the necessity of its passage through the mouth, whether it’s a matter of words or of things, of daily bread or wine, of the tongue, the lips, or the breast of the other” (113). Derrida returns to this concept in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, when he writes that “Evil comes to the animal through the male,” specifically, the sacrificial structure that originates with “Adam whom God charged with establishing his dominion over the beasts” (*Animal* 104). This charge enshrines the “single law” that subordinates all other beings (female, animal, earth) to this Western male subject (104).

flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like the featherings of soft white down. Her slate-blue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face. (171).

This scene is important to this discussion of plot and Joyce's ecological aesthetic not only because of the obvious bird imagery, but especially because of what Stephen does next. Instead of the heteronormative conquest of the female, as one would expect in the traditional bildungsroman form, Stephen "turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand" (172). Stephen's contemplation of the so-called "bird girl" and his walking away from her have received pejorative critical attention: Chester Anderson has summarized the foundational and early criticisms of the novel, and finds a trend of "Stephen haters," who treat this scene as an instance of sexual errancy, a failure to engage in a real-world encounter by an artist who is trapped in the realm of aesthetics (Anderson 446-454). However, Joyce's decision to circumvent the traditional bildungsroman climax with Stephen's failure to consummate a heteronormative sexual relationship is exactly the point, and is a locus of the novel's decolonial, queer politics.

To get at the ecological undercurrent in this scene, first I turn to Valente, who has usefully linked Stephen's fear of, but obsession with, water as a signpost for his homoerotic pleasure and curiosity. Valente argues that the "smuggling" incident at Clongowes, wherein Stephen's elder classmates are caught engaging in queer sexual acts in the male lavatory makes water in general, but especially stagnant or swampy water, an item of "some homoerotic potential for Stephen" (Valente "Thrilled" 54). This fetishization of water's queer possibility appears in other forms in

the novel: Valente catalogues such “dark and eddying courses of water” as “the square ditch, the sink at the Wicklow Hotel, the shallow end of the bath at Clongowes” (60). Arguably, the bird girl’s surroundings of “brackish waters and the seaharvest of shells and tangle and veiled grey sunlight” (Joyce *Portrait* 171) represent this brand of queer water, thereby displacing Stephen’s sexual pleasure off of the girl, and into another realm of sexual fulfillment. In this way, then, Valente avers that Joyce “unsettles the *bildungsmythos* of a young man’s self-conscious graduation from homosexual play to heterosexual maturity,” and that Joyce also “replaces it with an ambivalent complication, a progressive overlapping and interfolding of sexual preferences” (60). Stephen’s implicit and non-normative pleasures and desires in this scene not only subvert the bildungsroman form, but they also allow him to picture his artistic vision. Castle suggests that the passage’s “auto/homoerotic energies, in which his communion with himself, mediated by the bird girl...[pass] beyond into something ambivalent” (Castle 177); this “something ambivalent” is Stephen’s artistic manifesto, “[t]o live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!” (Joyce *Portrait* 172). My reading of this scene is indebted to Jack Halberstam’s understanding of the re-ordering of queer time and place as revolutionary, as the production of “alternative temporalities” which allow for futures “that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience – namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death” (Halberstam 2). These other futures “unravel precisely those claims made on the universal from and on behalf of white male subjects;” thus, Stephen’s manifesto’s quest for queer time and place is also ecological. That is, Stephen’s aims rupture Joyce’s narrative from the tradition further, by replacing heterosexual conquest and mastery with a commitment to queer time and reproduction: to recreating life in literary form rather than as offspring.

A further *entrée* into this scene’s ecological politics follows from a close examination of

the role of the woman, the bird girl. Stephen's contemplation of the girl is often considered misogynistic: Valente suggests that Stephen's "fetishistic....overevaluation of the bird girl's physical presence" is "implicitly misogynistic" (Valente "Thrilled" 62), while O'Connor is concerned that Stephen's bestialization of the bird girl (which she links with his thinking of E.-C.- as a bird), renders each woman "a bird brain he can dismiss from serious consideration" and serves to rehash "the oppressions and stereotypes imposed on the Irish by the English" (109). However, a reading of the scene in this discussion's ecological and rebellious terms could recuperate these misogynistic concerns. First, Stephen's lack of desire for heteronormative conquest also liberates the bird girl from merely being the object of his sexual fulfillment, and opens her world to other kinds of relations. The scene also grants further agency to the girl, as evinced by the number of active verbs of which she is the subject. Though she is the object of Stephen's worshipful gaze,

her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. (Joyce *Portrait* 171)

She is the one who decides when and how to endure his gaze, and is also the first to look away. Her "stirring the water" complicates the sexual thrust of the scene: it simultaneously displaces sexual desire off of her body into the queer possibilities of water, as discussed above, but in so doing, it activates her position as a sexually autonomous agent, participating equally in the sexual politics as mediated *by* the water. Additionally, her comparison to seabirds need not be an oppressive expression on Stephen's part, but is aligned with the joy and beauty he associates with birds elsewhere in the novel: an example that comes to mind is his contemplation of the

swallows near the close of the novel, whose “dark darting quivering bodies flying clearly against the sky” fill Stephen with “soft liquid joy” (224, 226). In fact, in these ways she appears to be a mirror of Stephen, a person with a world and depth of her own. The girl’s avian qualities are thus an indication of Stephen’s contemplative way of being in the world, one that denaturalizes heteronormative subjection of land, animals and females, and that reimagines the world in queer and ecological terms.

Beyond marking the novel’s departure from the heteronormative bildungsroman form, Stephen’s joy and pleasure at simply being *adjacent* to, and not sexually possessing the bird girl, serve as an example of what I am calling Stephen’s ecological politics of proximity. The theme of “proximity” arises frequently in the *Quare Joyce* essays, as the authors discuss the illicitness of Stephen’s homoerotic desires and the *frissons* they inspire in this character. For example, Valente demonstrates how Stephen frequently finds himself in “the condition of the proximate,” that is, the “situation of belonging and estrangement simultaneously” (Valente “Thrilled” 62); Stephen’s pondering over the “smuggling” incident at Clongowes, for example, has Stephen belonging to the social environment of school-aged boys at school who hear about the “smuggling,” and also estranged, as he is excluded from the sexual activities, and left wondering about how they proceed. Proximity, then, is a polymorphous position: it encompasses a not-fully-knowing, a being outside of a relation or encounter, but deeply piqued about transgressive sexualities. This concept of proximity can be extended and elaborated to include new, more ecologically revolutionary ways of living and being. The inspiration for this spatially-informed proximity occurs in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s 2003 book centered on queer affect entitled *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Her outline of the concept of “beside” is instructive to this discussion of ecological politics outside of the agrilogistic double bind, as

“*beside* seems to offer some useful resistance to the ease with which *beneath* and *beyond* turn from special descriptors into implicit narratives of, respectively, origin and telos” (Kosofsky Sedgwick 8). That is to say, “beside” gets away from more constricting and imperialistic naturalized narratives; for this discussion about the conquest of other bodies in a given space, “beside” also undoes the narratives of “above” and “below” that reinforce hierarchies of patriarchal and agricultural control. Therefore, “beside” can also offer geographical and ecological ways of moving beyond “the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking” (8). For Kosofsky Sedgwick, “beside” opens up a number of different relations other than conquering and possessing, including “desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivalling, learning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping” (8). These different modes of affiliation certainly seem to be at play in Stephen’s interaction with the bird girl, especially considering that she inspires him to heed the call of an artistic vocation, of “representing” life out of life. Tellingly, they are both literally litoral, in the middle space of land proximate to the sea.

The bird girl is also the catalyst for Stephen to embrace proximity in a more spatial way: after he walks away from her, he finds “a sandy nook amid a ring of tufted sand-knolls and lay down there that the peace and silence of the evening might still the riot of his blood” (Joyce *Portrait* 172). Stephen is taking pleasure from being proximate to the earth, in a horizontal position that marks humility and intimacy, rather than the figure of the vertical (erect) male planter standing over, and thus possessing, a horizontal, female earth. His undoing of agricultural thinking in this way is highlighted by his figuring of the land as female, as he feels “the earth beneath him, the earth that had borne him, had taken him to her breast” (172). His feeling reminds us that working through agrilogistic modes, which categorize land and earth as female,



is a work-in-progress for Stephen. Yet, his position relative to the earth is, as aforementioned, one of humility and vulnerability, outside the logics of imperial agriculture. Stephen's spatial decentering of the agrilogistic subject does not end there: as he lies on his sandy knoll, he "fe[els] above him the vast indifferent dome and the calm processes of the heavenly bodies" and "the vast cyclic movement of the earth and her watchers" (172). Stephen's small intimacy with the sand is bound up with a sense of deep geological time, a scale of reference that further undoes the fiction of human supremacy, thereby rendering Stephen, as a human, a symbol of vulnerability instead of mastery. Stephen even conceives of his artistic calling and his place in the world in incomplete, hesitant and non-masterful terms here, as "[h]is soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as the sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer, or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, it spread in endless succession to itself" (172). In this scene, Stephen is also enacting the ways of living that Morton outlines in "Queer Ecology," where Morton envisions a "politicized intimacy" that "necessitates thinking and practicing weakness rather than mastery, fragmentariness rather than holism, and deconstructive tentativeness rather than aggressive assertion" ("Queer" 278).

Stephen's recumbent position, his imagining of his relative insignificance in the world, and his evasion of the narratives of conquest certainly demonstrate Morton's proposed ecological ethics. Moreover, Stephen's proximity and besideness also evoke Morton's vision "that life-forms constitute a *mesh*, a nontotalizable, open-ended concatenation of interrelations that blur and confound boundaries at practically any level: between species, between the living and the non-living, between organism and environment" (275). Put another way, Stephen embodies the mesh "between organism and environment" as he lies down amid the sand, seaweed, seashells, water and air that surrounds him, while also blurring the lines between species in his vision of the bird

girl. Morton calls for “a vocabulary envisioning [the] liquid life” of queer ecology (275), and *Portrait*, given Stephen’s politics of proximity, offers just such a vocabulary.

Stephen’s politics of proximity also undermine the falsity of urban versus rural, and natural versus cultural binaries, which serve only to reinforce the agrilogistic primacy of the human subject<sup>13</sup>. That is, the setting of the novel, the very urban Dublin City, is alive with ecosystems despite being on the other side of an ostensible rural/wild binary. This explosion of this dualistic thinking about space on Joyce’s part anticipates the work of contemporary ecocritical philosophers such as Morton, who argue that “there is no ‘natural’” (Morton *Ecology* 125). He writes that “Nature is not just some Alpine place where everything is equally splendid and sublime;” in fact, the very fact of “setting up nature as an object ‘over there,’ – a pristine wilderness beyond all trace of human contact – ... re-establishes the very separation it seeks to abolish” (159, 125). The premise that there is a nature/urban binary is the kind of thinking that upholds the agrilogistic double bind in the first place, not only by participating in the overcoding and conscription of land through the imperialization of agriculture, but also by falsely hierarchizing humans and urban living as a more developed life than that of other kinds of organisms. Like Morton, Joyce is critical of this binary and the human ego it sustains; for instance, in his critical writing he argues that “Nature is quite unromantic. It is we who put the romance into her. It is a false attitude, an egotism, absurd like all egotisms” (quoted in O’Connor 101). His critique is omnipresent in *Portrait* as well: Stephen’s fascination with the smell of “horse piss and straw” (Joyce *Portrait* 88) are a reminder of “rural” animals in the city. Stephen is constantly proximate to a not-necessarily-productive urban ecology, one which undoes the agrilogistic demarcations of proper land-use, and measures the worth of land by the produce it

<sup>13</sup> See Bruno Latour’s book *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (2004) for a discussion of the question of “nature” in ecological activism. Latour writes that “political ecology... has to let go of nature. Indeed, nature is the chief obstacle that has always hampered the development of public discourse” (Latour 9).

yields. Indeed, Stephen takes great aesthetic joy from this ecology of which he is a part: the smell of “mouldering offal” and “the grey morning light falling about him through the dripping trees and...the strange wild smell of the wet leaves and bark” allow “his soul [to be] loosed of her miseries” (175, 176). Later, he thinks how “[t]he quick light shower had drawn off, tarrying in clusters of diamonds among the shrubs of the quadrangle where an exhalation was breathed forth by the blackened earth” (216). When he wakes up the following morning, “[i]t was that windless hour of dawn when madness wakes and strange plants open to the light and the moth flies forth silently” (217). O’Connell observes that even Joyce’s jubilant renunciation of priesthood is scented “by the spectacle of rotting vegetation” (O’Connell 135). Joyce himself even celebrates that “the odour of ashpits and old weeds and offal hangs round [his] stories” (quoted in Deane 41).

Joyce’s writing about Stephen’s decomposing urban ecosystems serve as one way of the “rethinking of representation” which Marzec advocates as a way of decolonizing literature (Marzec 144). Marzec argues for a way of living, and of representing life in literary form, that celebrates the land’s earthliness (28). This kind of literature understands earth “as a strange, trivial, and ultimately useless effluvium that defies the institutional processes of meaning-making” (165). That is, escaping the agrilogistic double-bind frees the land from the doctrine of productivity, and returns it as a not-fully-knowable, and certainly not conquerable, material with an agency of its own. The “blackened earth” and “strange plants” of Stephen’s city, and also his realization that one day his body will be placed “into a long hole in the ground, into the grave, to rot, to feed the mass of its creeping worms and to be devoured by scuttling plumpbellied rats” point to an ecology where humans are not at the top of the food chain, thereby also presaging Morton’s ecological politics of “dark ecology” (Joyce *Portrait* 112). Like Marzec, Morton

supports a decomposing, “useless effluvium” concept of earth, one not centered on mastery and transcendence of the soul over the body, but one where we acknowledge that life is changeable, and organisms are always dying (*Ecology* 188). He writes that “we should be finding ways to stick around with the sticky mess that we’re in and that we are, making thinking dirtier, identifying with ugliness” (188). In his proximity with a decaying, rotting city, Stephen’s “identifying with ugliness” is not only one of the many ways in which this novel foretells, and fleshes out, the tenets of contemporary ecocriticism, it is also key to the novel’s decolonial ecology.

Beyond the foregrounding of rotting within his ecological vision as a decolonial strategy, Joyce’s novel also features a plethora of other creatures and beings that also form the backdrop of the novel’s action. Indeed, animal life is central to Stephen’s growing artistic consciousness, ranging from birds twittering outside his window, the goats that roam the field in his adolescent hallucination about hell, and the mathematic equations in his notebook that appear as “a widening tail, eyed and starred like a peacock’s” (Joyce *Portrait* 218, 137, 103). More ecologically salient, however, is Stephen’s theriomorphic imagination, that is, his sense of the transmutation of the human into animal or beast. For example, Stephen contemplates “Moynihan’s snoutish face,” and how an “olived faced student” is “equine in expression” (191, 196). Stephen’s theriomorphism succeeds in undermining the hierarchies of man over animal and “natural world” that sustain the agrilogistic double bind, more generally, as well as deflating the colonial double bind. By refiguring the personages around him as animals, he reclaims the category of bestial that rationalizes British colonial development and exploitation. This understanding of the decolonial power of animalization is reinforced by contemporary ecocriticism, and its turn to recuperative readings of Darwinian theory. Breaking away from

more traditional post-colonial critiques of Darwin such as Cheng's, who correlates the 1859 release of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* with a surge in British pro-imperial material culture that painted the Irish with the brush of "derogatory bestiality" (Cheng 32), Morton finds a profoundly decolonial and anti-agrilogistic core in Darwin's writing. He argues that "the force of *On The Origin of Species*" is that "there technically *are no species and they have no origin*" (Agrilogistics 96). Not surprisingly, Darwin's text makes an appearance in *Portrait*, when Stephen is critiquing his colleagues' sense of female beauty. Stephen asserts that MacCann's association of men's physical attraction to women with "the manifold functions of women for the propagation of the species.... with one hand on *The Origin of Species* and the other hand on the new testament" is the kind of thinking that "leads to eugenics rather than to esthetic" (Joyce *Portrait* 108-109). While at the surface, Stephen's comment seems fairly critical, he is essentially lambasting Darwin's (mis)appropriation by others to justify the hierarchizing of organisms over others, especially the heterosexist constraints and delimitations these categories present to different modes of interpersonal, sexual, and artistic affiliation. Indeed, the most central person to be graced with the liberation through animalization is Stephen himself, whose artistic calling occurs at the Bull Wall, a seawall in the Dublin harbour, and is heralded by the cries of "Bous Stephanoumenos!," and which stokes Stephen's sense of "mild proud sovereignty" (168). This name, which links cows (bous) with his name, also pairs the ideas of being a sacrifice (stephanoumenos), outside of the modes of everyday life, but through this also crowned, garlanded, and exalted. Throughout the novel, Stephen continues to be comforted and soothed by such gentle ruminants, such as when Stephen's horror of the sermon at the Jesuit retreat is abetted by "the sound of softly browsing cattle as the other boys munched their lunches tranquilly," a sound which "lulled his aching soul" (125). Gifford makes note of the fact that the

cow is a frequently occurring character and symbol in Irish mythology; of especial interest here is the story of a cow who transports children “to an island realm where they are relieved of petty restraints and dependencies” (Gifford 131). Stephen’s simultaneous characterization of himself and others as bovine is thus linked with his (and Joyce’s) larger personal and artistic aims: of literature and exile as means to alleviate the double-binds which beset colonial Ireland.

Beyond functioning as a means for Stephen to encode his quest for artistic liberation, his theriomorphism also works to undo the hegemonic codes of gender and authority that also bind and delimit imagination in his cultural and social milieu. Theriomorphic characterizations are applied with great frequency to Stephen’s more robust school colleagues and on figures of authority as Stephen’s way of demystifying their muscular performances of masculinity. Not surprisingly, one target of this brand of animalization is also Stephen himself, whose attempts at participating in predatory sexuality is ironized by Joyce. Stephen documents the incident in his journal toward the end of the novel:

22 *March*: In company with Lynch followed a sizable hospital nurse. Lynch’s idea. Dislike it. Two lean hungry greyhounds walking after a heifer. (Joyce *Portrait* 248)

In addition to calling attention to the voracity of heteronormative sexual conquests, Stephen’s discomfort with the situation is further highlighted by the fact that only a few pages earlier, he has confessed to Cranly that dogs are one of the many things that he fears (243). Tindall supports this reading of Stephen’s doggishness as unease with sexual mores, suggesting that he is afraid of himself, which can be seen here as a performer of these masculinist acts of sexual subjugation (Tindall 79). It is interesting to note that after Stephen’s non-sexual climax with the bird girl, however, that Stephen’s father Simon theriomorphizes Stephen in turn, asking his siblings: “Is

your lazy bitch of a brother gone out yet?” to which Stephen replies “He has a curious idea of genders if he thinks a bitch is masculine” (Joyce *Portrait* 175). This exchange further demonstrates how Stephen’s dog transformations highlight the gender politics at play in his world, as a young male expected to seduce women in public, or as a subordinate to a patriarchal figure in his domestic setting. In this vein, moreover, *Portrait*’s many supporting characters are likewise theriomorphized<sup>14</sup>: a rather irritating fellow student Temple is seen “fle[eing] through the dark like a wild creature, nimble and fleetfooted” (237). The aforementioned fellow greyhound Lynch elsewhere appears as “lynxeyed” and having a laugh “like the whinny of an elephant” (250, 201). Stephen’s animal imagination also lampoons his academic environment at the university, as when he imagines “the young professor of mental science discussing on the landing a case of conscience with his class like a giraffe cropping high leafage among a herd of antelopes” (191). Animalization also helps Stephen to subdue his classmate Vincent Heron’s masculine violence. This classmate, on the night of Belvedere School’s Whitsuntide play, relentlessly prods Stephen to confess to his love of E.-C. by, suggestively, “striking him...with his cane across the calf of the leg” (78). This act of teasing violence prompts Stephen to recall another encounter with Heron, in which Stephen was mocked for his unconventional literary tastes. Indeed, Castle has described Heron as a proxy “for the colonial official who demands obedience on principle” (Castle 167). Indeed, Stephen realizes the pretence behind Heron’s supposed power, that the “spirit of quarrelsome comradeship” that Heron embodies is “a sorry anticipation of manhood” (Joyce *Portrait* 83). Stephen also thinks to himself that “it [was] strange that Vincent Heron had a bird’s face as well as a bird’s name” (76). Here, Stephen’s theriomorphism is a way of further humbling and shattering the props behind Heron’s masculine

<sup>14</sup> O’Connor’s article “‘Mrkgnao!’: Signifying Animals in the Fiction of James Joyce” (2013) catalogues some of these references to animals in *Portrait*, as well, but with the slightly different focus of depicting bestialization in the novel as a “counterpoint to Stephen’s desire to aestheticize experience” (106).

stance.

With this breaking down of the masculine gender code in mind, then, Joyce seems to be equally concerned with the constraints imposed on women, especially with regards to sexual behavior, a matter that is equally addressed in theriomorphic terms. Stephen makes similar proclamations regarding two women in the novel. First, of the peasant woman who fascinates Stephen in Davin's anecdote about her suggestively greeting passersby at her cottage door, he thinks that she is "a type of her race and his own, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness and, through the eyes and voice and gesture of a woman without guile, calling the stranger to her bed" (183). Later, he thinks that E.-C.- is likewise "a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness" (221). These two comments have been read as markedly misogynistic by critics such as Vicki Mahaffey, who argues that Stephen's thoughts demonstrate his lack of understanding of female subjectivity, and his "thoughtless misogyny" which posits women as "not quite human" (Mahaffey 239). Yet a reading of the theriomorphism here in light of the larger exploration of ecological decolonization may help to recuperate Stephen's thoughts. First, if Stephen is debasing E.-C.- and the peasant woman as bats, he is including himself in the characterization, as the bats represent "a type of her race and *his own*." In this vein, Tindall has connected the bats' "darkness and secrecy and loneliness" with Stephen's professed tools of "silence, exile and cunning," a link which Tindall suggests renders Stephen "a little batty" (Tindall 90). But even Tindall's sarcastic reading is only possible if we read bats as necessarily pejorative, as a derogatory comparison. Indeed, winged creatures seem to align with Stephen's feelings of liberation: the bird girl, and the image of the soaring hawk, confirm Stephen's rejection of a religious vocation and ground his calling as an artist. The swallows which encircle him in the



final section are his harbinger of exile. If birds, as in Heron's case, are also a means to call into question sexual normalization and performance, then the peasant and E.-C.- as bats would be hinting at the same deconstruction. In other words, the way to escape the limits of prescribed sexuality is to embrace the animal; it is noteworthy that female soul is able to come into knowledge of itself, and to approach another for sexual relations, when recast in bat form. Stephen feels that female sexual expression is one of the many souls, like his, who is caught in the nets of "nationality, language, religion" that "hold it back from flight;" using his wings, or the wings of a bat, Stephen's exhortation is "to fly by those nets" (Joyce *Portrait* 203).

Another noteworthy function of animals in the novel that occurs alongside the theriomorphism of human characters is Stephen's endowment of seeming artistic agency and autonomy to animals themselves. For example, the swallows flying above the library appear to Stephen as a choreographed, musical performance: their flight consists of "a dark flash, a swerve, a flash again, a dart aside, a curve, a flutter of wings" (224). The notes of their song "were long and shrill and whirring, unlike the cry of vermin, falling a third or a fourth and trilled as the flying beaks clove the air. Their cry was shrill and clear and fine and falling like threads of silken light unwound from whirring spools" (224). The artistic agency of animals and theriomorphic art creep into Stephen's musings about his own developing art and aesthetic theory, when he explains to Lynch the questions he has been asking himself: "*Can excrement or a child or a louse be a work of art? If not, why not?*" and "*If a man hacking in fury at a block of wood, Stephen continued, make there an image of a cow, is that image a work of art? If not, why not?*" (214). These questions are seeming answered by Stephen's later contemplation of the delicacy of "the brittle bright bodies of lice" whose bodies are "tender yet brittle as a grain of rice" (234, 233). The attribution of non-human artistic production critiques the concept of

authorship: to use Valente's words, it is a strategy which "altogether subverts the Imaginary author, the illusion of a unitary identity" who produces work autonomously and purposefully (Valente "Thrilled" 68). Joyce himself has claimed "to have been turned into an animal himself by the act of writing" (O'Connor 102). Considered together, *Portrait's* dehumanizing theriomorphism and celebration of animal artistry call into sustained question the metaphysical fictions which separate human life from animal life. Stephen even explicitly argues that "the creatures of the air have their knowledge and know their times and seasons because they, unlike man, are in the order of their life and have not perverted that order by reason" (225). *Portrait's* animals therefore "caricature[e] the sovereign autonomy of the western subject by fracturing it in every act of habitation" (Castle 160). Once this autonomy is fractured, ground is opened up, as Morton intends, for "collective forms of identity that include other species and their worlds, real and possible" (Morton *Ecology* 141). Stephen's statement that "we are all animals. I also am an animal" is therefore a *memento animalis*, a queer rebellion that bypasses the agrilogistic and colonial double-bind by turning it on its head, while also forging non-normative affiliations and kinships between other kinds of beings (Joyce *Portrait* 206).

Morton suggests that "[e]cology is the latest in a series of humiliations of the human" (Morton "Queer" 277). This being the case, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a novel about Stephen revelling in this delicious humiliation. He debases the human subject by reminding us that "we are all animals." He humiliates himself, by literally being proximate to the earth, among the humus. The novel's queer and ecological imagination, moreover, are also grounded in the historical reality in which Joyce was writing. Stephen's conception of and interaction with the land, people, animals and space around him offer a politically necessary and non-violent critique of and alternative to the limitations of colonial rule and nationalist

insurrection in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Ireland. In so doing, Joyce also envisions an escape of the doctrine of agrilogistics, by working through the metaphysics that have held it in place for hundreds and thousands of years. *Portrait's* queer ecology, then, is a form of collective resistance, both in Joyce's time, and in our own as we approach the end of the Anthropocene.

## Conclusion

This thesis explores how an ecological and postcolonial reading of Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a tool by which to articulate Joyce's literary rebellion against the colonial takeover of Irish land. This approach also exposes his deep-seated unease with and critique of nationalistic Revival rhetoric, which upholds the very gendered oppressions written over the land, animals, and people that was enshrined by imperialism. Queer ecology emerges, then, not only as a way of reading Joyce's political and critical understanding of this colonial double bind, but also as the vocabulary by which his ecological imagination and artistry revel in the pleasures of the dirty world. In this way, I hope that this thesis contributes to the burgeoning critical attention to ecology in Joyce's writing, and I aim to continue this project by looking at Joyce's other fictional works, including *Dubliners*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, whose pages house Joyce's ongoing innovations with language and form as decolonizing ecological play. But more importantly, I see a consideration of Joyce's writing as a very fruitful contribution to ecological theory and literary studies, as his experiments with form and language, and his envisioning of queerly humble and earthly intimacy entextualize possible ways out of current ecological aporias.

In its consideration of the twinning of ecological awareness and artistry, this thesis departs from the tenets of foundational Joycean criticism, which tend to depict Stephen as having a perverse and unfulfilling distance from the material world, thereby preventing him from accessing a fully-fleshed artistic vocation. Indeed, Hugh Kenner views Stephen as highly ironized by Joyce, when he points to the bird girl scene wherein Stephen imagines his calling as an artist. Kenner bemoans the "empurpled triteness of such a cadence" as is articulated in Stephen's joyous vision and his communion with the earth (Kenner 438). Kenner finds this

“ecstasy” to be a locus of Joyce’s ironization of Stephen’s overreaching and jejune aesthetic. However, in this scene and in the novel as a whole, I contend that “ecstasy” is exactly the point, as it etymologically denotes a stepping-outside-of, a movement beyond the colonial double bind and the ecological crises that beset his existence. To this end, Derek Attridge also reminds us not to approach Joyce with hegemonic readings in mind, not to strive “toward that impossible goal of total understanding”, as Joyce’s writing does not need “singleness of meaning or certainty of position” to be enjoyed, read with pleasure, or taken up critically (Attridge 3, 24). Indeed, this ecological reading points to Attridge’s articulation of the need to avoid the quest for mastery in the understanding of Joyce’s revolutionary politics. This eschewing of mastery is present even in the novel, such as Stephen’s artistic call of “To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!” (Joyce *Portrait* 172). Stephen’s vision is not the locus of his artistic failure, as Kenner posits, but instead is a reminder of the vulnerability inherent in reading, writing, creating, and understanding, of being a human animal. Stephen’s call is an exhortation to embrace queer failure, a reminder to always ironize ourselves so as to create more intimate, ecologically ethical ways of living and being.

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